

Education as Mutual Translation:
A Yoruba and Vedantic Interface for Art
School Pedagogy

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I declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signature

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Date

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With gratitude to students who gave so much time and energy to this research, colleague discussants, my patient supervisors, my challenging, loving sisters and mother, the inspirational friendship of my late father. And good humoured, creative life companions Paul and the children Shilpa, Kirit-unending thankfulness of our days together.

ABSTRACT

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This thesis proposes that concepts of self and mutuality with others, found in ancient Indian (Hindu Vedantist) and Yoruba (West African) philosophies can be applied to art school pedagogy and potentially beyond. Mind, self, identity and agency in these traditions echo recent thinking on the student being by Ronald Barnett, and critical consciousness as defined by Paulo Freire. Situating oneself as part of, yet distinct from others, leads naturally to reflection on the nature of self and identity; the thesis urges that art education engage with more awareness of students as cultural, political, and ontological entities, and with learning and teaching as an act of mutual exchange.

In support, case studies are presented, gathered through dialogic interviews in a project called 4 Minds. These capture students' experience of art school pedagogy, Yoruba and Vedantic ideas of the self in relation to society, and their views on the constitution of the self and its role in education. Reflexive, phenomenological methodology is employed, its impetus coming from responses to a course on Yoruba, Hindu and postcolonial theory, leading to an in-depth examination of its contents, pedagogic tools, and implications for creative education. From this process has emerged a theoretical framework for extracting key elements of the originating course and its pedagogic strategies, underscored by specific Yoruba and Vedantic concepts in dialogue with Barnett and Freire.

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Introduction

Education as Mutual Translation

This research examines the potential role of specific Vedantist and Yoruba concepts in the creation of art school pedagogy that is hetero cultural and conducive to student well being through a recognition of the metaphysical self. It bridges these ancient philosophies with contemporary educational concerns through theories of Ronald Barnett and Paulo Freire, creating an interdisciplinary and intercultural framework for pedagogy that speaks multiple languages. The process of such pedagogy is articulated through the metaphor of mutual translation on the learner teacher journey. The form employed is action research based phenomenological enquiry, into the nature of self perception, and of self in relation to society, as experienced by a group of art and design students and staff, within the learning and teaching environment of a contemporary British art school, referred to as Art and Design Institute X (ADIX).

The aim is to arrive at a transferrable framework for art and design education that balances the pressures of individuality placed on art students, with a nurturing environment that supports self awareness and contextualises criticality in a wider sphere than in the appraisal of work in progress. The thesis proposes that such an environment can be created by recognising students on ontological, as well as intellectual levels; that the Vedantic concepts of *karma yoga*, *satsanga*, *jiva atman*, and Yoruba thought reinforce mutually critical, relational discourse between individual and society, thus offering rich and relevant starting points for new pedagogy; that contradictions within and between the four ancient and contemporary sources can be tackled through contemporary contextualisation, and dynamic synthesis created. It also argues that fruitful reflection on the ontological, intellectual, cultural and political self can be developed through critical autobiographical reflection by students and staff.

This hypothesis, has been examined in three ways:

Firstly a second year elective course which I have taught for many years, introducing Yoruba and Vedantic ideas embedded in West African and ancient Indian art and culture, has been analysed for its impact and contents.

Secondly these responses have been set against Hindu Vedantist and Yoruba understandings of the self, will, and action. These have proved to fit with naturalness into reflection on art school activities and pedagogies.

Thirdly the relevance of Yoruba and Vedantic thought to contemporary education has been underlined by comparing it with progressive education theories of Ronald Barnett and Paulo Freire. Barnett articulates the notion of a “student being” from a Heideggerian perspective, (Barnett: 2007), paralleling the way in which this thesis utilises Vedantic ontological theory. Freire’s “conscientization” (Freire, 1996, p. 17), developed throughout his work as *critical consciousness*,¹ like Yoruba thought, cites agency in determining our relationship with others and with history, and points to the role of education in bringing this about. For creative education these juxtapositions and comparisons offer a viable way to discern the self in creative processes; and to introduce nuance to expectations of originality and individuality.

The 4 Minds Research Project

Over the period of six years, with varying degrees of involvement, nine students and seven members of staff engaged in dialogue and activities under the umbrella of the 4 Minds research project. Students were drawn from the second year elective course referred to above, titled up to 2012 ‘Shades-ancient Indian and Yoruba Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self’. In 2013 it became ‘Contemporary Contexts for ancient Indian and Yoruba Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self’. Henceforth it will be referred to as the Yoruba/ Vedanta course.

¹ *Critical consciousness* as applied in this thesis refers to the entirety of Freires’ aspiration for education, and not specifically to the publication *Education for Critical Consciousness*, first published in 1973.

Student interviews were structured in a step by step manner, moving organically from questions of learning and teaching as experienced in their various studio disciplines and on the course, to recognition of the role of identity in that experience, to a more philosophical dialogue about the self, and the possibility of a metaphysical/ontological self. The latter discussions included Barnett's idea of the "*will to learn*", (Barnett: 2007) the ways in which that metaphysical self is viewed in Hindu Vedantist and Yoruba thought, and the ways in which such a concept of self could enhance art school experience and inform pedagogic practice. A more direct approach was taken with colleagues, by discussing the role of philosophical enquiry in their own pedagogic practices.

From the earliest interviews, student responses revealed great interest in art school education practices. One member of the student research team [SRT] graduated and progressed into teaching during the course of the research, adding a generational element to the project. Appendix 4 details the origins, development, and contents of the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Chapter 5 provides the full practical methodology, methods and stages of the 4 Minds research project. Chapter 6 presents student case studies as individual and grouped narratives, analysing their growing self knowledge, and their comments on art school pedagogy. Where appropriate, these include references to studio work and essays produced for the course. Also quoted are questionnaires and work submitted by non SRT members, where they shed light on the themes of the thesis, though these are not analysed in depth, as the SRT data is. Chapters 6.2 and 7 look more analytically at the course and the research project, including an account of staff research team [StRT] responses

Self Reflection

This enquiry has proved to be a profound journey of self reflection, one that both complicated and enabled the thesis, in that autobiographical reflection itself emerged as a potential pedagogic tool that needed to be tested and critiqued. In attempting to understand the impact of the Yoruba/Vedanta course on students, I

questioned why Yoruba and Vedantic ideas had had impact on my own self, as a student, as a teacher, and what *other* contributory factors existed . This exercise led to the identification of five formative influences:

- a) Cultural and perceptual influences stemming from an early introduction to Vedanta, a circa eighth century BCE school of Hindu philosophy (Radhakrishnan, 1989, pp 430-444)
- b) Juxtaposition of Vedantic ideas beside later encounters with traditional West African Yoruba philosophical ideas on society and self; the latter originate circa fifth century BCE- fifth century CE and continue to develop into the present era (Fagg and Pemberton, 1982, p.ix).
- c) Notions of freedom and relationship as experienced in family culture influenced by the ideas of the twentieth century iconoclastic Indian philosopher, J. Krishnamurthi.²
- d) Liberal but skill based art education practices, experienced as a student at a British Art School in the late 1970's to early eighties
- e) Progressive education theory encountered personally or via curricula throughout my education, from school days to date. These include Ivan Illich (1970), Paulo Freire (1970; 1998), Ronald Barnett (2007), and recent scholarship on intercultural, interdisciplinary and arts based research, by Melissa Cahnmann-Taylor and Richard Sigmund (2008), A.-Chr. Engels-Scwartzpaul and Michael A. Peters (2013), amongst others.

These five influences have led to curriculum materials and a manner of addressing the student/tutor relationship developed over the years, applied in the Yoruba Vedanta course, amongst other pedagogic projects. To move however from this realisation, to presenting it as transferrable pedagogic methodology is problematic

² Familiar titles in my childhood home were compilations of J. Krishnamurti's writings and talks such as *Commentaries on Living* (1960), *Freedom from the Known* (1969), *The First and Last Freedom*(1954). Later I was to encounter *Education and the Significance of Life* first published 1953.

on several fronts. Firstly, the solipsistic potentials of focussing on personal experience are manifold. How can one assume, after all, that an experience that was beneficial or otherwise for one person would have the same value for another or affect them in any way? Could there be connections being made to the influences cited in a wilfully retrospective manner? These questions will be dealt with again in Chapter 7, but some response is needed at the outset.

In relation to the first question, this research consciously uses as a starting point the specifics of autobiographical experience, for two reasons: firstly as a process of identifying the way in which as a teacher today I have negotiated the past into a pedagogical approach. The influences cited have consciously shaped the way in which certain projects have been undertaken, and on reflection, show themselves to have shaped my pedagogic philosophy as a whole. Secondly, and here lies the essence of the research question, the very purpose of the research *is* to determine whether what is identified is transferrable. Clearly, while these influences are in a sense part of my upbringing, they are available to all via easily accessed books and other sources, and their viability as pedagogic philosophy can be qualitatively if not empirically tested, or at least examined.

To tackle the second question regarding the danger of retrospectively and wilfully applying rather than finding connections, another deliberate decision should be noted. Since the research bases its enquiry on aspects of self that are both visible and invisible- the curriculum journey and the inner more existential journey, a degree of introspection is highly relevant. A backward glance in such a context becomes highly insightful, casting light on my current actions, and as a catalyst for change. This in itself is a process worth sharing; however personal introspection also serves another key function in this methodology. As a phenomenology, this research seeks to ground pedagogy in art students' experience of *themselves*- as living beings in a particular learning environment; it asks how they perceive learning, and how they survive, or flourish, as the case may be in the pedagogical environment they find themselves. Further it asks if a greater sense of metaphysical self could enhance the experience of art school, or help guard against vulnerabilities

in a field that places great emphasis on individualism. For all of these purposes, looking back at one's own experiences as an art student and as cultural being is useful, relevant and can be approached systematically

Problems with Vedantic and Yoruba thought as theoretical grounding for this research

A second area of concern arises however, regarding the use of the five influences cited above. (Vedantist cultural and perceptual influences, notions of freedom and relationship based on J. Krishnamurti, juxtaposition of Vedantic and Yoruba ideas, liberal, skill based art education, progressive education theory). The concern has to do with the origins and nature of Yoruba and Vedantist ideas. Beyond the lack of familiarity with these thought systems within the research and pedagogic environment in which I function, (especially when Vedantic and Yoruba ideas are coupled together), a further complication lies in the fact that both have cosmogonic and spiritual aspects, making their incorporation into a contemporary educational paradigm an act of deep contradiction. This is because it may appear to strike at the very heart of modern, and post modern democratic and secular impulses in education. The latter tend (quite rightly) to be wary of proselytising missions and undue influence on individual beliefs. By contrast, the theories and practices of Yoruba and Hindu philosophies that inform this research operate in what appear to be simultaneous streams of mythology, religious faith, as well as critical analysis of a rigorous kind.

This doctoral project, however, began in the first place with the remarkable engagement by art students to the complexity of Yoruba and ancient Indian thought and their arts, introduced to them via the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Positioned as an undergraduate cultural studies elective, the course was delivered between 2003 and 2013 (with a gap in 2009 and 2011). Apart from responding with interest to such different worldviews, and to notions of the self not normally encountered at art school, student comments, captured in feedback questionnaires, tutorials, and

extracurricular voluntary discussions, also often strayed into thoughtful critique of social, and specifically art educational power structures.

Such conversations, recurring over a period of ten years (in which, as cited above, the course was delivered eight times), provided an indication of students' own awareness of some of the problems within art education; they also shed light on several factors in the art school experience in general. These include the place of skill based learning and teaching, or the imparting of discipline specific skill sets and material knowledge; self esteem in relation to tutor student relationships, grading systems, and professional practice; the relationship of studio practice to the academic component of art school degrees and the ways in which these are perceived by students and tutors. The purpose of this research however, was not to critique art school pedagogy and current practices as a whole. The objective was to acquire in- depth understanding of how a group of students have harnessed their own energies and passions to extract, construct, or reveal meaning from both the positive and the problematic pedagogies they have encountered. Having in common their attendance of the Yoruba/ Vedanta course, their case studies indicate how ideas from these thought systems resonated powerfully with them, and could consciously be used in pedagogy. The enquiry is encapsulated in the research question,

“Can introduction to the key concepts of karma or ‘un-attached work’ in Vedanta, and of the self as always in relationship to society in Yoruba thought, in conjunction with reflective education theory, facilitate pedagogy that allows the metaphysical self to emerge and support the creative learner journey?”

As the research has progressed, Yoruba and Vedantic principles have been increasingly applied to analysing student and staff narratives, leading to the transferrable principles of the thesis.

The “will to learn” and metaphor of mutual translation

As the research project was being formulated and presented in supervisory meetings and research seminars, a persistent problem was the need to explain Vedanta and Yoruba thought in extreme abbreviation, prior to any possible discussion of the pedagogic theory that was evolving. While this may be a common experience in the formulation of any new paradigm, or in the travails of doctoral students, whose very remit involves the thorough explication of a research question, its examination process, and a thesis based thereon, there was a particularity about my situation that resonated with some of the problems identified in the research itself. There simply was not enough commonly shared educational and cultural heritage, in the research climate I found myself in, to enable moving straight to debate of a possible application of Vedantic and Yoruba ideas in postmodern art school education, especially in combination. Since familiarity with Yoruba and Vedantic ideas could not be assumed, a disproportionate amount of time was being spent in situating those ideas within a common discourse between department and research student. This was similar to situations encountered in conferences in which as a speaker referencing non-western material in an otherwise completely shared research domain, I had lost valuable time in a precious twenty minute slot explaining (and being expected to explain) basics of the comparative half of my paper, rather than being able to develop a robust or more complex argument for the main point being made. And in the current research, while autobiographical, ethnographic, and self reflective approaches, and contextualisation within western philosophical frameworks were applicable and were adopted, there was a problem; in the first few years of being registered part time as a doctoral student aspiring to develop an interface between Yoruba/Vedantist and contemporary education theory, it became impossible to find time to further my reading and understanding of the former, in view of the need to explain them in the terms of the latter. Ironically at the same time, the Yoruba/Vedanta course was delivered several times again, and the evidence of its apparent relevance to students continued to grow. A pedagogic theory and practice that had become normative and progressive within the pedagogic sphere of the Yoruba/Ancient India course remained deeply other, politically and philosophically

problematic, in the research environment in which I attempted to speak and write about it. If truth be told, even to myself, the task seemed somewhat illogical and there was no precedent to turn to. Yet to omit or subvert the philosophical inspirations of the research in favour of a more readily explicable study of art school pedagogy would have been tantamount to losing its very impulse, its very core. And in a phenomenological quest for meaning in the pedagogic and personal experiences of the past, such an evasion would abort rather than allow meaning to emerge. To succumb to such a temptation (and tempting it was) to contain the research in more familiar territory might have completed the task, but not the full evolution of the ideas. To state this is not to lay blame, nor to express contrition, but to use the observation as a means of embarking on an understanding of the crucial role of multiple cultural insights in higher education pedagogies.

It could be said, to use the terminology of Ronald Barnett, that to make such a compromise would entail the deadening of the very “*will to learn*” that had inspired the research. In this respect this thesis is indebted to Barnett’s 2007 publication, *A Will to Learn*, encountered midway in the interviewing process. The book provided the link that was needed, in the way of established dialogue about the metaphysical student being, and an expressive vocabulary for speaking about students in such a way. An extension of Barnett’s ideas about “student being” (Barnett, 2007) is developed here. It is proposed that the *cultural specifics* of an individual student, and the way in which they are heard or missed by tutors, are fundamentally important in supporting the student “will to learn”.

Another theoretical context for this thesis is recent scholarship on acknowledging differences in doctoral candidates. These sources recognised predicaments such as mine, and provided very welcome academic grounding to translation as metaphor for trans-cultural constraints and aspirations. *Of Other thoughts: Non Traditional Ways to the Doctorate* (Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters, 2013) for example, provides first-hand accounts by PhD candidates and supervisors of what are termed “non traditional” research trajectories. The term is applied broadly to encompass two streams of work highlighted in the book,

one theme (ironically) concerns members of so called traditional (ethnic or national) cultures, the other refers to particular research cultures and methods. The first cluster includes researchers from Indigenous, transnational, diasporic, coloured [sic] or ethnic minority groups (already there are overlaps between these categories); the second cluster involves research orientations and methods that arise from, for example, trans-cultural, post-colonial, transdisciplinary and creative practice led approaches. (Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters 2013, p.312)

In seeking practical guidance on doctoral studies, such candidates, the book asserts, find little to go on in guidebooks that assume the existence of a standard, tried, tested and exemplified epistemology of research, aimed at delivering success, regardless of subject, at “thesis, exegesis, performance/exhibition, ‘the oral’, and ‘the defence’” (2013, p.312). In applying such advice to non traditional formats and conceptual bases, then, such candidates “have to ‘translate’ the available literature for their particular needs and purposes” (2013, p.2) such an articulation of problems faced by “non traditional” Phd candidates and the solutions some of them have found provides a helpful base for this research; however two specific assertions are made here drawing from the research itself and from Ronald Barnett: firstly, before a student can take on the task of translation from existent guidance, s/he must possess the energy and competence to do so- in Barnett’s terms, s/he must have a suitably supported “will to learn” (Barnett, 2007); secondly, this will needs to have survived in a climate where its cultural anchors found little to grasp. To expand Barnett’s terms, (perhaps contentiously) support for the “will to learn” requires cultural openness and sensitivity.

Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters’ use of the term “translation” chimes with another greatly clarifying moment in the formulation of this thesis, which arose from a revisiting of Walter Benjamin’s 1923 essay “The Task of the Translator” (Benjamin, 1999, pp.70-82; 257). In attempting to create from this experience an accessible pedagogic theory, the thesis seemed to defy any conventions of setting sensible achievable boundaries for research projects. In other words, the idea simply did not seem to translate into well proven academic frameworks, hence rendering improbable an aspiration to produce a transferable pedagogy. To bridge the ideas of several apparently starkly different worlds, and present them as new pedagogy

required an act of translation, and perhaps translation itself was the root of the problem, since the means of describing the translatable in all of the fields touched on may not be commonly known, or perhaps did not exist. Tackling this gap had to be a key concern of the research, if not the main one. Thus Benjamin's ideas on translation became, at a crucial juncture in the research a vehicle for clearing the way, for creating a space within which the cross cultural and cross disciplinary argument presented could be thought through.

To Benjamin, translation is above all, a conveyor not of information, but of meaning. Hence translation between languages entails far more than conveying that which is stated in another language into one's own. More importantly, it begins by returning "to the original" (1999, p.71) in order to establish that which is to be conveyed *and its suitability for translation*. In purely linguistic terms this may be read as stating the obvious, for we can presume a translator would be conversant with the language of the original as well as the one s/he is translating into. Yet the literal facts of what is said, no matter how grammatically well formed, are far from the process of which Benjamin speaks. The original with which he concerns himself is not only that which is stated, but its worth as a work of literature,

For what does a literary work 'say'? What does it communicate? It 'tells' very little to those who understand it. Its essential quality is not statement or the imparting of information.[...] but do we not generally regard as the essential substance of a literary work what it contains in addition to information? (1999, p.70).

So the linguistic translation of information alone cannot convey the deeper sense of the original, and conversely, if the original lacks in content that has trans-dimensional value going beyond its chronological time and the technicalities of its language, it has not achieved what Benjamin means by translatability.

Translation is a mode. To comprehend it as a mode one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translation: its translatability. The question of whether a work is translatable has a dual meaning. Either: Will an adequate translator ever be found among the totality of its readers? Or, more pertinently: Does its nature lend itself to translation and, therefore, in view of the significance of the mode, call for it? In principle the first question can be decided only contingently; the second,

however, apodictically. Only superficial thinking will deny the independent meaning of the latter and declare both questions of equal significance. (1999, p.71).

What Benjamin describes as translatable is a text that links to an archaic language- the significance and knowledge of which pre exists,

Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential they be translated; it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability (1999, 71).

It is the presence of this "true language" (Benjamin 1999, p.77) that renders a work translatable; and therefore its translation manifests also "the kinship between languages", since the carefully selected grammatical forms of the second language match and yet *mutually transcend* the languages of the original and the translation. Only in such a translation, does the "afterlife" of the original become possible since,

...just as the tenor and significance of the great works undergo a complete transformation over the centuries, the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well. (1999, p.74).

And finally, it is this quality in the mode of translation that renders it,

so far removed from being the sterile equation of two dead languages that of all literary forms it is the one charged with the special mission of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own. (1999, p.74)

Many arguments have been made since Benjamin about the credence that can be attached to the notion of universally understood and pre-existent human concepts, and much can be critiqued in his conception of a "pure" archaic language in all great works , (1999, p.77 and p.79). As stated previously reading Benjamin in the context of this thesis served as a way of creating space in an otherwise impenetrable impasse; not all of the assumptions he makes apply, but the implications of an interaction that transforms both original and translated text resonates profoundly with the education paradigm aspired to, and the dilemmas faced in the development of this thesis. For the purposes of the thesis then, the idea of an original archaic language that renders a work translatable, is in itself translated, to

mean that which resonates with contemporary concerns, despite its age, and its geographical or cultural origins.

Treated thus, it is possible to apply his proposition, that more than words and ideas get translated, that translation in itself begets an "afterlife" for the original, and most importantly that in this afterlife "the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well" (1999, p.74). If we take contemporary art education as the translator of textually present and contemporaneously held ideas about the self in relation to society found in Yoruba and ancient Indian traditions, we find that in order to be able to translate, contemporary art education practice will need to draw from its own existent concepts and frameworks, but also to create new ones where pre-existent ones do not provide sufficient context and meaning; in having to create these new terminologies, concepts, methods, it will itself be transformed.

Conversely, in being translated in such a way, ancient ideas themselves take on new meaning. The process is therefore an act of mutual translation, and that is the key function, the *modus operandi*, and the conceptual basis of the pedagogy that is proposed here. A process of mutual translation is inherent in the intercultural, inter-disciplinary dialogue attempted in this research.

In the rendering of key concepts from Yoruba and ancient Indian philosophy and art into contemporary educational theory, there is firstly a recognition of the relevance of that theory beyond the times and contexts in which they were formulated; secondly a recognition of the contentious, debatable, yet persistent possibility of a *universal* quality in these intimations, evidenced by contemporary art students' grasp of them; thirdly an inevitable transformation of this rich and archaic thought, as it interacts within contemporary life in new contexts.

While emphasising the "afterlife" of a translatable work, Benjamin does not eschew good craftsmanship in translation. Here a parallel concern emerges, with first needing to understand the original adequately, in order to translate in a meaningful way in which the original is still discernible. While on the one hand he declares that "something other", "the mysterious, the 'poetic'" in that which is translatable is better reproduced by "the translator... who is also a poet" (Benjamin, 1999, p.70), it

is not to be taken over by the creations of the latter. Benjamin discusses the need for the translator's language to become absorbed by the original. Quoting Pannwitz on German translations from ancient languages, Benjamin proposes that to capture the "intention" (1999, pp.75;77;81) of the original, necessitates the translation of one's own language into the other, prior to bringing the other into one's own.

In this arena can be sited contemporary debates about cultural appropriation and postcoloniality, raising questions about authenticity. Barnett speaks of the will to learn that enables actions and interactions that allow the emergence of "authenticity" in the sense in which Heidegger uses it (Barnett, 2007) As stated earlier, this research questions whether this can truly be possible without some recognition, and preparedness for, a student's specific cultural context. There is a danger that even a highly sensitive teacher, in an open pedagogic space welcoming all voices, may yet miss an emergent voice if it is delivered in a language- whether literally or metaphorically- that lies outside of the teacher's frames of reference. Benjamin warns,

The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where work, image, and tone converge. He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. (Pannwitz, in Benjamin, 1999, p.81)

In the context of this thesis, then, the educator through efforts to broaden her own cultural horizons creates not predetermined bridges that all students need to traverse, but new streams over which diverse students can build their own means of crossing, trespassing, and re landscaping the other side.

However Benjamin also proceeds to a declaration that is far more difficult to reconcile with contemporary education and critical theory,

The intention of the poet is spontaneous, primary, graphic; that of the translator is derivative, ultimate, ideational. For the great motif of integrating many tongues into one true language is at work. This language is one in which the independent sentences, works of literature, critical

judgements, will never communicate- for they remain dependent on translation; but in it the languages themselves, supplemented and reconciled in their mode of signification, harmonise. If there is such a thing as a language of truth, the tensionless and even silent depository of the ultimate truth which all thought strives for, then this language of truth is - the true language (Benjamin, 1999, p.77).

Can education safely partake of such a process? How is a true language to be known? And might not a multiplicity of voices claim theirs to be the true voice of the "one true language"? On this point this thesis turns to what it asserts is the intrinsically self- questioning nature of the thought systems it draws from. So the potential dangers of an individual's predilections presented as universal "truth" can be overcome by reference to - *translation from*- their intrinsically open and self questioning aspects. This is the experiment that is attempted in this research. To be specific, it is argued that such an outcome can be produced by the extraction and re-contextualisation of

a) the Vedantic concept of the *jivatman* (individuated self) and its liberation through *karma yoga* (action/work)

b) the Yoruba concept of individual agency in relation to society.

Underlying these concepts is recognition in both thought systems, of the mutual dependency of opposing tensions, and fluidity in visualising space and time. This paradigm rather startlingly lends itself to post modern attempts at plurality and the creation of space for multiple truths. Because the Yoruba concept of the social self and power balances within society, and the Vedantist idea of the *jiva atman* engaged in *karma*, or work done for its own sake without attachment, both require individual agency and critical evaluation in order to be applied, it is proposed that within a pedagogy that draws from Yoruba and Vedantic influences, the individual can, firstly be supported in rigorously questioning, while at the same time being nurtured by the very systems s/he critically engages with. Is this not what an educational environment should aspire to do in any case?

Secondly, such pedagogy would instil an ability to read complex motifs in a multi disciplinary manner; both traditions employ a multifaceted layering of linguistic and

visual metaphor that are often belied by the apparent formality of their artefacts; a cross referencing of visual, textual and historical and philosophical data is required in order to read them. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, such a pedagogy would instil a desire to come to terms with the other and with plurality; within the language of Yoruba and Vedantic thought is evidence of discourse, disagreement, and recognition of the significance of individual agency. Such cultural signs are encountered at different sites, ranging from myth to detailed intellectual analysis, depending on the contexts of specific purpose; they are discussed in chapters 2, 3, and 4. Expanding on Benjamin's analogy of translatability, the thesis begins with the assumption that a language for the articulation of its philosophical inspiration may not fit current languages of art school pedagogy; that in order to embrace such ideas, existent art school pedagogy would need to learn the language of the original cultural motifs used; in doing so an "after life" for the ideas would be created in the kind of art school experience that is proposed. Conversely, any pedantic, anachronistic, geographically specific, castist or classist ideas surfacing in Yoruba and Vedantist sources can be critically examined and filtered out via contemporary education theory. Crucially, as intimated above, the entire process requires also an application of the value of the other, so just as contemporary art education practice may need to recalibrate some of its assumptions in relation to the unrecognised potential of ancient theories from Africa and India, so too will empathy with the other generate insight into the less palatable ideas from the past. The bold hypothesis of this thesis is that as a result of this interaction and mutual transformation, a uniquely interstitial philosophy of education applicable in art schools today emerges.

The crucial principle of the education paradigm proposed here therefore is that, internal balance between intellectual and personal well being entails, or even requires, a greater ability to relate with others, and the ability to envisage a sense of one's own 'place' in relation to society and the wider world. Modernist Art school education and its legacies are incomplete; they spotlight the individual and individuality as pre-requisite to professional artist status, but leave students vulnerable since the philosophical dimensions of identifying the self, and of the

relationship between self and other, is not touched on. An educational experience that would account for this challenge would need to structure its pedagogy in such a way as to enable an encounter with the self within philosophical discourse, and further, to encourage a consideration of the self in relation to other. As a process of this encounter, students would negotiate what can be known and what not known about the other, seek a language in which to converse with both self and other, and therefore be participants in an education of mutual translation.

This thesis analyses points at which this kind of exchange has taken place in the case studies and related discussions, contextualises that analysis within specific Yoruba and Vedantic ideas, and goes on to substantiate a further elaboration into a philosophy of education. As outlined earlier, the intention of this research is to take the metaphor of translation further; to capture the mutual exchange and recasting that takes place in pedagogic relationships that consciously embrace ontological possibility. By viewing this exchange through Yoruba and Vedantic philosophic lenses, by negotiating the problems of referencing spiritual and religious ideas in an education context, by gathering data through dialogic exchange with students and by inviting them to take the ideas forward into their own work, the research treads on some of the “non traditional” lines that Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters (2013) amongst others speak of. The research also proposes that in a socio political climate in which colonial, modernist and post cold war migrations, alongside technological advances such as internet, mobile phones, and instant access to news place large sections of humanity cheek by jowl as never before, new forms of research are as inevitable as they are needed.

Chapter 1 now outlines the origins of the thesis, through personal autobiographical reflections and analysis of the lack of place for much of this experience at art school in the late 1970’s, while also highlighting ways in which existent art school pedagogy, in experienced and sensitive hands, can facilitate an enabling individuality.

1

Origins of this Thesis

It is possible that this thesis has been in the making ever since my childhood Polish American school friend turned my faltering six year old English, reluctantly acquired in Convent schools in India, into fluent New Yorkese. By the time we met, I had already traversed several countries, many cultures, experienced the rupture of long term goodbyes, and caught glimpses of the strange workings of society.

Growing up in New York and then Geneva, to be followed by art school in England, interspersed with regular visits to the homeland was to further a nascent sense of the commonalities in humanity, and despair at its ability to violently divide itself. State schools in New York in the mid to late 1960's were particularly instructive. Recalling the names of teachers and classmates, I realise afresh what a very twentieth century moment it was. Hect, Bernstein, Weissmann, Kauffmann, Weinblatt; and our beloved family Doctor Lauber, whose genial demeanour never hinted at the horror signposted by a branded number once glimpsed on his arm.¹ And another set of names- McNaught, Fuller; Cameron, Price all belonging to African American pupils. Living in Scotland today, the Caribbean names of the streets of Glasgow reveal the historical threads tying my childhood friendships to the hideous origins of a transatlantic human trade, as I traverse the very Merchant City that gave my African American classmates their Scottish names.² While the origins of family names would not have struck me at the time, my sister's

¹ Jewish emigration to the USA from Europe pre and post world War II manifested in the very layout of our street, where stood a synagogue on one corner and church on the other.

² Glasgow described itself in two Great Exhibitions (1888 and 1901) as the "Second City of the Empire." (GCC website, 13/12/2015) The presence of Scottish sugar and tobacco plantation owners, overseers, and clerical workers gave rise to the Scottish names of some African American and Caribbean family lines, and Glasgow street names e.g. Jamaica and Buchanan Streets. Counter current to such denial of participation in Transatlantic enslavement are efforts to highlight it, e.g. research by historian Stephen Mullen.

experience of the startling reaction of some children running away from the “Indian” in the class, *her*, thinking they might get scalped, certainly did register. This reaction was hardly surprising. Our history lessons purveyed a panorama of placid peoples who took pleasure in helping European newcomers, who sold islands for strings of beads and who seemed to disappear from American history after that initial encounter; at the same time, film and television imagery of Native American peoples was still replete with Wild West folklore that portrayed senselessly violent “Indian tribes”.

Most confounding for a new comer to the United States, was the question,

“Are you black or white?”

Living in all white post-bussing Jackson Heights, we were welcome as a prestigious United Nations family. But we later learnt that our neighbours had campaigned against bussing and integration.³ This was confirmed when the Alsatian on the corner nearly became uncontrollable at the sight of my visiting African American friends, and its owner explained that it had been trained to attack “blacks”. My parents’ complete rejection of such racist and disturbing views echoed their stance against caste prejudice within Indian society, with their high expectations of us as girls in an androcentric world, and with their liberal approach to our upbringing. In the criticality they employed in the face of mass consumption and 24 hour television, and in the way in which they created India in our minds, I can see a distinct causal factor in my own trans-cultural personality and pedagogic style. What has taken longer to recognise, is that for the same reasons, I have often been at odds with my environment, particularly in the world of contemporary British art and art schools, both as student and lecturer. This is not to deny wonderful friendships and intellectual engagement over the years with students and colleagues. What has become apparent is that many of the easy transitions between cultures, media, belief systems, and a grasp of political and social context

³ Segregated schools were not legal in 1960’s New York but, housing patterns created de-facto segregation; legal actions taken by African American families led eventually to a policy of ‘bussing’ children to schools outside of their neighbourhoods integrating black and white children.

that had grown in my young adult self to be work-a-day, was anything but the norm to others.⁴ In this context it is useful to look at Arjun Appadurai's call for a "cosmopolitan ethnography" that has the flexibility to recognize and analyse the transnational existence of millions in the modern and post modern world.

Appadurai states,

(...) what is the nature of a locality as a lived experience in a globalised, deterritorialised world? ...the beginnings of an answer to this puzzle lie in a fresh approach to the role of the imagination in social life. (1996, p.52)

Appadurai refers here to the "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983 in Appadurai, 1996, p 54.) to which the transnational subject can choose to belong, or be socialised into belonging. He points out both the rich potential for unique identities, as well as the danger of influence by divisive political and social causes that can usurp and over-simplify cultural/national origins. The imagination, as a means of coming into being, is at work when a British school child, seeking a voice to register protest chooses to align herself with terrorist actions proposed by a self proclaimed 'authentic' cultural voice; the imagination is also at work when the same school child chooses instead to align herself to a Gandhian inspired campaign of non-violent resistance. Apposite to this is the phenomenon of deterritorialised cultural subjects influencing the politics and conflicts of the motherland, such as the practical and ideological support to twentieth century Irish republicanism by Irish émigrés of the previous centuries, and similar support to the Khalistan separatist movement in late 1980's to 90's India by Sikh émigrés settled in Canada, Britain and the US.⁵ The transnational subject has choices. It could be said that a major task of contemporary education is to provide the grounding for making choices that are conducive to harmony both personal and social. An imperative thus arises- that of creating curricula and learning modes that can speak several cultural languages, or a

⁴ For this realisation I thank my supervisors who strongly encouraged an autobiographical chapter and insisted on its importance.

⁵ The continual presence of this issue is exemplified by an attack in London on Lieutenant-General Kuldip Singh Brar by four British Sikhs. Brar had led the Indian army entry into the Golden Temple in Amritsar, held at the time by armed Sikh separatists. (The Globe and Mail online source, 9/11/2012)

language that enables many others, while keeping alive a sense of belonging to the present.

The Transcultural Subject in Art School

As an art student in the late seventies and early eighties, I was fortunate in having some highly supportive and challenging tutors who embodied much that is successful in art school pedagogy. Others however, created a sense of the institution's fearfulness of my ethnic origins, or whatever these may have represented to them. These were expressed in ways ranging from outright negation of any possible value in non western culture,⁶ to expectations of interest in certain disciplines, production of predictable types of work,⁷ and equally frustratingly, to kindly advice designed to steer the work away from the "tweeness" of drawing for example from Indian miniature painting styles.⁸ So in the heyday of multiculturalism and anti racism in schools in the UK, at art school the exploration of art as anything other than art of a particular modernist lineage, was still highly problematic. Perhaps due to unpreparedness for a wider aesthetic and cultural vocabulary, reference to certain kinds of visual or conceptual language, recognisably divergent from northern European or American ones, was not encouraged. Clearly I was not alone in this experience of art school, as a transnational subject. Impactful critiques of representation in 1980's Britain include texts by Eddie Chambers, Rasheed Areen, and the founding of institutions such as AAVAA⁹, and later INIVA.¹⁰ Parallel arguments are made regarding issues of gender, class, race, sexuality and

⁶ Astonishing it may seem, I was told by a tutor, "I believe there is nothing of value outside of western civilisation"

⁷ On seeing strong sculptural ceramics at my crit my personal tutor remarked, "I am surprised- I was expecting to see porcelain and fluted edges."

⁸ Said in a Crit in response to decorative work using crossover of animation and miniature painting style

⁹ The African and Asian Visual Arts Archive, founded by Eddie Chambers in 1989 (AAVA website, 13/12/2015)

¹⁰ The Institute of International Visual Art was "established in 1994 to address an imbalance in the representation of culturally diverse artists, curators and writers." (INIVA website, 13 Dec 2015)

representation in general, exemplified by Griselda Pollock's comment at a conference on Issues in Art and Education at Wimbledon School of Art,

[Women art students] want to be pushed beyond themselves in ways that are compatible with what they are trying to do. They want to work in an environment where it is accepted that people are different, or diverse, and where difference is not only a negative, a lack, a limitation a locality, but a vital source of what makes their contribution valuable. [...] Fine art education in the twentieth century stands indicted of systematic masculinism, and of psychological violence against women's creativity. (Hetherington, 1996, p.28)

The perceptions embedded in the responses to my own and other art students' early efforts to incorporate a culturally distinct visual language echo the attitudes Pollock criticises in relation to women.

Tracing and voicing influences- then and now

Such experiences, while they did shape some of my learning trajectories, did not crush a spirit of enquiry into the ideas that had produced the art of India. A retrospective appraisal of my undergraduate degree show makes apparent an engagement with the philosophical ideas encountered as a child, alongside personal interpretation of the philosophy of 'truth to material' that was prevalent in our department. The show included large solid chunks of clay weathered in real time, presented momentarily but intended to continue changing through time; slabs resulting from ceramic firing processes designed to capture the physical shadow of the heating and cooling cycle; woven silk shot with threads died to match the colours of a single autumn leaf. Present in these were several hallmarks of Indian thought: cyclical, eternal time, *kala* ; the self as facilitator of art, not inviolable author; actions taken for their own sake rather than for merit or reward, *karma*; nature as an endless source of contemplation and inspiration, though ultimately ephemeral, *maya* the illusory world experienced by the conditioned self. Looking back, these concepts, that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3, informed what I saw in clay and possibly why it appealed to me: as a tangible fragment of time in it being the result of thousands of years of weathering and erosion, in its

malleability into endless forms that in themselves could survive as archaeological finds for another millennia, in its ability to preserve the passing marks of civilisations and chance impressions. Appendix 1 presents some images of work produced for the degree show in 1980.

Equally present in my final year degree show were three other crucial factors; firstly the modernist paradigm of artist as free agent, able to pick and choose influences in order to shape in her own way; secondly an art school pedagogy displaying complete faith in the student's need to follow an individual path and its rightness in itself. Years later my patient final year tutor, the late Gemma Bontempo, disclosed she had felt it absolutely necessary and right to allow the work to proceed as planned, given my well articulated logic and fervour, but aware of the ceramics conventions that were being defied, had also ruefully commented, "...It will also be so nice if she has a show to put up...". This tolerant watching, listening and allowing the emergence of ideas was particular to this tutor, and is an example of how the same institutional ethos, of encouraging individuality, enshrined in modernist art education can yield two distinctly different experiences for students, depending on how the notion of individuality is applied. Too much emphasis on the individual voice, unfettered by tradition, when the student is encountering so much that is new, can be confusing and alienating, yet in the hands of a thoughtful and experienced tutor, can also enable pedagogic bravery, as displayed by my final year tutor. She seemed to rely on an instinctive faith in the students' ability to find their own voice with the right instructive support around them. In the dialogues with students undertaken for this research, there is clear evidence that students do place great value on being allowed to find their own way, but do not always find enough support to feel they are making informed choices.

The third element that was present in my undergraduate degree show was evidence of a thorough grounding in technical aspects of ceramics, and enough in woven textiles, to have created the work and run the risks involved in some of it. In the dialogues with second year students conducted in 2013 for this research, across the disciplines of fine art and design, a lack of practical skills training,

whether perceived or real, was a key source of anxiety and dissatisfaction, as evidenced by the narratives. Looking back it now seems evident that in my development as an artist, the resource base of 'how to' knowledge, the bedrock of the department in which I studied Ceramics, and the resulting practical understanding of material limitations, allowed me the freedom to experiment with breaking out of or pushing the edges of these limitations. This physical experimentation in turn manifested in philosophical musings on the nature of the real- and of time and eternity; I did not set out with a desire for such theoretical engagement, but came to it through empirical experimentation.

On balance, the formal training and strong aesthetic values instilled within our department paved the way for my personal visual language and satisfying sense of self. Indeed thriving in the final year mix of freedom and solid practical grounding went some way in diminishing the slights of more negative responses to earlier work and the more politically dubious expectations based on ethnicity. Yet it is difficult to put aside a sense of what might have been, had I followed the earlier *aesthetic* impulse, starting with an emulation of externals, but likely eventually to have encountered the same philosophical ideas through aesthetic theory. And would the arm's length that seemed frequently to wedge itself between art school and my multiple cultural heritages have been as powerful if, to use Appadurai's phrase, the institution had been equipped to welcome rather than withhold a "global imagination" (1996, p.181) for itself as well as its students?

Hybridity, interstice, and mutual translation.

From an educational perspective, it would seem necessary therefore to examine varied cultural identifications in any given student group, to differentiate between potentially harmful ones, and others that would enrich the individual as well as the group. Only when this is done can a next step be enabled, the creation of discourse in which the embrace of ancestral concepts, particularly those that can benefit contemporary society, are not, *and are not seen to be*, romantic, backward-looking or perversely resistant to local and contemporary norms. Homi Bhabha's notion of

“hybridity” (1994, p.40) captures the potential benefits as well as the inevitability of this condition of modernity- the “something else besides” that emerges in political and cultural encounters; Bhabha argues that these should be viewed not in terms of opposing binaries, but as temporal exchanges that transform the self–definitions, as well as the represented definitions, of contesting forces or groups within society. In *The Location of Culture* (1994) he draws from disparate contexts that can all be illuminated and understood in the light of post colonial critical theory, from the writings of eighteenth century English missionaries in India, to twentieth century British political events. Speaking of how women in the British Miners strike of 1984-85 came to see themselves and their socio-political contexts, through actions that initially served only the purpose of expressing support for their men folk and for a way of life they hoped to safeguard, Bhabha illustrates the possibility, and the value of recognising such moments of change and emergence,

For most of them there was no return, no going back to the ‘good old days’. It would be simplistic to suggest either that this considerable social change was a spin-off from the class struggle or that it was a repudiation of the politics of class from a socialist-feminist perspective....(1994, pp. 40-41)

On a broader plane, the principles of cultural theory that are invoked above are concerned with a way of reading events and their representation in a manner that may well defy an original textual intention, or add a layer of meaning, allowing for complexity in experience.

[In] the hybrid moment of political change (...) transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are neither the One (unitary working class) nor the Other (the politics of gender) but something else besides, which contests terms and territories of both. (1994, pp. 40-41)

Hence in looking back at the America that I encountered as a child, and education received at state public schools attended for six formative years, it is possible to recognise the hegemonic limitations of the information I received, and the impact this had on personal relationships. It is also possible to trace how as a young child I was able to negotiate alternative framing of some of the same information, through juxtaposition of other information available at home and through experience. In

recalling ambiguous messages about drawing from Indian influences at Art School, it is possible to see resultant negative impact on my student experience and sense of self, stemming from fear and indifference on the part of some tutors and from simply being in an environment unfamiliar with such influences. Alternatively, it is possible to discern my growing political awareness and willingness to articulate argument, alongside the eventual discovery of the relevance of Indian philosophy despite not having engaged directly with it at college, as ultimately a strengthening experience that led to work that has stayed with me for many years. From this interstitial cognitive area has emerged a way of encountering the world, which I now recognise in my pedagogic approaches, and that I examine through this chapter, and propose as transferrable through the research. The question does arise, however, is it enough to survive our education, or can we expect to thrive in it too? Bhabha sees in the reading of interstices an agency for difference, be that difference either marginalised or valorised in a selective or fixed representation (1994). In education as a means of knowing the self, curricula should allow students to experience and articulate an emergence of meaning, as much as a grasp of knowledge and information, thus facilitating a sense of her own being, and of her own being in relation to society. This dialogue with society cannot begin without the individual being acknowledged by society- which in the educational environment is the society formed by classmates, tutors, and staff. In instigating mutual recognition and reflecting off one another, an educational environment can be conducive to diverse ways of being, and of agency borne of self awareness.

In Bhabha's words,

This is the historical movement of hybridity as camouflage, as a contesting, antagonistic agency functioning in the time-lag of sign/symbol, which is a space in-between the rules of engagement. It is this theoretical form of political agency (...). (1994, p.277)

While Bhabha's focus is on political agency, this research looks at the necessity for what can be called an agency of self knowledge, without which political agency cannot be complete. If our education systems give the impression that knowledge and philosophy of only certain geographical and political areas are valid, how can

the transnational subject find self expression and self belief without a fundamental denial of that part of herself that is formed by ideas that lie outside? Moreover, does not such a single minded education system miss an opportunity to tap into the contemporary moment by refusing to engage in a meaningful way with disparate cultures in its midst?

Hybridity as agency is also invoked by Appaduari's insistence, mentioned earlier, on "a fresh approach to the role of the imagination in social life." (Appaduari, 1996 p 52). He speaks of the imagination as means of thinking new possibilities – the ability to bring into being by imagining possible, a greater variety of self definitions within society; and by extension, the coming into being of new ways for society to interact with its disparate constituencies. Hybridity cannot flourish (though it can occur) in separated channels, or in a forced multiculturalism. It requires instead a climate that allows different selves to know themselves and to show themselves to each other. Such a climate in Higher Education can be delivered through a criticality that is can envisage, encourage and articulate mutual translation. And so in art school education, cultural influences could be examined without pre-emptive closed readings by student and staff alike.

Such criticality is possibly already heralded by some ideas in post modern societies, while hampered by others. Appadurai celebrates the "post blurring... of ecumenism" which has "given rise to sharp debates about the word, the world, and the relationship between them" (1996, p.51). The statement refers here to the influence of post structural linguistic and cultural theory on the Northern academy from the 1950's to 1960's onwards. These theories, and their impact on higher education, alongside shifts in society and politics brought about by de-colonisation, World War II, and modernity itself, are now referred to as a given- as an established influence on the way in which we see the university disciplines today. Theoretical frameworks emerging from these influences have impacted on canonical narrative traditions that privileged only dominant sections of society that further the hegemonic control of already powerful states or sections of any given society. This is welcomed by Appaduarai as a means of challenging this control

where it is problematic. In the field of education, Chamann-Taylor and Seigmundson begin their 2008 publication on emergent forms of post modern arts based research with the following,

With the acceptance of postmodern approaches to educational research in the last few decades including feminism, post-structuralism, critical theory, and semiotics, assumptions about what counts as knowledge and the nature of research have dramatically changed. Not only have multiple qualitative research methodologies gained more widespread acceptance, but also the tools we employ to collect data and display findings have been diversified to include artistic as well as traditionally scientific methods. As researchers deploying a range of literary, visual, and performing arts through all stages of our own research, we [assume] that the arts have much to offer educational researchers-challenging us to think creatively about (...) ways to engage in empirical processes; and to shape our questions and findings in more penetrating and widely accessible ways (Chamann-Taylor and Seigmundson, 2008, p. 3)

Here Chamann-Taylor and Seigmundson parallel an increased use of practical arts based techniques in research with challenges to hegemonic views of what counts as culturally significant. They suggest that new forms of knowledge require new means of obtaining and dispersing them, and that the academy needs to expand in order to accommodate resultant projects and enquires. Specific to research in visual art, design and architectural fields, debates about research *for, through, and into* practice first articulated by Christopher Frayling (1993), have been part of art school discourse through the 1990's. (Rust and Mottram, 2007)

Many significant critiques however, of the effects of the post modern on higher education can also be found. Some are discussed in Michael Peters'

Poststructuralism, Politics and Education,

To what extent does the decentring, deconstruction of the subject deny a theory of agency necessary for political change? Does poststructuralism lack a coherent politics? Is it essentially conservative or nihilistic? Relevant to these questions are Fredric Jameson's (1983,1989a) and David Harvey's (1989) critique of postmodernism as the culture of late consumer capitalism and ... feminists (e.g. Mascia-Lees et all 1989) who argue that postmodernism hypothesises the 'death of the subject' at precisely that point, historically, when others (women, ethnic groups, gays, and so forth [sic]) have begun to speak for themselves as historical subjects. (Peters, 1996, p.10)

Similarly, in her study of tensions within post World War II disciplines of Comparative Literature and Area Studies, Gayatri Spivak (2003) argues for an academy that is multi-dimensional through post structural critiques of its disciplines, but that also maintains its ability to be precise, disciplined, and specific in its articulations. Discussing a range of responses to changes to the of Comparative Literature, Spivak comments,

Since 1992, three years after the fall of the Berlin wall, the discipline of Comparative Literature has been looking to renovate itself. This is presumably in response to the rising tide of multiculturalism and cultural studies.... How can we respond to the changes brought about by the end of the Cold War.... A simple splicing up of Comp. Lit. and Cultural Studies/Multiculturalism will not work or will work only too well; same difference. A combination of Ethnic Studies and Area Studies bypasses the literary and the linguistic. What I am proposing is not a politicisation of the discipline. We are in politics. I am proposing an attempt to depoliticise in order to move away from politics of hostility, fear, half solutions. (Spivak, 2003, pp.3-4)

Spivak cites the foundational influence of US foreign policy and world events in the creation of both Comparative Literature and Area Studies as American university disciplines. Comparative Literature is cited as the result of the presence of European intellectuals fleeing fascism in Europe, explaining its emphasis on European literature, for the most part to date. Area Studies is cited as arising from a need for linguistic, historical, social, and political bodies of knowledge, for Cold War diplomatic and military manoeuvres. This explains the development of courses and departments that deal with entire geographical regions in the Humanities, such as Soviet Studies; the later development of Cultural and Postcolonial Studies within the Humanities is a direct result of “the 500% increase in Asian immigration in the wake of Lyndon Johnson’s reform of the Immigration Act 1965”¹¹ (Spivak, 2003, p.3).

Yet a resultant “same difference” (2003, p.4) between traditional subject curricula and multicultural versions remain, if the exclusivity of one is replaced by too generic

¹¹ In 1965 the Immigration and Nationality Act 1952 was amended, allowing more non-European immigrants to enter the United States. (Immigration to the United States web, 13/12/2015)

an application of cultural studies approaches that fail to broaden the field of 'acceptable' subject matter and methodologies. In the field of research, problems arising for students in western or westernised academic cultures, who come from multiple or different cultural backgrounds, can be operative at fundamental and structural level,

The normative ideals of traditional research enterprise (independence, rationality, and originality) become particularly problematic when the doctoral candidate locates him- or herself outside this dominant mode of enquiry (Johnson, Lee, and Green 2000). Anna Yateman (1995) refers to the importance of imagined possibilities for doctoral candidates, on the one hand, and the exclusionary features of the normative ideals of academic research culture, on the other. According to Yateman, the increasing number and diversity of doctoral candidates, due to the rapid development of mass higher education, means that the traditional elitist notion and apprenticeship model of doctoral study is no longer viable. She writes '[i]t is especially inadequate to the needs of many new PhD aspirants who, by historical cultural positioning, have not been invited to imagine themselves as subjects of genius' (Yateman 1995:9). And she adds that the 'new PhD aspirants' include women, and all those others who are excluded and marginalised, for example due to class or ethnicity (Lynley Tulloch in Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters, 2013, pp. 37-38)

Appadurai refers to post modern influences and their outcome to call for a reconfiguration of our understanding of the local and the global. In a globalised world that is technologically connected as never before in human history, his concepts lend themselves to the unravelling of assumptions in art education which have shaped its modernist as well as postmodern phases. It can be argued that neither in grand European narratives of the past, nor in intellectual fragmentations of the present, has the trans- cultural subject, with his/her multiple identities been successfully catered for or even recognised (Engles and Schwarzpaul 2013; Chanmahn-Taylor and Seigesmund 2008). Far less has this transnational subject been identified as a source of new meaning outside of the postcolonial sphere.

Through research presented here, it is asserted that the transnational subject is in a uniquely privileged position in the creation of new pedagogies, appropriate to the current social, political and cultural moment in Britain. With regard to the main aim, that of identifying ways of enabling learning through self awareness, the multiple

perspectives of a transnational can offer unique and new ways to create effective and enabling dialogue. Perhaps the emergent tentative articulations of creative students, who struggle to fit their thoughts into normative assumptions within which they study, can be more easily recognised by tutors who have themselves had similar experiences. As students and as teachers they too may have been 'in between' worlds, had to 'translate guidance', and to continuously reinvent themselves while attempting to hold on to a core that lies beyond, or is embedded in their most fundamental understandings of themselves. This is not to say, however, that *only* a transnational subject as teacher can create a pedagogic environment that acknowledges and enables a diversity of student experiences and outputs. What is proposed is transnationality, hybridity, and a desire for translation as a way of being in the tutor student relationship. The fundamental requirement is recognition of the student not just as learner in a particular field, but as a whole person. Barnett, reflecting on the standard formulations of pedagogic theories, epistemological and practical, comments,

Even when nuanced and put together in some way, the two projects - of knowing and acting- have to be insufficient. What they leave out is the student as a person, especially her will and her being. Here we have been concerned with the will. (...) To put it more straightforwardly, we are in desperate need of thinking and practices that take the student as a human being seriously (Barnett 2007, p.26)

The Metaphysical Self, the "will to learn", Vedantic and Yoruba threads

In personal experience, it has been useful and at times existentially necessary to turn to philosophical traditions, both western and eastern, in order to make sense of my own work and responses to it. Race and gender and to some extent class expectations have been present throughout, and an equally necessary parallel has been the acquisition of social and political theory. The latter has been necessary in order to unpick the underlying causes of experiences of racism and sexism, while a philosophical perspective has been invaluable in limiting the damage of these experiences, and in broadening one's own perspective on why societies and

individuals within them conduct themselves as they do. This too influences the pedagogic project presented in this research; I aim to understand the role of imparting such strategies to students in order to enhance their experience at art school at best, and in the worst case scenario, to mitigate damage. An early throwback to this kind of enquiry resides in a memory of my first encounter with the word 'ego', on a calendar produced by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram¹², in which the message seemed to be that one had to overcome the ego in order to act wisely. At twelve, then, I had first puzzled over how there could be more than one self, and the possibility that they both interacted with the world and determined who we were. The student ego in art school takes a relentless battering, yet we seem to offer little in the way of nourishment for its balanced or healthy growth. This research would suggest that nourishment of the kind that would enable an art student to deal constructively with critical feedback and even disparaging comments based on misreading of their work can be built, perhaps ironically, on the Vedantic premise that the physical self, the ego self we recognise as ourselves, is *not* in fact the only self, and that one's true self is not affected either by praise or criticism. In the Hindu Vedantist tradition, there are four aspects of mind consciousness. These are: *manas* mind/ intellect *buddhi* knowledge *chitta* heart/ conditioned consciousness *ahamkar* ego. (Roebuck, 2003, p 464 and Krishnanada , web Dec 2013) Most significantly, in relation to creative education, action, or *karma*, is the end result of all four aspects of consciousness, applied to a specific situation at a particular time. This is where human agency is required- to make decisions that are ideally governed by a balance of the four components of the self. There is an aspiration in Vedantic thought of becoming able to select actions with a combination of analytical intelligence (to make correct judgement), distance (to keep emotions in check), empathy (to overcome surface difference), and self belief (to carry out necessary action). Yoruba thought too, envisages the mind as composed of different aspects, and life as a journey in which the individual strives

¹² Sri Aurobindo was an Indian philosopher and spiritual leader who founded a retreat (*ashram*) and study centre in Pondicherry, India in 1926. After his death in 1950 the ashram was headed by his disciple and fellow aspirant known as "The Mother". (Sri Aurobindo Ashram website, 13 Dec 2015)

to know him/herself well in a perennial learning process. Both traditions have much to say on agency, creativity, social interaction, and criticality.

To return to the autobiographical origins of the thesis, encountering Yoruba thought while on a taught masters programme in art history, which did not include it in the curricula on offer, both underlined past experiences at art school, and instigated a way of moving forward. As an art student, I had always been aware that African art in our art historical and contextual studies courses had been referenced only in relation to its influence on European modern art, and that too as “primitive art” and harbinger of “primitivism” including some aspects of cubism. Fourteen years after graduating from art school, on entering university for a postgraduate art history degree, it was disheartening to find little had changed and that entering academic studies could not assist in tackling this gap in my knowledge: the subject of African Art was simply not available. Selecting therefore a series of courses on modernism, I set out to address this lack through my dissertation, hoping to unpick the implications of the notion of primitivism by presenting what the artefacts encountered by Picasso and others actually were. If that research had been limited to the art history books available at the time, it would have been impossible, for the only sources engaging with African art in depth were anthropological or ethnographic ones. The significance of inter-disciplinary research practices therefore became apparent, as did a grasp and application of postcolonial theory. While the humanities sources located, Fagg, Drewel, Pemberton, Picton were thoughtful, thought provoking and highly informative, it did feel crucial to get contemporary African intellectual commentaries on the objects I was looking at and the concepts they contained. At this point Nigerian playwright, scholar, and cultural critic Wole Soyinka’s *Myth Literature and African World* opened up an entirely new way of thinking about African art and philosophy. Soyinka’s essays on Ogun the god of creativity and destruction, his comparative approach which referenced Greco-Roman as well as African aesthetics, and his creative output in the form of plays looking at the legacies ancient African religion, and of colonialism in contemporary society, widely performed in Nigeria and the UK, all informed the ways in which I could understand Yoruba art and ideas. A combination of all of these sources

alongside art historical texts contemporary and early 20th century helped shape the dissertation, “The Abyss of Transition: Yoruba ideas on Creativity as Opposed to Picasso’s Africa” (1997), which later formed the basis of the Yoruba lectures on the Yoruba/Vedanta course.

A Retrospective Research Log

The idea of creating a retrospective research log emerged at an early stage in this research, to locate a range of influences and key turning points or illuminating events. Laid out in a basic columned diagram, the timescale covered was 1976-2013, so the log presented a lifetime of learning and teaching in synoptic form. Beginning with familial influences, it traced their presence into later stages as a teacher, artist employed in gallery education/ interpretation, art school studio based tutor, then critical studies lecturer, and finally as a programme leader of masters research programme. Interconnections became apparent between the formative conceptual grounding of childhood, and the ways in which these influenced responses to art school. Critically, these interconnections were traceable also to my later education projects and ways of engaging with students. I could see for example that Vedantic ideas had been quietly present in much that was everyday in our familial exchanges; that occasionally attending talks at the Vedanta Center in New York and later Geneva, alongside hearing J.Krishnamurti live had embedded a lived sense of education as not confined to books and qualifications, and highlighted the importance of asking questions, and expecting students to do so too. Seeing these influences clearly laid out albeit in cumbersome tabulated form, helped arrive at the streamlined list of five influences cited in the introduction, and laid important foundations for this thesis. (Vedantist cultural and perceptual influences, notions of freedom and relationship based on J. Krishnamurti, juxtaposition of Vedantic and Yoruba ideas, liberal, skill based art education, progressive education theory). The pedagogic theory proposed here, now grounded in wider education research and radical questioning of how meaning is derived in art education, owes much to these formative experiences, and charting them was a useful exercise. Beyond clarifying personal history for myself, the

exercise later resurfaced in more elaborated form as a pedagogic tool tested for this thesis, the critical autobiographical reflection diagram CARD, discussed in chapter 7

In chapters 2, 3, and 4 the theoretical grounding of this thesis is established, drawing out parallels and contradictions between Yoruba, Vedantic, and contemporary education philosophies. Through these lenses, in 5, 6 and 7, data from the 4 Minds research project and methods of its analysis are presented.

2

Vedanta

In this chapter, the Vedantic individuated *jivatman*, and the significance of work as a means of self knowledge *karma* (action), are discussed, and their potential application to understanding pedagogic processes introduced.

The Texts of Vedanta

Vedanta is one of six schools of classical Hindu philosophy. Its major preoccupation is the pursuit of self knowledge, by which is meant apperception of reality. Eternal reality, thought of as true reality in this philosophy, is different from our everyday perception of the real. It is imminent: present but hidden by our senses, that keep our attention fixed on the mundane world. The Real is present within each person too, and is understood as each person's true Self. To facilitate this discussion, capital letters will be used for Self and Real when referring to these as not tied to the day to day experiences that constitute our mundane understanding of ourselves. Personal identity, name, body, are projections of the un-real temporal self, the *jiva-atman*. In this temporal and unreal world of all physical, psychological and emotional experience, the *jiva atman* acts, feels, and has varying levels of insight into the true Self. Nihilanda recounts an amusing story that underlines the Vedantic view that happiness, sorrow, and all that lies in between, are illusions that individuals cling to. A man wandering through a forest, presumably preoccupied by its beauties,

(...)was discovered and hotly pursued by a tiger. He suddenly came to the brink of a deep precipice. [He] perceived a vine hanging down the cliff and, catching hold of it gave a jump. But the creeper was not long enough to land him on the ground. Looking down (...) he beheld a second tiger (...) The first, meanwhile, was still roaring at him from above. And then (...) two mice, one black and one white, began to gnaw at the vine that he was clutching (...) It was then that he spied a strawberry growing on the side of the cliff, ripe and

luscious, and just within reach. He stretched forth his hand, plucked the fruit, put it in his mouth and exclaimed with delight, 'Ah! How perfectly delicious!' (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.3)

This story can be understood as implying that pleasures are fleeting and therefore should be grasped whenever possible, and our protagonist seen as accepting his fate but going out with a smile and a sweet taste in his mouth! It can also be read as a metaphor for the Vedantic idea that all that seems solid and real is in fact as insubstantial as the vine to which he clings. The tigers he chooses to ignore while he eats the strawberry are not predators, but a greater inevitable reality of which we are aware, but choose not to engage with. And the illusory world is full of strawberries and other delicious distractions.

The Upanishads and their sources

Appendix 2 illustrates the lineage of key texts and tenets of the schools of Vedanta and their relationships to each other. The Sanskrit word *vedanta* means the 'end of the Vedas' and refers to the doctrines set forth in the closing chapter of the Vedas. (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.11) The Vedas consist of four books and are the most ancient of the Hindu texts. The first, *Rg Ved*, consists of 1,028 hymns divided into ten books. Dated 1500- 1000 BCE, considered the oldest sacred text in the world, it is followed by *Sama*, *Yajur*, and *Athara Vedas*. The *Brahmanas*, composed c. 700 BCE expound on rituals prescribed in the *Vedas* and include the *Aitareya Brahmana* and *Satapatha Brahamana*. Of more direct relevance to this research are the books of the *Upanishads*, c. 600 -700 BCE. The *Upanishads* present emerging spiritual ideas which stemmed from, but differed from Vedic ritualistic approaches. It is in the *Upanishads* that the first mention of the transmigration of the individual soul- the *jiva*, or *jiva atman* is made, as a temporarily separated part of what is envisaged as infinite causality, given the name Brahman or Atman, and understood as formless and omnipresent. In the terminology used earlier, only Atman is Real, and the true Self is part of it. The format of the *Upanishads* is a pedagogic one, playing to a certain extent with the expectations of teacher and student, or guru and disciple.

Typically, an Upanishad recounts one or more sessions of teaching, often setting each within the story of how it came to be taught. A renowned spiritual teacher is about to leave the household life to live as a renunciant in the forest: one of his wives refuses her share of his wealth and asks for knowledge instead. A serious young boy, taking his angry father at his word, goes to the house of death: while there he takes the opportunity to question the god about the afterlife. A king sends his chamberlain to look for a great teacher of whom he has heard: he finds a rude and uncouth man, sitting scratching himself under a cart. The knowledge that is sought in these encounters is aimed not at material success or even intellectual satisfaction, but at enabling the questioner to become free of worldly suffering and limitations: 'to attain fearlessness', 'to cross beyond sorrow', 'to dig up the supreme treasure' (Roebauck, 2003, p.xv)

In relation to education theory, a questioning of the completeness of knowledge that is intellectual alone is very interesting. It suggests that education of the whole person must address not only the mind but other aspects of being too. The Vedantic understanding of truly useful knowledge is that which leads to realisation of Self. This idea of "True Self" (Nikhilananda, 1978)¹ derives from the Upanishads. The Self that lies beyond individual identity is said to reside in all living beings, and be of common origin. The self with which we normally identify- the 'I' of name and form- falls away when true knowledge is acquired. From an educational perspective, the way in which Hinduism in general, and Vedanta in particular presents the mundane relationships of everyday life as potential burdens, *as well as* potential means of attaining freedom for the self, are very apt too. The Upanishads are written within particular cultural parameters, but the teachings themselves, the debates they give rise to, and the very fact that they are debated at all, serve as a paradigm of constantly evolving discourse translatable through time. In order to act on these teachings, the individual requires judgment, which affords him/her with agency. That agency is expressed in the work one does, in choices made, and these lead either to a greater enmeshment within the materialistic world, or to liberation from it. From hedonism to the life of the renunciate, and every possible level of

¹ Translation and commentary on Sankara's *Atmabodh* with a preface and substantial introduction by the scholar Swami Nikhilanada of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre in New York, originally published in 1947. Nikhilanada states that his interpretations of Sankara's text is based on the *Vedantasutra* of Sadananda (c fifteenth century CE), and also draws from Sankara's *Drg-drs'ya Viveka*- 'The Discrimination Between Seer and Seen' and his *Vivekachuddmani* -The Crest Jewel of Discrimination. (Nikhilanada, 1978, Preface p.xx)

attachment to the mundane world that lies in between, each approach ultimately shapes the length of the journey to Self realisation. Vedanta is thus a theory of knowledge that recognises many different routes to liberation, and affords agency to the individual in choosing a path that will lead to it. In a Vedantic framework, the individual aspires to develop her faculties of discernment in order to choose appropriate action or responses to a given moment. There is an outcome to each action, in the world, and also in the inner life of the individual. Work that is done with attachment to reward, or fear of failure, criticism, etc, attaches us further to the mundane world in which we remain ignorant of the Self. Work that is done for its own intrinsic worth is a vehicle for Self discovery. A different sensibility then arises: one in which work is its own reward. In other words, immediate personal gain is not equated with success.

In a Vedantic framework of pedagogic criticality, therefore, it should be possible to do ones creative or academic work for its own sake, and not for high grades or praise. Conversely, it should be possible to overcome, or be emotionally unaffected by negative feedback, by either applying it to the work and not to the self, or by absorbing its valuable elements in enhancing the work. The sense of exposure and humiliation that can be experienced by art students in the traditional tutor or peer critique can thus become a less likely outcome, even in the worst case scenario of a highly sensitive student facing a highly insensitive tutor. To “attain fearlessness” (Roebuck, 2003, p.xv) as an aim described in the teachings of the Upanishads, for example, lends itself to creating work that is conducive to Self knowledge.

The Atmabodh (Self-knowledge) of Sankaracharya

The earliest interpretations of the short, frequently ambiguous stanzas of the Upanishads are by two scholars, Jaimini and Badarayana. These interpretations constitute the texts of *Vedanta Sutra* also known as the *Brhama Sutra*. Jaimini’s *Purva Mimamsa* examines *dharma* (duty); Badarayana’s *Uttara Mimamsa* chiefly examines *jnana*, (knowledge) it systematises the Upanishads that are based on the

Jnana Kanda of the Vedas. (Radhakrishnan, 1989b, pp.430-444) These textual relationships are shown in Appendix 3.

The *Vedanta Sutra*, as the main source of Vedanta philosophy, has led to many critical commentaries that are major texts in themselves. All of these share five concerns:

- 1) The nature of ultimate reality (named *Brahman* in the Upanishads)
- 2) The nature of the individual self / soul (*jiva atman*) and its relation to *Brahman*
- 3) The nature of the universe (*jagat*) and its relation to Brahman
- 4) The nature of the means of attaining Brahman (*sadhana*)
- 5) The nature of the supreme goal (*parama purusartha*, on reaching which liberation from the conditioned consciousness of the *jivataman*, or *moksa* is attained) (Chari, 1998, p.xi)

Foremost amongst texts on the *Vedanta Sutras* are the commentaries of the circa eighth century CE Sankaracharya, whose *Atmabodh*, or Self Knowledge, constitutes an authoritative treatise on Vedanta, and on the relationships of the everyday to the spiritual. It is the theoretical base of the late nineteenth /early twentieth century spiritual teacher Ramakrishna and his direct disciple Vivekananda, who took Vedanta to the west in 1893.² Historically, Sankara is said to have re-established a focus on the Upanishads, through intensely analytical debate with intellectual opponents from all over the subcontinent. Following the rise of Buddhism and then its decline in India, (though spreading to China and Japan), pre-Buddhist Hindu religions had reasserted themselves and “honeycombed [the land] with conflicting sects.” (Nikhilanda, 1978, p.x). Amongst these were two views of the nature of the real, based on critical traditions of dualist (*dvaitya*), and non dualist or (*advaitya*) Vedanta. Both dualist and non dualist traditions share the following principles:

- Self knowledge is of primary importance

² Vivekananda attended the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893. Vedanta Societies were set up in the USA as result of this visit. His opening address, introducing Hinduism’s foundation in principles of unity can be heard online, and his full speech can be read on the web pages of the still active Global Interfaith Movement Parliament of the World’s Religions <https://parliamentofreligions.org/content/1893-parliament-swami-vivekananda>.

- This is because the true *Atman* (Self), is “existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute”, *sat-chit-ananda* (Nikhilananda, p.xi). It is unconcerned with the experiences of the individual personality.
- *Atman* is a particle of the Absolute- given the name Brahman. It is self emanating “Sole Reality” (Nikhilananda, p xii) “Pure Consciousness” (Nikhilananda, p.42) that is beyond the laws of causation that bring about the experiential world we perceive as real.
- Only the Self that is *Atman* is real. This is not the individual self we identify with as particular people with specific family and cultural identities
- All forms of knowledge other than *Atmabodh* (Self knowledge) are of secondary value, because individual “action, feeling, reasoning, and thinking are dependent upon [one’s] idea of the Self” (Nikhilananda, p.xxi)
- Self knowledge removes pain and suffering, but also brings about detachment from happiness; this is because all such human experience is based on emotions.
- Emotions are transitory and ultimately not real, but “caused by ignorance of the Self” (Nikhilananda, p.xxi)
- *Avidya* (Ignorance) causes us to believe in the permanence of “the relative world of good and evil, pain and pleasure, life and death, and other pairs of opposites”. It clouds our ability to see our true nature which is Brahman/Atman.
- That relative world is experienced by the individuated self, conditioned by ignorance, and termed *jiva atman*.
- The actions and choices of the *jiva atman* can bring about knowledge of Brahman/Atman as the true Self (Self knowledge *atmabodh*); despite this however, while it continues to identify with, and continues to be governed by its individual identity, the *jiva-atman*, cannot be merged with Brahman.

- Therefore, in a repeating cyclical pattern, the *jiva-atman* is born again and again as different earthly personas, until it realises its true nature and the cycle of rebirth is no longer necessary. At this point it loses individuation and merges with Brahman/Atman
- The relative world, *maya*, consists of all that is known to us at an ordinary perceptual level, including birth and death. All experience, from the beautiful to the ugly, to the quest for the sublime, and all forms of intellectual knowledge are creations of, and exist, only within *maya*.

The characterisation of deluding names and forms as *maya*, and the injunction to renounce the unreal as a means to realisation of Truth, are not new ideas of Sankara but are both explicit in the Upanishads (Nikhilananda, p.xvi)

- *Atman* (Self) is the true nature of all living beings; it is beyond all of the identifications of the *jiva atman* in *maya*. When this realisation is reached, the significance of the relative world disappears, and at the death of a realised *jiva-atman*, the particle of *Atman* that was within the individual all along merges with Atman/Brahman, or “Pure Consciousness”.
- The journey of the *jiva-atman* to Self knowledge is via the actions, or *karma* of the individual; these actions and one’s attitude towards them are determined by *karma* of previous lives; karma operates in a cause and effect cycle that continues to shape rebirths until Self realisation is reached,

Every soul is divine, though, during the state of ignorance, it remains oblivious of its spiritual nature. While sojourning in the relative world it assumes various bodies and identifies itself with them. It is then regarded as a finite creature. (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.xvii)

And most importantly,

But in the heart of every individual the divine light shines with undiminished lustre. Hence all men are entitled to our respect. The divinity of the Soul is the unshakable spiritual basis of democracy, self-determination, freedom, and other aspirations of modern minds. Even a noble ideal, when guided only by expediency, can be an

instrument of oppression and exploitation” (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.xviii)

Dvaitists (Dualists) and *Advaitists* (Non Dualists) speculate and debate on all aspects of these fundamental doctrines, but differ entirely on the way in which the *jiva atman* merges with *Atman*. *Advaitists* argue that since the *jiva atman* is but a particle of *Atman*, when it merges, it disappears completely,

As milk poured into milk becomes one with the milk, as water poured into water becomes one with the water, as oil poured into oil becomes one with the oil, so the illumined soul absorbed into Brahman becomes one with Brahman (Nikhilananda, p.146)

Dvaitists argue that absorption into Brahman does not preclude the retention of some distinction as parts of a whole, in the way that many threads make a woven fabric.

Atman as Consciousness

Another way of understanding *Atman* is to look more closely at the Vedantic idea of consciousness. Unlike Northern philosophical and psychological definitions of consciousness, Vedanta describes it as beyond and within all such definitions,

Vedanta is radical where consciousness is concerned. (...)It does not come and go however much it may appear to do so. You cannot ‘lose’ consciousness even when hit by a sledgehammer. Nor is it lost on death. It does not even have degrees. To believe that is like believing that your train is accelerating out of a station, when it is the train on the next platform that is moving the other way. In short, all these so-called features of consciousness are illusory. They belong to the world of appearances and not to reality. For consciousness is real. (Hodgkinson, 2006, p.70)

Consciousness as the real is also understood through the idea of three states of human perception, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep discussed in the Mandukya Upanishad. Waking is the state in which through sense perception we experience the mundane world. When asleep and dreaming, we “have awareness of the inner workings of the mind”, (Hodgkinson, p.71); this applies also to imagining when awake. The third state,

Deep dreamless sleep contains no objects, neither external nor inner, and consequently has no differentiation of any kind. No desires are experienced in this state (...). (Hodgkinson, p.71).

These three states relate to the workings of the mind. They illustrate the differentiation in Vedanta between consciousness as Atman, and the intelligent mind. As stated above, the mind too, while it is a tool for liberation, is part of the illusory temporal world.

Mind and the Subtle Body

In the terminology of Vedanta our “subtle body” (Nikhilananda, pp.89-95) operates at a less mundane level than the individual personality with which we identify- a subtle body operates as an “inner organ” (p 89) of the five senses so that,

the organ of seeing does not mean the outer eye, but an organ made of intangible, finer matter, which is one of the constituents of the subtle body. The mind, or *manas* is that function of the inner organ (*antahkarupa*) (p.89)

There are three other functions of the organ of seeing. The functions of this “psychic organ” are discussed in the *Mandukya Upanishad* (Roebuck, p.464) These constitute four aspects of consciousness, or four of what are termed the nineteen *mediators of experience* in the *waking state*. As described by Sanakra, the four psychic organs have specific functions and outcomes, all to do with thought and perception.

Table 1: Shankara’s Definitons of Four Aspects of Mind as Mediator of Experience in the Waking State

PSYCHIC ORGAN	NATURE	FUNCTION	OUTCOME
MANAS	Perceptual	“Considers the pros and cons of a situation” (Nikhilananda, p.89)	Cognition; <i>Maya</i> and <i>jiva atman</i> are perceived, problems are considered
BUDDHI	Determinative	Resolves doubt and brings one “to a conclusion regarding the real nature of an object. (Nikhilananda, p.89)	Intelligence/Knowledge; decisions are made in the light of past experiences and speculation on the real
CHITTA	Emotional	“Seeks for pleasurable objects” including	“On account of [the] limitation [of <i>manas</i>

		human attachments (Nikhilananda, p.89)	and its perception of <i>maya</i> as real] the <i>jiva</i> forgets its true nature of infinity and blessedness and feels that it is a doer, as enjoyer or experiencer of happiness and misery." (Nikhilananda, p.90)
AHAMKARA	I -conscious	"Identifies the Self with the body" (Nikhilananda, p.89)	"The Self, or Atman, identified with [the limited conditioned consciousness of the <i>jiva</i> atman, assumes the characteristics of the mind and experiences a diversity of names and forms" (Nikhilananda, p.91) The individual suffers the consequences and benefits of its actions in this or the next <i>jiva</i> form.

All four mediators of experience, *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *ahamkar*, are required for *karma*/ action to take place. Since the quality of one's *buddhi* will determine the quality of one's action, any action is ideally the end result of a balance of all four mediators of experience, of all aspects of temporal consciousness. When applied to a specific situation at a particular time. Karma/action can in this sense be seen as a manifestation of the will, and the *jiva atman* the site of the will. Schopenhauer, the western philosopher so strongly associated with defining the will, and subsequently influencing much speculation on its nature and degree of autonomy, was greatly influenced by his reading of the Upanishads. Only recently has general knowledge been established of the fact that Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, published 1819, is based on his interpretation of the *jiva atman*, encountered in a Latin version of the Upanishads, translated by Anquetil-Du Perron between 1801 and 1802) (Thaper, 2002). Will, individual agency, action, and ego, all come into play in a creative education environment. While a theological curriculum is not suggested for art school, nor one dependent on esoteric and/or intellectual philosophical debate, there are principles for effective pedagogy in Vedantic ideas

presented here. A framework that enables reflection on action, consequences and some perspective on emotions would encourage mutually beneficial working environments and more clarity of thought. First however, an understanding of how work is understood in Vedanta is needed.

Sankara on karma (action)

Bhraman/Consciousness or *Atman*, *jiva atman* and *karma* are all discussed in the Upanishads (c. 700 BCE), the Bagavada Gita (c. 400 BCE), and expounded in Sankara's *Atmabodh* Self-Knowledge (c eighth century CE). Swami Nikhilananda's commentary on his translation of Sankara's treatise *Self Knowledge (Atmabodh)* begins with an explication of *karma*. According to Sankara,

From the cradle to the grave, the unillumined soul engages in ceaseless action (...). But his activities are influenced by love and hate, attachment and aversion (...) He roams aimlessly in [*maya*] the world of change and becoming rising or falling according to the results of action. Only gradually does he discover the impossibility of attaining abiding happiness through work associated with I-consciousness and the desire for results. Infinite blessedness is not possible through any finite action governed by the law of cause and effect. (Nikhilananda, pp.xi-xii)

At this point the significance of *karma* is understood,

Then he learns from his teacher and the scriptures that *karma* (work), in order to produce a spiritual effect, must be performed as *yoga*; that is to say, the doer must (...) surrender to God the results of action, and remain unruffled by love or hate. Work performed in this spirit purifies the heart and makes it inclined to the cultivation of meditation and Self-Knowledge. (Nikhilananda, pp.xi-xii)

While Nikhilananda uses the word God, an atheist too can identify with the concept of *karma yoga*. Central to the idea is an expectation that any seeking of reward, even a selfish adoration of godhead, is problematic. Work that is conducive to Self knowledge is that which is done for its own sake, without a focus on 'I'. It is understood that *karma* or action is part of the mundane world, but conscious engagement with it leads to realisation that any happiness (and unhappiness) stemming from actions is fleeting and unreal. Appropriate action is needed to fulfil one's duties as an individual networked into the lives of others- family, friends,

teachers, etc.; but its results are temporary, except in the accumulation of patterns of cause and effect that transcend time. This realisation leads to an aspiration to break the cycle of rebirth.

Gradually, outer action drops away, reduced to a minimum sufficient only for the maintenance of the body. The actor remains satisfied with what comes of its own accord, without feeling attachment to the agreeable or aversion for the disagreeable, devoting himself heart and soul to the contemplation of Atman, which is the sole reality. By means of Knowledge, or *jnana*, he at last realises the true nature of the Soul, attains peace, and is liberated from endless suffering of the world. (Nikhilananda, p.xii)

At such a stage, Shankara suggests, the *jiva atman* attains attributes that place it *in* the world, but not *of* the world in the sense that the only reward it seeks is greater knowledge of the nature of the Self, so work is truly performed for its own sake,

The liberated man engages in service to humanity, but his activities are quite different from those of an unilluminated person. He is free from I-consciousness and the longing for results. He never loses the Knowledge of the Atman. In his actions he recognises the influence of the *gunas*, which constitute man's physical nature. At their bidding, the organs perform actions; but the soul is always immersed in peace. Thus, though appearing to be active, he is really actionless. He sees non-action in action. If the Soul is identified with action even to the slightest degree, it has not realised its true nature. (Nikhilananda, pp.xii-xiii)

This introduces another key concept in Vedanta, the three *gunas*, or three types of behavioural inclination in all human beings. As constituents of *maya*, they are present in all of nature. Each of the *gunas* are primal traits: *rajas* (energy), *tamas* (inertia), and *sattva* (which balances the opposite traits of *rajas* and *tamas*). In that the three *gunas* are said to determine the nature of every substance and every human action, the theory indicates an observation of the physical qualities of matter, and the drives of human psychology.

Dharma (duty) and its relationship to karma (action)

The performance of duty is an ubiquitous theme in Hindu thought, and has many applications and interpretations. These range from the performance of sacred rituals, to the attachment of sacred value to social expectations such as parental

obligations of seeing to the marriage of one's children, or filial obligations of carrying out traditional funerary rites of one's elders. When tied to mores and ethics of particular societies and times, the notion of duty has been used, as feminists argue, to limit the activities and participation of women; or as other reformists would argue, to subjugate those said to be of low or non caste status³. Given that the concept of duty or *dharma* is understood as a means of attaining liberation or spiritual attainment, the dangers and potency of its misuse are self evident- if exploitation can be presented as religiously sanctioned, what hope is there in such a thought system for the oppressed? Yet the root of the idea of duty sheds quite a different light on Hindu and Vedantic thought: for *dharma* (duty) is an articulation of *karma* (action) and karma translates also simply to 'work'. As explained above and highly significantly, *karma* is seen as the propagator of a timeless chain of cause and effect, which ties the individual into cycles of birth and rebirth, and determines the nature of those cycles. So the individual's *choice* of action need not be driven by conformity to accepted norms. It is quite compatible within Vedanta, indeed intrinsic to its logic, to question religious norms, and to expect to challenge conventions that have grown corrupted or proven to be harmful. This is implicit in the pillars of Vedanta: speculation, analysis, questioning of the meaning of scripture. More explicitly, the difficulties in making correct choices, of being aware of one's actions and their potential impact, of determining right from wrong, all lie at the heart of the *Bagavada Gita* (c. 400 BCE).⁴ The Gita,

³ Caste discrimination especially against the lowest castes is illegal, and this is enshrined in the Indian Constitution; positive discrimination in all government jobs and institutions of education has been in place since independence. Nevertheless, the problem persists and is exactly the type of remnant of older social systems that need to be radically and critically assessed in the present, and in light of historically condoned cruelties. The contemporary Dalit movement in India bears witness to still existent and in some cases systemic discrimination against so called 'lower castes' and currently faces a backlash in the rising power of far right political groups purporting to represent Hinduism as a whole. As stated previously, this thesis does not propose the wholesale adoption of older ideas. According to Hodgkinson and others, the problematic 'caste system' still active in India today "bears little resemblance to the account Vedanta gives." Likely to have been a way of dividing labour and organising society, it was not understood initially as hereditary or rigid. (Hodgkinson, 2006, pp.203-4) The addition of a caste below the lowest that was considered 'unclean' by birth is a later development, as is the closure of movement between castes.

⁴ In the introductory chapter of the Gita, the chief protagonist, Arjuna, questions the need for going into battle, which he is told is his duty by Krishna, who serves as his charioteer. The text is misunderstood as advocating war fare- but the dramatic analogy is meant to provoke reflection on the real, and on unattached work. Throughout the centuries and especially in modern times, the intrigues of warfare, and actions taken by the 'righteous' Pandava brothers as presented in the Mahabharata, of which the Gita is section, have been questioned; the

as it is popularly known, is dated after the Upanishads, and appeals to all sects of Hinduism. It deals with questions of will, individuality, connection and conformity to a social and cultural group that arise within any discussion of the individual self in relation to other. It is an oft quoted text in Vedantic discourse, though the earlier dense analytical arguments within Vedanta all stem directly from the Upanishads and Vedanta Sutras. The Gita keeps the format of the Upanishads, and addresses the same questions about the nature of life, death, and human action, in graspable narrative frames.

Vedanta and its sources provide a framework and analytical tools for such criticality through constant questioning of perceptions of the world and of the self. By application, this expectation of agency lends itself to an education system that would not be passing down instruction, but encouraging an enquiring mind, a desire to learn, and a determination to engage with the process ethically and creatively. It also enables an extension of empathy to others, since from Vedantic standpoint, everyone is struggling to know the Self, and at the same time everyone can be valued as the site of the Self. Vedanta seems therefore by definition to lend itself to a criticality that is grounded in mutually enabling well being; or in a pedagogic context, to mutual understanding and openness between students, and between students and staff. Such a learner journey resonates with Ronald Barnett's discussions of "coming into being" (Barnett, 2007) of the Higher Education student, how the system can hamper it by not recognising it, and be conducive to it by awareness of a metaphysical self in students and tutors. This correlation will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4, as well as difficulties that arise from it, particularly the assumption of an absolute truth in postmodern times. The remainder of this chapter however, continues to cite Vedantic theories that support the assertions above: significance of work for its own sake, unity within diversity, and correlations to reflective education practice.

Gita itself does not include these intrigues, and moves from the particularities of the story of the Pandava brothers to a general discourse on universal concerns of life, death, loss, relationships, work and duty, advocating unattached work as a means of liberation and self realisation.

Viveka (discrimination /discernment)

In order to be able to act in a way that “sees non-action in action” as Shankara describes, Vedanta requires the cultivation of “*viveka* or discrimination between the Real and the unreal” (Nikhilananda, p.42). Discrimination in this sense is the ability to differentiate between illusory phenomena, or desires and emotions that are experienced in illusory *maya*, and the Real/Brahman/Atman also referred to as “Truth” and “True Knowledge”, which lies beyond the laws of causation. By application this means that discrimination is an extremely useful term also for the ability to read any given situation fully, without the distractions created by emotions, in order to arrive at appropriate action. Earlier a parallel was drawn between unattached work and the ability deal with critical feedback; there is moreover, a tension in Vedanta between the actions and achievements in the illusory world, and “True Knowledge”. It seems they are not entirely mutually exclusive.

True Knowledge is always accompanied by a direct personal experience. To know Atman is to realise that the Self of man is Pure Consciousness. To know Brahman is to become Brahman. Therefore intellectual understanding of Vedanta must be followed by actual transformation of life; otherwise it is of no practical benefit to the aspirant. (Nikhilananda, p.42)

This insistence, that when there is genuine understanding of the Self, it manifests in the everyday actions of an individual, is a hallmark of Vedantic thought. There is reciprocity between our everyday actions and the development of Self Knowledge. One interacts with and shapes the other. This means that while there is great store set by intellectual knowledge and understanding, it is not considered enough, as there is always the danger of deluding ourselves. Intellectual understanding of Truth remains intellectual only, unless it also manifests in our everyday interactions, and in critically evaluating these,

...much of our reasoning is the rationalisation of our desires. Most people understand a thing the way they want to understand it; they prove only what they want to prove. Therefore the attainment of Truth demands complete non- attachment to everything, including our own thoughts and ego. (Nikhilananda, p.42)

Ahamkar (ego) in Education

Action that does not seek rewards and therefore is conducive to self liberation is a concept that has many applications. So too does the concept of a necessary distance from ones emotions, while acknowledging the importance of an identity that is sufficiently confident to be able to bring about action. This appears at first to be a contradiction in terms. If the *jiva atman*, and its ego self operates within the unreal- the veil of *maya*, how can it serve a useful purpose? This has been answered by Nikhilanda's explanation quoted above, that "intellectual understanding of Vedanta must be followed by actual transformation of life; otherwise it is of no practical benefit to the aspirant" (Nikhilananda, p.42). A parallel in creative education is the role of a sufficiently robust ego in bringing original ideas into the world and defending them. Students need the drive and the self esteem to make this attempt in the first place, and the ego, as will, needs to be nurtured; it can be seen as a means of developing and expressing self confidence. That same ego can be crushed however by criticism, or crush others in the drive to be heard and acknowledged. The type of action however, in which the doer "surrenders the results" as Sanakra puts it, is based on non attachment to results; such a doer will therefore be equally unaffected by praise as much as criticism. This does not mean that the student should ignore the feedback of teachers and peers, nor that they should not care about their work. On the contrary s/he will be able to be very attentive and reciprocally critical in appraising it, because her sense of self is not threatened by the feedback. Having an awareness of Self, as the Real, the 'I' self is detached from the results of the actions, so the work itself can evolve more efficiently and harmoniously. Here judgement as to the most appropriate response to feedback comes into play. This approach lies at the core of reflective education practice, in which students are encouraged to pause and reflect on their work from time to time, to consider its aims, influences and aspirations in relation to what has been achieved thus far. By detaching the work from the reward seeking ego, responses can be weighed up in terms of development of the work, rather than

being driven by a need to prove one's worth or to attach unhealthily to work that is praised. As Sankara summarises, when "the organs perform actions" with detachment, "the soul is always immersed in peace." (Nikhilananda pp.xii-xiii) If an architectural model needs changing, it is the model that has a flaw- not the architecture student; if a painting does not seem to speak in the way a student wishes it to- it is the painting that could be rendered or introduced differently- not the painting student that is deficient in some way. The *karma* (work) of the student remains the focus, rather than the student- so criticism can be taken at face value where appropriate, and challenged if necessary, where the vision of the teacher may be unable to grasp the work's intention.

This does not mean that a work will be seen through no matter what, or that its purpose will be rigidly defined from beginning to end. Instead, as an action unfolds, each hurdle would necessitate reassessment as in the normal course of things in studio practice, but it would be undertaken within a broader context, and more holistic aspirations for the self. The conceptualisation of four aspects of mind discussed above, is part of a broader framework for discourse on the nature of the Real, the Self, and the individual's relationship to them. In creativity as in other worldly activities, when only the 'I' is considered, the conditioned mind, *chitta*, driven by emotions and desire has overtaken the intrinsic value of the work. Similar unproductive results can arise when intellect, as only logic dictates the actions taken; an action can be logically justified, for example, but morally questionable. So it can be said that *chitta*, as a vehicle for empathy is irreplaceable; however its conditioning or attachment to an object can cloud necessary analysis, of a situation; it then becomes a vehicle of *agyana* (ignorance). A balance between the two is needed, which is brought about by *buddhi* (wisdom). So the ability to empathise, or see the viewpoint of others through intellectual understanding of the significance of the act, is a reflection of the knowledge that on some level all is connected. It is also a demonstration of what Vedanta sees as the unity of knowledge that is Real.

Humility, skill, and self assertion

The idea of non attachment, as conducive to better work and more profound knowledge, is interesting in the context of the acquisition of skills. There is in the learning of any craft, a prerequisite of the humility of the ‘taught’ - the novice who wishes to achieve dexterity and complexity in a given medium or idiom. Historically in Northern and Southern, including Indian traditions, this has extended to a master- disciple relationship in which the individuality of the trainee was not allowed to surface until the master felt it was ready for such self declaration. Depending on the self awareness of the master, such a relationship could be either highly nurturing or highly destructive, and is *not* proposed here as pedagogic model. There is, however, apparently something nurturing in submitting to instruction in a craft in which one’s performance will visibly improve over time, and which can be measured by the student as much as the trainer. In an art school environment, there can be built into such training an expectation that once an understanding of the fundamental techniques of a craft have been demonstrated, the student will use this knowledge to develop more personal articulations and renderings of the craft. In fact this was quite clearly desired by students interviewed as expressed by student A, who said, “a combination would be ideal” [*Student A, post-graduation essay*] when describing the more structured curriculum of an institute in which she spent a year on exchange, and the more open ended pedagogy of ADIX. For art students, perhaps this surrender to the acquisition of knowledge, a temporary suspension of self assertion in order simply to learn, has become too much of a rarity. And perhaps it is through this type of *reprieve from individualism*, that genuine self confidence can emerge, since it invokes a sense of satisfaction that students themselves recognise, as shown by the quotes below,

...I really liked life drawing [in first year] because each week I saw myself improve, and I actually got better at it and it really did teach us just to look and map out things, it taught us about proportions and light, which (...) I thought was quite necessary for [a] student. (...) in second year...some of us started to go back to the life drawing [Student J; Interview round 3]

On Foundation one of the best things we learnt was book binding and (...) it gave you a sense of ohh if ... I can make a book, what else can I do? I find (...) inevitably each thing you learn makes you feel better and more confident. [Student G; Interview round 3]

Without abdicating responsibility for ones work, there is something to be said for learning in a way that absorbs advice and information, articulates this understanding, and then filters appropriate aspects of this knowledge into personal interpretations in statements and works. Hence there is also a great deal to be said for a pedagogy that leads to independence by first providing rigorous training,(as was my own experience as a student of ceramics in the late 1970's. Through surrender to learning, the student can have time to gather sustenance, from their subject matter, from tutors, and from each other and form a more assured sense of themselves. From this more mature individual statements can arise.

Teacher and Taught

Crucial in this relationship of minds, and of teacher and taught, is the degree of empathy between tutor and student. Criticism is harmful only when there is an inability to consider the intentions of the critic and the criticised. The student needs to see from the teacher's perspective, and vice versa. A sensitive teacher will be able to determine or attempt to capture a moment when a student may be able to receive feedback beneficially; others may apply a more formulaic timetabled approach, in which all students need to demonstrate responses at set times and in set formats, such as the standard art school whole class crit. The student too needs to have the ability to empathise with the teacher, and to see that the teacher aims not to be destructive or dismissive, but to develop a vitality of thinking and questioning within the student by setting challenges and offering advice. This kind of mutual empathy can be structured into a pedagogic environment, and would reflect the Vedantic principle,

Even a noble ideal, when guided only by expediency, can be an instrument of oppression and exploitation (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.xviii)

Such imbalance will not arise if the more fundamental Vedantic principle quoted earlier is considered, that Atman is contained in all, and beyond difference lies unity. Nikhilanada states,

(...) in the heart of every individual the divine light shines with undiminished lustre. Hence all men are entitled to our respect. The divinity of the Soul is the unshakable spiritual basis of democracy, self-determination, freedom, and other aspirations of modern minds. (1978, p.xviii)

In less religious parlance, this idea translates to conceptualisation of a right to dignity and freedom for all in a pedagogic environment, and a need for distance from immediate emotional responses to a given situation. This aspiration is enshrined in equalities legislation, and embedded in expectations of all schools and universities in Britain. Vedanta, then turns out not to be so foreign to us after all.

Caveats and Aspirations

There are of course, immediate problems with any advocacy of a universal Consciousness that lies beyond individual subjectivity. Much twentieth early twenty first centuries discourse , as previously mentioned, has reasserted and debated subjectivity of individual groups, articulated through complex theories of post colonialism and feminism, to name but two academic disciplines that inform pedagogic practices albeit in varying strengths and forms. In order to proceed with the pedagogy proposed here, it may be necessary to momentarily suspend scepticism on the possibility of an a priori, absolute. In much the same way as Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said argue for consideration of humanism as still possible in order to be able to progress political and social discourse , despite “scornful dismissal of the term by sophisticated post modern critics” (Said, 1978, p.xvii); just as Alain Badiou argues that it is necessary to “to think” (Badiou, 2005, p.2) the twentieth century- evaluating its ideological intention, rather than dismissing it altogether; just as Ferderic Jameson reminds us that history may not be altogether dead, when he states that an acknowledgment of the plurality of truth does not rule out the usefulness of the existent bedrock of analytical thinking about History in Marxist literature, and vice versa (Jameson, 1998, p.37); in the

same vein, I argue that the religious and philosophical underpinnings of ancient thought systems too can be harnessed to give direction and insight into the complexity of pluralist readings of society. An important step towards this in relation to Vedanta is rigorous contextualisation, including articulation of its relationship to more commonly known forms of Hinduism. Especially today, when conservative readings of religious ideas are being so dangerously and divisively employed, it would seem the world over, a sense of history that demonstrates debates and plurality within the traditions is required.

Historical context

The term Hindu is itself something of a misnomer, as it was not used by Indians to describe themselves until the nineteenth century. Persian in origin, (Olsen, 2007, p. 6; Nikhilananda, 1978, p. 8) it came into common use initially via the studies of early European Orientalist scholars, William Jones, Max Mueller, Monier Williams, Georg Foster and others.⁵ (Thapar, 1999) the term served British civil service administrators as a practical solution to categorisation during the early colonial period: Faced with a confusing array of religious belief systems and customs, all professing to have the same origins, 'Hindu' became a useful catch all for practices predating the modern religions of Islam and Christianity, also present on the subcontinent. Interestingly, this classification was then taken up as a unifying identity, by political and cultural leaders of the independence movement.⁶ It has settled into the identity of modern Indians in a way that makes it neither foreign as a descriptor, nor entirely indigenous, but serves as an umbrella term for philosophies, religions, and praxis based on interpretations of ideas originating in the books of the Vedas which are dated c 1500-1000 BCE.⁷ Commentaries and

⁵ William Jones' translations of Sanskrit dramas led to many more in almost all European languages including Icelandic. However it was most avidly taken up by the German Romantics. The first German translation was published in 1791 by Georg Forster who was impressed that, "...the tenderest emotions of which the human heart is capable could have been as well expressed on the Ganges by dark skinned people, as on the Rhine, the Tyber, or the Illissus by our white race..." (Thapar 2002, p.206)

⁶ India became independent in 1947.

⁷ The Rg Veda Composed c. 1500- 1000 BCE; 1,028 hymns divided into 10 books. Considered to be the oldest religious text in the world. Later followed by the Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas

ensuing books of Hinduism, however, are so numerous that no one book serves as its ultimate authoritative voice. These factors contribute to the possibility of a great deal of self-determination and freedom in the individual Hindu's use of religion. It is this in-built quality that underpins the proposal of using elements of Hindu thought in contemporary self-reflective education theory.

Carl Olsen, referencing Julius Lipner calls the term Hindu,

a useful construct to the extent that it refers to the culture instead of a single religion. The Sanskrit equivalent...is hindutva or hinduta. Such a term suggests a particular way of being in the world, more specifically a distinctive type of mentality that is paradoxical. 'It is a paradoxicality that rises from insightful aversion to dogmatism in articulating findings of reason and experience, and from the nurtured desire to inject a healthy dose of relativism in our perception of things.' (Olsen, 2007, p.6)

Discourse created by this long procession of debate and practice, and the nature of what the economist and cultural historian Amartya Sen has dubbed "the argumentative Indian" (Sen, 2005) has led to a formidable array of religious, spiritual and philosophical traditions that include what can be termed the protestant religions of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, with their attendant philosophical schools. In complete contrast to this narrative of diversity and engagement with argument and analysis sits the current rise of a highly conservative revivalist brand of Hindusim, calling itself Hindutva, and allied to particular political parties. For secular Indians and practicing Hindus alike, its selective propagation of customs and beliefs associated with high bramanism,⁸ and allied with nationalistic displays of pride in India are problematic on many levels, most alarmingly in relation to other religions in the country. Yet Hinduism's essentially pluralist and democratic vision is never far from view and it is always possible to choose to highlight the heterogeneous and dialogical in the Indian tradition, as Sen does,

...the only world religion that is firmly agnostic (Buddhism) is of Indian origin, and, furthermore, the atheistic schools of Carvaka and Lokyata have

⁸ The contemporary Hindutva movement, takes a rigid view on caste and religious differences, and promotes a hierarchy of religions on the subcontinent, privileging Hinduism. By conflating general questioning of political policies since Independence with issues of religion, it also manages to gather followers that have chiefly economic, not religious concerns.

generated extensive arguments and have been seriously studied by Indian religious scholars themselves. (Sen, 2005, p.159)

Heterodoxy runs throughout the early documents, and even in the ancient epic Ramayana (c. 400 BCE), which is often cited by contemporary Hindu activists in a somewhat reductionist manner as 'the holy book of the divine Rama's life', contains dissenting characters. For example, Rama is lectured to by a worldly pundit called Javali on the folly of his religious beliefs:

'O Rama, be wise there exists no world but this, that is certain! Enjoy that which is present and cast behind thee that which is unpleasant' (Sen, 2005, p.159)

Lipner has described a key characteristic of ancient Indian (Hindu) thought as having an "ubiquitous porosity of boundaries". (Lipner, 1994) This includes a logic that perceives polarities in a dualism of mutuality, rather than as opposing binaries as in the theory of *purusa* and *prakriti*; these are universal primal energies that have opposite characteristics, but are dependent on each other to become activated. Lipner's term "porosity" applies also to recognised tensions within the individual such as attraction to both the sensuous and the spiritual or ascetic life. The concept of a dualism of mutuality is certainly present as a stream of conjectural philosophical enquires within Vedanta. Hence the oft quoted lines of the Rg Veda,

"Truth is One; Sages call it variously" - Rg Veda, 1.164.46 (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.xix)

Unity of consciousness and knowledge

The idea of Brahman/Atman/formless absolute Consciousness as a universally applicable concept is open to debate and analysis as to its constituents, within Vedantist debate and out with its discourse. Throughout Vedantic thought, however, universal Consciousness is taken as substantiated by the reasoning of scriptures, and observation of mind. A contradiction arises, since the workings of the mind, even at their best, are said to be responding to the unreal illusion that is the complex world of *maya*. Vedantist response is to consider *manas* and *buddhi* as instruments of discernment, or discrimination between the real and the unreal. The logic is, once the universe is realised as in permanent state of oneness, the need/

function/illusion of the mind and emotions of the *jiva atman* disappear. While on this journey, however, the *jiva atman* manifests its growing understanding of the Real in visible practical outcomes of behaviour and decisions in relation to others.

There is also a manifestation of this thought system that is far less problematic to transfer into education theory: that is to do with the role played by the *jiva atman* as the everyman or everywoman, subject to pressures, desires, and aspirations both material and spiritual. All of these pressures are present in creative education, and the extent to which we support or thwart the student's struggles determines the quality of their experience of education. The extent to which individuality is valued in art education makes the art student particularly vulnerable – since a quest for individuality and uniqueness can manifest as a collection of individualists, unable to empathise with each other, with tutors, and with the world beyond the art school. In turn this can lead to a dead-ended environment in which no one really thrives, and creativity is constricted by seeking the approval of a very small circle of close associates. When graduates of such a system go on to become teachers in art school themselves, the cycle is perpetuated into another generation. Perhaps individuality - as in the sense of free and creative thinkers- can better thrive in an environment that nurtures the ego by making it aware of its connection to others, and by valuing self-worth that is based on a desire to understand others, not for personal gain, but for the worth of the other. This is what Nikhilananda's equation of recognition of the "divine" essence of all human beings, with "democracy, self-determination, freedom, and other aspirations of modern minds" implies (Nikhilananda, p.xvi). Even if the religious connotations of the words "soul" and "divinity" are removed from this argument, the idea that "all men are entitled to our respect" (xviii) because there is shared commonality is powerful. It also resonates strongly with Paulo Freire's call to "become fully human" (1970). Freire has argued that the innate quest for freedom in humankind necessitates critical examination of oppression, and that truly useful pedagogy facilitates the emergence of such consciousness. To understand oppression (or by application- to fully comprehend the implications of a given status quo- in art education for example) is to become "fully human". Key to this process is an acknowledgement

that the oppressor too is in need of liberation; for the tyranny of power that relies on the subjugation of others limits or stunts his/her humanity too. Therefore Freire insists that when oppression is overthrown, it must be safeguarded from a simple role reversal in which the formerly oppressed become the new oppressors, or join existent ones. The expectation in Vedanta of agency, determined by *viveka*, discrimination, implies careful consideration of a given situation in its entirety, *in relation to others*. This mirrors Freire's conditions of defining a fully functioning human being. It is also the crucial safeguard within Vedantist thought that can prevent the application of Hindu /Vedantist ideas to contemporary education in a manner that is mono-cultural, narrowly religious, gender biased or a carrier of any other form of chauvinism.

Chapter 3 will now carry over this discourse to Yoruba philosophical ideas in relation to education.

3

Yoruba Thought

This chapter introduces Yoruba concepts vital to the education theory proposed, starting with geographical and historical context. The term Yoruba refers to a language, religion, geographical region, and art objects from the region or associated with Yoruba beliefs, whose culture is centered in Southwestern Nigeria and in areas of neighboring Benin and Togo. Amongst these are regional variations originating in twenty cultural subgroups that were once independent kingdoms. Continuity in linguistic and fundamental belief systems, however, allows for a single grouping. Yoruba arts are among the most prolific and ancient of the African continent, including metal cast sculpture, wood carving, architecture and architectural sculpture, costume associated with masquerade, textiles, and body art. Yoruba Society is inherently highly structured and urbanised; archeological and linguistic evidence dates currently recognisable political, religious and social systems to the first millennium CE (Barnes, 1989). Myths and religious beliefs referred to in this chapter originate in this era, which also saw the establishment of Yoruba city- states. John Pemberton summarises,

From the beginning, Yoruba culture has been characterized by an urban life-style, and a political system of sacred rulers. By the twelfth to fifteenth century the political/cultural position the Yoruba city of Ile-Ife had (...) created the famous Ife bronze and terracotta sculptures, and there were other Yoruba artistic centers at Esie in the northeast and Owo in the southeast. By the seventeenth century, Oyo, a city in the north-central Yoruba region, was emerging as a significant power that over the next century would establish itself as the centre of an empire. (Pemberton, 2000, pp.16-17)

Yoruba identity, in continuation and in legacy, tempered by time and adaptation, is evident in many contemporary fields, as well as in objects and social systems of the past. Of significance in the presence of Yoruba ideas today is their spread to the Americas. During the sixteenth to mid nineteenth century enforced movement of West African men women and children across the Atlantic, Yoruba religious systems

were transported to the Caribbean islands and to Brazil. There, African religions, practiced covertly by converts to Catholicism, became syncretised with elements of Christianity and emerged eventually as *Condomble*, *Santeria*, *Bai'a* and other offshoots of Yoruba religious practices. Religious systems related to the African pantheon of *orisa* (gods/ dieties) have made another more recent voyage, along with people of African descent migrating to the United States and also within Latin America. As a result, In New York, Texas, California, Florida, the *orisa* (god/deity) Ogun is worshipped by adherents who originated in Haiti and Cuba. From Brazil the faith has spread to neighboring Uruguay and Argentina. In both continents, the number of followers has grown in the 20th century, with the result that,

More than 70 million African and new world peoples participate in, or are closely familiar with religious systems that include Ogun, and the number is increasing rather than declining. (Barnes, 1989, p.3)

Ogun the *orisa* of creativity and destruction is taken up later in this chapter, as emblematic of complex observations about human nature in Yoruba thought. Concepts arising from Ogun myths relevant to modernist ideas of artistic genius, the bedrock of art school pedagogy, will also be introduced. He is mentioned here only to indicate the geographical spread of Yoruba ideas today.

An important caveat to proposing Yoruba ideas as relevant to art schools today is recognising that while they are very present, they are not necessarily important in the same way to all modern day Yoruba people. One of course finds thriving in modern day Nigeria art, literature, theatre and other arts discourses; these naturally respond to international, as well as indigenous cultural influences (Olanrewaju, 2013). There are also many religions including Islam and Christianity, which exist side by side with African religions. (Picton, 1996) An inbuilt flexibility and multicultural fluency allows external influences to be absorbed and implemented in new ways. The result is that contemporary African people can be proudly Christian, while also participating in selected elements of traditional African religious functions and festivals. For example Christians will participate in various elements of the Festival of Ogun, (to be discussed later), but not eat the sacrificial meat; or, in illness, Christians and Muslims will seek medical help from traditional

African healers who divine the cause and treatment of ailments. (Abimbola, 2001) This hetero-culturalism of modern Africa will be discussed later in the chapter too. The understanding of the human mind implied by the metaphysical concepts of the divination process, grasped by lay persons as well as healers will be shown to be particularly relevant.¹ Even so, while the past is firmly intertwined with the present, not all contemporary Yoruba people would necessarily directly embrace Yoruba ideas, whether due to personal choice, westernisation, modernisation, or through the influence of other religions, humanism, atheism, etcetera.

Most important, as in the earlier contextualisation of Hindu philosophy in relation to contemporary education, is the acknowledgement of the many conflicts and divisions in West Africa and modern day Nigeria, to demonstrate that an unproblematic romanticized past is not proposed here. There have been historical wars, social divisions, and political strife, alongside great achievements: from the earliest civilization (circa 800 BCE Nok culture) to the formation of city states, kingdoms and empires (11th century); to interactions with Islamic cultures (Sokoto caliphate 1809-1903); continuing during British colonial rule (1903- 1960); and evident also in independent Nigeria (1960 onwards), as exemplified by the Biafra War (1967-1970) (BBC News, 2015).² This is a multifaceted and large country, with complicated politics and of course, other cultural and regional identifications besides Yoruba, including Igbo, Ijo, Hausa, Nupe, Mumuye, and many others (Picton, 1996, p.331). These cultural groups are not defined by religion, though one religion may predominate a region or group. Hundreds of languages are spoken there, and these can be as different as Chinese and English³ (Picton 1996, p.331).

¹ "The term divination describes efforts to foretell future events or to discover hidden knowledge by supernatural means" (LaGamma 2000, p.7). Divination rituals include those that aim to diagnose and select cures for physical and psychological afflictions.

² BBC News Africa profile, Key Events of the Biafra War <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13951696> [accessed 04/05/2015]

³ "Today in West Africa, some languages are spoken by populations of a few hundred, and some by several million. They represent three of the four great language families of Africa. Nilo-Sharan, Afro- Asiatic, and Niger-Congo. (Khoi –San languages are located only in the southern half of the continent, and I exclude Indo-European languages that have dominated the institutions of education in colonial and post colonial times.) It is worth remembering that not only are the languages themselves different from one another (and we are talking of

Nigeria's borders, like the rest of modern Africa, were created entirely in the administrative offices of the European colonial era, resulting, as Odia Ofeimun puts it, in the "forced-draft barracking" of indigenous cultures "in a new contraption called Nigeria" (2003, p.2). The dispersal of traditionally cohabiting groups of people, and the inclusion of other groups less culturally affiliated by drawing board designed national borders, have created a legacy of conflict in many parts of Africa. So too has the after effect of 'divide and rule' policies that pitted one group against the other in order to stave off the unity that would hasten independence. Equally significant, as explained by a titled chief from Ghana, now a musician based in Glasgow, colonial misunderstanding of the subtleties of traditional African hierarchies, leading to privileging of certain functionaries over others, has led to the erosion of a finely balanced social structure in which over-reaching one's authority could be kept in check. Religion, ethnicity and political machinations have all played their part, or been manipulated by western colonial powers, as well as by indigenous rulers from time to time.

However Ofeimun as many others, is critical of attempts to blame all current problems on "slave-catching wars as well as colonialism" (Ofeimun, 2003, p.2). What he finds more crucial, is an assessment of

strategies of self-reflection and self-empowerment lurking deep in our history (...) to make the past useable or to achieve a basis for genuine participation in the century that has confronted us (Ofeimun, 2003, p.2)

To reiterate, this research is not aimed at returning to an imagined and sanitised past, but a critical exercise in extracting useful, in some cases forgotten ways of understanding human behavior and applying it to creative education that is adaptable in a changing world. Many contemporary Yoruba people too, would consider an embrace of traditional African ideas a romantic notion that amounts to clinging to a glorious past. Others assert that in past traditions lie kernels of intensely practical wisdom and highly applicable discourse on personal freedom and social responsibility that would benefit contemporary politics and governance.

differences of the order of English and Chinese), but each presupposes a conceptual order that is equally different." (Picton 1996, p.331).

Indeed certain underlying concepts fundamental to Yoruba philosophy, visually evident in art forms, aurally received through the ages in proverbs and fables, conceptually embedded in customs and social structures, reveal an understanding of humanity that seems at times startlingly contemporary. In this research the focus is particularly on the Yoruba understanding of individual identity in relation to society, agency, and the key role that creativity and education play in this. Margaret Drewel also describes and gives many examples of “play” (Drewel, 1992, pp.12-28) as central to Yoruba customs, language and exchange. She cites ritual performances, and the way in which they have evolved and incorporated new emblems and materials over the centuries, and the preference for improvisation over rigid adherence to established practices (Drewel, 1992, pp. 7-8; 94-98). She also cites an inherent potential for slippage and improvisation in the Yoruba language itself, giving rise to innovation in conveying meaning in everyday discourse.⁴ The discussion of Yoruba culture attempted here is indebted to interpretations, critiques and commentaries by scholars such as Drewel, Wole Soyinka, John Pemberton, Sandra T. Barnes, Molar Ogundipe, and the previously named Kola Abimbola, Moses Oke, Ademola Kazeem Fayemi and OC Macaulay-Adeyelu.

Several themes emerge in studying these readings of Yoruba culture, and all can be read in relation to education. Three key Yoruba themes discussed in the context of pedagogy in this thesis are,

- Human agency: of the social group and of the individual
This speaks to the relationships between student peers, students and staff, and both students and staff in relation to society beyond the institution.
- Temporal and psychological transitional spaces: the mind as shaped by past and present, by internal and external influences

⁴ Drewel recounts conversations with a Yoruba priest, Ositola, in which play, slippage and humour are used by him to both answer and gently point out through ambiguity any erroneous assumptions in her questions regarding the meaning of certain Yoruba rituals. She describes this as “a spontaneously improvised riddling encounter in which Ositola and I collaboratively explored our working relationship” and an example of “reflexive play” (1992, pp. 17-18).

This speaks to the internal world of students and their growing understanding and coming to terms with themselves and their actions, and how an educational culture can facilitate, or obstruct the process

- Life as an ongoing process of evolution and learning: the role of self criticality and social structures to instill it.

This too speaks to the internal journey of the students, but also includes the student's ability to absorb useful criticism, to self evaluate, and self defend where needed. In acquiring such skills as a student, s/he is able to continue the process into social interaction beyond the institution.

Traditional Yoruba Ethics and Morals

There is an emergent field in re-evaluating Yoruba philosophy, its meaning and potential applications to understanding human nature in contemporary contexts: In the field of ethics and medicine, Abimbola has examined traditional medical divination (touched on in page 3) as an example of complexity in Yoruba conceptions of the world, and the limitations of applying a western framework of ethics:

Let us describe this Westernized conception of ethics as the "this-worldly" approach to ethics. (...) in Yorùbá culture (both traditional and contemporary), ethics is a three-way relationship among: (i) natural beings and other natural beings; (ii) natural beings and spiritual beings; and (iii) spiritual beings and other spiritual beings. (Abimbola, 2001, p.2)

By this he means that while debates in western philosophy are concerned with moral and ethical questions regarding our behaviour with each other as fellow human beings, the field of Yoruba ethics requires a broader moral theory, since it acknowledges further inter-relationships. It includes our relationships with nature (the natural objects and animals around us), and the supernatural (the spiritual world of the ancestors, the unborn, and cosmic deities). Whether one believes in such concepts or not, there is much that bears scrutiny and invites engagement, since humanity's relationship with the natural world is a subject of paramount importance and anxiety in contemporary times; equally, human struggles to come to terms with life, death and the possibility of an afterlife are age old concerns.

Abimbole however, also suggests a flaw in contemporary African philosophical thought, stemming from its inability to logically accommodate and draw from African concepts when framed in “standard [western] philosophical classification of the branches of ethics” (2001, p.1) The flaw he finds, is not in the contents of traditional African ethics, but in the language afforded by the western philosophical framework within which it is usually discoursed. He explains,

The term ‘ethics’ can be used to include normative ethics-thought about the basis and justification of moral rules and principles; meta-ethics-the meaning of moral terms; applied ethics-the nature, content and application of specific moral guidelines; and, descriptive ethics-accounts of how people actually behave in situations requiring moral action. Contemporary thinking on ethics in African philosophy is primarily concerned with normative and descriptive ethics. (Abimbole, 2001, p.1)

He goes on to say,

... contemporary scholarship on ethics from an African point of view is preoccupied with the question of whether moral rules and principles arise out of religion (in which case, they are [argued as] valid because the gods command them), or whether these rules arise out of reason (in which case they derive their validity from some non-religious base). Because these scholars also make claims about the nature of the principles implicit within traditional African societies, much of their work is also on descriptive ethics. (2001, p.1)

Abimbola argues that an opportunity is lost in this preoccupation with normative and descriptive ethics. By contrast, he states that his “primary concern is with applied ethics” because

the issues of applied ethics that arise in Yorùbá culture (traditional and contemporary) are by far more complex than anything ventured by most contemporary African philosophers. (2001, p.2)

A theory of ethics and morality, he says, can be gleaned from the methods and interpretive imperatives of Yoruba cultural tropes. This is exemplified by its holistic medical system, in which conceptualisations of the spiritual and physical self are intertwined with ideas of good conduct and interrelationship. In Yoruba thought,

good conduct is required not only between human beings, but also between human, animal, and cosmic entities.

Applied ethics is the bridge between morality and moral theory, and it is concerned with the application of a systematic moral theory to human conduct. It is the connection between theory and practice. The main thrust of my assertions (...) is that contemporary African philosophy is seriously defective because it fails to provide a critical assessment of the application of traditional African moral theories. (2001, p.22)

So as demonstrated by Abimbola's paper, one of the unique qualities of Yoruba moral theory lies in its taken-for-granted application to physical as well as metaphysical realms. Balanced character expressed through ethically considered conduct is expected of the gods as well as of humans. The role of the medical practitioner is to assess any imbalances of human and cosmic forces that may be leading to illness. How this assessment is made, and how segments of the divination process are read, and then interpreted into action, are intrinsically related to the Yoruba understanding of personhood. This will be examined after two further examples of scholarly assertions that traditional African values and systems can provide for a meaningful contemporary application.

In civic governance, Moses Oke sheds light on "tenure ethics" (Oke 2007 p 85), or declared expectations of behaviour that shape the conduct and tenure of those in powerful functionary positions of traditional Yoruba custom. He argues that these ethics are ideal starting points for the formulation of a training system for contemporary politicians. Indeed, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, customs and restrictions that go hand in hand with holding traditional Yoruba religious or civic positions of power over others are embedded, explicitly and implicitly, with expectations of self criticality and reminders of the limits and temporal nature of their roles. Oke argues that the sense of responsibility and humility in leadership that such a system is designed to instil can shape contemporary Nigerian politicians, and an adherence to such traditional ethics would improve their performance in governing and serving the populace they are elected by.

While the customs and protagonists he refers to are tied in with Yoruba religious functions, their necessary interaction with the public place them in positions of influence on social conduct and significant communal decisions. As such, Oke's paper exemplifies the applied ethics that Abimbole proposes, as a means of facilitating contemporary African philosophy effectively embracing indigenous concepts. Oke writes about masked performers of Egunegun Festivals. These performers are thought to be conduits between ordinary humans and cosmic forces, when channelling *egunegun*, or ancestral spirits. Referred to as "masks", masquerade performers, or "egunegun" for the ancestral spirits they embody, these individuals also have the duty, when performing, to convey criticism to current rulers, on behalf of the people in the voice of the ancestors. Since they bear such serious responsibility, they too can be criticised and even ousted by the community they serve should the job not be done with due discipline (Oke, 2007, p.87).

Yorùbá know that those in the costumes and behind the masks are living persons among them, and many of them even often know the names of the persons wearing the masks during Eguńguń festivals and other outings (6). However, once the Eguńguń has emerged from the grove (*igbó igbàlè*), it ceases to be regarded as an ordinary human being; and it has from that moment taken on the spirit of an ancestor, and in its acquired spiritual personality, each Eguńguń is regarded as deserving of the respect, support and maintenance of the entire community. (Oke 2007, p.86)

So the function of intermediary elevates the status of the selected masked performers, but there is an in-built exchange of expectations, as the remainder of the quote above indicates,

...it is clear to the discerning that in a short while the festival would soon be over and the spirit will be out of the persons who were in the masks. (Oke, 2007, p.86)

The performers must therefore be careful not to abuse the status they have been temporarily afforded. Because they are seen to intercede between the will of the deities and the will of ordinary humans, performers are reminded through poems, injunctions, and a shared common sense, that they must be critically aware of their powers and handle them responsibly. Through the performance of traditional

messages to egunegun masked performers, the public become critics, active participants, as well as religious worshippers.

Hence, in a significant way, the Eguńguń festival is an annual re-affirmation or re-enactment of the social contract between the ancestors and the community which marks the institutionalization of periodic social commentary and communal appraisal of the community. [It] provides an opportunity for a review of the performance of each Eguńguń in meeting the people's expectation during the preceding year, and provides a time for the Eguńguń to interact physically with their patron-communities through entertainment, inspired directives, moral reproach or praise, benediction and gratitude (Oke, 2007, p.86)

In the lyrics are evidence of inter-related play and improvisation as Margaret Drewal describes it,

Whenever improvisation is a performative strategy in ritual, it places ritual squarely within the domain of play. It is indeed the playing, the improvising that engages people, drawing them into the action, constructing their relationships, thereby generating multiple and simultaneous discourses always surging between harmony/disharmony, order/disorder, integration/opposition and so on. (...) ritual and play are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Drewal, 1992, pp.7-8)

Through linguistic slippage as well as direct censure, the poems create a bold discourse on power, its potential abuse, and the consequences there of. They also evidence a knowingly self-conscious participation in ritual that evokes the supernatural, but is constantly aware of the mortal limitations of its players. Oke affirms this with his examples of reminders to Egunegun of responsibilities that accompany the rights and privileges of their calling. Some examples cited and explained by Oke are,

‘Èni tí à ń wò, kì í wòran’

(The actor should not become a spectator.) (...), a person who is being looked up to lead should not abdicate his/her duties or derelict in them. (...) a person who is the focus of public attention should not lose focus.) (Oke, 2007, p.90).

‘Èbitì tó pa eéguń kò jèbi; kínni Owólàńké ń wá ní ìdí eẏlń’

(The trap that killed the masquerade is not to blame; what did Owólàńké (...) want (...) with the palm-fruit bait in the trap.) Public office is an arena of limitless temptations (...). However, it is expected that they will always not fall into the temptations. Should any one of them fall (...) the consequent ignominy is well deserved..." (2007, p.90)

'Owó olówó ni Eguńguń ñ ná.
(i.e. "The Eguńguń spends other people's money"). During their public outings, Eguńguń depend on public patronage for their sustenance (...). A discerning masquerade is expected to know that he owes his well being to the pleasure of his patrons. (2007, p.96)

The implications of such an arrangement for voicing critical judgements is that it is important, for the well being of society as a whole, that all stake holders have an opportunity to give and receive critical feedback. Yoruba ritual, religion, and social structure are intrinsically self aware, and designed to remind the individual that life and thought are ongoing processes, requiring the ability to step back and evaluate one's actions and work. From a pedagogic perspective, this is valuable material. We want students to feel pride in their work, but also be able to see its flaws, areas for improvement, and ways in which it impacts on those around them.

As Oke states,

African cultures, in their various manifestations, cannot but contain sound ethical principles for the proper conduct of those charged with the responsibility of managing the social life of the people. It is in this belief that the Eguńguń aspect of Yorùbá culture is being explored to re-discover and bring a critical awareness of the rational social values and ethical principles contained in it that can be profitably blended into formal, informal and non-formal African educational and leadership training programs. (2007, p.89)

Yoruba Philosophy of Education

In the same way that Oke calls for a reassessment of Yoruba ideas on leadership, so Ademola Kazeem Fayemi and OC Macaulay-Adeyelu argue for examination and integration of useful elements of Yoruba philosophy of education in contemporary settings. Doing so they argue, would avoid problems created by schooling systems founded in colonial times, and further equitable and sustainable development in

modern day Nigeria. They focus on Yoruba ideas on education as a means of developing the whole person, one who acquires wisdom that goes beyond the learning of facts, and continues to evolve and adapt through time.

the Yoruba conception of education is marked by the underlying philosophical principles of functionalism, moralism and progressivism. These principles, (...) are of great relevance to the quest of contemporary African societies for education that will serve as a catalyst for development. (Oke, 2007, p.44)

This type of education they argue does not exist in current Nigerian education systems, since they are based on colonial structures and expectations. Values superimposed in colonial times have been further institutionalised after independence, as a particular kind of qualification led, elitist system of training in particular subjects, creates dichotomies, they assert, in pupil and student self-perception. They consider this particularly significant since graduates of these elitist educational systems inevitably become privileged participants in societies they are not trained to fully understand.⁵

By contrast,

Education for the Yoruba is life-long process. Education is seen by them as any act or experience that had an integrative and formative effect on the mind, character, skills, physical and spiritual abilities of the individual to enable him/her live effectively [sic] and responsibly in the society. (Fayemi and Macaulay-Adeyelu, 2009, p.44)

To date, however, in the course of conducting this research no *direct* application of Yoruba ideas to contemporary pedagogic practice has come to light; neither has any precedent been located of the application of Yoruba ideas to pedagogy in the Higher Art Education environment, nor a correlation to Vedantic worldviews, much less a construction of pedagogic principles and practices arising from combining specific elements of both thought systems. To further this line of enquiry, into potential contemporary application of Yoruba ideas, it is necessary to encounter

⁵ Some relevant recent papers on leadership in Nigeria include D.E. Gberevbie, A.O. Shodipo and F.O. Oviasogie, "Leadership and Accountability in Nigeria", 2013; also an entry on Traditional Education in an F.A.O. Corporate Document Repository <http://www.fao.org/docrep/t6260e/t6260e04.htm>

humanity as endowed with agency in the Yoruba world view.

Humanity as Author of Gods and Transitional Space

Fundamental to Yoruba philosophy is the belief in the primacy of human experience in the creation of religion, illustrated by the way audiences of masked performances display a parallel awareness of the human medium- the local person who performs- as well as the ancestral spirit whose message he conveys. The primacy of human experience is also implied in the three-way ethical system portrayed by Abimbola that expects moral conduct of the gods as well as of humans. Even more clearly stated, this principle of humanity as author of religion is found in the proverb,

“Bi o s’enia, imale o si”

“If humanity were not, the gods would not be” (Soyinka, 1995, p.10)

Wole Soyinka explains,

Whatever semantic evasion we employ- the godness, the beingness of god, the otherness of, or assimilate oneness with god- they remain abstractions of man-emanating concepts or experiences which presuppose the human medium....[this] is formulative of Yoruba cosmogonic wisdom. (Soyinka, 1995, pp.10-11)

By implication, human beings are placed firmly in control of their spiritual as well as social well being, and by extension of their destiny. Control is exercised through ritual linked to mythological narratives that are the outer signs of Yoruba religion, based on traditional African ethics referred to earlier. In these narratives, sensitive relationships between humans, natural world, and supernatural realms are the norm. Yoruba rituals, and the *orisa* to whom they are addressed are performative of the knowledge that human control is effective only when keeping within finely balanced natural and metaphysical cycles. In the conceptualisation and rationale of these concurrent cycles lies the root of Yoruba ontological thought. There is a cause and effect relationship between distinct spheres of time and space. *Being*, in this world view is a continuous process of encountering through ritual, both the present empirical world and its metaphysical counterpart. Hence mythological narratives of

deities and humans transitioning between different cycles of time and space are mapped onto the individual mind. And the mind in Yoruba thought is continuously evolving, changing, and judging carefully the actions and perceptions of each moment and each particular situation.

In between the distinct worlds, lies an area of transitional void recognised in many African religions. Soyinka constructs a cosmology of three concurrent worlds, the ancestors and gods, the living, and the unborn. He refers to the void between them as,

... the less understood or explored fourth space, the dark continuum of transition where occurs the inter-transmutation of essence ideals and materiality. It houses the ultimate expression of cosmic will. (Soyinka, 1995, p.26)

Ritual maintains balance in inevitable intercessions between different spheres of time and space, through controlled contact. Thus creativity, as ritual objects and ceremonies, is a conduit between mortal and supernatural forces. This functional role assigned to creativity is paralleled in the freedom, play and interplay employed in poems addressed to *egunegun* masked performers. The texts slip between praise and warnings of the fine line between authority and abuse of privileges, slipping also between allegory, symbol, metaphor, and culturally understood humorous analogy.

In this light, creativity can be seen as an expression of cosmic force. Creativity enables ritual, and ritual endows creativity with a function beyond the mundane. This relationship between the mundane and the cosmic is found throughout Yoruba thought and culture, and recent scholarship such as Oke's is concerned with extracting psychologically sophisticated observations of human nature and civic life from the poetry and symbolism of traditional sayings, songs, and customs. Ritual codifies therefore confirms the moral theory that underlies ethical conduct between humanity, nature, and supernatural beings. Creativity as crafted tools, linguistic slippage and play provides imaginative functionality to ritual. Therefore one can conclude that the "whole person" that Yoruba education aims to form must

learn to be creative, and be taught creatively. What better basis can there be for art school pedagogy that nurtures the self?

Of further relevance to education, is self-awareness in using ritual to remind the individual of interconnections between him/her and the community. In ontology that sees the individual as shaped by immediate social as well as other worldly cosmic influences, Yoruba ritual also invites reflection on the *causes* of one's actions and impulses. For example in coming of age ceremonies, divination practices determine which of the pantheon of Yoruba deities a child is particularly affiliated with. In discerning and coming to terms with that deity, parents come to understand the nature of the child. As the child grows, s/he comes to understand the characteristics of the *orisa* s/he is associated with, and the consensually understood flaws, as well as positive qualities of the deity. S/he is then expected to use this knowledge in order to assess, reflect on and determine action in difficult situations.

The Mind in Yoruba Thought

In the previously mentioned paper on applied ethics Abimbole explains the Yoruba concept of personhood as composed of two parts with the second further subdivided into three: *ara* is the physical, material body, and a metaphysical "soul complex" is divided into *emi*, *ori* and *cse*. (2001, pp. 14-16)

Table 2: Yoruba Concepts of Self and Self Knowledge

<i>Part of the self</i>	<i>definition</i>	<i>function</i>
<i>ara</i>	The corporeal body-consisting of the skeleton, flesh, organs, etc. The Ara is created by the deities <i>Ogun</i> and <i>Obatala</i> and is distinct from the “soul complex” (2001, pp.14-16)	The everyday functions of the body
Composite metaphysical self –the “soul complex” consists of three parts:		
<i>emi</i>	Breath, or the breath of life, imparted by the Supreme Being <i>Olodumare</i> .	
<i>ori</i>	“a personal divinity”, (2001, p.14) also referred to as the “inner head”; each individual is said to be particularly influenced by, and share temperaments with a specific orisa (deity) from the pantheon. Identifying this deity is key to understanding oneself and being in charge of oneself.	“functions as the principle of earthly success or failure” (p 14) because it shares the temperament of the personal deity him/herself, including flaws. “principle of material actualisation” (2001, p. 16)
<i>cse</i>	“The principle of freedom” (2001, p.14) In masked performances evoking ancestral spirits, it is the <i>cse</i> of these sublime beings that is invited to enter the form of the medium for the duration of the ritual.	“will to success” (2001, p.14) “principle of individual effort, strife or struggle (necessary) before the potentialities encapsulated in one’s <i>Ori</i> can be actualised” (2001, p.16)

The mind’s composite nature and especially the *ori* as “principle of material actualisation” highlights the Yoruba expectation that the individual must know her/himself in order to arrive at appropriate action.

Yoruba visualisations of the self reinforce the importance of critical social cohesion, as seen in the role assigned to ritual, and the vision of the cosmos it underlines. While it incorporates mythological deities and the presence of deceased ancestors and intercessory spirits, which may seem illogical to the contemporary mind, the self in Yoruba thought also can be seen as a precursor to psychological analysis of the individual and his/her actions. In contemporary discourse, if the idea of the

“inner head” as governed by the temperament of particular deities is replaced with terminology from modern psychology, it can be seen as the self composed of subconscious and conscious memory. What is therapy, if not a coming to terms with the causes of one’s actions, and endeavouring to change them if they have become harmful to oneself or others? The influences of the inner head are inclinations-and do not constitute an inevitable destiny. Indeed knowing one’s influencing *orisa* well through mythological narratives, and considering the inherent dangers *in relation to* the beneficent aspects of the *orisa’s* personality, can be said to constitute wisdom in the Yoruba system.

Furthermore, this message while conveying the individual’s responsibility in making the right choice in conduct, also conveys an understanding that mistakes will be made, that people and gods are fallible, and that with critical judgement the situation can be righted again. It is in this arena that education also fits. To complete the statement quoted earlier,

In consonance with the Yoruba understanding, Babatunde Fafunwa defines education as ‘the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour, which are of positive value to the society he lives’ [Fafunwa 1982, 17] (Fayemi and Macaulay-Adeyelure, 2009, p.44)

True to this multiplicity of purpose, there is extensive, nuanced vocabulary in the Yoruba language that captures the meaning of education,

The word ‘education’ in Yoruba is *eko* [which] has a broader meaning than *imo* (knowledge). *Ogbon* (understanding), *iwe* (literacy), *ile-iwe* (schooling) and *oye* (wisdom). (...) *eko* means the actual display and consistent demonstration of the epistemic features of knowledge, understanding, wisdom and other ethical values of excellence in character, honesty and modesty in attitude, and self restraint in action and expression.

For the traditional Yoruba, to be adjudged educated is not merely a question of being literate, bookish and having prowess in Arithmetic (...). It goes beyond that, [accounting] for the Yoruba proverb (...) *iwe ki n se ogbon, a le jo ikun ni* (literacy is not wisdom, but only an addendum to already acquired knowledge) [Balogun 2008, 124]

This proverb is not discountenancing school and literacy: it is only saying that literacy is not sufficient for obtaining further information and for modifying attitudes and behaviour. It can be deduced that for the Yoruba, it

is not only those who have been to school that can be educated. [Akinpelu 1987, 183] (Fayemi and Macaulay-Adeyelure, 2009, p.45)

This vocabulary and its implications for contemporary education practice will be revisited in chapter 4, in which pedagogic application of Vedanta and Yoruba thought will be developed by examining them in the light of Freire and Barnett’s education theory. For the moment, a recap: three key themes in Yoruba thought are followed in this research, in relation to their applicability to education. The themes are presented here again, alongside their manifestations in Yoruba practices

Table 3: Yoruba themes for pedagogy and their manifestations in society and religion

Yoruba theme identified for this research	Educational implications	Manifestation in Yoruba religious and social practice
human agency: of the social group and of the individual	Relationships between student peers, students and staff, and both students and staff in relation to society beyond the institution.	Public censure and praise of masked performers; dual relationship with theme as sacred as well as par to everyday (in the form of poems addressed to the performers)
temporal and psychological transitional spaces: the mind as shaped by internal and external influences of past and present.	internal world of students coming to terms with themselves and their actions; how educational culture can facilitate, or obstruct the process	Application of ethics to mundane, natural, and supernatural spheres; Interaction between time spheres as in contact with ancestors; rituals of divination and masks/ <i>egunegun</i>
life as an ongoing process of evolution and learning: the role of self criticality and social structures to instill it.	internal journey of the students, but also the student’s ability to absorb useful criticism, to self evaluate, and self defend where needed. In acquiring such skills as a	“Play” in language and communication <i>Egunegun</i> masked performers Ascribing of characteristics of particular orisa to an individual in establishing the “inner head”

	student, s/he is able to continue the process into social interaction beyond the institution.	
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In the remainder of this chapter, themes above are exemplified through the character and rituals associated with the Yoruba *orisa* of creativity and destruction, Ogun. (Both Ogun and the Yoruba conceptualisation of the self, are introduced in the Yoruba/Vedanta course.)

Agency and the Myth of Ogun- an illustration of Yoruba Ideas on Power, Space, and Time

Accounts of Yoruba deities often differ, their exact number, specific roles and significance can vary from region to region. Ogun is one of only two or three pan-Yoruban deities. Other gods having pan-Yorubic presence are Ifa the deity of divination, and Esu, trickster, messenger, conveyor of sacrifices to the gods, whom Ogun-dipe describes as metaphor for fate. In all there are said to be four hundred and one Yoruba deities (Pemberton, 1989, p.106). Soyinka (1995) emphasises the significance of Obatala, Sango and Ogun because their stories convey essential aspects of the Yoruba thought system, and because all three have survived the journey to the new world.

Soyinka (1995), bases his chosen emphasis on these three deities' complex relationships to humanity and other gods. Also, their attributes place them in such a relationship to each other, that either godly or human over-emphasis on one has a negative misbalancing effect on the powers of the others. Ogun is the *orisa* of creativity and destruction. Unlike the *orisa* Obatala, who is a creator of mortal beings, Ogun has a more abstract description as the bearer of the creative impulse itself. This makes him particularly interesting from the perspective of artists and designers, and even more so because he is bearer of creativity as well as destruction. Ogun's is an intrinsically dualist nature, and of this Soyinka says,

In Yoruba metaphysics, no other deity in the pantheon correlates so absolutely, through his own history and nature, with the numinous temper of the fourth area of existence which we have labeled the abyss of transition. (1995, p.26)

This is explained by Ogun's mythological origins and the story of his great service to mankind and gods alike. The pantheon of deities are said to have been generated from the shattering into fragments of a primal, "original, solitary being" (p. 27) This original being was not however entirely alone, for he was attended by a slave, Atunda, presumably fashioned by his master although there is little explanation of Atunda's origins. The main function of Atunda's presence in the story of the generation of the pantheon seems to have been the unintentional start of this process through an act of rebellion against the primal being. Watching over his master as he worked in his garden one day, Atunda rolled a boulder onto him, shattering him into a thousand and one pieces. These shards were hurled into the abyss and they became embedded in various deities, bringing about a pantheon of *orisas* who became identified with various forms of labour and professions. In the being of Ogun was embedded the shard of "original Oneness" Essential to this shard was the spark of creativity, making Ogun the embodiment of creativity and technological proficiency. These attributes enabled him to assume leadership of the gods at a crucial juncture. Some shards of the original being had landed in the mortal world, bringing about human beings. Containing only certain aspects of the primal being, the gods did not feel complete in themselves. Some communion was necessary with mankind, who embodied the mortal counterpart of the eternal shards the gods had absorbed. The common origin of man and gods is therefore clear in Yoruba thought, as is the need for the completion of each realm of existence by codified contact with the other. Neither gods nor mortals were spiritually complete without the other. Unfortunately the void between worlds had become impossible to pass. Attempts were made but all proved unsuccessful until Ogun came forward and,

armed with the first technical instrument which he had forged from the ore of mountain wombs, he cleared the primordial jungle, plunged through the abyss and called on the others to follow. (1995, p.29)

This first technical instrument is symbolically recalled in the staff of Ogun, used in ceremonies associated with him, again demonstrating the role of ritual in keeping power balance and creativity uppermost in our minds. In being the first to enter primordial chaos, Ogun risked total disintegration. Only by "harnessing the untouched part of himself, the will" (1995 p.30) was he able to avoid complete dissolution. He emerged in the mortal world, having bridged the terrifying void between worlds, and the gods were thus able to enter the mortal world and move freely in it. There they lived for some time, each returning eventually to their own cosmic realm after having interacted with human beings in various ways formative to the Yoruba world. In expressing their gratitude to Ogun for his sacrifice in having risked annihilation as the first to penetrate the void, the other gods suggested he become their king. Significantly, Ogun refused. Human beings it would seem were not so wise. In his first wanderings in the mortal world, Ogun came eventually to the town of Ire where he was made to feel so welcome that he came to the aid of the townspeople when they went to war with a neighboring enemy. The people of Ire, like the gods before them wished to express their gratitude by crowning him king, and again Ogun refused. Unfortunately a party of elders sought out Ogun who had retired to the forest to hunt and farm. They implored him to reconsider the crown. Ogun agreed, but appeared in the town deliberately dressed in his fiercest war attire, his body smeared in blood and dressed in leather clothes. The townspeople fled, and Ogun hoped they had learned their lesson. However, he was sought out again by them, and beseeched to come in less aggressive guise so that he could properly be welcomed. Reluctantly Ogun agreed, coming to the town this time dressed in palm fronds, he was duly crowned king and leader of Ire. Tragedy soon struck, as during a battle in which Ire was winning, Esu the trickster left some palm wine to tempt Ogun during a lull in the fighting. Drinking it down, Ogun acquired new energy, and defeated more of the enemy than ever before. The palm wine however, had also dulled his senses, and he became unable to differentiate between the enemy and the fighters of Ire itself. With the same rigour he had cut down the enemy, he slew his own men.

The Inevitability of Flaws in Humanity and Gods

The principle of duality embodied by Ogun is present in his many roles. While Ogun carries the will to create, the uncontrolled will to destroy lies latent within his being. His own awareness of this explains his refusal to become king of the gods, who appear to have had the good sense to accept his decision, while human beings did not. The logic of the tale is that the same force of will that had made possible Ogun's resistance to disintegration in the abyss of the fourth space between worlds, when it operating as pure force, divorced from its social links, became a threat to men and gods. Thus the need for critical awareness in human conduct.

The killing of his own men at Ire, Soyinka says,

... was the possibility that had haunted him from the beginning and made him shrink from the role of king over men. (1995, p.29)

For, inherent in Ogun's act of bravery was a manifestation of pride in the face of primordial forces,

(He) not only dared to look into transitional essence but triumphantly bridged it with knowledge, with art, with vision and the mystic creativity of science- a total and profound hubristic assertiveness that is beyond parallel in Yoruba experience. (1995, p.157)

The loss of control over his powers by Ogun is interpreted as a penalty for this act of hubris, and a reminder that balance is the ultimate nature of the universe.

This raises the question, should Ogun not have crossed the abyss? It can be answered by another question, *could* he not have crossed the abyss? There is another aspect to Ogun's character that resonates with human beings the world over, and lies at the heart of his popularity across Africa and the diaspora. He is an embodiment of human curiosity, a searching quality that leads inevitably to risks. In other words, thousands of years ago in Africa we find a profound understanding of the dichotomies and oppositional pulls of human experience and its psychological manifestations. Recognition expressed through the myth of Ogun of the human ability to differentiate between the known and the unknown, to construct conceptual boundaries between these arenas, and, to break its own restrictions.

While defining an area of no entry, the Yoruba world view seems at the same time to acknowledge that human beings will always break boundaries, and enter the unknown. It ties in also with the Yoruba concept of education as “ongoing process”, never complete, always requiring critical judgment and balance between experience and book learning. The concept of dualist tensions or of a struggle between opposing forces inherent in ones nature, is embedded in myth and coded into social custom. In each of the three major deities Obatala, Sango, Ogun, lies a fatal flaw, each linked to an act of hubris. Obatala, the deity of functional creation, also succumbed to the pleasures of palm wine while engaged in an important task – that of fashioning human beings. He is said to have created disabled mortals as a result. From a contemporary perspective the implication that disability might be the result of a cosmic flaw is unacceptable; yet here again the Yoruba mind provides an interesting balance, since Obatala is therefore the patron *orisa* of disabled persons, and they in turn are respected as his special children. Obatala’s penalty for his act of hubris- that of drinking on the job- was enforced imprisonment against false charges in the kingdom of his best friend Sango, who failed to recognise him, disguised as a mendicant. Sango himself was to suffer a profound sense of failure as leader, unable to help his people in the famine and chaos which followed the imprisonment of the veiled Obatala. Soyinka’s narrative arc therefore underlines Yoruba intricacies in discussing power, relationship and self awareness.

By placing disproportionate importance on Ogun over other *orisas*, the people of Ire were also responsible for the fate of their warriors. Human beings share the fatal flaws of their deities, and must constantly be on guard against acts of unwarranted pride. For this reason, at traditional festivals celebrating Ogun, rather than abstain from the palm wine that caused Ogun’s terrible mistake, it is drunk freely; Ogun’s fatal flaw is remembered and enacted, so that followers can be reminded of their own. By contrast in festivals dedicated to Obatala, there is abstention from palm wine. This reflexivity between myth, society, religion and critical reflection on actions, can be seen as a way of encouraging balance of different tendencies within our own personalities. It is this very humanistic aspect of the Yoruba religious

system which is its hallmark.⁶

In education, resistance to the idea of perfection in either mortal or cosmic entities emanates in its conception as a continuous journey of aspiration,

...we should note that an *omoluwabi* [educated person] is not a person of impeccable character or an iron cast with no flaws. This is because the Yoruba abhor all claims of absolutism, and believe that as humans we can only, and ought to, strive towards the ideal, because perfection is illusory [Fayemi and Macaulay-Adeyelure, 2009, p.171]

The Yoruba Social Contract

John Pemberton comments on the meaning of two civic festivals devoted to Ogun in the northern Yoruba town of Ila-Orangun. Resonating with Oke on proverbs addressed to *egunegun* masked performers, Pemberton sees the rituals of the festivals as a way of recognising duality in existence, and the dichotomies present in positions of power,

My reading of the ritual of Ira Ogun (the ritual segment of the Festival of Ogun, the Odun Ogun) and of the material representations and oral traditions associated with it, suggest that Ogun symbolises the reality of and ambiguity of violence in human experience, a violence that creates through acts of destruction, but which can also destroy what it has created. The rites of Odun Ogun require the Yoruba to recognise the irony of cultural existence: death is essential to life. Yet these same rites reveal that if humans are to achieve social and political accord, then they must submit to a cultural power which can appease, even transcend the dreadful power of Ogun. That is what is acknowledged in the festivals [of Ogun]. (Pemberton in Barnes, 1989, p.107)

The Festival of Ogun is also an occasion to reassert the nature of balance sought within society. For example in Ila-Orangun, within the ritual associated with the festival of Ogun, a mock battle takes place between titled chiefs and the Oba, represented by his palace servants. The enacted skirmish ensues after repeated invitations from the Oba to the chiefs to enter the palace verandah have been first

⁶ The duality of Ogun, and of the forces of the universe, are also frequently represented in Yoruba art in various versions of opposing interlinked forms, such as opposing crescents.

ignored, then reluctantly accepted. This “ritual affront” to the *Oba* is explained by Pemberton as a dramatic reminder to the king that the

the people over whom he reigns have another allegiance, another locus of political identity than that which is expressed in his royal person. This is the primordial bond of kinship (Pemberton, 1989)

Even though the *Oba* is selected by divination and therefore represents other worldly as well as political power, the significance of mortal kinship must also gently be reasserted at each festival. For the king, once selected and crowned, becomes aligned to a supernatural kinship group of the *Obas*, whose founding ancestor was *Oduduwa*, the “divine mythical king” of all the Yoruba peoples. Although the *Oba* is allowed to worship his own personal family ancestors, he must do so as an ordinary, not royal personage.

Ultimately the dualist tension within Yoruba philosophy, recognised within the individual self, played out in opposing social allegiances, and enacted in ritual and performance, evidences awareness of psychological pressures on individuals. Yoruba thought goes further and posits this duality as inherent in humankind and the world, and inductive of agency in the face of challenge. For *Ogun* represents

the embodiment of challenge, the Promethean instinct in man constantly at the service of society for its self-realisation. (Soyinka, p.157)

Thirst for achievement leads to success but carries the risk of unleashing forces of imbalance which must by definition be harmful. In the context of craftsmanship, for the Yoruba, the innate nature of materials themselves must be respected, understood, and properly treated, lest their life force, and the cosmic balance of which they are a part, be violated in some way. As the individual self, so each natural material that humans use has *cse*, “essence ideal”; in humanity, as explained earlier, *cse* forms part of the “soul complex”; in inanimate objects animals, such plants, metals, minerals and rocks it constitutes its elemental nature. *Ogun* is associated with the natural element iron, whose nature echoes all the contradictions within the deity. Just as iron had immense impact on human society, so *Ogun*, whose mythology dates to the African Iron Age, enables a huge leap

forward for *orisas* and humankind. This is symbolised in the nature and variety of the professions to whom he is patron deity⁷, materials and methods they utilise, and explains how he can simultaneously be popularly and poetically be described as, god of creativity, god of war, master craftsman and artist, farmer and warrior, guardian of the road, explorer and hunter, custodian of the sacred oath. Yet in the narrative of Ogun's journey to the earth, it is in his near dissolution that resides his most significant meaning. Within his *cse*, the creativity which he represents harbors equally the possibility of destruction. The same creative impulse that enables him to defy the abyss, carries also the potential for bringing about the chaos of the abyss. Order and disturbance are both intrinsically related to Ogun's nature. Therefore in the duality of his spirit, he conveys human beings' most endearing and dangerous traits: the potential for creativity, curiosity and with it the potential for loss of control. But the Yoruba system does not leave it at that. Instead, it pre-empts such chaos by instilling rituals associated with Ogun with reminders of the contradictions within him through the material used in the rituals, through references to his mythological narrative in the enacting of his fatal flaw, in the "ritual affront" to the Oba, it transposes and extends this collective knowledge into more immediately recognizable and relevant civic relationships.

For art education the most interesting resonances can be found in the interconnected polarities of Ogun's creativity and potential destructiveness. The Yoruba place Ogun, as force of creativity, centrally in the efforts of mortals to evade the abyss of the transitional world. Ogun's role as the fearless maker of bridges gives him a timeless quality, and gives Yoruba thought an unmistakably humanist edge. Ogun, like humankind, accepts challenges and continually redefines and interprets new situations. Inherent in his personality is his status as outsider, recluse of the forest who prefers solitude, yet who is the harbinger of urbanisation, and has powerful – and unpredictable-effects when he mingles in society. This parallels interestingly with modernist paradigms of artist-genius, outside of society,

⁷ blacksmiths and metalworkers, wood carvers, soldiers, tattoo artists, and latterly garage owners, and taxi drivers

potentially misunderstood and self destructive, while intensely creative and original. It also resonates with post-modern ideas of artists as interpreters and revealers of society, creating and critiquing discourse about the everyday, the mundane, and of the very rituals of which art and language are a part. The crucial difference between Ogun in the Yoruba framework, and the artist in modernism or post-modernism, is that the inevitable alienation of outsider status is pre-empted by expecting and allowing for its resolution through ritual. Hence it can be argued that the Yoruba perspective takes the recognition of individual alienation as its starting point. The terror of dissolution is acknowledged and ritual provided to bridge the gap, or reduce the size of the unknown void.

Considering Yoruba thought in this way, it is all the more astonishing that rather than being referenced for its rich sources of language, custom, nuance and discourse on the nature of arts practice, it and other African art continues to be referenced only in relation to its influence on modernism, and that too in the distorted framework of “Primitivism”. Why is it that throughout the modernist era, and arguably into the post-modern, a valorized and largely fictional primitivist reading of African art continues to be the only context within which the art and thought of Africa has entered art schools?⁸

In summary of the thesis thus far, chapter 1 has provided autobiographical background by way of introducing the pedagogic philosophy proposed in the thesis and citing main influences on its conceptualisation. Chapter 2 has laid out fundamentals of Vedantic thought on the self, individual agency, and self knowledge through unattached work; the concept of unattached work has been used as springboard for envisioning art school pedagogy that nurtures self criticality and creative individuality, but maintains self esteem and social responsibility. Chapter 3 concluding here has established key concepts of Yoruba thought that resonate with the same dialogue. It has been shown that:

- Contemporary scholars are already appraising and re evaluating Yoruba

⁸ As discussed in the introduction and in chapter 1.

egunegun proverbs, traditional medicine, and ideas on education in contemporary contexts.

- ‘Play’ and creative license are also intrinsic to and characteristic of Yoruba thought and custom. These qualities are crucial in art school education, and there is an interesting underlying discourse of challenge that prevents authority from being taken for granted.
- Traditional Yoruba understanding of education is highly applicable to the pedagogy proposed in this research, because education is envisaged as an ongoing journey, critically responding to the present moment.
- Yoruba conceptualization of the self -the physical body and its “soul complex” alongside the social contract that it implies, offers a starting point for ontology of empowerment that balances empathy, criticality, and personal well being by tying in the personal with the social. This shows that Yoruba understanding of education is tied in with the understanding of the self.
- Myths of Ogun are particularly apt in uncovering Yoruba ideas on creativity and individual genius.
- Self criticality is a hallmark of Yoruba thought and custom.

All of these can be written into education theory and pedagogic practice in art school. Chapter 4 will now demonstrate ways in which Vedantic and Yoruba thought can be integrated with Barnett and Freire’s education theory.

4

Vedantic and Yoruba Thought in Relation to Barnett's Will to Learn and Freire's Critical Consciousness

In this chapter, Barnett's will to learn provides a route into ontological discourse on education, centred on the student self, incorporating Yoruba and Vedantic ideas. Once this is established, Paulo Freire's "conscientisation" translated as critical consciousness (Freire, 2001, p.17) and "true dialogue" (1996, p.26), developed throughout his works, are shown to parallel the dialogic and critical in Vedanta and Yoruba thought, especially in relation to art education. Barnett's will to learn is aligned with the *jiva atman* of Vedanta, and the *ori* of Yoruba philosophy. Freire's concept of "becoming fully human" through an education system that enables "true dialogue" (Freire 1996, p.73) and *critical consciousness* is aligned with the imperative of critical self reflection and understanding of education as an ongoing journey of holistic understanding in both traditions.

In table 4 the key elements of Vedanta and Yoruba thought proposed as relevant to contemporary education, particularly to art school pedagogy are recapped. The left hand column for each tradition names an overarching theme, and the column on the right for each tradition names an ontological or epistemological tool that acts as sign for that conceptual theme and also enables its enactment. The selected themes from each tradition are roughly aligned with each other; a direct parallel is not suggested, but resonance between the themes is, with the aim of arriving at a synthesis in later chapters.

Table 3: Yoruba and Vedantic concepts of self and self knowledge

VEDANTA Theme applied to this Research	Vedanta Ontological/Epistemological Tools for Enactment of the Theme	YORUBA Theme applied to this Research	Yoruba Ontological/Epistemological Tools for Enactment of the Theme
<p><i>Jiva-atman</i> individuated soul that is part of a greater Consciousness</p>	<p><i>karma yoga</i> Non attached work/ work for work's sake), outcomes and consequences of which are carried through multiple life cycles</p> <p>Reflection on the actions of the individual</p>	<p>Temporal and psychological transitional spaces: the mind as shaped by internal and external influences of past and present.</p>	<p>Interaction between timespheres: in contact with ancestors; rituals of divination and masks/<i>egunegun</i></p> <p>Application of ethics to mundane, natural, and supernatural spheres</p>
		<p>Cyclical Time</p>	<p>Rebirth; qualities of the "inner head"</p>
<p>Subtle body comprised of <i>chitta, manas, buddhi, ahamkar</i></p> <p><i>jiva atman</i></p>	<p>Reflection on the nature of the mind and consciousness</p> <p>Concept of balance of <i>chitta, manas, buddhi, ahamkar</i> (Wisdom or 'right action' as demonstrating balance of intellect and empathy)</p>	<p>Life as an ongoing process of evolution and learning:</p> <p>Signification of self criticality, criticality in general and creativity in social structures</p>	<p>Education as <i>eko</i>, not merely book learning; educated person as <i>omoluwabi</i></p> <p>Play in language and communication</p> <p>Ascribing of characteristics of particular <i>orisa</i> to an individual in establishing the <i>ori</i></p>
<p>Consciousness <i>Atman</i> as a timeless universal principle and the basis of mutual respect</p>	<p><i>Atmabodh</i> self-knowledge that leads to understanding of individuated souls as ultimately one.</p>		
<p><i>Viveka</i>-discrimination/ discernment</p>	<p>Meditative practice of <i>neti- neti</i> ('not this/ not this')</p> <p><i>Upanishad</i> "to sit near to" (Sanskrit Dictionary) as a form of education: Transmission of knowledge as questions and answers between teacher and student leading to Guru-disciple tradition</p>	<p>Human agency: of the social group and of the individual</p>	<p>Public censure and praise of masked performers; dual relationship with them as sacred as well as part of everyday (in the form of poems addressed to the performers)</p>

An ontological vocabulary for learning and teaching

Barnett (2007) calls for ontological dialogue about students' experience of education, bringing to mind themes identified in my own reflective log of key influences and their later manifestations. These have not only nurtured the teacher/ artist/ researcher that I am now, they have also informed a metaphysical sense of the self. This would seem to be what Barnett describes as the ontological being that the student brings to the educational environment, and that needs to be addressed,

If (...) we are seriously concerned with students, a suitable vocabulary and a suitable line of enquiry have to embrace matters of 'Being', 'self', 'will' and 'becoming'. How can these matters be avoided? If we are to tackle them, we are bound to embark on a philosophical journey, strictly, on an ontological journey, in which matters of student being are brought into view and engaged with. (Barnett, 2007, p.9)

He goes on to define the purpose of his book *A Will to Learn- Being a Student in an Age of Uncertainty*, stating,

...we are urgently in need of an ontological turn in our thinking about higher education and, by extension, in our research into higher education. Matters of what it is to be a student, of the kinds of human being that tutors might be looking to nurture, and of the pedagogic possibilities and even responsibilities. (2007, p.9)

In developing an ontological discourse on student experience, Barnett identifies an innate drive within the student being that spurs her on to seek information, knowledge, and skills, often despite enormous personal or institutional hurdles. This desire to learn is formulated and auctioned by the student's will, and he suggests that its nurturing should be the principle concern of university lecturers to whom the book is addressed.

The primary term, indeed, is that of will and the key point I want to establish is that a student's engagement with her course of study depends on her will. (2007, p.10)

This is borne out in ADIX student narratives, disclosing an urge to keep going despite setbacks, as a means of saving face, of ambition, or of desire to keep learning and finding solutions. These will be discussed in chapter 6.

Barnett further suggests that current pedagogical practices are unable to support this aspect of student learning because they envisage the student as a learner of

particular discourses, and not as *a whole person*. He critiques an emphasis on “the two projects - of knowing and acting” as pedagogic parameters, since “they leave out (...) the student as a person, especially her will and her being” and declares a “desperate need of thinking and practices that take the student as a human being seriously” (Barnett, 2007, p.26). By this he means that universities have traditionally focussed on the imparting of intellectual knowledge and skills, as though divorced from the student as a person. From the inception of the European university in the fifteenth century, “to the middle of the twentieth century” (2007, p.26), emphasis has been on transmission of theoretical knowledge alone. By contrast, in the twenty-first century, Barnett states, due to various political and economic factors, “higher education was urged to broaden its ambit to include a skills agenda” (2007, p.26). It should be noted that for art schools in Britain and other vocational training programmes sited at or related to the university system, this chronology does not quite hold true. In art schools, the shift from an emphasis on abstract knowledge to an emphasis on discernible skills can be said to have taken an opposite trajectory. Through the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the direction of fine art and to some extent design has moved further away from skill based education. This is borne out by all the interviews conducted for this research. Be that as it may, in art schools today, a governmental expectation of market aware course offerings that proffer discernible practical skills applicable to employability also applies. Barnett refers to a dual thread in higher education that sets pedagogic agendas: that of acquiring theoretical knowledge (“knowing”) and the other of imparting skills (“acting”) (Barnett, 2007, p.26). Barnett finds both inadequate in relation to the student *being*- the whole student who is led by his will.

This same will can be easily damaged or even silenced by the pedagogic environment. And so the aim of education should be to nurture the student being, to support her will to learn, and thereby to encourage the student’s “will to offer” and “will to proffer” quality engagement and output.

Such a will requires energy, willingness to risk, and (...) human qualities- such as courage and resilience- and dispositions- such as (...) care and authenticity. We shall, therefore need to explore the qualities and dispositions that must accompany a will to learn. (Barnett, 2007, p.10)

Art school tutors will immediately recognise some of this terminology: risk taking, courage, resilience, are highly valued in art students by their tutors, but there can be lack of explanation as to what these mean, and little discernible support for developing such qualities.

Interestingly, given the value placed on freedom of expression and individuality in art schools, it is in the acquisition of recognisable skills that art students can sometimes find a sense of worth. Being able to see one's work improve, or to recognise through demonstration or empirical experiment why an effort has failed, and how it can be redone, seems to have a liberating effect, and raise self esteem, sometimes injecting humour into the process. This was exemplified in chapter 1 and is underlined by Student K whose design had to be altered due to the limitations imposed by the material she had chosen,

I wanted to make it out of concrete. [quietly laughing] And then (...) physical constraints (...) get imposed on it and (...) the original idea doesn't match up with the physical object- [but] the physical object ends [up] narrating what I'm capable of, cause I couldn't lift any more concrete (...) I kind of enjoy that. [Student K; Interview round 3]

If education aims to instil confidence in its students, it would seem the acquisition of skills is a sound way to do so- since it enables the measuring of progress in getting to know a technique or body of knowledge better. The result of such activity seems to produce not just confidence, but also a sense of contentment within the student as a person. With reference to Barnett's call for an ontological turn a question arises. What vocabulary can we utilise in order to express this transition from the absorption of facts to confidence within the person? In the section below, Barnett's suggestions for doing so are compared with an example of current university guidance. Then, working with Barnett's vocabulary for ontologically aware pedagogy, a first correlation of those terms with Yoruba and Vedantic concepts is attempted.

Qualites, Dispositions, Authenticity, Ori, Jiva atman, and Karma Yoga

Barnett's ontological terminology comes from Heidegger. In Barnett's philosophy of education Heidegger's "Being- there" (*dasien*) is the pedagogical being. The idea of "there-being", or placedness in the context of which *dasien* attempts to define itself, is the pedagogic environment of higher education in which the student finds herself (Barnett, 2007, pp82-39). Heidegger's authenticity- or the being that emerges when it is able to modify the "they" it encounters in the wider world (Wheeler, 2015), is formulated in Barnett's terminology as the individual *student being*, since the student being encounters and discourses with the myriad demands and influences of her pedagogic environment, eventually to find her own voice. (Barnett, 2007, p 43). Heidegger's *care*- the impetus that drives *dasien* to define itself through "thrown-ness", "projection", "fallen-ness" is Barnett's will to learn (Barnett, 2007, pp 129-30)

The will to learn is made visible by the characteristic dispositions and qualities of a student.

Dispositions are the expression of a will to learn. They are the orientations that a student has towards his course of studies. Qualities, on the other hand are the form that those dispositions take. (...) a student may be disposed to work things out in his own way, but does he really have the quality of courage to accompany that disposition? (Barnett, 2007, p.101)

There are echoes here of the Vedantic concept of *gunas* or inclinations inherent in the *jiva atman*- the individuated soul. Such a possibility- of underlying characteristics that determine a person's actions and responses to the world also exist in Yoruba thought, as the shared characteristic between one's personality and that of the *orisa* one is particularly associated with. The key difference of course is that Barnett speaks not of characteristics one is born with, but that one could acquire in a healthy educational environment. In his view, certain key dispositions and qualities are nurtured in pedagogy that serves the needs of the student *being*, not just the student *mind*. He cites as,

dispositions [that are] especially fitting for higher education:

- a will to learn
- a will to engage
- a preparedness to listen
- a preparedness to explore

- a willingness to hold oneself open to experiences
- a determination to keep going forward (Barnett, 2007, p.102)

He cites as

qualities that have particular affinity with higher education:

- integrity
- carefulness
- courage
- resilience
- self-discipline
- restraint
- respect for others
- openness (Barnett, 2007, p.102)

It is illuminating to compare Barnett's two lists with current governmental literature on qualities expected of students at various higher education levels. An example is Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) guidance for providers of award related courses and programmes of study. The SCQF sets out verbal descriptors to gauge achievement levels. It attempts to encapsulate degrees of complexity, depth and breadth of expectations in qualification awards, presenting to qualification providers a means of matching their own curricula and assessment systems against twelve clearly demarcated SCQF levels (SCQF, 2010, pp.5-10).¹ Awards are defined by verbal explanation of baseline levels of attainment. Level 1 is the minimum attainment level of certain first high-school qualifications, and level 12 corresponds with doctorate studies. The twelve attainment levels are set out against six outcome "characteristics", (SCQF, 2010, p.6), more like categories or component skills emerging from learning and teaching practices. The booklet states,

The SCQF Level Descriptors have six characteristics which provide a reference point for determining the level of a qualification, learning programme, module or unit of learning or for the recognition of prior learning. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements of required learning for individual qualifications. Each level is described in terms of its characteristic general outcomes under five broad headings (SCQF, 2010, p.3).

¹ Since this chapter was written, the SCQF guidance has been updated. Characteristics 4 and 5 have been merged to "Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills". In all other aspects this critique applies to the current 2012 document too.

The six characteristics in the SCQF level descriptors are:

- Knowledge and Understanding
- Practice: applied knowledge and understanding
- Generic cognitive skills
- Communication
- ICT and numeracy skills
- Autonomy, accountability and working with others. (SCQF, 2010, p.3)

So the six areas provide a baseline against which the pedagogic methods, contents, assessment processes and strategies of the different levels can be compared. The message, that all programmes of study at all credit levels must demonstrate an ability to bring about attainment in all six areas is clear. Yet five out of the six SCQF “characteristics” are concerned with attainment and demonstration of knowledge and skills. Only the final one is concerned with ethics, morals, interrelationship, personal conduct or wellbeing. The list seems to be startlingly accurate in exemplifying the type of learning and teaching approaches that Barnett sums up as governed by “the two projects - of knowing and acting” that “leave out ...the student as a person, especially her will and her being.” (Barnett, 2007, p.26)

The sixth characteristic, though outnumbered by skills and knowledge based characteristics, can be said to potentially address Barnett’s concern for the student being, and bears further scrutiny in the context of this research. Each of the five SCQF “points of reference” or characteristics are aligned with key markers of attainment. The intention is that the framework can be used to measure the provider curriculum’s success by comparing with attainment markers that are clearly recognisable. The full SCQF table of verbal descriptors for all “characteristics” (2010) is presented in full in Appendix 4. Here, the concern is with the sixth characteristic, “autonomy, accountability and working with others”.

For level 10, equivalent to “Honours Degree [as] an example of a qualification at this level” this characteristic is aligned with the following markers:

- Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/equivalent activities.
- Take significant responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.
- Practise in ways which show a clear awareness of own and others’ roles and responsibilities.

- Work effectively, under guidance, in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners.
- Work with others to bring about change, development and/or new thinking.
- Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.
- Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate. (SCQF, 2010)

For level 11, equivalent to “PG Cert, PG Dip, Ma, MSc, SVQ5 [as] examples of qualifications at this level” the same characteristic is aligned with the following markers,

- Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.
- Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.
- Take responsibility for a significant range of resources.
- Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development.
- Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others’ roles and responsibilities.
- Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices. (SCQF, 2010)

These are important and highly demanding expectations and they seem to match up remarkably well with Barnett’s suggested *dispositions* for higher education pedagogy. The markers associated with SCQF level 10 and 11 ask for co-operation, ethical and critical judgement as regards the impact of one’s work. As such they seem arguably aimed at instilling “*dispositions ...fitting for higher education*”,

- *a will to learn*
- *a will to engage*
- *a preparedness to listen*
- *a preparedness to explore*
- *a willingness to hold oneself open to experiences*
- *a determination to keep going forward* (Barnett, 2007, p.102)

From the SCQF framework, however, it is not clear *how* they are to be instilled, and what relationship they have with characteristics 1-4. Furthermore, while the level

10 and 11 markers do bear a resemblance to Barnett's suggested dispositions, they are difficult to align with his suggested *qualities*,

- *integrity*
- *carefulness*
- *courage*
- *resilience*
- *self-discipline*
- *restraint*
- *respect for others*
- *openness* (Barnett, 2007, p.102)

How, if one is mostly focussing on training students in skills and knowledge, can these qualities be brought forward? Equally, given this emphasis, how can the SCQF sixth characteristic be instilled, since "autonomy, accountability and working with others" are not straight forward instructional areas of knowledge? In this respect the markers are aspirational expressions rather than guides enabling praxis. There seems to be a key to pedagogic methodology based on these aspirations however, in Barnett's further definitions of dispositions and qualities,

Through their dispositions and qualities, students become themselves. They flower not just as pedagogical persons, but as persons as such. Students are their dispositions and their qualities. Once these have been well enough formed, all else of importance will follow. Without them, nothing else of importance will follow (Barnett, 2007, p.101)

His argument is that pedagogy of knowledge and skills alone will not create a climate in which the student being, or the will to learn, will be nurtured; and that since the will to learn is the true driver of knowledge acquisition, its absence, or damage to it, will also slow down or even prohibit the learning process. Also, the type of learning experience that is led by the will to learn is more meaningfully and permanently embedded in the student's mind, as a way of being, rather than a catalogue of knowledge,

Knowledge can be forgotten and skills can atrophy without use; but dispositions and qualities are durable in their nature. They constitute the student's pedagogical being. It is they that have to be the focus of 'teaching' in higher education. (Barnett, 2007, p.102)

So there is a real challenge to Higher Education. We need to convey the training and knowledge we provide in an environment that nurtures the dispositions and

qualities of the students as persons. Put in another way, knowledge itself can be conveyed in such a way as to include critical awareness of the student being. And since the idea of the student being means the totality of the person addressed, consideration of the students’ dispositions and qualities can be a path to such an exchange of meaning.

In relation to the Vedanta and Yoruba ideas summarised in table 3 at the start of this chapter, the idea of dispositions and qualities reciprocate well. The student being has, and/or needs the nurturing of dispositions and qualities that enhance his will to learn, and the will to learn emerges when the student as a whole person is taken into account. This resonates with the Vedantic and Yoruba understanding of the individual as comprised of many levels of consciousness that need to be grasped in order to live a balanced life and to determine appropriate action. Accepting Barnett’s terminology and proposition of the student being, a comparative table is constructed below, aligning his terms with concepts from Vedanta and Yoruba philosophies with which they chime.

Table 4: Concepts of self and characteristics in Barnett, Vedanta and Yoruba thought

<i>Concepts of self and characteristics in Barnett, Vedanta and Yoruba thought</i>				
Terms used by Barnett	Will to learn	Will to offer/proffer	Dispositions	Qualities
	Resides in “student being”	Emerges when will is nurtured in the pedagogic environment	Care, authenticity	Courage, resilience
Vedanta	Resides in <i>jiva atman</i>	Embedded in concept of work as karma yoga	Carrying out ‘work for work’s sake’ – not for the gratification of the ego alone	Non attachment, criticality
Yoruba	Resides in <i>ori</i> / inner head	Embedded in concept of balanced interaction with society	“actualisation” of inclinations of the <i>ori</i> (Abimbole, 2001)	Critical reflection to determine which of the <i>ori</i> ’s dispositions to follow, how and to what degree

In this table Barnett’s terminology provides an overall frame enabling the following comparative observations:

- Dispositions in all three philosophical frameworks result in work that is autonomous in nature, but consultative in process.
- Qualities in all three philosophical frameworks require the ability to reflect and to think critically
- There seems to be reciprocity between what Barnett calls “the will to offer” and autonomy. This follows because care, authenticity, courage and resilience require a decision making process that cannot take place by simply following either the teacher or fellow students.
- Therefore, independent thought seems to require an element of interdependency. This is not the dependency of followers, but the mutual engagement of fellow learners.

Heidegger’s authenticity, which Barnett advocates, emerges when *dasein* comes to know itself by differentiating itself from the world in which it exists. Knowing that world is a catalyst- and it can be said that without the world of other beings and forms, there would be no need for *dasein* to define itself- it would simply ‘be’. In Barnett’s ontological space the student being too, knows itself when it encounters other beings, and a pedagogy that recognises this process allows the student to become aware of her own dispositions and qualities, provides for them or supports the student when she wants to reshape them. Some of this reshaping, self discovery, and formation of the self, tentative at first but hopefully growing with time and experience, will arise because of encounters with others, circumstances and situations that require ethical and moral judgements, critically and judiciously applied. This leads to further conclusions from reflection on the table above,

- Nurturing the will to learn of one student allows that student to become more aware of other students as fellow learners and to care for their achievements too.
- Critical awareness of others is a pathway to autonomous work
- The will as Barnett speaks of it, and the Vedantic *jiva atman*, and the Yoruba *ori* are comparable because they enable agency.

Combination of these conceptualisations of the self makes fertile basis for a higher education pedagogic epistemology.

The Fragility of the Will to Learn

Barnett warns that the will to learn is fragile. In an uninviting pedagogic environment, even if it is strong when the student arrives, it can fail to develop further, or lose motivation altogether. This is especially the case he states, when the pedagogic environment takes the presence of the will to learn for granted.

This taken-for-grantedness character of the student's will bedevils higher education. It is surely part of the explanation of student non-completion across the world. That the concept of will is pretty well entirely absent from the literature on higher education is testimony to this taken- for- granted status of the will (Barnett, 2007, p.24)

He identifies causes of this state of affairs. Firstly, educators may assume either that the students' will to learn will always be present, since it brought them to the institution in the first place, or that students' will and being are private affairs. This would justify a view that,

lecturers have enough on their hands worrying about the development of the student's knowledge and skills, and perhaps even some of their attitudes as well (2007, p.25)

Secondly, even where tutors may recognise the role of the will as significant in students' engagement with their studies, an assumption can be made that the nurturing of students' will is not appropriate territory for tutors.

Barnett argues, however, that, as demonstrated by students who drop out of courses of study, despite having arrived confident and enthusiastic, the taken-for-grantedness of the presence of the student will is,

an unwarranted assumption. It assumes a durability to will that cannot be justified. The will in general is pliable. It is liable to wane. The student's will-qua student may dissolve. It may not always be present (2007, p.25)

In the face of students' leaving courses of study or becoming de-motivated to continue their efforts, Barnett argues, it is difficult to justify either the assumption

that the student's will to learn in the current pedagogic environment will always be present, or that it is not the responsibility of the tutor to foster and support it.

How is this to be done? The nurturing of dispositions and qualities cited above can be said to be dependent on the dispositions and qualities of the tutors, in that they bring them to the pedagogic environment they create. These are recognised by students in less specific terms. As Barnett says,

...students may say on graduation that 'the course has changed my life' or even that 'coming across so-and-so in literature has changed my life'. Students also often say in questionnaire surveys that they look to their tutors to be 'enthusiastic'; they may even say of a tutor that she has been 'inspiring'. All these are signs of the students' will being nurtured and advanced. In these and other ways the students are saying that their will towards the course and their studies was given a boost. They came to care more about their studies; their will to learn was lifted. (2007, p.26)

These responses to teaching style and approach to pedagogy are echoed in interviews undertaken for this research. Student B who had undertaken the Yoruba/Vedanta course in year two stated that while the content was intriguing to him,

"there was something about just the way you were with us," [*Student B Interview round 2*]

that inspired him to continue into an interview for this research. The fragility of the will to learn, it would seem, can be protected from harm by expressing care about the student and his interests, and in the tutor's own externalised care for the subject taught.

The Will to Learn and Cultural Specifics

As suggested in chapter 1, there is one element of Barnett's will to learn and methods of nurturing it that falls short of the questions raised in this research. The will to learn as an ontological tool takes care of the student being in a broad metaphysical sense. In Vedantic context, one could say that approaches encouraging awareness of the will would enable students to reflect on themselves

as *jiva atman*. By doing so they would be able to acquire resilience to a sensory and emotional onslaught induced by the newness of the learning environment or difficulties in learning. This mental space could free up energy and motivation required to deal with the pedagogic environment. By having an awareness of a steady core being that was unaffected by any of it, they would be able to place criticism of work in the context of the work, and not see it as personal failure. They could then develop strategies for putting criticism to use in the growth and maturity of their work. Parallel to this, a student could apply principles of Yoruba tenure ethics in receiving and giving critical feedback. Becoming tacitly aware of the responsibilities inherent in having power, be that the power of the political ruler, the teacher/assessor, or the verbal power of peer appraisal, would render more nuanced the students' understanding of the processes of education and their role in it. The Yoruba ethical principle of power over others as intrinsically tied with responsibility and balance would shape the student's own conduct as well as her expectations of peers and tutors. They would then be able to confidently address tutors and fellow students, asking questions and defending themselves where necessary.

The question remains however, can such an understanding of the student's metaphysical being be enough in a mixed disciplinary, multicultural environment such as one finds in British higher education today? How can the student being of myriad individuals be nurtured without some common language of knowing and acknowledging each other? Is it perhaps the job of those who fashion the pedagogic environment to facilitate this common language? Seen in this light, it would seem enthusiasm for the subject taught, and a generally welcoming quality in the tutor is a start, but not enough. As asked in chapter 1, can the validation of the individual, the well being of an internal life be complete without validation of the cultural specifics within which the individual was formed? What is the relationship of that specificity to the milieu within which the student is being educated? Does it matter what gender, class, country, religion the student comes from? In other words, can the invisible will be enabled and nurtured without first acknowledging the visible or more easily known qualities of the individual?

In Barnett's schema, the fundamental requirement is recognition of the student not just as learner in a particular field, but as a *whole person*. Of what, however, does the totality of the person consist? The problems identified by Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters, and experienced in some aspects of my studentship, stem from cultural differences that lead to an infertile space for, to borrow their phrase once again, "non-traditional" practitioners. They use the term non-traditional to cover researchers who draw from geographical or philosophical sources not normally known, considered valid or traditional within their departments, disciplines, or institutions of study. It is applied here to students of art design and architecture who find themselves in the same circumstances. From the outsider status of their areas of interest stems a lack of nurturing. Tutors can either be unable, or uninterested in extending their own pedagogic vocabulary in order to support such students. Without that nurturing the student may lose interest, feel marginalised, be damaged, or simply leave. And so it can be said, that from the non-traditional, outsider status of particular students' areas of interest can stem their non-recognition as whole persons.

Even in a conjectural philosophical project, the ontological or epistemological vocabulary of these students may not fit well with the one used by their tutors or supervisors. Very likely, their sense of self and the vocabulary to express it may not be fully formed; in such circumstances, encounters in which their emergent utterances are rejected or dismissed as non-academic, lacking in rigour, or in other ways implausible can cause the student to give up on the chosen research or practice, or on research and practice altogether. Their will to learn will certainly have been thwarted in this scenario. Where the student's area of interest is autobiographically rooted this scenario is even more problematic for their self confidence and sense of self worth. Recognition of the student being cannot be limited to only some students, and indeed the need as identified by Barnett is universal. Take for example a scenario in which Tutor 1 is able to support the emergent utterances of one student, because of cultural congruity, familiarity or shared educational experience of a particular discipline or subject of research; however, Tutor 1 is unable to do so for another student because s/he is unable to

grasp and respond to that student's subject matter and ways of expressing it, due to *lack* of cultural familiarity, or a difference in approach to the discipline being researched. In such a scenario, some fundamental inequality occurs, and it can be argued that the will to learn of the student in the second scenario is under threat. Some examples of this kind of impact are: an international student told he has been given a C as a safe guess, since the tutor is not familiar with culturally specific aesthetics employed by him; a student referencing ideas of the spirit and self in their creative work, challenged by the response, "you're not going all Buddhist on me are you?"; and with regard to language as an additional factor in incomplete cultural dialogue, Colleague E commented of English as second language users,

some just stop caring since no matter how hard they try, they are not understood or made to feel valued [*colleague E consulted on ESOL support*]

When students' are questioned on the sources they turn to in examining 'non-western' subjects in a traditional academic settings, they can experience a first realisation of the how they themselves have been conditioned to consider only some sources as valid,

my whole understanding changed when you asked me 'what do you think Freud knew about Ssitkingut [ancient Korean]priestesses?' [laughs] it was very traumatic, but it really opened my eyes [Postgraduate student PGX1]

Such comments shed light on how beneficial consideration of the whole student- both culturally and metaphysically, can be. Conversely, they also indicate that without awareness of the various elements of that whole person, too universal an approach can be highly damaging.

What is the being of the student? How do we understand this? This what? Is there another word, other than 'being' itself that will help us here? If there is, I do not know of it.

The being of the student is the way the student is in the world. In the first place, the student is a person in the world, and has her hold on the world as a person. However, the student is also a student. She is embarked on a course of study with its challenges, with its time sequences and with its situations. The student moves, and is amid these challenges, sequences, and situations. She is embedded in all of this, but this student is not to be read off these educational moments- of challenges, sequences and situations. She brings her own wherewithal to bear on all of that (Barnett, 2007, p.27)

In order to understand what this “wherewithal” may consist of, it is useful to return to Bhabha’s conceptualisation of political agency. As discussed in chapter 1, this stems from interstitial moments that enable hybridity: there is a moment in which a third possibility emerges, not as a direct causal outcome, but because of the juxtaposition of several circumstances. Bhabha’s description of political agency, emerging from “in-between the rules of engagement” (1994, p.277) serves as an ideal stepping stone for naming an agency that it does not actually aim to cover. He defines and highlights the significance of an agency that becomes active because it stems from recognition of the political moment and one’s potential within it. This thesis speaks of an agency that stems from awareness of a metaphysical as well as tangible self. The themes presented here can in some respects be seen as emerging from a moment of hybridity, made possible by the interplay of experiences of one specific individual negotiating her way through specific eras, education systems, first in other countries and finally in British Higher Education. Bhabha, suggests that hybridity ‘happens’- it emerges regardless of the intentions of contesting forces, or even of hegemonic congruities. His theories, expressed in Derridian language, critiquing while utilising postcolonial methodologies, present hybridity, or intercultural contestations and syntheses, as intellectual phenomena. Hybridity as critical theory makes visible the interstitial potential of the concept and experience of difference, to those who may not otherwise grasp it, or may resist it. Interpretations and valuation of Bhabha’s theories vary, much criticism leveled, rather ironically by academics, at the denseness of his language.² His place and his intellectual influence in recent cultural theory are, however, undisputed. It is true that Bhabha’s writings demand multidisciplinary engagement, his language a pre-existent knowledge of post structural critical theory. Yet they also serve to encourage those who may have experienced a lack of political agency but have not had a name for it. Indeed discovering Bhabha’s analysis and juxtapositions of historical and contemporary materials in *The Location of Culture*, has provided much needed sustenance for my own student and tutor being, since they

²A sentence by Bhabha was awarded the second prize in the so called “Bad Writing Award” 1998 by the journal “Philosophy and Literature”. (Dutton, 1999)

intellectually contextualised experiences that were otherwise only hurtful memories. Thus a strategy of dealing with exclusion by using it as a catalyst for understanding political and social structures has grown from personal experience. This strategy has been underpinned by notions of metaphysical being, of independent thinking nurtured at home, and of observations of a variety of human foibles and strengths across several countries and cultures. Eventually the interaction of all of these factors has crystallised into a desire, and an ability to construct the pedagogic theory developed here.

Viveka, Temporality and Paulo Freire's "True Dialogue"

There is immense power in Bhabha's naming as agency the recognition of alternative and unpredictable ways of thinking. Just as Barnett's discourse of the student being was found to be incomplete as it lacked space for considering the cultural and political specifics of the student being, so there is a reciprocal problem with Bhabha's political agency as a pedagogic informant. Hybridity as political agency does not provide for contemplation of the student being at a metaphysical level- the self beyond the culturally specific. In this research I take the liberty of adding to hybridity as political agency. I argue that political and ontological agency is inextricably intertwined. I take a dualist position in asserting that just as consideration of the whole student is not complete without recognition of her specific cultural and social contexts, so political agency too cannot be complete without an ontological perspective. In an educational environment that is able to respond to knowledge and philosophy stemming from, and student interest in, only certain geographical and political areas, only certain academic languages, and only certain ways of being, how can the student being of the transnational subject emerge? Pedagogy that acknowledges the whole person, the ontological learner being, the will to learn, must be able to cope with transnationality, hybridity, and what is loosely called 'difference'. Seen in this light, the ontological and the political seem inevitably and closely linked. This again points to the prescient nature of both Yoruba emphasis on the self as formed and forming of society, and with the Vedantic idea of the journeying *jiva atman*. Both systems provide a means of relating self to other. The *jiva atman* is thought to be trapped in a way, within the

sense experiences of its temporal identity as an individual person in a specific family and particular circumstances. This includes the ability to consider the impact of our actions on others. Its long term journey however, dictates that it accumulates credits as it were, towards enlightenment or escape from rebirth through appropriate actions in each life time. By employing *viveka*, it is able to judge each situation in order to arrive at the correct action to be taken in various situations as they arise. *Viveka* is usually translated as discrimination, in the sense of being able to differentiate. Truer to its outcome, *veveka* is better understood as criticality, or the ability to critically evaluate given circumstances. *Viveka* is materialised through action, and so karma or work/action is intrinsic to enlightenment in the Vedantic philosophical framework. Through actions guided by *viveka*, and through reflection on the nature of consciousness, the *jiva atman* eventually comes to realise that it is in fact one with greater Consciousness, and that all differentiation is an illusion. This knowledge however, could act as a disincentive to work or engage with others at all, since they too could be considered unreal! In a Vedantic framework however, such knowledge ignites an impulse to care for others, for all beings, and for justice, since essentially all is thought to be one, and all beings on the same journey, clouded by ignorance of their true nature. This is why *Atmabodh*, Self knowledge is thought of as the “spiritual basis of democracy” (Nikhilananda, 1978, p.xviii)

Similarly, the Yoruba awareness of temporal and psychological transitional spaces encourages plurality in social decisions. Reflection on binding relationships between beings through time encourages speculation on appropriate reactions and responses to given situations. As shown in chapter 3, the mind and individual personality is thought to be shaped by internal and external influences of past and present. Hence reflection, debate, even controversy about the meaning to be extracted from these different influences is prerequisite to determining appropriate actions in current situations. Interdependency is key to both Vedantic and Yoruba ontological principles. It is implicit as well in Barnett’s ontological approach to Higher education pedagogy, as discussed earlier. A student’s will to learn cannot be nurtured without first recognising the significance of the tutor-student relationship as an interaction of beings in a shared environment. The student’s relationship with fellow students too is crucial; a pedagogy that encourages destructive

competitiveness or favours only some ways of being, also encourages lack of regard for one's fellows. This is of course immediately destructive to those not 'in the fold' as it were, but it is equally damaging to those who find themselves thriving in an unequal pedagogic environment. Once out of this environment and fending for themselves, they may not have the tools needed to connect in a meaningful way with new circumstances, wider social groups, employers, or even with more challenging mentors.

The question of how university and school graduates interact with society once out of education is taken up in the influential writings and work of cultural theorist, Paulo Freire. Unlike Bhabha, whose theories tend to resist polemical language, Freire employs an overtly Marxist language of polarities. He speaks of the oppressed in society, and of education as a strategy for liberation. His strategies and aims however, are a far cry from the emancipation that comes of acquiring employment potential and status alone. Freire has argued that an innate quest for freedom in humankind necessitates a critical examination of oppression, and that a truly useful pedagogy facilitates the emergence of such consciousness. Freire famously worked amongst educationally and economically disenfranchised communities in Brazil, Chile and later Guinea Bissau. His theories have their own specifics and political considerations. They have proved immensely powerful and applicable in areas of urban deprivation and in social projects throughout the world.³ Yet it must be admitted that liberties are being taken in the very comparison between first world art educational institutions, and the conditions for which Freire's pedagogic practice was created. It would be insensitive to imagine that any constraints faced by those working and studying in UK higher education today, even in art schools whose degrees may not immediately translate into lucrative jobs, are comparable to the plight of landless farm labourers, or urban working classes in states with a far lower per capita income, or even to school children in the most deprived areas in the cities of the North. However the internal poverty of which

³ Throughout his life and beyond Freire's work has influenced social work, education and other fields seeking an approach of inclusion and empowerment. See the Freire Institute online for current examples of this legacy.

Freire speaks can be likened to the experience of the student who has lost the will to learn, and to the pedagogic environment in which this occurs.

Freire argues that consciousness of one's oppression, or one's lack of control, is a first step towards analysing, and overcoming it. Such consciousness constitutes and defines meaningful education. Freire also warns however, of a cycle of educational empowerment that effectively perpetuates inequality by replacing one rigid system with another. He warns of wasted potential and social loss in producing graduates that are no longer able to identify with others still caught in the deprived circumstances from which they themselves have escaped. Freire challenges both teacher and student to resist the replacement of one set of oppressors with another, by demanding continuous self reflection, and the changing of unjust systems at their root, through dialogue, learner –teacher partnership, and self-vigilance. Understanding this, he says, is the purpose and definition of “true dialogue”

...true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking-thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them-thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as static entity-thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. (Freire, 1996, p.73)

Freire's criticality implies much more than intellectual analysis. It expresses a combination of several principles of learning and teaching. In this research two major Freire publications are drawn upon: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in 1970, and *Pedagogy of Freedom-Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, published posthumously in 1998. The latter contains reflections and developments of ideas introduced in the first, and tackles the influence on education of neo-liberalism and globalisation. As stated in the introduction to *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Freire “does not hesitate to put his own intellectual sources on the table” (Aronowitch, 2001, p.9). While Freire remained Marxist in inspiration till the end, he also critiqued vigorously too formulaic and rigid an application of Marxist systems; he argued that imposition onto a disenfranchised group of even the most fair minded theory in the form of a pre-defined system, would lead to hierarchically

shaped, predetermined outcomes. This would lead to the replacement of one inflexible system for another.

Freire's later position is that radical futurity is indeterminate and he has taken into account the pitfalls of the actual experience of revolutionary regimes, including some with which he collaborated. (Aronowitch, 2001, p.10)

Aronowitch cites another influence evident particularly in Freire's later writings. These are the "phenomenological and existential philosophy of writers such as Jean Paul Sartre" (Aronowitch, 2001, p.10). The impact of such approaches to human behaviours is cited by Arrnowitch as at least partly causal to the nature of Freire's later writing of the 1990's; in these he moved from a certainty of belief in dialectical, historically based transformations of society to an insistence on "indeterminacy", as a radical tool (Aronowitch, 2001, p.10). In other words, progressive education must allow the student to know his circumstances, and also to know himself and his capacity for determining the nature of change that is required. The exact nature of this change and how it is to be brought about- this agency –cannot be pre-defined by already existent systems and paradigms. Society can only change when there is student autonomy and autonomy can only bring about beneficial social change when that autonomy is arrived at in an environment of self criticality.

By 'progressive' I mean a point of view that favours the autonomy of students. This theme of autonomy incorporates the analysis of various types of knowledge that I find to be fundamental to educational practice. And, if there are other types of knowledge that I have left out or whose importance I have not appreciated, I hope the critical reader will be able to add them to the list. (Freire, 2001, p.21)

The implication is that true dialogue and the formation of progressive thinkers in education are part of an on-going process, evolving as necessary from given circumstances.

Freire does not flinch, however, from declaring his main sociological concerns emphatically. The most important of these as expressed in the posthumously published *Pedagogy of Freedom*, is his "abhorrence of neoliberalism" and along

with it any false claims of “impartiality” (Freire, 2001, p.22) where such claims may disguise an unstated economic or social agenda.

I am not impartial or objective; not a fixed observer of facts and happenings. I never was able to be an adherent of the traits that falsely claim impartiality or objectivity. That did not prevent me however, from holding always a rigorously ethical position. Whoever really observes, does so from a given point of view. (Freire, 2001, p.22)

Freire insists also that recognition of the structures of oppression does not imply destructive license. The end does not justify the means; the means must be conducive to just ends.

I do not accept however, under any circumstances, acts of terrorism in support of this point of view. Such acts result in the death of the innocent and the spread of an insecurity that affects everyone. Terrorism is the negation of what I call a universal human ethic. (Freire, 2001, p.22)

The statements above underline how Freire’s thinking is at odds with, yet intertwined with several late twentieth and early twenty-first century intellectual paradigms. He asserts that he is not impartial in his aspirations for bringing equality to excluded sections of society; yet he also rejects the indoctrination of such peoples into wholesale acceptance of pre-existent or new systems which they have not helped to form. So the aim is not to replace one system with another. The aim is the fostering of an agency that is able to remain self critical, so avoiding rigidity.

At the same time, he does not suggest that humanist, idealist attempts at bettering society, since they inevitably emanate from partisan viewpoints, are necessarily doomed to failure. The subtlety of his arguments lies in the way he defines ethics and criticality. He criticises rigid systems of education that impose, or transpose, Marxist desires to undo capitalism into class room practices that remove the voice of both teacher and student, but he does not do away with a need to recognize and articulate oppression. Such agency is brought about through “methodological rigour” (Freire, 2001, p.33) self questioning and appraisal of one’s actions. Another contradiction arises here, for Marxist revolutionary impulse would imply that a change in external circumstances, accompanied by dialectical discourse and education of the masses would improve external circumstances. Freire however

sees the need for both internal and external change, and most importantly, this continuum of change and self vigilance is the responsibility of *both* learner and teacher. This is what Freire calls “consciensation”, (1996, p.17) or critical consciousness.

Critical consciousness is both the aim and the method of Freire’s pedagogic touchstones. These are:

- “reflection on practice” (Freire, 2001, p.30) that recognizes the direct relationship of theory to practice
- “epistemological curiosity” (2001, p.32) that emerges from the acknowledgment of mutuality between learner and teacher
- “methodological rigour” (2001, p.33) that, risks stepping outside of one’s certainties, in order to allow new ideas to come forth.

Critical consciousness is grounded in the particular circumstances of the present moment seen in historical context. That combination of observations of past and present, their patterns and inter connections, allow meaningful alternatives to emerge

A Marxist concern with history – and one’s own historicity remains a key concern of Freire to his last writings. As summarized by Aronowitch, Freire believed,

The accomplishment of critical consciousness consists in the first place in the learner’s capacity to situate herself in her own historicity, for example to grasp the class, race, and sexual aspects of education and social formation and to understand the complexity of the relations that have produced this situation. Such an accomplishment entails a critical examination of received wisdom, not as a storehouse of eternal truths but as itself situated in its own historicity. (Aronowitch, 2001, p.14)

Such a consciousness requires not only the questioning of one’s circumstances and their causes, but also of the explanations given by those who hold power, be that in the form of the teacher, politician, banker, or would be reformist. Equally importantly, the historicity of those in power too needs to be understood.

Such an accomplishment [critical consciousness] entails a critical examination of received wisdom, not as a storehouse of eternal truths but

as itself situated in its own historicity. Implicit in this process is the concept that each of us embodies universality but that it does not necessarily dominate us. Thus the active knower, not the mind as a repository of 'information' is the goal of education. (2001, p.14)

This notion of "active knower" that questions herself as much as others, preempts a reification of criticality that might emerge if Freire were only to insist on intellectual judgment. In conjunction with ethical correlation of actions and policies with real life impact, criticality plays an intensely practical role. It sites given circumstances in their historical context, relates these contexts to current concrete realities, and enables an ethical and suitably practical action. It requires continuous movement and reflection, on decisions played out in practice. Indeed the essential inter-relationship of theory and practice is another crucial aspect of critical pedagogy. The teacher too must be a continuous learner, reflecting on how the students are responding to materials and methods of her teaching, and reflecting on her own historicist circumstances, as well as encouraging students to do so in their own regard. Aronowitch describes this as Freire's "scientific formation" that both enables and demonstrates that "people are conditioned but not determined by their circumstances" (Aronowitch, 2001, p.12)

...to teach cannot be reduced to a superficial or externalized contact with the surface of the object or its content but extends to the production of the conditions in which critical learning is possible. These conditions imply and demand the presence of teaching and learning simultaneously in the context of a rigorous methodological curiosity anxious to explore the limits of creativity, persistent in the search, and courageously humble in the adventure. In these conditions those who are engaged in critical learning know that their teachers are continuously in the process of acquiring new knowledge and that this new knowledge cannot simply be transferred to them, the learners. At the same time, in the context of true learning, the learners will be engaged in a continuous transformation through which they become authentic subjects of the construction and reconstruction of what is being taught, side by side with the teacher, who is equally subject to the same process. (Freire, 2001, p.33)

Far from concluding that inevitable subjectivity necessitates a rejection of humanist inspired idealism, Freire harnesses the skeptical impulse of post modern criticism, with its emphasis on subjectivity, to a tempered Marxist agenda. He places the conclusions to be drawn about the self and society in the hands of individuals who

ask inter-subjective questions. As such he rescues post modern theoretical and social influences from their abuse in neo-liberal, market driven, media partnered forms of civic and financial governance.

To use Barnett’s vocabulary, Freire’s methodology addresses the nurturing of the will to learn by recognizing the “wherewithal” (Barnett p. 24) with which students arrive. As discussed above, this is where Vedantic ideas of *karma yoga* and Yoruba ontology of self in relation to society resonate. A combination of the two would allow for critical engagement with one’s surroundings while nurturing a deep sense of selfhood that is at once removed from and empathetic to others. Aligned with Barnett’s will to learn, and Freire’s critical consciousness, these concepts point towards pedagogy that serves the purposes of the individual and the whole.

Applying all four together would make for a more efficient and meaningful art education, in which students’ ontological being is recognized and is able to thrive. A pedagogic environment of this kind would be transformative in opening the potential of education as a catalyst for reflective social cohesion. Towards this end, this chapter concludes with a table shown overleaf in which the core principles of Barnett, Freire, Vedanta, and Yoruba thought discussed in this research are aligned to allow later elaboration in the data analysis chapters.

Table 5: Concepts of self and characteristics in Barnett, Freire, Vedanta and Yoruba thought

Terms used by Barnett	Will to learn	Will to offer/proffer	Dispositions	Qualities
	Resides in <i>student being</i>	Emerges when will is nurtured in the pedagogic environment	Care, authenticity	Courage, resilience

Freire's Pedagogy of Freedom	Resides in ability to see that people are "conditioned but not determined by their circumstances" (Aronowitch, 2001, p.12)	Emerges when <i>true dialogue</i> occurs.	<i>Understanding reality as process, as transformation, rather than as static entity-</i>	<i>Consciensation; critical thinking</i>
Vedanta	Resides in <i>jiva atman</i>	Embedded in concept of work as karma yoga	Carrying out 'work for work's sake' –not for the gratification of the ego alone	Non attachment, criticality
Yoruba	Resides in <i>ori</i> / inner head	Embedded in concept of balanced interaction with society	"actualisation" of inclinations of the <i>ori</i> (Abimbole, 2001)	Critical reflection to determine which of the <i>or</i> 's dispositions to follow, how and to what degree

In summary

- Freire's combination of Marxist/Humanist idealism and post modern inter-subjectivity addresses, to use Barnett's vocabulary, the nurturing of the will to learn by recognizing the "wherewithal" or the specific circumstances and knowledge with which students arrive.
- The recognition that individuals in society are "conditioned but not determined by their circumstances" and can acquire agency through "critical consciousness" has direct bearing on education.
- Applied to education, it can be spoken of in Barnett's vocabulary as the instilling and nurturing "dispositions" and "qualities", bringing real growth and change.
- These dispositions and qualities include a desire for creative, cultural and political self determination, formed by the students themselves. In this process they negotiate the desires and aims of others around them.
- Through "true dialogue", which is structured by "critical consciousness", or awareness of the wider contexts within which individuals encounter each

other, students can bring about change and development in themselves, and in their society/ pedagogic environment.

- The Vedantic concept of *karma yoga* (non attached work), arrived at by practicing *viveka* (discernment), correlates with true dialogue and critical consciousness: they both require an ability to step back from immediate desires or reactions, in order to find solutions or take actions appropriate to the moment.
- The Yoruba concept of action as “actualisation” of the inclinations of the *ori* (inner head) *requires* critical reflection to determine which of the *ori*'s dispositions to follow, how and to what degree. This too resonates with *viveka*, critical consciousness, true dialogue, and awareness of one's own and others' ontological as well as physical being.
- Applying all four together would make for a more efficient and meaningful art education, in which students' ontological being is recognised alongside their cultural/political being, and they are able to gain agency in relation to their own growth

5

Overview of Methodology and Methods

The methodology of this research project is phenomenological, in the privileging individual experiences in the generation of theory, and in techniques for analysing it. Since it has philosophical grounding already in Yoruba and Vedantic thought, it has not engaged directly with the work of either Husserl or Heidegger or their followers, but does adopt research approaches and methods associated with phenomenology; these tools have made it possible to capture subjective, lived experience, allowing meaning to emerge from reflecting on them, and identifying themes with wider potentials in pedagogy. Phenomenological characteristics of the research are iterated here:

The research has been conducted from the outset in a reflexive manner, asking questions of my own pedagogic practices. As it has progressed, its methods have responded to changing circumstances and feedback. The aim of the project was to test the applicability of Yoruba and Vedantic principles to more general art school pedagogy. Two shifts in emphasis occurred as a result of the quality of feedback from students on their learning environments and processes, alongside their interest in the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Firstly from focus group respondents, some students evolved into fellow researchers. Secondly, rather than immediately trying to establish how students and staff could apply Yoruba and Vedantic ideas to creative or pedagogic practices, the project enabled a demonstration of their applicability, in a more indirect but ultimately more fruitful way. Yoruba and Vedantic lenses have proved ideally suited to the analysis of interview material; this approach also served to test translatability between the four theoretical sources and art and design education, while instigating a potential synthesis.

A phenomenological research methodology is also in keeping with the autobiographical reflection method that shaped the education theory proposed here. Students were interviewed in a manner that invited them to value their own experiences, and to become more observant of their own reactions, of how events

may be inter- connected, and to articulate developments in their way of thinking. This is due to a sincere respect for and need of their opinions. It is also based on the validity of autobiographical reflection found in my own experience of constructing the retrospective research log, described in chapter 1. From a wish to share the benefits of constructing the retrospective log, but to offer it in a more appealing and effective format, grew the idea of CARD, the critical autobiographical reflection diagram. CARD, and how it was introduced to the SRT is described in more detail in chapter 6 .0. In chapters 7 and 8 the methodology specific to this thesis takes shape, applying Yoruba and Vedantist theory to an analysis of the data, and producing principles for mutual translation in pedagogy.

Practical Overview of the 4 Minds Project

The title 4 Minds refers to the conceptualisation in Yoruba and Hindu traditions, of the self as constituted of four types of consciousness. As a simple catch all title I felt it would be attractive, simplify communication in emails and notes, and indicate a comparative approach. The plan was that fully acknowledging all input, the thesis would be informed by feedback from colleagues in different studio departments. They would either facilitate or take an active role in trialling pedagogic experiments with Yoruba and Vedantic concepts. This would be done through students' work stemming from course material, or colleagues could work with the ideas in their own ways. Material from the course would be shared via a virtual learning environment and live events. Sharing the Yoruba/Vedanta course material with colleagues would also serve as a means of discourse, knowledge exchange, and a platform from which pedagogic ideas could be developed. Students would be encouraged to work in partnership with staff from their departments who were part of the 4 Minds research team, to record their own responses and to call on the thesis author and tutor of the Yoruba/Vedanta course where necessary. The timeline of the project spanned October 2009-June 2015. A breakdown of dates and activities is provided in appendix 5.

Structural context of the Yoruba/Vedanta course

4 Minds was entirely structured around the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Second year elective courses run for eight weeks in term two, January to March. Students from across the studio disciplines select two academic options from a menu of courses delivered by staff from the critical studies department of the institution. Students submit one piece of work for assessment, related to one of the courses they enrol on. Some courses are mandatory for students from particular studio disciplines, and in this case, their assessed submission must relate to the mandatory course. The Yoruba/Vedanta course is not a mandatory one affiliated to any studio department, so runs the risk of having insufficient numbers to allow it to run, or of having no work submitted for assessment, but neither scenario has occurred in the years it has been taught. Strategically for the 4 Minds project, the timing and timetabling of the year two elective courses make natural transitions possible between academic and studio based outputs by students as long as studio staff were willing to cooperate. This was a key element in project planning.

Appendix 6 shows how the 4 Minds research project interacted with the Yoruba/Vedanta course in academic year 2009-10, the first year of the project, and what work was produced.

Student and Staff Research Teams and leadership

In Phase 1, December 2009, prior to the call for elective course selection, all second year studio staff were addressed with background information on the research being conducted. They were also invited to participate in the project should they choose to do so. They could become more involved by accessing the lectures online and/or participating in informal staff seminars with the action research team. Alternately they could choose not to be directly involved with the project, but allow those of their year 2 students who signed up for Yoruba/Vedanta course to use studio time in term 2 to make art or design work in response to the course. Studio support would then be provided by individual members of the 4 Minds action research team as appropriate to each student. As a result, one more colleague joined the 4 Minds team to be better informed when working with second year students who would be doing the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Seven colleagues thus

formed the StRT. Of these, one was unable to continue due to illness, and the last to join did not actually participate. In the earliest communications, it was explained that the research project was a means of testing the pedagogic theory I was developing for my thesis in progress. The genesis of the research question was also explained.

In the language of the funding application form, I was named “lead researcher” taking responsibility for:

- Coordination and facilitation between students and staff, who come from different year groups and disciplinary areas of the school.
- Booking venues, liaising with visiting artists, balancing budget, keeping information and communication flowing.
- Mentoring / providing expertise where the theoretical and philosophical aspects of the Yoruba/Vedanta course were taken up in personal projects
- Conducting interviews and compiling data about personal projects, providing anonymity or ensuring named credits as appropriate
- Taking responsibility for completion of the project thesis, informed by or directly incorporating reflections and findings of the student and staff research teams, providing anonymity or ensuring named credits as appropriate

The rationale for assuming leadership was also premised on the project’s dependence on the dissemination of Yoruba/Vedanta material, and my being the only team member with this knowledge base. Hence I would advise on emergent student projects, and bring in specific new material if needed as student or staff ideas took shape. Equally, and perhaps more significantly, the decision was a response to colleagues’ hesitations regarding the amount of time to be put into the research project over and above existent teaching and managerial duties. As team leader I took on all practical coordinating duties. Another motivation was that it would be more valuable to the project, and to colleagues, to devote all of their time to the research rather than organisation. Also, as the team was made up of individuals representing disparate departments and social/philosophical outlooks, it would be important to take a steering role to ensure that the basic premise of the

project was examined, or to observe why it was not if that should be the case. The implications of these decisions are analysed in chapter 7.

The nine member student research team SRT, drew from separate year two Yoruba/Vedanta course groups, joining the project over three academic years. In 2011 the roles of the two research teams were reversed as the students, two in particular, became more engaged as active fellow researchers. As previously stated, initially the students were conceived of as a focus group, whereas colleagues who joined the staff research team were to actively examine the incorporation of Yoruba and ancient Indian ideas, or ideas about the metaphysical self in their studio areas. Due to time restrictions and other matters discussed in analysis of the project in chapter 7, staff trialling of the ideas did not occur, though other data was produced.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations spanned several fronts.

1. Critique of art education:

In defining new ways of addressing art school education, critique of existent elements would inevitably arise. Colleagues could feel exposed. This was addressed at the outset by involving the staff to see themselves as conducting the research, rather than being observed or merely responding. The project was also put through the Goldsmiths College ethics committee.

2. Transliteration, analysis, and editing of interviews and questionnaires:

- a) The subjects discussed were likely to elicit responses that could make student interviewees vulnerable
- b) There is a risk of altering meaning and/or editing out content of importance to the interviewee
- c) The expectations of the thesis author could intervene and have an hermeneutical impact on the findings

Concern a: All class questionnaires offered an opportunity to remain anonymous; the interviews and questionnaires of the SRT were named, but these have not been made public. At the same time, should they wish to make public and author any work that stems from their involvement in the research project or the Yoruba/Vedanta course, they have been invited to do so. Over and above this, the research presented here is potentially hampered by the power relationships inherent within it, if they are not accounted for. The thesis researcher is the teacher/purveyor of curriculum content that interviewees are being asked to assess in relation to their art school experience. Despite rapport with, and volunteer nature of student respondents, they are still students, and the researcher a tutor. Indeed initial introduction to the research being conducted for the thesis was via a taught series of lectures culminating with an academically assessed student submission. This potential impact has been minimised by clearly articulating the status of the project as non-assessed and independent of any grading systems. The student research team was told this and also that I too would submit work to the student team's critiques and analysis just as they will.

As for staff respondents, a different power relationship had to be recognised, in that the researcher had no authority over colleagues, nor they over her. The gifting of time however, can be a problematic factor in these relationships. Phase 2 saw the re-evaluation of the best means of obtaining staff responses to the project and this too is discussed in chapter 7.

Concerns b and c: Rather than attempting neutrality, the pedagogic principles and perceptions of the thesis author are written into the research ethos within which the project is conceived and conveyed. 'Bracketing' of my aims and interests in order to elicit uncluttered perceptions of interviewees/respondents was not considered possible. In the postmodern era, it is necessary to acknowledge the unlikely success of such an endeavour. As has been demonstrated by feminist and postcolonial critics, the interpretive influence, or unconscious construction of meanings by ostensibly neutral authors, are some of the factors that must be accounted for in any research findings. Potential problems in this area are also countered however, by addressing the students and staff involved as fellow

researchers, with their own interests often leading the way in which I have addressed the project to them. This fed into a combined deductive/inductive method of data analysis, as explained in 6.0, and critiqued in the evaluation of the project in 7

Staff research team meetings

Prior to, during, and subsequent to the commencement of the Yoruba/Vedanta course in January 2010, seven meetings of the staff research team StRT took place between June 2009 and March 2010.

1st team meeting, 17 June 2009- split over 2 days to suit availability:

Introduction to the project

2nd team meeting- October 2009 over dinner at home of thesis author:

invitation to consider individual avenues within the project.

3rd team meeting -29 November 2009- Presentation by Colleague E- *Tantric*

Buddhist principles and the significance of the *mandala*.

4th team meeting -17 December 2009: "Inside /Outside the Body"- workshop

presented by thesis author. Discussion recorded; distribution of paper on action research in Buddhist contexts provided by colleague E.

5th team meeting-24 February 2010 Presentation by a Sufi

teacher/practitioner at instigation of Colleague B: Sufi thought and meditation

6th team meeting –3 March 2010 Presentation by Colleague B on own

collaborative artistic practice and ways in which research is integrated into it.

7th team meeting- 19 March 2010 Updates including outcomes of first year

fine art involvement in the project.

First staff team meeting

The first meeting was held in June 2009. It included all seven members of the StRT. The relationship of the Yoruba/Vedanta course to the 4 Minds research project was explained. Art and craft objects that exemplified the use of art as a means of expressing a complex understanding of social relationships were shown and discussed. It was agreed that the team would begin the project by reflecting on their own aspirations for art school pedagogy, particularly in relation to the lack of, and desire to include 'non-western' perspectives, and in relation to the potential problems of including philosophical self-reflection. Direct engagement with the Yoruba/Vedanta course material would emerge when lectures took place or were provided in recorded form. Should funding be obtained, the lecture series would be augmented with talks by visiting speakers and special events. (As stated above, funding was obtained and these aspirations were met). Introductory handouts were distributed on action research as a means of educational enquiry, and on some key Yoruba and ancient Indian concepts. These included an explanation of the title of the project, 4 Minds. In summary the handouts contained:

Introduction to Yoruba thought

Major ancient Indian texts

Yoruba + Hindu concepts of self

And by way of connecting with more familiar theoretical material,

Similarities between Postmodern, Hindu and Yoruba outlooks -an extract from a 2008 paper by the thesis author)

Derrida + ancient Indian grammar

With hindsight, this first meeting should have included an agreement to read a chapter or brief article on Yoruba and Ancient Indian ideas in relation to education or social hierarchies, or even to set a date for discussion of these. Also, although the project was introduced as one following an action research paradigm, the degree of familiarity by the team with education research was not gauged, and material that was distributed at a later meeting could have been distributed at the first. At the time it seemed sufficient to have gauged interest, shared the general principles of

the project. This and other aspects of the project including valuable material that was obtained through staff responses are discussed in the analysis of the 4 Minds project in chapter 7.

Second and further staff team meetings

A second meeting was held in October 2009, the purpose of which was to confer on ways in which each individual would like to shape their participation in the project. The setting was entirely informal, over dinner at my home. Dialogue was developed from previous individual informal conversations with members of the team in the past, prior to the project. Indeed it was these conversations that had led our shared interest in the project that was now unfolding. The question was raised,

“Why is it we do not include more philosophical reflection on the self in our art school curricula even though we often find it would benefit many students who may be on a self-destructive path?”

“Why is it we hesitate to deal with these approaches, even when students themselves express an interest, but also express a fear that a ‘spiritual’ approach would not be welcome in a contemporary art context?”

As was noted by the team, there was little scope or space for this kind of discourse on pedagogy and staff experience at work. Initially the dialogue revolved around anxieties related to staff student relationships, and the many factors impacting on them. These included recent perceptible changes to student expectations of staff, based on a new consumer awareness based on being fee payers, frustrations with managerial systems at the institution. It then moved to problems with introducing any material that may be construed as religious or evangelical.

This meeting was also the start of a fascinating development that led to the nature of ensuing StRT meetings. The project engendered an exchange of ideas between the members of the StRT not directly about Yoruba and Vedantic concepts but towards their own philosophical and spiritual convictions. Triggered by the general questions above, the philosophical and spiritual inclinations of several of the team came to be articulated. A parallel programme developed in which the team

considered the potential for educational context of these other philosophical ideas too. Those who introduced their own philosophical concerns via presentations to the team, examined firstly the question of why they had not as yet directly referred to these in their teaching; secondly how these ideas were actively employed in their own self sustenance as teachers, if not as curriculum inputs, and thirdly how they might now consider the relevance of specific aspects of their chosen philosophical outlooks in their teaching practice. Equally, those in the team whose focus is scientific, psychoanalytical, or based purely on avowedly secular education theory, reflected on defining their own outlooks as applied to their pedagogic practice, and how it could be enriched by the interactions of the project.

At this time a return to the core content of the project was not attempted as this tailored approach in itself was a useful and important development, shedding light on the teams' apprehension of their own pedagogic experience, as teachers as well as drawing from their student days. It also served to broaden the field within which the question of relationship to society and internal well-being could be examined. Equally importantly, team members were not yet familiar with the Yoruba/Vedanta course material. It was expected that via recordings or attendance where possible/desired, they would access lectures students would receive.

Responses by staff research team [StRT]

For reasons that will be analysed in more detail in 7, several staff team members seemed to hesitate or were unable to access second year students in order to advise or request them to choose the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Hence students who enrolled on the course mostly turned out to be from other departments not represented by the staff team. Nonetheless, one design student, and two fine art students enrolled on the advice of tutors who were on the StRT. Appendix 12 summarises StRT members' backgrounds and their participations in the research project.

Colleague A was exceptionally active in facilitating the project within the First Year programme, incorporating it into an annual project, as briefly mentioned earlier. This built on experience gained by previous collaborations between the thesis

author and this colleague. Colleague A also followed the course via the recorded lectures during the time that his students were involved with it. I was also invited in to join the tutorial team attached to the project, and to give a lecture on ideas of the self and self-representation in contemporary and traditional art in various cultures. This first year project leads to an exhibition, and the students responded with wit and absorption to the combined forces of the 4 Minds input and the original project. However since first year students in this institution move on to different departments, and contact with colleague A could no longer serve as conduit, it was not possible to pursue contact with this large student body. Appendix 13 presents images from the first year exhibition that came out of this collaboration. In chapter 7, as part of the analysis of the 4 Minds project, questionnaires and interviews of three of the StRT are discussed.

Student Research Team [SRT]

Nine students took part in the 4 Minds project. As previously stated, a decision was made to shift the input of students from respondent mode to active researcher mode in Phase 3, 2011. Participation by the StRT had fallen away, and colleagues found insufficient time available to directly engage with the theoretical material. Depth and variety of responses by students, however, and the quality of work produced in a very short space of time was very encouraging. The apparent willingness of some students to engage further with the research made self-evident the value of transferring more responsibility to them. I realised that the proposed pedagogic methodology and philosophy of education may be more readily achieved by the lecturing staff *of the future*. In initial interviews the students had spoken at length on their feelings about how they were taught. They had volunteered comments on peer learning, group crits, teaching styles they valued, and the pedagogic strategies of the Yoruba/Vedanta course. In short they had shown that they were keenly aware of their pedagogic environment. What also emerged were demonstrations of concepts spoken of in all four theoretical sources: Barnett's will to learn, Freire's critical consciousness, Yoruba and Vedantic understanding of work and society were all present in the students' narratives. It was evident that much could be learnt about the self in a learning environment by listening to the students,

and engaging them directly in conversations about education itself. Direct application of Yoruba and Vedantic ideas to art school pedagogy began to seem a second step, one that could be premised on dialogue with students on the self in the learner journey. Pedagogy of mutual translation could then be arrived at by critiquing all the project data through the lenses of the theoretical sources.

Appendix 5 breaks down the level and types of involvement of each student member of the SRT, including number of interviews, and work produced. These are discussed in detail in the analysis chapters and narratives of chapter 6.1a,b,and c.

Data

Data was gathered via questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, group meetings, tutorials about students' studio work, research logs and writing. In later phases of the research two of the students also engaged directly with the pedagogic tool that evolved over the development of the thesis, the Critical Autobiographical Reflection Diagram, CARD. This is described in chapter 6.0, and critiqued in 7 which also includes colleague E's reflection on using the CARD in a student support context. Students C and J have played particularly significant roles, having engaged at a very deep level with the research:

Student C graduated early on in the project, opting not to stay on for the honours year of his degree course. He then went on to work in an international school as an art teacher, and later enrolled in a college of education to train as a secondary school teacher. His perspective therefore spans student to teacher, and his engagement with the education process spans the fields of designer training at art school to pedagogical training.

Student J provided the additional input of having personal insight and experience of many aspects of the research concerns, including Hinduism, Indian culture both traditional and contemporary, race and cultural identity, as well as her perspectives on the discipline in which she was studying, and the direction in which she moved during the course of this research.

Five rounds of student interviews took place. Practical details, specific questions posed at each round, venues and dates are appendix 5.

Interview Round 1 was really an introduction to the project, but some general reflection was invited on the course, on the idea of researching education itself, and how the knowledge gained on the course may interact with the students' current interests. The 4 Minds research plan, research questions, methodology and role of student participants were explained. Where appropriate there was discussion of how the student wished to engage with course themes for the research project. As explained earlier, it was made clear that any seminars, interviews, outputs produced specifically for the research project would not be graded or marked in any way. It was also confirmed that at this point the thesis author did not have any assessment responsibilities Vis-a-vis the students. Immediate responses to the Yoruba/Vedanta course had already been captured in post course questionnaires (There was one feedback questionnaire for the whole class, and an additional more detailed questionnaire for those opting to be part of research team.)

In Interview Round 2 the students were invited to reflect on their experience of art and art school teaching at this important juncture in their careers.

Questions were tailored to each interviewee, depending on responses, but all covered

1. What to you is the most important part of an art school education, in relation to your chosen discipline, your general maturity, your maturity as an artist?
2. Would you say your art education has influenced your relationship to society, family, self?

In Interview Round 3, the role of skill and recognisable knowledge acquisition was used as a way to enter into the domain of self perception and self appraisal in art school learning and teaching environments. The idea of the metaphysical self was not entered directly, but via references to it in the Yoruba/Vedanta course which the students had recently completed.

Questions:

1. Which aspect of your art school education has been your favourite?
2. Which has been your least favourite?
3. Would you say both experiences- of your favourite and least favourite aspects of art school education- helped you to know yourself better?
4. What role has the acquiring of skill played in this?
5. Would you say the Yoruba/ Vedanta course was a skill based one?
6. Some would say the material in the Y/V course is so unfamiliar, so ancient, that it is of no relevance to contemporary art and design students. What are your thoughts on this?

In Interview Round 4, the metaphysical self was considered more directly- with students C and J considering how acknowledgment of this sense of self might have supported their studies, and indeed whether it already had. Barnett's idea of the 'will to learn' was also examined in the light of the students' experiences. Questions were,

1. How would you define your cultural identity and how has this interacted with your art school experience?
2. In the Yoruba/Ancient India course (formerly known as the Shades course) you were introduced to a 'self' that operates at a metaphysical level, and to the idea of four aspects of self. Does the idea of a metaphysical self resonate with you? Does it make sense in relation to how you define your identity?
3. In your opinion, can knowledge of this other self –unaffected by the ups and downs of life and the pressures of studies and assessment- help to survive the troubling aspects of art school education and enhance its positive aspects?
4. In the course you were also introduced to the Yoruba concept of the individual as always in a reciprocal relationship with society. In your opinion, can such an approach help survive the troubling aspects of art school education and enhance its positive aspects?

Interview Round 5 took place after students C and J had attempted the 'Critical Self Reflective Diagram' and they reflected on their own processes, reflections and findings.

The methodology of the 4 Minds project was above all a reflexive one, responding to events, feedback and developments over a significant period of time. Data presentation and analysis now follow in subdivided chapter 6.

6

Case Study Narratives, Analysis of the Yoruba/Vedanta Course and 4 Minds

6.0 Introduction

Analysis of information gathered in the 4 Minds project has required careful structuring, in order to manage the volume of qualitative data. Based on interpretive methods of Elliott and Timulak (2005, pp.147-159), the aim has been to capture in the students' comments the "phenomenon as it was contained in the gathered data" (2005, p.155). The phenomenon in question is the students' sense of self, what this constitutes, how it emerges in the everyday experiences of art school education, and how it might have been shaped by ideas presented in or related to the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the 4 Minds project. From these, a pedagogic proposal emerges.

Table 6 demonstrates how Elliott and Timulak's six steps for analysing qualitative data have been adapted to the research at hand.

Steps as advised by Elliott and Timulak	As adapted to 4 Minds data
1. Preparation of data; verbatim transcription.	1. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, questionnaires studied and all data coded. A table (appendix 5) was prepared for ease of detailing sources of the data (i.e. the students, code named), length and chronology of each person's involvement, number of interviews and activities.
2. "Delineating and processing meaning units" (2005, p.153) Meaning units are "the units with which we do the analysis". These quotes or key observations should be traceable via coding to their sources i.e. full interview transcripts, questionnaires, etc. (p.153)	2. Significant quotes, which shed light on the students' experience of art school education, of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, and of their understanding of themselves as beings were extracted from the transcripts and questionnaires.
3. "Shortening (...) by getting rid of redundancies	3. The quotes were searched for <u>indicators</u> of

<p>that do not change the meanings contained in them” (p.153) while preserving the voice and language of the interviewees, sentences are simplified so that their contents are clearer.</p>	<p>the student’s perception and critique of the educational environment, and how they responded to challenges. These were rephrased as synopses of the quotes, leaving in only the most significant parts, in relation to the meaning of the whole.</p>
<p>4. Organising the meaning units into “processes or phases, referred to as <u>domains</u>”. These “provide a conceptual framework for the data” (p.153)</p>	<p>4. Shortened meaning units were separated out into themes emerging. On first collation, these potential themes numbered a cumbersome ninety-two; these were reduced to forty five, and finally to nine. Adding the Yoruba/Vedanta course as a domain of its own, ten domains were listed.</p>
<p>5. “Generation of Categories” that “evolve from the meanings in the meaning units” (p.153)</p> <p>Categories are then themselves categorised, searching for overlaps and interconnections between them or resonating with existent knowledge.</p>	<p>5. The ten domains, and the meaning units they contained, were then critically studied for their value in relation to the research question, and the theoretical sources of the thesis, namely Yoruba, Vedantic, and educational theories of Freire and Barnett. This revealed three categories.</p>
<p>6 “Abstracting the main findings” (2005, p.155)</p> <p>This step consists of presenting findings in a communicative way to the reader, including the use of graphics and tables. The processes of creating meaning units, domains and categories “usually ends with a taxonomy that describes and interprets the whole phenomenon as it was contained in the gathered data” (p.155)</p>	<p>6. The creation of the three categories helps to manage the data by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inter-textually connecting the domains to core concerns of the thesis; • simplifying the findings by reduction to essential meaning in relation to the aims of the thesis, and therefore • communicating the phenomenon articulated in the data.

In step 4 the final nine themes were selected in two ways, statistically and then through a funnelling process: statistically by picking up on topics mentioned by four or more of the student team; funnelling by grouping similar, overlapping, or conceptually connected themes into representative domain names. The Yoruba/Vedanta course was listed as a domain in itself, allowing comments specific to it and its contents to become clearly visible at the outset.

The ten domains identified were:

1. KNOWLEDGE, ACHIEVEMENT, GUIDANCE
2. EXISTENT CURRICULUM
3. SKILLS as measure of progress
4. PERCEPTIONS and EXPECTATIONS OF STUDIO PEDAGOGIC ENVIRONMENT
5. PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEDAGOGIES OF STUDIO DEPARTMENTS and DEPARTMENT OF THEORY/CRITICAL STUDIES
6. PHYSICAL SPACE
7. PEER LEARNING
8. SELF/IDENTITY
9. “WILL TO LEARN”/ RESILIENCE
10. YORUBA/VEDANTA COURSE

In step 5 three key categories emerged serving as bridges to the thesis, and leading in turn to a conceptual framework for the proposed pedagogy. These are, peer learning, resilience, and pedagogic principles valued by the students:

- Somewhat unexpectedly, the role of peer learning and a strong sense of identity with a community of learners came across in each of the initial interviews. This links to Yoruba and Vedantic ideas of the self and the social, and to Freire’s idea of becoming “fully human”.
- There are abundant examples of the students’ own tenacity, and resilience in trying circumstances. This links to their will to learn as Barnett describes it.
- Another significant finding relates to the pedagogic value of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, over and above its contents. While questionnaires and interview questions directly focussed on the contents of the course, students volunteered responses that signified the importance of the way in which the course was delivered, the way in which they were supported as learners, how the material was presented in relation to their own experiences, and the freedom they had in shaping their responses. This links to Yoruba and Vedantic ideas of the role of the teacher or leader, progressive education theory that proposes reflective and reflexive

education practices, Freire's "consciencisation", and Barnett's call to nurture the student's will to learn.

All three are treated here as indicators of the emergent student being, and her efforts to know herself.

Education as mutual translation promotes students' ability to know themselves better, to nurture their metaphysical being, and to increase both curiosity and compassion towards others. Its theoretical vehicles are direct and indirect application of Vedantic concepts of *karma yoga* and *viveka*, Yoruba principles of individual and community, and Barnett's will to learn coupled with Freire's notion of becoming "fully human". The theory is supported by evidence and reflection on interviews and further by the CARDS completed by two members of the SRT. Starting with meaning units we therefore end with their abstraction into education theory.

In order to put the data to critically derived functional use, a combined deductive/inductive (interpretive) strategy has been applied. Thorne describes this as a combination of 'phenomenological reduction and hermeneutic analysis' (2000, p.21). In a deductive sense, themes or domains have been generated by close study of the data, looking for commonalities and dominant views. These are studied against the hypothesis of Yoruba, Vedantic, and theoretical concepts of Freire and Barnett as potential pedagogic sources. The analyses then takes a loop back to an ontological concern and employs inductive reasoning to determine the way in which students create meaning from all that is thrown at them in their pedagogic environment, how they relate this to their needs and desires as individuals, and how they come to understand their own being, and themselves as meaning making beings with agency.

As researcher, tutor of the course in question, and champion of certain Yoruba, Vedantic and educational principles, these interests are not 'bracketed' in a classical deductive phenomenological sense. They are tackled by being declared at the outset while examining the evidence of the students' responses for support as well as criticism. Thorne's differentiation between inductive and deductive analysis has

therefore been influential in deriving a combined process appropriate for this thesis,

Some qualitative methods are not oriented toward finding patterns and commonalities within human experience, but instead seek to discover some of the underlying structure or essence of that experience through the intensive study of individual cases. (Thorne 2000, p.12)

While nothing as formal as constant comparative analysis has taken place, commonalities between the students' experiences and perceptions of education were sought in order to lend structure to the analysis; framed as categories, these commonalities have been used to go more deeply into individual student experience; critical reflection has then taken place of the nine student narratives in relation to my own pedagogic experiences, and the theoretical grounding and research question that has guided this enquiry.

The Critical Autobiographical Diagram- a phenomenological device developed for this thesis

By spring 2014, consideration had been given to interview rounds 1, 2, and 3, and post course questionnaires that had come out of the three year groups from which the student research team had been drawn. It now seemed time to put forward the idea of autobiographical reflection as a means of understanding one's work. As explained in chapter 1, it had been useful for my own self awareness, to trace key influences and events from the past. The simple columned table I had produced had captured many factors, from the deeply personal and familial to aspects of formal education, both supportive and detrimental. These were listed in relation to the outcomes that had emerged in my artistic and pedagogic practices. The student research team's interest in understanding their educational processes, and in critiquing the education system they found themselves in, crystallised the idea of using such an approach as a pedagogic device. The format of the columned chart however, was uninspiring, and being a horizontal left to right chart, was also conceptually and visually limiting. A table provides no opportunity for illustrating

the interconnected nature of many of the influences and outcomes cited, and this recognition is central to the idea of translatability.

In relation to the research question, it was also necessary to find a graphic language to demonstrate the relationship of the individual to social, since this is one of the most significant commonalities in the messages extracted from Yoruba and Vedantic thought in this research. It became apparent that one's personal and external world – or family and wider society were more productively visualised as spheres, and not as parallel columns containing specific facts. The notion of co-existent spheres led to the creation of a circular diagram composed of a series of smaller interconnected circles. Bearing in mind the significance to this thesis of keeping aware of others, the diagram came to incorporate other rings representing the students' interaction with others around them, from the peer group to further and further layers. In this way the critical autobiographical diagram took the form of a series of rings. Circles in each ring were connected to each other, and could also be connected across the diagram to outer layers. Students could adapt the design to capture their own phenomenological data about themselves.

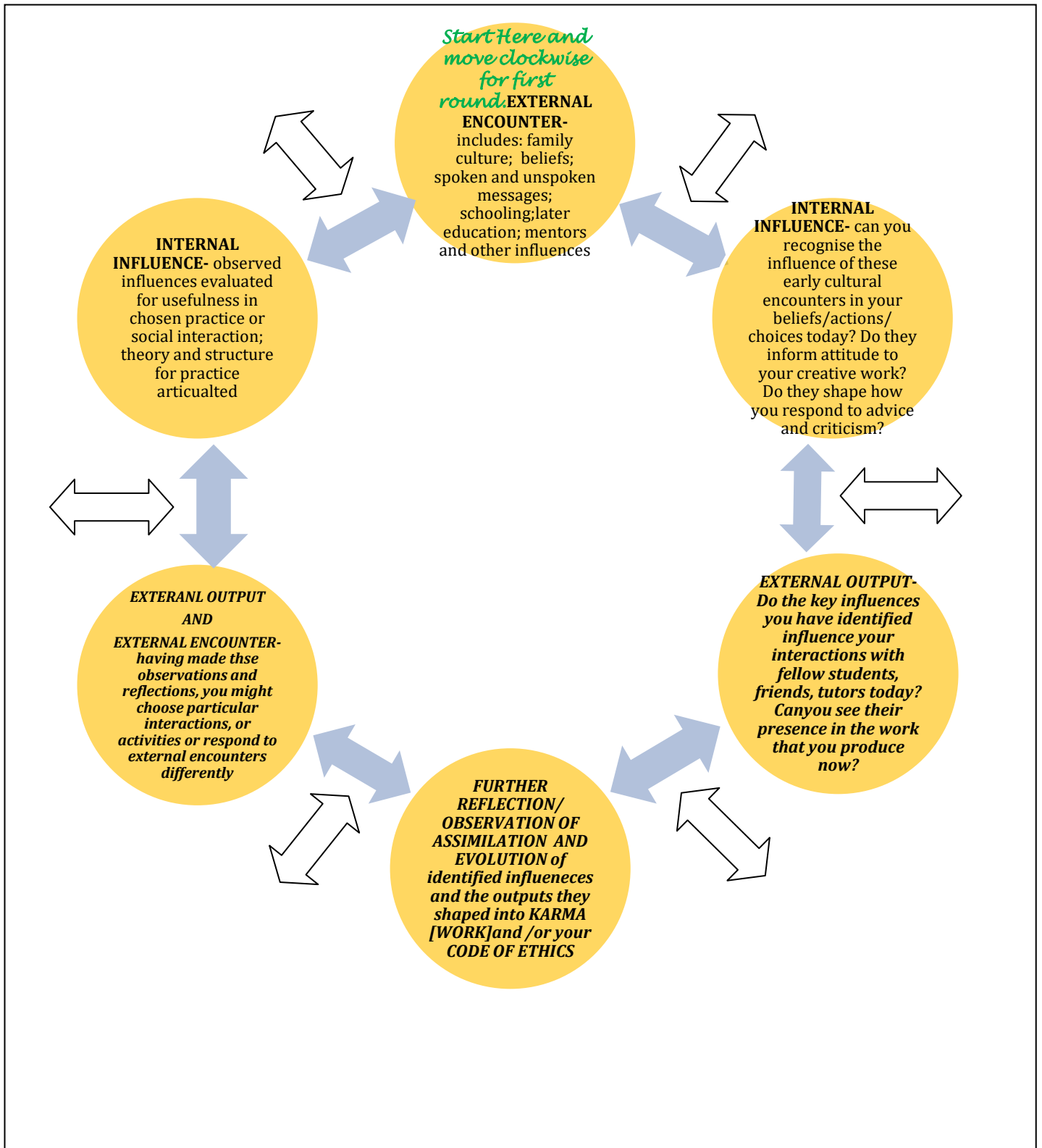
The diagram was shared with the student research team on 24 April 2014 as a pencil drawing. At that time the intention had been that students themselves would design their own versions of the format shown in the pencil drawing. Only two of the students were able to attend in person however, and C was already in Bucharest. Initially simply as a means of passing on the format digitally, a skeletal digital diagram was created and emailed to the team. It was offered as a starting point, and showed only the innermost sequence of spheres forming a circle, that would have at least three further concentric rings added as layers around it. Each sphere in each circle was connected by a double-sided arrow; stemming from the double sided arrow between spheres was another double-sided arrow running perpendicularly. This arrow is intended for connection and extension of points in the inner circle of spheres to the next concentric layer which would be added by the student. Arrows can also run across various concentric rings to connect innermost to outermost circle in varying relationships to middle rings.

The innermost circle, presented to the student team in the initial diagram, differentiated between “external encounters” and “Internal influences”. Part of the purpose of the CARD is to facilitate recognition of the personal journey as part of a collective journey. While the innermost circle represents the individual and the influences of her immediate family and close friends, the second represents experiences of peers at art school, as they are known to the student making the diagram. This circle is also for noting any significant interaction with, or influence by peers on the student’s work and perceptions. The third circle of spheres, a layer further to the circle of peers, represents staff and tutors and their experiences as known to the students. It also records interactions with, and influences by these educators. The fourth circle of spheres represents the institution in which all these interactions are taking place. For the purposes of this initial draft of the CAD, the institution was imagined as representative of wider society, in relation to the individual art student at the centre.

The students were invited to add as many layers and satellite circles of spheres as were necessary to plot out their reflections and observations of the interactions that had made them the people and the art students they were today. The skeletal diagram that the students were given, representing the innermost circle of the CARD, is reproduced below. It is followed by the written explanation and advice on how to proceed that the students were given. Narratives 1 and 2 show how students J and C responded to this invitation, and also how they altered it to suit their own preferences. The versatility of the format is illustrated by the fact that they each took such different approaches.

Diagram 1 presents the first CARD template and instructions as they were given to the SRT.

Diagram 1: CARD Guidelines as Given to SRT April 2015. Layout for innermost circle, and instructions for personalisation and expansion.



How to construct the diagram:

The diagram consists of four flow diagrams as concentric circles; Arrows indicate relationships within the circles, and another set of arrows move across the circles, from innermost to outermost and vice versa. You will need to see my scanned drawing to see the complete set of circles.

Illustrated below is the innermost circle.

This innermost circle represents you. It plots your observations of key moments and encounters in your life, and the work/ actions/ interactions/ attitudes/beliefs you can identify as being influenced by them.

The 2nd circle around this one represents the experiences of your peers at art school. You do not have the details of their experiences, and they are not taking part in this research, but there are moments at which you might have a significant interaction with them; this can be plotted in your diagram in the 2nd concentric circle and/or via the arrows that go across the concentric circles. Your response to the encounter will feed back into the circle that represents you.

The 3rd circle represents your tutors, technical and other staff. As with circle 2, you can plot pedagogic encounters . You can use the arrows that move across all three circles to plot points at which these external events intersect and influence your peers and yourselves.

The 4th outermost circle represents the wider institution, or society as a whole. As with circle 2 and 3, you can plot interactions with events/ people in this wider context. You can use the arrows that move across all three circles to plot points at which these external events intersect and influence your peers and yourselves

This is a basic template to provide structure; you are free to add detail and alter the template as it suits you, but initially please do one that maintains the structure of four concentric circles.

Student Data:

Data presented here is obtained from:

- Questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, group meetings, studio work, research logs and writing produced by SRT members, anonymised as students A-K.
- C and J's responses to the CARD
- Post course questionnaires completed by students who took the Yoruba/Vedanta course but did not join the research team. [students X1, X2, X3, X4, X5]
- Where appropriate, work submitted for assessment for the Yoruba/Vedanta course is also referenced. [Essays 1-7]

Information obtained from the later two categories is included because it further illuminates the conclusions that can be drawn from SRT data, but they have not been studied in detail or analysed in the same depth. Other valuable supporting material included or mentioned in the thesis submission includes art works created by the students such as the First Year Exhibition presented in Appendix 1, and studio work produced by students who took the course in 2009-10 the first project year; this has not been analysed, since the emphasis of the project shifted from potential visual and creative outcomes of exposure to Yoruba/Vedanta ideas, to ascertaining the students' views on pedagogy, capturing their experiences and aspirations, and understanding these in relation to the theoretical sources.

Not all SRT members were able to participate in all of the interviews and meetings. Student E was unable to continue with the project due to illness shortly after getting involved, so his/her data has not been included. Students A, C, D being from the 2012 batch of graduating students had their first interviews a year earlier than Students F,G,H,J,K, but the same ground was covered.

While it had been hoped that there would be occasions when the student team in entirety would meet, this proved logistically impossible. Timetables, student exchanges that took them away from the institution, illness and other personal

circumstances mitigated against whole team meetings taking place. However there were conversations and overlaps between smaller groups within the team:

The largest meetings included

- Students A,C,E on 15/02/2012
- Students F,G,H,J,K 17/05/2013

Apart from this views were shared by

Students A and J, on 25/11/2013

Students H and J on 24/04/2014

Student C, after graduation, contacted Student J via social media

Fuller details about the student data, how and when it was gathered are presented in a series of appendices. The critical autobiographical diagrams CARD of students C and J are not included in full for reasons of confidentiality but relevant sections have been quoted. Also presented as appendices:

Appendix 5: A full breakdown of the level and types of involvement of each member of the SRT, including number of interviews, and work produced

Appendix 6: Relationship of 4 Minds project to the Yoruba/Vedanta course in the first year 2009-10: organisational data and work produced

Appendix 7: Extracts from the SRT interviews to show their favourite and least liked aspect of art school

Appendix 8: SRT Permission forms

Appendix 9: SRT Blank questionnaires

Appendix 10: Post-course Blank Questionnaire given to all students

Appendix 11: Interpretive Process: Student interview statistics leading to themes and categories [cd]

Appendix 11b: Analysis Process

Appendix 11c: SRT Themes from post course questionnaire

Chapter Structure

The remainder of this chapter is divided as follows:

6.1 presents as case studies the thoughts of SRT members on art education, the self, the Yoruba/Vedanta course, and Yoruba and Vedantic concepts, through extracts from their interviews, questionnaires, and in some cases the work submitted for the Yoruba/Vedanta course. In the case of Students J and C, the CARD diagrams they each created for this research are also discussed.

The material in 6.1 subdivides into three sections:

- 6.1a: Narrative 1: student J
- 6.1b: Narrative 2: student C
- 6.1c: Narrative 3: combining the responses of remaining SRT members (students A, B, D, E, F, G, H, and K).

Also incorporated into Narrative 3 are extracts from selected questionnaires and work submitted by students who took the course but did not join the SRT, or who studied prior to the commencement of the research project. Although they do not constitute case studies in the way that the SRT members' responses do, they are useful in exemplifying the variety of ways in which students can engage with the type of material the course offers, and provide further insight into the way art students are themselves able to connect initially unfamiliar material to their own practices and concerns.

All narratives follow the same pattern. After a general introduction to the student and the degree of their involvement in the research project, the remaining text is arranged under three headings arising from the three categories arrived at earlier: *Peer learning*, *resilience*, and *pedagogic principles valued by the students* are set against how they instigate and sustain the student's growing awareness of the self. Responses to the Yoruba/Vedanta course are woven in throughout these narratives, so that it can be seen in relation to the three headings.

6.2 further investigates insights emerging from the interview and questionnaire data; it critiques the Yoruba/Vedanta course in relation to the theoretical sources of the research project.

Chapter 7 reflects on the 4 Minds research project in relation to its aims, objectives and outcomes. It also deals in more detail with the CARD, undertaking an analysis of its intentions, and the ways in which it can be informed by the students' feedback. Staff data has been discussed here too, alongside analysis of 4 Minds and the CARD. Appendix 12 supports the evaluation of staff data by providing backgrounds of staff research [StRT] members, and logging ways in which they participated in the research project

Chapter 8 then presents the pedagogy of mutual translation.

6.1a

Narrative 1 STUDENT J

From the outset, J's perspectives have contributed valuable additional insights through previous personal experience of Hinduism, Indian culture both traditional and contemporary, subcontinental and diasporic, and race and cultural identity in British education systems. Prompted by the Yoruba Vedanta course, her conversations often veered into autobiographical experiences of the theories touched on in the course, while her comments on the discipline in which she was studying and its pedagogy, provided a rich reflections on creative learning and teaching processes. J also went through a serious setback during the course of the 4 minds research project, eventually changing from the department she had been enrolled in to a completely different one. As she had been keeping a research journal for the project and was set to embark on testing the critical autobiographical reflection diagram, she found herself with more time to engage with these activities albeit facing an unknown future at ADIX. From a pastoral perspective, I had an ethical dilemma about continuing with extra demands of the project at a time of personal difficulties, and offered an opportunity to take a break from 4 Minds too. Instead, J voiced a clear desire to engage with the autobiographical diagram because not only would completing it bridge a gap in activities, but because she felt it would help her to work her way through her current dilemmas.

Twelve months after the crisis that instigated the change of department, having successfully transferred to the department of her choice, J was also screened for dyslexia and found to require support mechanisms. In this process, she mentioned to her student services advisor the research project, the CARD, and how useful it had been to her. That advisor turned out to be one of the original members of the 4 Minds staff team. Colleague E had not engaged with the project beyond the first year when she had presented to the rest of the staff team on her belief in Buddhist principles of dharma and the self. She now asked to see the diagrammatic reflections J had made, feeling it would help her to understand the student's

thinking style from a dyslexia perspective. In 7 colleague E's comments on the CARD as a tool for self reflection that may be helpful in educational support and counselling contexts are incorporated into analysis of 4 Minds and CARD. For now the three categories derived through the process described in 6.0 are applied to J's narrative.

Finding and defining the self through peer learning

Peer learning, whether encouraged by tutors, devised by the students themselves, or arising by simple proximity, featured heavily in conversations with all nine students. Speaking about work in progress, dilemmas faced, or seeking general support was found to be much easier amongst fellow students than with staff. The positive aspects of discussing work with peers were described in relation to tapping into different areas of previous experience, trust, and an ability to empathise with each other; there appeared to be an equality of mutual learning, because of the shared experience of being an art school student, and part of a community of novice artists and designers. For J, it was also important that through an open studio in which students were free to roam and comment on each other's work, it was possible to share knowledge gained prior to the course, or understood better by one student than the others.

there are some people in our year, who say, have experience in carpentry so we're, if we don't know anything about our structures or details, we'll go and ask them or uhh, sometimes people are a bit more open or maybe a bit more philosophical about design- you want to go and have a chat (...) and maybe have inspirational talks with. [Student J; Round 3, Interview 1]

In all the students' testimonies, the value of peer learning was tied also to its physical possibility, since the studios and workshops of an art school provide a shared environment for exchange. J commented that while it may have led to time spent socialising and not working, this too was valuable, and s/he realised early on that working amongst classmates reduced anxiety since worries could be shared, and fear assuaged of being left behind in standards, concepts or skills allayed by the visible reassurance of working together.

I don't really like working at home at all, 'cause I lose track, (...) so (...) just working in studio will make you work. Even though there's massive social aspect to it, sometimes you'll just go and you'll chat to your friends and you end up talking for a good couple of hours and not doing any work, but (...)studio really helps me keep on top of my work. [Student J; Round 2, Interview 2]

Student J also commented on the differences between peer and tutor feedback in terms of what each was looking for,

In third year we are becoming more aware of [being part of a community of learners]. The other day we had a peer review...I really started to engage with other people. Everyone kind of stood up and was looking, really listening to you. [...] It was interesting because...when you are not presenting but speaking casually, you learn more about them as a person – maybe not so much about them as [name of discipline] but you learn much more about them as a person because that's the way they have approached something. [Student J; Round 2, Interview 2]

J expresses a desire to know fellow students “as a person” rather than purely as authors of the work. This is a clear example of a view she frequently demonstrates in her commentaries, that the personality or individuality of a person is embedded in the work they do and the way in which they go about it. In the safety of a group of people they knew well, and that had no authority over them, she and her peers were able to expose their own approaches and comment openly about each other's individual choices as expressions of their persons.

It did feel like a community because you've known these people now for two years. It's not like you are so uncomfortable about them....That should happen more...we all put up sticky notes for each other [of advice and suggestions]. Normally at a review, nobody really speaks- it's only the tutors who give feedback...it's funny when the tutors are out, and the fact that we organised this session. [Student J; Round 2, Interview 2]

In this situation, and similar ones described by other students, trust and familiarity and a sense of all being equals were prerequisite to comfortable creative exchange. In each of the interviews with J, the idea of work in which the personality of the student comes through is revisited. In relation to a more unusual approach taken by

a visiting tutor for a one- off project, she speaks about the significance of being asked to consider themselves as persons.

[the visiting lecturer] ... just came in and said- ok I want you to produce two images- and these images must be of a space you feel most creative in.... And I think this is the first time we ever thought about ourself. Every single time we've been designing for a client or a specific brief. But this time the brief was us and where do we feel most creative; in these spaces there must be things which we feel are a necessity. [Student J; Round 3, Interview 1]

Not all in the large second year group had been comfortable with this approach, but for Student J it made a refreshing change,

... during our final review only round about twenty people out of seventy ended up- deciding to actually do it....I remember even me I couldn't think of the space where I feel I could be most creative in, I really had to think, because ...he said it doesn't need to be here, it can be up on the moon, it can be up in space, it can be anywhere in the world. So that ... just got rid of [...] boundaries and rules and in [name of discipline]there's always rules, and always some sort of design restrictions, but there was none at all....So... in the final reviews some people had some really lovely spatial drawings, some people had some really crazy expressive stuff. [Student J; Round 3, Interview 1]

What was most significant to J however, was the way in which the students were asked to become aware of themselves as people, and not simply as trainees in a field of study,

I think that's the first time we were ever really able to... asked to think about ourselves. It was really really interesting....one guy it looked like a proper project, computer rendered image, text next to it, some people just had some really crazy colours and ...just writing and there really wasn't a space, it just looked like a specific art piece. People responded in completely different ways, it was just really interesting 'cause that was –that was really **you** coming up through, 'cause it was your own space, where ever you wanted it to be. [Student J; Round 3, Interview 1]

J seems to be saying that when one defines one's space in a way that reflects ones interests and personality, one "comes through"- becomes visible. In this instance the brief itself asked participants to literally describe their ideal space, and therefore they had to think about what was important to them. This was no doubt a strategy deliberately deployed by the tutor, who, judging by other comments

quoted by J, had a deep interest in getting students to become more self-aware. It can be said, however, that students who respond well to peer led crits are responding to the same impetus to know themselves through their work. Operating in a space that is not defined by the institution or the department- at least through the presence of a tutor or examiner, they are defining what this other space is, and drawing from inner reserves of self knowledge. Their own conception of the subject at hand is expressed freely amongst peers, and so their individual selves become more visible to each other. Whereas in a formal tutor led crit they may have hung back and not exposed their tastes, desires, responses to each other's work, perhaps even to themselves, in the freedom of self-defined space, they allow a fuller view of themselves to emerge. One of the outcomes, from a phenomenological perspective is that this performative self, declaring itself, is also then able to recognise kindred spirits, or compatible thinkers.

...some people who maybe I've spoken to I feel who are really open, and I can have quite nice conversations with (...). One guy who looked at Fung Shui, and looked into ideas about philosophy and he always goes and reads. He'll really look at the brief, and really try and dissect the brief [Student J; Round 3, Interview 1]

So the peer learning situation allows students to not only express themselves more freely, but also to forge future peer learning situations, based on compatibility of approach. J recounts how a group of peers, motivated by curiosity and desire to understand fundamental questions about life and meaning, turned to classical philosophy, joining an evening class and enjoying their mutual efforts to make sense of the discourses they were exposed to.

J also made a striking correlation between an opposite type of attitude, more "closed" to peer or tutor feedback, and vulnerability,

...if you're uncomfortable with maybe, maybe yourself, I think sometimes maybe your vulnerabilities could maybe come out in your designs. You might not even notice it.... Like some people are kind of arrogant. And they might design in a specific way; they might not even want to take criticism at all. They think well, 'my design's the best', and maybe uh, I feel like maybe the way they design could even be ignorant to their surroundings. [Student J Round 2, Interview 1]

So J sees a connection between being unsure of oneself and appearing, or being, arrogant. Further, she sees a connection to creative output- she seems to imply that a closed personality may produce design that is less able to relate to its surroundings. Whether this is the case or not, is not the subject to this thesis, but the way in which fellow students learn to read each other and themselves is. J implies that a more open mind will produce more sensitive work. In her views on the Yoruba /Vedanta course, themes of openness, listening and multiple viewpoints are recurrent,

[on the Yoruba/Vedanta course] I felt like I've learned about different ways of thinking.... what really interested me was...creativity, with space and self, which I wanted to maybe learn more about, so that's why I decided to take this ...course...because it's interesting to see- and maybe as a [name of discipline] student I was interested about space. And also nothing else there [in the list of available courses] was about self [Student J; Round 3, Interview 1]

In relation to her discipline she was drawn to an exploration of space, and as a person she was interested in building on her understanding of the self. She saw a direct connection to knowing oneself and ones creativity, and interestingly she already saw this as a vital part of education,

...maybe as a designer, or maybe as an artist, we really need to know ourselves better in order to design for others. And ...maybe it might come naturally to us, 'cause if we know what we want- or (...) understand ourselves better (...) we can understand others. So I thought that was something that was key to learning. [Student J; Round 3, Int A]

Asked in the post-course questionnaire, whether the course had “contributed to your understanding of the philosophical idea of the ‘self’? Does it feel relevant to your own life and circumstances?” she replied,

Yes I found this part of the course particularly intriguing. The workshop made me realise that we can be quite disconnected with ourselves [Student J PCQ [2013]

The workshop referred to is a simple and quick 2- 3 minute experiment aimed at introducing the idea of the self as constituted of many parts, some more evident than others. This is conducted early in the course, as a basic grasp of the concept is necessary in order to understand Yoruba and Indian art and ideas. The students,

seated in their lecture theatre seats are asked to sit up straight, close their eyes and relax. For a minute or so they are asked to become very aware of the textures of the chair they are seated, on the clothes they are wearing, and the weight of their bodies on the chairs. They are asked, in other words, to become viscerally aware of their physical presence. They are then asked to visualise themselves seated in this position as though seen from the ceiling. A rich silence fills the room as these very visually astute individuals are able to take quite naturally to this mental exercise. After a minute or so they are asked to return to the earlier awareness of their physical bodies seated in particular ways in particular chairs. Next they are invited to slowly open their eyes and resume a normal stance. They are then asked if they all managed to 'see' themselves seated on their seats, as if from an aerial view. In the various groups with which this has been tried, the general consensus has been affirmative. The students are then asked,

“who was watching you in a seated position, if you were seated in the chair?”

Responses are given such as “the imagination”, “the mind”, etc. These are all accepted as valid, and the Yoruba and Vedantic idea of the mind being one part of a composition of physical, psychological and metaphysical aspects of the self, is introduced. Students are told that much of the philosophical quests of these cultures are aimed at understanding and defining the mind, the self, and a metaphysical self; that this quest has spawned many analytical traditions in the case of ancient India, and great discourse embedded in myths and art works of both. The concept of a multifaceted self, and its expression in art and literature is therefore introduced early and present in the backdrop of all the lectures.

In J's CARD, her ongoing concerns with this concept is mapped and evidenced. All SRT members stated that most if not all the material was new to them. For J however, the course, while bringing much that was new, also resonated because it acknowledged for the first time in her art school experience, ideas that she had grown up with, coming from a Hindu background, as evidenced in her CARD and interviews.

As explained in more detail in 7, and in the methodology chapter, the critical autobiographical reflection diagram is structured as a series of concentric rings each consisting of key events and encounters in a person's life. The person creating the diagram is invited to identify these moments, and to connect them in the circular structure to the outcomes, or actions that can be traced to those influences. The innermost ring represents the individual and their most immediate sense of themselves, stemming from family and upbringing, and concentric rings move out from representations of friends, peers, staff, and eventually to wider society. The CARD enables the recognition and plotting out of interconnections between these various and potentially endless rings that represent self and society. Most importantly, they enable identification of the roots of ideas we see as deeply representative of ourselves. In J's case, the ideas that form part of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, and the research project that followed, appear in several of the rings. [See CARD template chapter 7 introduction]

Below are some entries from the digital CARD which J produced in February 2014. These selected extracts relate to the Yoruba/Vedanta course and how it connected to J's previous concerns and questions about self and identity, and how it continued to figure in conversations and ideas taken up later. They are also selected for their capturing of significant peer interaction. Entries are alphabetically coded simply in the order in which they are cited here.

Entry A is connected by J to two from the past, prior to enrolment at art school.

"January 2013 Term 2
Contemporary Contexts for
Yoruba and Ancient Indian ideas
on space, creativity and self.
A natural attraction to [this] elective in 2nd Year.
It appeared as if it would answer questions with
the combination of it being in an art school context" *Student J,*
CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 2

Entry B captures an intuition that the stress of dealing with school exams and leaving school can be handled by knowing more about herself, or as she puts it, getting “in touch with my essence”,

14-16 years old

Studying for Standard Grade and Higher Exam

I became extremely stressed and burdened by final exams and the rigid nature of life that supposedly follows. I didn't know what to do when I left school. I believed I would know if I became in touch with my essence. [Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 2]

Entry C highlighted by J in red, explains where her notion of “essence” may have come from, as it captures a moment in which she asks herself directly whether she can identify with the religious ideas embedded in everyday life in the family,

14-15 years old?

Am I Hindu?

I began to read the book.[an explanation of Hinduisim given by her parents] I found my answer within the 1rst chapter. Or Did I? I did some research no? [Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 2]

This entry is particularly indicative of an ongoing concern that seems to have been a major part of J's childhood and teenage years. This episode also arises in J's second interview,

...what's so interesting about Hinduism it's so vast that you can find an answer there but you'll also find contradictions which lie there. My mum's a person who goes along with tradition, but I'm not sure she truly understands why, especially when I question her. ... (...) my dad is someone who- is (...) aware of them but he (...) doesn't really align himself with it. If something's bad, he'll criticise it openlyFor me, I started wondering about Hinduism, I think my mum gave me a book called “Am I a Hindu?”I started reading the first chapter (...) it was a dialogue between a son and a father. (...) One of the

questions was (...) can you be a Hindu if you don't believe in God? And he says (...) you can believe in massive universal power that controls everything and whether that be God that's kind of up to you. I kind of ended it there! I thought that's quite a good question and answer. I think I'm actually going to pick it up again. [Student J; Round 2, Interview 1]

Tensions, questions and contradictions that arose for J about her identity as ethnically and culturally originating outside of Scotland, often retold with much humour, are captured as moving beyond the nuclear family to visits to the homeland, amongst school, art school and social peers in Glasgow, as seen in

Entry D

12-17 years old
Questioning self & ethnicity
"Are you Scottish or Sri-Lankan?" my parents' Sri-Lankan friends would ask, assuming I would reply identifying myself as a Scot which then would cue lecture about being a Sri-Lankan. So I would say "Scot-Lankan" and they would laugh. I do identify myself as a Scot-Lankan as a blend of my environment and my cultural upbringing, however it is not WHO I am.
Being a 'Scot-Lankan' is an outer layer, which gives me a place within our society we live in today. [Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 1]

In interviews she speaks also of a subtle change in relationship to fellow Scottish young people of the same ethnicity, but who came to the country as teenagers,

When we moved here, Scotland wasn't very mixed we lived [in an area where] I wasn't really exposed to (...) lots of Sri Lankan people because there wasn't much around. My parents did have friends but their children were much older than us (...)in 2000 (...)that's when (...) we started to meet more Sri Lankan people [our age] but they were much different from me because they had lived half their lives in Sri Lanka. That's when we had the temple going on (...) I think that's why I started to conflict because I started to realise I couldn't speak Tamil. I was only speaking English- my accent was (...) strong (...) and they would speak more in Tamil. They knew more about film and tradition than I did and It was really strange like shouldn't I know this as well? I remember me and my sister we were quite different compared to everybody else- we were born and raised here (...) but we could understand Tamil, so these people would talk to next us, and we'd be 'we know what you're saying' (...)at that point we were also too scared to speak in Tamil

because our accent's different, and so it was quite uncomfortable but I think it's quite good we've been exposed to that [Student J; Round 2, Interview 1]

The quote above highlights ways in which peer responses and expectations can be detrimental to a young person's well-being; it also demonstrates J's ability, and recourse to an analytical skill in recognising broader contexts in which the encounter takes place. She also articulates a strong sense of wanting to be identified as a person, and not defined by perceptions or expectations within, or of her cultural background. This articulates complexities inherent in being part of any community, but particularly a diasporic one. While finding that the Yoruba /Vedanta course appealed because it addressed ideas from the global South which were lacking in other aspects of art school, she also found an over enthusiastic intrigue with her cultural background problematic,

Sometimes I'll speak to friends about Hindu gods, I tell them a bit about my background, and they are fascinated by it. But I feel a bit disappointed by their fascination because, again, it's just an element- it's just another part of the world- it exists. So you shouldn't take it to be something so great- it exists [Student J; Round 2, Interview 1]

At the same time, discourse around these issues with peers who shared an interest in ideas and concepts coming from south Asian and other philosophical traditions was a bonding and empowering experience,

That's why I like being around friends (...) who are already aware of this (...)and they're more interested, but they don't take a 'WOW' [reaction] (...) That sort of thing it does really irritate me, but I'm glad they're accepting to it . [Student J; Round 2, Interview 1]

The question of knowing herself runs throughout J's testimonies and is articulated as a political, social, and existential one. Through doing the CARD, and participating in interviews, J's interest in questions philosophical take a deeply personal turn. Given the requests intrinsic to the exercise, this is hardly surprising. The extent to which its potential for reflecting on the meaning of past experiences is taken up, however is quite poignant. In an entry that refers to a significant conversation with a fellow student several months after the Yoruba /Vedanta course, and days after Interview round 3, J makes mention of childhood depression. **Entry E**

18th December 2014

Remembering last night's conversation with [Name]

[Name] is the only person who understands finding that essence. Hearing him say "essence" brought me a lot of joy. I didn't feel like the only warped person in this world. I was embarrassed before. It allowed me to come to terms with what depression at an early age gave me.

There is a process to finding your essence. You need to question your identity and peel back the layers till you reveal that core. [Name] believes that it is something you must question when you are young. I agreed with him. I have felt quite different from others who were around my age. This questioning of the soul does leave a permanent scar. It lingers in the back of your head and it shapes the way you think and brings in other perspectives. The self is multifaceted, and this world is too.

[Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 2]

In finding a peer who shares interest in the existential question that she frequently poses to herself, J is able to free herself of "embarrassment" at having had such preoccupations and become depressed by them. The way in which engaging with the CARD provided J with a vehicle for further contextualising that depression forms part of the next category of this narrative. It also sheds light on the kind of resilience an education of mutual translation might instil, nurture, and support.

Finding and defining the self through resilience

J first mentioned childhood depression at a personal, non-documented meeting following a period in which she had not been in touch. As mentioned at the start of this narrative, J had suffered an academic setback that had caused her to question whether she actually wanted to continue with her studies. This in turn had made her think back to an earlier difficult period in her life. It was in this conversation that I offered her an opportunity to take a break from the project, as she had already quite a lot to contend with. She replied that on the contrary, being free from course work, she now felt she had an opportunity to give the project more time. She spoke

of having recognised signs of potentially sliding into depression again, and how she had been, and continued to be determined not to allow it to take over her life again. Having recalled the impact of the depression she had suffered as a teenager, she was keen to reflect on it further in relation to the present. She had made a tentative start on the CARD and felt drawn to continuing with it, as she felt it would help her to make important impending decisions.

J's account of both of these difficult periods in her life are powerful examples of resilience in a student who is able to take recourse to self-reflection in order to get through demanding or stressful experiences. In both periods, education systems, cultural values, and a crisis of identity are part of the general picture in which the depression arises. In the second period of crisis, however she has made use of critical autobiographical reflection. Throughout J's interviews and CARD, there is evidence of resilience to trying circumstances, both in defining herself spiritually and culturally, and in getting from education what she needs, she applies tremendous will. Barnett's idea of the "will to learn" with which students enter higher education is amply demonstrated by J's changing her educational situation, and even direction where necessary, and in her aspirations for being taken seriously and recognised by tutors. Her will to simply go on, to overcome adversity, however, seems to gain sustenance from her oft mentioned search for her "essence" or "soul".

Three months after the informal meeting, in a recorded interview, J spoke about her CARD, hand drawn at the time, which she had brought with her. She asked for certain clarifications which are dealt with in 7, since they are very useful for improving the instructions and presentation of CARD in future. Freed up by these clarifications, a further month on she had spent considerable time with the CARD process, and commenced a digital version. She reported by email,

I am working through the circle diagram and it has been rather insightful. I have come [sic] to terms with parts of myself with it. I have started working from my teenage years which was difficult but interesting to see how I have progressed clearly. I was in very deep thought over the past month remembering things and it seems like I haven't done a lot. [of actual diagram construction at this point] I ended up opening up myself to some friends

about certain things and had some interesting conversations too. [Student J, email 1]

Thinking back to difficulties in the past, the contexts within which they took place, and the actions they led to is described as “insightful”, so presumably is bringing about some understanding. J speaks of taking time to think and reflect prior to commencement of writing. In this period she also finds herself able to speak about things that she had not previously shared with friends.

A few days later, she states that the process has been beneficial,

I dove into deep thought while doing the diagram. It is a bit emotionally difficult since I feel myself avoiding even thinking about some things. But it helps me come to terms with it making me see things clearly. I got lost some days. The art school bit is a bit haphazard. So I will gladly send it to you over the weekend! [Student J, email 2]

When sending the diagram, [Appendix 14] she states that she sees the “exciting” process as a long term one, requiring breaks to allow space for letting revelations settle,

I am attaching what I have done so far on the diagram. It is not near finished, though there is a quite a bit there. I keep on unravelling things and making connections. It is quite exciting to do. It was difficult to do at [a] time because I had to come to terms with things. I will continuously work on it and send you updates maybe weekly. [Student J, email 3]

In answer to my concern that the process may be upsetting her, she replies,

It lured me into a deep thought but it didn't entirely upset me. Some days I got fired up to complete a circle! It was pretty exciting times seeing things piece together! [Student J, email 4]

So the excitement of discovering patterns, solutions and recognising important moments seems to outweigh the upset of recalling unhappy times. Equally, J as a co-researcher, has found ways to customise the skeletal diagram structure she was given, and is happy to make technical changes to ease reading the document,

Yeah. I ended up making up my own process at times as well as sticking to yours. Yeah, it feels like a labyrinth! I just wanted it to be readable in case you wanted to print parts of it out. So the font is 12pt I think. I might resize it to an A0, or a 4 A0s in case I needed to print it and put it on a wall one day. Haha! [Student J, email 4]

In the email above J also flags up the possibility of putting it on a wall, an idea she was later to take forward, and which is discussed in 7. For now the focus is on how the CARD process enabled some perspective and understanding of her current situation and how it was influenced by past key events. In articulating and contextualising a key moment of crisis for the CARD, she seems to have found agency in an otherwise potentially overwhelming situation. Much of this is very much due to her own resilience and determination, but she states that the “unravelling” of interconnected experiences has enhanced the process, and most importantly, that it *has allowed her to recognise her own abilities and changes,*

I think it's a good thing for me to work through 'cause it actually makes things more clearer, and it's interesting to see how things interlink. My mind's sometimes quite scattered ... I was able to sort of have everything...Maybe I should put it on Illustrator all the circles in a nutshell, it would be really be interesting to see all of me, like my mind on a piece of paper [laughs]....cause you can actually track your growth which is actually quite nice. I'd like to see that because I don't think we are very aware of how you've grown [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

When asked if using the CARD encouraged her to keep working and learning,

yeah I'm quite young and naïve I want to keep on learning and growing; I like reading some of these things, I think 'ahh I used to think like this...' I've grown up somehow over these past couple of months so it's good- it's quite positive to know that you are somehow moving forward. [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

In the CARD the following entry is sited at its very centre, differentiated from others also by its black background and grey font. **Entry F**

2004-2005 [12 years old in 1st year]

Depression

I believe depression sparked when I began to question happiness.

I remember being off sick from school. So I decided to watch

old home videos of myself from when I was around 1-4 years old.

I didn't recognise the child on the television screen at all.

She was full of life. I don't feel joy. I feel heavy and burdened.

I wondered what happened between then and now. Who am I?

I began to wonder who is that core being completely unaffected

by their environment and experience? How do I feel my soul?

This question struck the development of my depression

during my teenage years. [Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Centre]

Around this J has plotted her first most personal ring. The CARD structural advice given to the SRT states,

This innermost circle represents you. It plots your observations of key moments and encounters in your life, and the work/ actions/ interactions/ attitudes/beliefs you can identify as being influenced by them. [Instructions on CARD template]

Here J has cited the dilemmas and conflicts as well her responses to key questions that arose for her between the ages of 12-17. Some of these are already quoted above. She cites in this ring her decision to come to art school as well as questions that arose in the course of the 4 Minds research project. In relation to the CARD structure and terminology, the decision to come to art school is positioned as "*Further reflection/Observation of assimilation and evolution of identified influeneces and the outputs they shaped*"

Entry G

Late 2010- 2011

Change

I began to realise that this internal battle with figuring out who

I am in its essence will take time. I first need to kick my depression

and live my days as honestly as possible. I decided to work on myself

when I started [name of discipline] at ADIX I felt by going into a new

environment(High school to College) I felt free to make changes with

nothing of my past reminding me of my old self. I wanted to recover myself

completely to and my essence.

I decided to push myself to feel, stop caring about what others think of me, make connections with people, put an effort to get know people, follow instinctual feelings, gain confidence with heart and be honest to myself.

(This was a difficult and slow process. I rejected the idea of therapy to avoid breaking down. I didn't speak about it to anyone. I felt that I had to go through this alone, and my anger with myself fuelled this desire; I took revenge on myself)

[Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 1]

This entry titled "change" is flanked by the influence of conversations about ethnicity, culture and belonging already quoted such as entry D. It is also connected by J to the research project interviews after the Yoruba/Vedanta course: **Entry H**

December 2013 (Stage 3 Term 1)

A Ranjana session

She asked, how do you identify yourself?

What do you call your inner self?

I was not sure, how do you give it a name.

I just feel that I have a soul, but what name do I give it?

Hamshya? So I shouted and replied with "Hamshya!"

How do you name your essence?

I struggle to articulate this feeling I have, so how do I give it name?

One word to embody and hold my individual essence. [Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 1]

So the Yoruba/Vedanta course seemed to act as a link to key moments in her life, and to concerns that have been with her for many years. Through the lectures, workshops and assignment of the course, and the methods of the research project, *J was able to find a home for many of her enquires*. Because the methods were open to interpretation and encouraged self-reflection, they moved beyond the confines and contents of the course to become more personally meaningful. For her course essay J examined some questions about the classical dance form that she had studied as a teenager and still had a great deal of interest in, *Bharata Natyam*

dance. She looked into the ancient Indian aesthetic theory *navarasas*, applicable to all art forms and consisting of techniques and concepts associated with the depiction of eight essential emotions and their relationship to each other. J's argument was that while there was much that was admirable in this dance form, it had many predetermined elements that the dancer was expected to perform; traditionally this involved the theory of the *navarasas*, but she felt there was a more individual interpretation of the theory that could be made; this more individual dance, she argued, could not be done when focusing on the *requirements* of taught performance, it had to be born from deep experience of emotions and expressed freely. This critical intuition was supported by encounters with a particular dance teacher, and a yoga teacher. The essay expressed all these ideas as the "difference between performer and dancer". There is a great deal more that can come of this initial idea, and it is possible that J will explore it further in future. Of significance here, is what the contents and pedagogy of the Yoruba /Vedanta course made possible: It provided the theoretical vocabulary to discuss Indian philosophical and aesthetic ideas of importance to J; it situated these within a tangible framework whose impact included the presence of these ideas in a 21st century art school in Britain. In short, it provided a critical research framework for engaging with ancient thought systems in contemporary contexts.

Entry J illustrates this.

2013 January-May Term 2

Contemporary Contexts for Yoruba and Ancient Indian ideas on space, creativity and self.

Writing Essay

Difference between Performer & Dancer

I enjoyed dancing for myself. I believe that a dancer dances for their own sake.

It liberates them, pouring out their emotion through movement. Space is no constraint; a dancer is ultimately free. I see dance as pure emotional movement.

However, a performer is different. A performer is restricted with a stage, therefore space. Not only are they conscious of their stage presence, they must be conscious of their audience. Yet most importantly, their piece should normally be choreographed and executed to perfection. They strive to satisfy their audience validating their performance as a success or failure.

However, a dancer dances to satisfy them self.

After dancing in Chennai, I saw that the majority of Bharathanatyam dancers and performers by nature almost. I [...] wanted to write this essay concerning Navarasa to explore emotion in dance as an aesthetic experience deeply. [Student J, CARD as at 1 Feb 2014, Ring 3]

The possibility of engaging in this intellectual manner with ideas from a culture that she had grown up with was a first for J, particularly in the art school. In her second interview, she speaks of the realisation that the history of [name of discipline] lectures that she was offered did not include any non-western material, except in the study of religious buildings, which too was selective.

That's why your lecture series was so interesting, because you covered a lot of ground, whereas we've never been exposed to that. In History of [name of discipline] and that was to do with religious [name of discipline] we only covered a little, maybe only half the world. If it was a real introduction it would be completely holistic and it would try to touch or cover as much ground as possible but they didn't do that at all and I picked up on that....There's so much more and I want to be educated on it [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

J confirms that this was disappointing especially since she was already aware that so much more exists, highlighting the dilemma for multiple heritage students, or those with a more international cultural focus.

I was coming to be educated, at the same time I know that exists. I was also a bit annoyed.. I thought that should be there.... [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

So the potential harm to J's will to learn is evident here. She goes on to say, however, that as with other difficulties, this realisation motivates her to find a solution,

I think that's why I wanted to write that essay [the Yoruba /Vedanta course assignment] because it was left out...[in other courses]. I thought I can uncover quite a lot of stones with this. I was just curious but I felt like a whole part of the world is just left out and it has so much history as well....that definitely did make me think, I want to learn ...Definitely because it was left out I kind of wanted to go and find out more about it. I think

maybe it even made me want to read more.... [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

While a resilient spirit manages to negotiate its way around a lack of acknowledgment, it does suffer, and the role of the educational environment is clear,

but I think it is quite damaging in the sense, it's quite hurtful that it [eastern ideas and art] does exist, and it is part of my background and if you are giving a holistic introduction it's not representative of that at all. [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

J's narrative demonstrates the role of resilience in student experience in many ways. Firstly she over comes troubling expectations of peers, both in and out of school, and family/family friends in her contemporary home and in the land of her parents' origin. Secondly as young person she deals with remarkable insight and self-awareness with depression, choosing her own way out of it. Thirdly she copes and is proactive in dealing with absences in the curriculum that bother her, but she also engages with the departmental teaching she finds valuable and useful. In encountering the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the research project that follows, she uses the opportunity to learn more about ideas she had previous interest in as well as to open herself out to new ones. When crisis strikes, she reflects back to her previous period of feeling lost and seems to pre-empt another bout of depression by using all her inner resources. At this juncture, being engaged with the research project, she makes a conscious decision to use the CARD process and other aspects of the research project to make sense of her present situation. Mapping her own thoughts and key influences on her thinking, allows her to see her own growth and progress. She does all this by using critical faculties as well as by holding on to a quest to understand a self that she describes as her "essence".

Finding and defining the self through pedagogic strategies applied by tutors

Some of J's responses to pedagogic strategies are already cited above with reference to the way in which her discipline is taught as well as the Yoruba/Vedanta course. More examples and their implications are given here. In her third interview, J contrasts the approaches of one year group tutor and those that followed. She recounts a tutorial in which critiques of a drawing was followed by the tutor's bringing in a dried flower to underline a point made about plant structures, accompanied by the quip,

Has a man ever brought you dead flowers before? [Student J Round 4, Interview 3].

This kind of personalised intervention, conveyed with humour, was tailored to individual conversations,

He'd come up and do this with everyone, he'd come up and talk to people...and he'd even say 'some of your drawings are quite naïve at present but that's ok at this stage.' He'd speak to us in that sort of sense. [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

This evidencing on the part of the tutor, of his recognition of the students as individuals and individual learners was described by J as beneficial to learning, as was the offering of criticism while also offering support,

It's comforting to know you've got someone like that, guiding you through...education. [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

Interestingly the students do not seem to have become aware of the role of the "watchful eye" of this tutor until they moved on to another one with a very different pedagogic style. Asked for the main point of contrast in these two tutors' manner of addressing the students, J explains,

(...) He seemed very disconnected....Sometimes I don't think he read me that well....he wasn't in the studios much to see how we were getting on. He was very, very distant [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

Despite the fact that the second tutor was positive about some of J's work, the "uncomfortable" quality of interactions with someone that peers felt did not know them by name, seemed to have the greater impact. At one point in Interview 3, Barnett's concept of the will to learn was introduced; I explained Barnett's theory

that it can both be inspired by education practices, and dampened by it. Asked how tutors can be shown the importance of nurturing the will to learn, she comments,

I don't even think tutors are even aware of the will to learn (...). I don't think they've even looked at education the way you have, (...) you can actually talk about nurturing (...). But they're not aware of how thoughts connect in our head (....) If you show them this diagram they would be somewhat shocked, but then you're (...) actually just putting a process down, you're actually mapping it out how an individual will learn. I think all educators should be aware of this sort of process [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

J goes on to suggest how the CARD could be used in the context of studio teaching,

If we had [a] submission coming up (...) we'd have specific lectures or talks(...) people will have different perspectives(...) Tutors have to be aware how (...) pupils actually take things in and how then it would actually affect their work (...). It seems like what you're bringing is completely different to what's even existing. Education of [discipline] seems to be all about are you learning the right things for them to go out and become a [practitioner] [Student J Round 4, Interview 3]

The passage above, apart from offering some validation of the CARD process, and extending its purpose, also evidences that student J values and would welcome more articulation of educational and pedagogic theory as part of the context in which she learns. While this may not be the case with all students, J seems reassured by the fact that the research project, and by extension the Yoruba/Vedanta course which it sprang from, is concerned with education theory. Being tied to the CARD, which places reflection on personal experience at its methodological heart, it can be concluded that knowing the self, and having it recognised in some form by the educational environment is of value to the learner journey at least of this student. Further, pedagogic strategies, such as the good practices cited, the CARD, and dialogue as in the interview, can support the student in knowing herself.

Specific strategies within the Yoruba/Vedanta course appreciated by J included the interconnection between lectures, even though they covered very different subjects,

I enjoyed how the lectures somehow linked to each other [PCQ Student J].

The link she was aware of was postcolonial discourse, a lens that serves also, in the course strategy, to bring the lectures back to the students' and the lecturer's context,

you were bringing us to a completely different continent but at the same time you were linking it back to post colonialism so I think it was just interesting because I never knew much about it before... [Student J Round 2, Interview 1]

This seemed to open up a way of looking at the world in a different way,

(...) learning about something completely different, (...) can open your mind and maybe make you think in a different way. It might not actually be a skill... Like maybe... if you, studied something (...) you can actually directly bring forward into your studio disciplines, but the fact that you can open your mind and maybe think in a different way, I think that, in itself is a bit more powerful and can actually stay with you, maybe for a longer time. [Student J Round 2, Interview 1]

In summary, throughout J's narrative are examples of how she connects knowing the self with knowing others; she found that working in studio and discussing ideas helped to both discipline her own practice and to partake in a mutually trusting environment; further it highlighted to her the way in which individual beliefs and ways of being were embedded in the work produced by peers, and made her want to find the type of work that would be true to her sense of who she was. The question of who she was, however, was complicated (or enriched) by her cultural background in which the existence of a soul, reincarnation, and the enactment of religious practices were a given; finding this idea absent in other pedagogic areas of the art school, she was attracted to the Yoruba/Vedanta course; she enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about familiar ancient Indian ideas, and also material about cultures completely new to her, finding that doing so "opens our minds"; subsequently she joined the research project; in interviews and reflection on her experiences, a strong concern for education processes emerged; these were articulated as a desire to be recognised as an individual; this quest mirrored her ongoing search for a culturally embedded but also deeply felt sense of an essence self, a self that was beyond physical identity; facing a crossroads situation in which she had to decide whether to return to her discipline or leave it, she found autobiographical reflection, structured as the CARD helpful. And finally, it is of note

that J's reflections have updated the evidence of my personal experiences as a South Asian in a British art school. She has also proposed many interesting ideas about education and the use of traditional material in contemporary contexts.

6.1b

Narrative 2 Student C

From the outset, C found that the Yoruba/Vedanta course contents offered inroads design approaches that had been introduced in studio, but to his mind not substantiated, or in some instances not as ethically rigorous as he would have liked. For his Yoruba/Vedanta course assignment he chose a question about cultural discourse embedded in the characterisation of two female characters in a Sanskrit play introduced in the course.¹ He later joined the student research team with a view to informing contemporary eco-design with older knowledge of nature and ecology, such as *Vastu*, the traditional science of spatial alignment in ancient Indian architectural design and construction. Due to a combination of personal reasons, C graduated early on in the project, opting not to stay for the honours year of his degree course. He maintained contact with the research project, communicating via Skype and email and gradually his focus changed from design to design education. These records, plus the original face to face interviews and meetings, constitute data collected over three years. On returning to his home country, C searched for opportunities for direct 'hands on' practice, having found this element absent in his theory oriented department. He became increasingly interested in how design is taught, and in arriving at critical understanding of current buzzwords and trends. He then went on to work in a European international school as a teaching assistant, and later enrolled in a college of education in his home country to train as a secondary school art and design teacher. His perspective therefore spans student to teacher, and his engagement with the education process spans the fields of designer training at art school to pedagogical training. His reflections on this entire journey are plotted in his CARD, in a very different style to J's. Instead of connecting different entries and concentric circles, he has retrospectively combined within each entry, key events and their relationship to past, present, and in some cases to the future. One year later he also sent a further annotated version of the CARD; this provided further insight into several of the original entries.

¹ "Sakuntala and the Ring of Recollection" by Kalidasa, written c 400 CE

Finding and defining the self through peer learning

In C's case, a good part of the learning that has emerged from contact with student peers has to do with differentiating his own attitudes and aspiration from those who appear unquestioning of the ethos of the studio discipline and its pedagogy. From the outset, he took a critical approach to expectations and principles of peer learning as experienced in his department. Perhaps because of this, he extended the notion of learning from and within one's community to communities outside of the art school,

[Department B] is advertised as a course that stimulates creativity through peer bonding and peer learning... through things that happen in studio- and its actually people wearing headphones and doing their thing- but it is (...) things that happen outside [art school]. Events [or] just hanging out with people outside of the school; just in gaining glimmers of inspiration from things you always needed to know[...] - and exploring [city name]- once you open to these possibilities [Student C Round 2 Interview 2]

The Yoruba idea of education as a critically aware life-long process and of a necessary dynamic between individual and society is present in this statement. C reveals here an ability to move on from a lack of peer empathy in the department to fulfilling that need elsewhere. He identified with like-minded peers when he found them, but he was also able to consider the view point and experiences of the public with whom they were interacting. He critiqued too the pedagogy within which he was training, and took on some aspects, while rejecting others.

In C's narrative a strong presence of Barnett's will to learn and the will to succeed despite setbacks which at times must have seemed bewildering and mountainous. For him, the emergent student self was often at odds with the very peer and instructor group he functioned within. His concerns were ethical, referencing questions of cultural appropriation, respect for the communities for whom a designer produces, the relationship between industry and education, and pedagogic practices. Often these concerns overlap in his commentaries, as in a paper titled "Can Art and Design Education Benefit from Cross-Cultural Awareness?" which he voluntarily sent after his second interview,

I consider that questioning the ethics of the mainstream design practices is crucial for finding one's own form of accomplishment. I also can intuit that tailored education is one effective approach to training and informing professionals about the possible crucial culturally significant decisions in their careers [Student C Post-interview essay Aug 2012]

By "tailored education" he means design education that combines theory from the social sciences (which his department does) with a more sensitive awareness of cultural contexts, (which he finds less present in the curriculum),

(...) does an experience or a product for that matter make a difference to the user if it holds strictly a scientific, technical or functional value? Can these 'things' be 'dried' of all connotations and become just tools? [Student C Post-interview essay Aug 2012]

He suggests that providing a fulfilling experience for the user would require the incorporation of values familiar to him/her. Further, he suggests that the way in which education deals with cultural and cross cultural knowledge is central to improving relationships between designer and community,

Can a good personal experience, [For the user] interacting with a work of design be achieved if the latter lacks a meaning? What deeper, more personally assimilate-able meaning can objects, systems or experiences have than a more or less familiar cultural meaning? (which requires a responsible and well- rounded awareness of a multitude of coordinates that inform a cross-culturally based experience). [Student C Post-interview essay Aug 2012]

He also questions messages given to students by a pedagogy that recognises success of only one particular kind,

Is an accomplished artist or designer just someone who was hired to work for a prestigious employer after an assessment of his/her portfolio or can there be other forms of success consisting in what every individual actively achieves, through a better collaboration with partners and the work they engage in? Can this engagement be stimulated by a better multi-cultural understanding facilitated by education? [Student C Post-interview essay Aug 2012]

There are nuances to C's overview of design education and the personal development of students. His own beliefs and aspirations do not at times seem to have fitted with the ethos of the space in which he found himself, but as stated above, this has served the purpose of helping him to differentiate his own preferred

ethos; and therefore it can be said that peer interaction serves to help him to know himself better, albeit in a roundabout way. This is reminiscent of the Vedantic technique for identifying the self by negating all that it is not, *neti-neti* (not this-not this) explained in chapter 2.

An example is his critique of a particular form of appropriation thought to be acceptable by some peers, practitioners of design education, and professionals. This is often presented as “cultural sharing” or a form of “added value”,

I've seen sometimes an inappropriate use of cultural particularities or innovation in different cultures that has been simply adapted into western culture and (...) I've seen products [such as] genetically modified fish that are already used in Asia for (...) spotting poisons in kitchen tap water, to (...) growing algae at home, or (...) even laser walled traffic lights for pedestrians instead of the classic thing -which they claim to be (...) innovated by [western] students as new products, or claimed to bring an extra value just by copying and pasting them into...into a western kind of innovative context. [Student C; Round 2, Interview 2]

This extra value is claimed to be premised on the marketing of an innovation already in use elsewhere to a fashion conscious, wealthy elite of consumers of radical design. The work adapted from elsewhere was,

then [seen] futuristically (...) as somehow shocking, as a new occurrence that wouldn't really be accepted by people but it would become fashionable just because upper classes would opt for them [Student C; Round 2, Interview 2]

In the case of one idea taken from existent eastern designers mentioned above, a peer had presented the idea as his innovation, because he had spotted the way in which introducing it could bring about a “paradigm shift” in western consumer culture, pushing at the boundaries of taste and acceptability, since it involved skirting around health and safety and animal welfare concerns. For C this raised a “double controversy” and many ethical issues that should be flagged up, including originality, while for some peers it did not,

It seems like education doesn't encourage completely original thinking, or discourage plagiarism in its true form, but it encourages sophistication as is perceived by tutors somehow... and the elaborateness of projects as a way bigger outcome than the (...) ethical loss that is created through plagiarising and just taking things and putting them into a different cultural context,

which is not really (...) deep cultural understanding. [Student C; Round 2, Interview 2]

In C's schema for an ethically sound way of sharing ideas, mutuality is key; for him this adds to the quality as well as the integrity of the work,

I think (...) as mature [as] the decision of implementing (...), and the more there is immersion into the ...certain culture... the better the understanding is, the more significant the innovation can be (...) I consider there should be a bit more of a mutual agreement, and a bit of... international discussion in between this, so there might actually be (...) a sort of product or information diplomacy [Student C; Round 2, Interview 2]

This brings to mind Freire's consciencisation in a desire to instil the ability to value others, to share power, and to prevent a cycle of insensitive educational practices- or in C's case to halt a cycle in which an insensitive design industry spawns an equally insensitive design education, and therefore continues to feed into the source of the very problem he perceives. C's department encouraged interaction with the public and a collaborative, partnership relationship with potential users. The levels of rigour and ethics in setting up that relationship however, were troubling to C and he seemed to have an instinctive resistance to much that his peers and department found acceptable. It was through participation in the 4 Minds research project and discussion on the Yoruba/Vedanta course; however he came to terms with the source of this resistance. C came to recognise a bedrock of ethical values stemming from his family and culturally specific experiences of having grown up in a former soviet bloc country at a particular point in history.

One of the first entries in his CARD reads,

Up until now I have been trying to explain some of my life changing decisions based on the way I was raised or by my logic. Well I have noticed the way I reacted [when] my decisions have been monitored by my value systems and in harmony with my reasoning and feelings. Throughout my journey I have realised I misunderstood some of my cultural background, I have rediscovered and took on some of it and at times doubted things that were embedded in my genes or that I had been associating with as a sometimes positive habit, up to the point when the work that I was used to doing from personal conscienciousness had become noticeable to me, like a second nature and effortless,[sic] though initially seeming otherwise.

In other words,

my cultural identity has very much to do with where I was born and raised
(...) I think it has been a form of social learning [Student C; Round 3,
Interview 3]

So the very foundational instincts that drew him to the aims of the department also mitigated against its methods. This realisation of similarities made him want to first consciously acknowledge, thereby dispelling the doubts he had had when such connections arose in the past, and then embrace what he could of those social, cultural and family values in new circumstances.

C summarises the way of life during his childhood as characterised by,

(...) having always been surrounded by people and many times...just enjoying our free time or just being together. (...) The way of life was quite voluntarian [sic]² (...)...the way people help each other, kind of living your day to day life very close to many people... [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

This ability to empathise with and help one another is noted by C as being partly necessitated by the restrictions and socio- political structures of his country at that time. This can be likened to codes of conduct in Yoruba ethics, in which freedom and self-knowledge depend to some extent on group consensus. The great difference of course is, that in a soviet era nation, overt recourse to spiritual authority would not be permissible either; whereas in the Yoruba context, at least in its ideal form, powerful social players and leaders are reminded constantly that they too need to consider the needs of the group- and this includes recognising them as individuals with spiritual and ancestral allegiances. For C, recalling the camaraderie of the past surprisingly also enhanced his confidence in the present. It was conducive to a desire to keep in touch with childhood and teenage associates,

From my experience, being away from home now coming back, I keep in touch with older classmates...friends (...) from high school and so many things - that's what my parents do as well (...) having university or high school reunions. [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

² By voluntarian C means that neighbours family and friends volunteered time and material support to each other.

It also reinforced a fledgling intuition that the apparently obscure and intellectual empathic design that he was being taught was in fact based on the same principles of mutual support and respect. Therefore, C became aware that understanding the relationship of past to present can *“confirm what you’re doing is somehow integrated in what’s happening out there”*. This enabled also a more precise understanding of nuances he felt necessary in the application and teaching of empathic design; he was able to act on the unexpected resonance with the principles of his upbringing, and his studio discipline, even though it had been expressed in what initially was for him too theoretical a manner.

Hence in reflecting on his original CARD he comments that in one of the entries he is,

(...) talking about culture as a foundation for education. I am tackling both academic elements, [and] education from home, using it, getting detached from it and I am trying to show its contribution to personal and spiritual growth.

I consider the Shades course has brought such a fortunate cultural pretext that managed to stimulate students’ personal development through the exploration of spiritual and ethical values [Student C, further annotated ‘Inner Circle’ August 2015]

The overall result seems to be that C’s negative experiences of design education at the art school, rather than putting him off it, have clarified for him his desire to enter the field. In his CARD sent in September 2014, he states,

After graduating from [Design] in [City] I decided to use my visual and cultural discerning and interest in order to contribute to the improvement of education. While becoming more aware that art education is my Karma, I started working with highschool students in [country name] towards a better understanding of art history and visual language within their school’s studio practice and curriculum. There I realised that design thinking and good presentation can open people’s minds and creativity, thus understanding that even art can be spread through good, coherent design.

In this entry C uses the term *karma*, introduced in one of the Yoruba/Vedanta course lectures, and discussed with student research team members as concepts being explored in this thesis for pedagogic prospects. It was discussed very much as work, or action, carried out with awareness and as much detachment as possible. C has applied it in the entry above in the sense of having arrived at a realisation of what work is important to him.

C adds that the usefulness of looking at his own background continued after his return to his home country,

I think that my understanding of my upbringing and what I did back home and how I reacted to the outside world (...) has changed after graduating [and returning home]... after having a bit of experience (...) When you apply what you've learned back home once you are away, you might not realise, you might just be making some things, but once you enter your experiences (...) you realise that things that you were taught when you were younger (...) do apply to situations that are similar(...). [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

reassessment of values embedded in childhood is enhanced by also retaining and developing what has been learned at college. And this includes identifying his personal cultural as also shaped by the fact of having been separated from it and the home country,

(...) my culture is also part of having been... extracted from my ...personal culture (...) but still sort of applying to other places that I've been visiting. [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

For C, peer learning at the university has been as much about separation from values accepted by peers, as it has been about bonding. Yet it is the very open sharing of ideas in studio crits that allowed this differentiation to take place. The 4 Minds project, and the Yoruba Vedanta course, however turned his attention back to peers and what he called "social learning" from his home country. This was not in a nostalgic way, but an active and critically reflective way, allowing him to see also that he had changed simply from the act of leaving, and that he had something new to take back, as well as an appreciation of the new..

In the Vedantic sense, this sequence of events can be seen as aiding differentiation, or *viveka*. An analytical awareness of what was important in his upbringing,

criticality in deciding which elements of it still apply in his present circumstances, recognition of similarity between the principles already instilled in him, and ideas about empathic design or social enterprise, seem to have had the effect of giving C new confidence in himself. His will to learn thrived despite setbacks because he recognised much of value within himself, and was able to connect and further in his own way the ideas his department was introducing to him.

Finding and defining the self through resilience

What were the problems identified by C in the methods of the department in which he found himself, and what does it tell us about the resilience of his student being? With some amusement, C recounted how he would frequently be asked to represent the international nature of the programme and introduced to visitors from the industries and professions related to his field. Generic understanding of the recent history of the part of Europe from which he comes, however would lead to his being introduced as being from a different country all together and even that referred to incorrectly. Already feeling his voice to be a lone one as to the ethical merits of practices cited above, and also suffering from health issues, it is in some ways surprising that C persevered in the department long enough to gain a qualification. Barnett's will to learn is certainly present, but why should it be in these circumstances?

In the previous section quotes from C have shed light on the possible reasons for his continued engagement with not just the studio course, but also with design as a field through his CARD and notes on it. The realisation that there was a pre-existent connection with values already embedded in his personality and the aims if not the methods of his studio department led to a degree of self-confidence that allowed him to persevere long enough to qualify, but he also took the opportunity of an early exit so that he could pursue education training. He cites the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the 4 Minds project as conducive to self-reflection that allowed him to value his family upbringing. He seems to have extracted the most useful and inspirational elements of his design education and identified ways in which he can take them into more general educational practices.

Referring to principles behind consultative, communication based preparation processes for social design, he states,

they're very, very related to people's sensitivities and needs. It took me a while to actually realise that the way you do that is still ...quite flexible. So realising that it was so close to my upbringing –to my own way of thinking was quite a relief after thinking that it's a very tricky sociological way of understanding people. [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

On first being introduced to “empathic design” C found it to be dense and academically sociological in nature. On returning home, however, he realised that he had interacted with society in this manner all his life,

It's actually a way of working with things ...both from the construction side of things and the project side. It's actually quite inclusive of ... almost any team member... [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

So C came to understand the academic idea of design as a form of team work- in which the membership of the team extends to the person who is being designed for. This for him resonated with a communal sense of ownership and social responsibility that he had experienced in his home country. Unfortunately the practice of these methods in the department did not appear to C to be grounded in discourse about what constitutes consultation, research into the social fabric within which they were taking place, or even training in ethical practices for interviewing using data.

[ADIX] tends to be showing that the way of getting into the core of the problem we are trying to solve by (...) team work , (...) knowing people and getting to understand people, but looking from the general characteristics of the problem [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

This approach does not accommodate

every stakeholder's particular (...) characteristics and needs (...) in a truly emphatic way, because we are all pretty much different [Student C; Round 3, Interview 3]

The principles enshrined in the modes of empathic design did not manifest in how tutors and students, and students and students interacted with each other. For example, there was an anomaly in the way in which students on project teams understood team work,

It seems like you are trained to be a professional who can operate within a team, but it seems you don't really get encouraged to see your value within the team- they just encourage you to be part of the team, but you don't really know once you are out of the team, how do you promote yourself? How (...) do you even show what you've done in there, because it's never gonna make sense within a big project and is sometimes it's even impossible to record. [Student C; Round 2, Interview 2]

So while team work was encouraged, there seemed no in-built support for the individual in the pedagogic framework. This, in conjunction with an absence of knowledge of his cultural and national origins and influences could certainly create a loss. Individual contributions to the team's results, notes of dissonance within it, could remain unrecorded and unacknowledged. This in itself is problematic, but its effect can also be loss at a deeper existential level. C however, seems to have chosen to move in the direction of taking the best aspects of his experiences and constructing from it a contribution to education. In the process, and in the aspirations he has for education, he includes the ways of thinking and connections made by him in the Yoruba/Vedanta course. The first entry, already partially quoted above, is reproduced in full here,

My identity has been, to an extent, up until I felt an important passage from adolescence to psychological maturation, shaped by the way people around me express themselves, and, according to my observations moved within the objective reality (the state of things around me), be they close family (parents and grandparents), friends, teachers, new experiences, a.s.o., and the impact these factors had on me as forms of education.

Up until now I have been trying to explain some of my life changing decisions based on the way I was raised or my logic. Well I have noticed the way I reacted within the situations that followed my decisions have been monitored by my value systems and in harmony with my reasoning and feelings. Throughout my journey I have realised I misunderstood some of my cultural background, I have rediscovered and took on some of it and at times doubted things that were embedded in my genes or that I had been associating with as a sometimes positive habit, up to the point when the work that I was used to doing from personal consciousness had become noticeable to me, like a second nature and effortless, though initially seeming otherwise.

Being raised to be ambitious and daring in my work, to become a "complete person", being introduced to various fields of knowledge and opening my emotional channels which I tried to reach rather than high levels of achievements in whatever job I do, while being surrounded by the people present in my life and caring for them. I personally consider the Hindu theory on "unattached work" a perfect fit for me at the moment due to my educational background, personal values, aspirations and also my work ethics that are oriented towards sustainable, ecologic living that regards work as a means of sustaining life and inspire others to approach "duties" voluntarily, as if giving for a better world.

In the August 2015 further annotated version of his CARD, his comments on this entry are as follows,

In this section I am trying to convey the process of coming to know my true multi-faceted identity. Within this process I am trying to be honest first of all with myself and then work towards the goals of the research project. I will consider the essence of myself outside of my learning and reasoning in order to discuss possible links with my relationship to society and my environment. [Student C, further annotated 'Inner Circle' August 2015]

The pedagogic connection he makes is expressed as,

My approach as an educator can be influenced by this reflexion [sic] in the sense that I will be able to establish a stronger connection with my students by being honest to myself while trying to help each one discover their full potential [Student C, further annotated 'Inner Circle' August 2015]

In the design education principles that C began to conceptualise during his time at art school, on the Yoruba/Vedanta course, and the 4 Minds research project, the idea of honesty within and between students and staff is present, as is the idea of knowing oneself better. He has made these connections himself and as such they provide valuable evidence as to how a pedagogic environment that juxtaposed the three – the course, the project, the art school setting, all with various flaws but also various beneficial elements, allowed the student to see and value himself.

Alongside this valuing of himself, his convictions about caring for others was also reinforced. In Vedantic terms, it can be said that C's sense of himself- his *jiva atman* defined by personal circumstances and experiences survived and was in fact strengthened by adversity in the form of similar and yet conflicting application of principles of social interaction as understood within his department. The ideas, ethos, and contexts of the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the 4 Minds research project provided a space in which he could work through these similarities and differences, and to be exposed to a very different way of speaking about culture, people and education. For C it was the open reference to matters spiritual that resonated, and this seems to have given his will to learn a boost and allowed it to survive.

Finding and defining the self through pedagogic strategies applied by tutors

How was this spiritual element, conducive to reflection on the metaphysical self, on the whole person, and on the significance of knowing the self, communicated in the Yoruba/Vedanta course? Question 8 of the student research team questionnaire asked, “Many of the lectures introduced ideas about the philosophical or spiritual self, and the individual’s relationship to society. Were you aware of this aspect of the course?” To this Student C responded,

I noticed that the ideas about philosophical /spiritual self introduced in this context were very subtly encrypted within the information we managed to assimilate. I guess I consider this element as a given, based on my very basic understanding of Hinduism and other oriental religions previous to the course [Student C; SRT questionnaire]

C is quite correct in surmising “this element as a given” in that any discourse on traditional Hindu and Yoruba art and theatre requires a grasp of the possibility of a non-physical reality co existent with our own. Further, any explication of the aesthetic techniques and principles of these thought systems also requires a multi-disciplinary lens that makes room for art history, the social sciences, theology and ethics. These in turn are related in these thought systems to human action of personal as well as socially sanctioned types. No one lecture is devoted entirely to the metaphysical self in either thought system, but delivered via views of what constitutes mind and body. Discourse is shared on concepts of creativity and human relationships as expressed in their classical cultural outputs. In 7, I will consider whether omission of a lecture that overtly addresses the question ‘who am I?’ is a valid and viable strategy or a form of hesitancy, avoiding the heart of the entire thesis, and if so, why so and what solutions there may be.

Question 9 asks, “Do you think the student experience would benefit from or perhaps suffer from more direct engagement with ideas about the philosophical or spiritual self? For example, what if an exercise in meditation, or a session of yoga were possible within the course?” The response in questionnaires was positive but mixed with caution by some. Student C felt,

This was an aspect I found very stimulating. Personally, I have felt a limit in theoretical engagement with these ideas outside of the [Yoruba/Vedanta] course, so even if it were to manifest in an elective I think it would fill a gap. [Student C; SRT questionnaire, q 9.]

Student C seems to desire more of this kind of conversation within courses, when he speaks of “filling a gap”, but also notes the “stimulating” presence of the subject of the self. However he found that the ideas and concepts introduced in the course, rich in references and sources, could become confusing at times. He is critical of an absence of non-theoretical explanations of the religious practices touched on in the course. He feels it is particularly important for students to experience esoteric ideas contained in lectures. This is a crucial observation for the research project, for it highlights the significance of embodied learning, even if, ironically enough speaking about an immaterial self. He also felt that there was a solution to this, and a start would be,

In the most sensible way, I would think the course would benefit from an explanation / mapping/ exercise of the very mystical (even though sometimes difficult to put into words) aspect of the actual religious practice (most preferable a breakdown, maybe even visual and actual live exercise of meditation). [Student C; SRT questionnaire, q 9.]

This indicates that more of the kind of exercise described in J’s narrative, undertaken at the start of the course, could be introduced. Without falling in to the potentially dangerous area of religiosity, it would be possible to develop exercises in which students could visualise and consider the many facets of their individuality, their work and beliefs, in relation to terms such as *karma*, *atman*, *omoluwabi* . For C, this kind of more accessible manifestation of the course did exist in the opportunity to hear and meet musicians who worked from the traditions and practices referred to in lectures,

(...) the workshops with musicians were an engaging element that gave the course a directness which for me made it stand out from other seminar and lecture based learning. [Student C; SRT questionnaire, 9.]

Additional punctuations could be set in place between the lectures, for students to contemplate and work through the many ideas they are introduced to, and to consider in more detail their application to their own lives. Hence an opportunity

would arise to build on C's perception of the course as providing a "fortunate cultural pretext that manages to stimulate students' personal development through the exploration of spiritual and ethical values" as quoted in the peer learning section above. Ideas for workshops and exercises that evolved from student and staff feedback, and potential problems therein, will be discussed in 6.2.

Inter-culturalism was another aspect of the course that C found valuable,

I have considered the intercultural approach to art and design a crucial element in the course. I consider that the teaching of history (art history) in European schools is quite unilateral, this course has broadened our insights into cultures, painting, drama, etc. [Student C, PCQ]

Given his experiences described above of feeling at times a cultural outsider, whether due to his nationality or his ethical values, it is understandable that he should appreciate a course in which several cultural perspectives are acknowledged. These include material new to the students- ancient Indian and Yoruba art, as well as postcolonial discourse to help navigate barriers to engaging with them such as "primitivism" and hegemonic historical writing; most importantly however, the and cultural perspectives are also presented in such a way as to focus on shared human experiences so that students can identify with the artists and designers behind the esoteric traditions and objects discussed. Human emotions, love and fear of nature, equality between the sexes, and notions of gender, all make entrances in this parade of multi-cultural perspectives. And, governed by the intrinsic meanings attached to art and design in Yoruba and ancient Indian traditions, there is a continuous presence of the question of humanity's relationship to the cosmos, to time and to the nature of the real. Because the more open elements of the two traditions are emphasised in the course, students such as C pick up on its invitation to understand themselves better,

I think that this course has fitted very well with my areas of personal interest; it has given me a parallel theme of reflection while carrying on with my usual activities (as a motivation factor). [It] has worked very well with my personal development and has always reorganized my thoughts about myself and my work of significant cultural or academic values. [Student C; Round 5, interview 5]

So rather than push students into a particular religious or philosophical world view, it seems at its best to open new worlds, but lead them back to a better understanding of themselves. This appears a lofty claim, and is written here with some trepidation. It is tempered by my own reflections and critique of the course and the research project in 6.2 and 7, but there is enough evidence from the student research team's testimonies, that it does 'speak to' students in a way that encourages self-reflection and that this is found helpful. For those that continued into the research project, particularly students C and J, there has been time to further these thoughts and provide more insight. C, when asked after three years of involvement if he had gained anything from taking part in the course and the research project replied,

Yes. (...) Even though I have revisited the course in different periods of my studies and work, with long gaps between the moments when I specifically thought about the research project, I always felt at ease trying to understand more about various cultures and seeing the world through different eyes which I realized are the same as my feelings and my own world view. I have gained a lot of satisfaction from being part of this research as I feel it has brought value to my own line of thought, self-awareness and self-expression. [Student C; Round 5, interview 5]

Since the Yoruba/Vedanta course was not about education, nor explicitly about developing a sense of well-being and self-worth, it is feasible to deduce that its pedagogic strategies which include judicious use of Yoruba and Vedantic principles in a contemporary context, have supported this student in his journey of self-knowledge. This has been enhanced by involvement in the research project, running parallel to his first years of teaching.

In relation to the CARD, C was asked if it would be useful in his own teaching- either to help students, or to devise strategies and understand his own learning and teaching process. He replied,

Yes. I think that the diagram would be a good means of counselling students towards knowing themselves better and engaging in honest introspection. It will definitely help me keep track of my personal development so far and keep focused on my values, objectives and aspirations (on a personal level, continuing on the path that the Shades course has opened for me). This will

help me be more organized, coherent, self aware and it will give me the inside peace that will sustain my practice and my capacity of helping others. In the same way I think I can help students. [Student C; Round 5, interview 5]

Asked for critical feedback and suggestions for improvement to the CARD his comment was,

I think the diagram is already very flexible; it can be changed by students according to their interpretation of it. I felt like I can always change or update what I have written in the diagram so, starting from my own experience of it, it would be good to mention that the diagram is an on-going process and not just a questionnaire. [Student C, round 5 interview 5]

C makes a very significant point here. Since much of qualitative education research relies on questionnaires and interviews, whose formats are more or less pre-defined by the researcher, it would be important to prepare students fully to commence on the CARD, and this would include the explicit written invitation to adapt it as seemed to fit the trajectory of the individual's recollections and observations. For him, making changes was not a matter of needing permission, since there was good rapport between him and the author of the CARD; the students on the research team had after all been given an equal status with the lead researcher. For a student still within the tutor/student power relationship, however, it may take on the appearance of requiring a specific and restricted format. Both J and C changed the format to suit their own stories, and provided leads on how this could both be written into a post feedback format, and how the welcoming of flexibility could be written into user guidance. This will be discussed in 6.2.

To summarise, C's approach to the CARD is distinctly different to that of student J. In C's CARD he has concentrated on the innermost circle, calling it the "Inner Circle"; rather than graphically draw connections to further surrounding rings or to plot them as sub circles, he has used text within the inner circle to both register significant events and to reflect on why they were important, where they came from and how they have shaped later events and decisions. One year later he also provided in PowerPoint format further reflection on his entries in the original inner

circle, with two additional text boxes for each entry. The first box comments retrospectively on the content of the entry; the second box relates it to his aspiration for education and the pedagogies he hopes to develop. Further he has included two diagrams of his own design, created during the course of the 4 Minds Project, as a response to a studio brief. Thus he has been able to utilise what he has learnt through the Yoruba/Vedanta course, the 4 Minds research project, and the CARD process to link past thoughts with present and future, and also to integrate his design training into the process. Dialogue with C through his involvement with 4 Minds has been multidisciplinary. His initial direct correlations between design theory and ancient Indian architecture and later reflections on education and his pedagogic aspirations have added much to this research.

6.1c

Narrative 3 STUDENTS A, B, D, E, F, G, H, K

Students A, B, D, E, F, G, H, K came from various year groups of the Yoruba/Vedanta course. Appendix 6 provides details of the level and types of involvement of SRT members, including number of interviews, and work produced. Observations drawn from interviews and work submitted by the SRT, are augmented in this chapter by relevant quotes from essays and questionnaires completed by students who took the Yoruba/Vedanta course over the years but were not part of the project. While not serving as case studies in themselves, their extracts further demonstrate the versatility of the course material, and underline the conclusions drawn from the SRT's testimonies.

Finding and defining the self through peer learning

Peer learning in the Yoruba/ Vedanta course essay seminar

As the course stands, there are not many formal occasions in which students' influences and interactions with each other could be recorded. In this narrative, it is presented in the form of references to the way in which peer learning combined with tutor input on the Yoruba/ Vedanta course. After the lecture series, a seminar was held to share ideas on the set questions and essay writing itself. Given the breadth and depth of the material covered, the newness of most of the contents to the majority of students, and based on previous students' feedback, it felt important to do some preparation with the class. Seated round a table rather than lecture theatre, each essay topic option was discussed. Students identified which they had selected and were able to confer with a peer on how they were approaching it. Regrouped as a class, their ideas were shared and questions answered by the tutor. Also discussed were the benefits of sharing research sources, and voicing ideas in order to work them through in one's own mind. It was pointed out that sharing must be mutual, so that all parties contributed something. In order to avoid accusations of plagiarism, where a peer had greatly influenced a thought or final outcome, it was advised that this be noted in the same way as

published or well-known sources are acknowledged. K found this seminar useful and supportive; she provided also a valuable clue as to the relationship between self-esteem or confidence, and the presence of visible pedagogic strategies.

...I'd definitely definitely say you doing that thing in the library- going over the essay questions like that made a really really huge difference to how confident everyone was in going into writing it and (...) when you feel more confident you can enjoy the research and the writing it more, rather than umm-ing and ahh-ing – is this how I'm supposed to be doing it? [Student K Round 3]

K voices appreciation of the preparation seminar and rather than producing limitations, it encouraged her to test her own ideas. Her essay testified to engagement at a deep level with the course, its reading list, and K's own independent ideas. The question chosen by K invited students to examine *navarasa*, the ancient Indian aesthetic theory of eight essential human emotions conveyed in all the arts. Each work contains all eight emotions but is suffused by multiple aspects of one predominant emotion, conveyed through colour, movement, and conventions understood by the audience. The work is successful when the audience is steeped in the predominant *rasa* by dint of the artist's evocation of it. K applied *navarasa* theory to the visual impact of Jacob Epstein's sculpture *Jacob and the Angel* (1940-1), including its visual as well as and socio-political impact on the public of its time. The essay is a particularly good example of the kind of critical inter-cultural writing that could emerge from the Yoruba/ Vedanta course and others based on its principles. A short extract is quoted here,

David Gitomer describes the conventions of movement between dramatic settings in Sanskrit drama:

'When a character moves from one to another locale he announces his intention, executes a *parikrama* or 'walking around'... By this convention the stage becomes a totally fluid space in which divisions are established by dialogue and movement. As easily as these divisions are brought into being they may be dissolved, only to have new ones established.' (Gitomer, 1999)

The ability to do this is inextricably tied to the play's self-awareness of its own illusionary nature. Rather than trying to create 'realistic' sets Sanskrit drama utilises its audience's awareness and understanding of convention and the dramatic situation. This undoubtedly feeds the *rasa*, an overriding

essence, as the drama refuses to weigh itself down in (attempting to mirror) reality.

We can talk about Jacob and the Angel in similar terms. The overriding forcefulness and idea is prominent. The sculpture dips in and out of abstractions, [*quote about the sculpture*]. It is interesting to note, considering this essay's focus on the dramatic applications of the Natya Sastra and navarasas, the animating nature of the activity of viewing sculpture. A three-dimensional mass entices the viewer to move around it, which in turn transforms the object as different faces come in and out of view. One could even draw links between this circular route we navigate around the sculpture and the circular narrative employed by Sanskrit dramatist such as Kalidasa 'Kalidasa devises a plot that is essentially circular...' (Gerow, 1999)." [Student J; Essay no. 1, 2013]

K found the essay seminar encouraging towards an experimental piece of writing. For other students it clarified a way to apply more strongly grasped aspects of the course to examination of broader essay questions. Rather than struggle through details and concepts they had enjoyed hearing about, but did not yet feel confident to write about, they were free to begin with what was clearer to them.

Choosing a question was VERY hard as I felt completely unable to talk about any of the ideas. Once I'd chosen and realised that I could talk about the issue in relation to post-colonial theory and not Yoruba/Hindu ideas it became easier. [Post-course questionnaire student X2, 2013]

X2 chose the essay question on Edward Said's discourse on culture and in relation to how the students understood culture. The source, Said's theory, became a means of identifying her own position on culture, and contextualising her studio practice as well,

Edward Said and Frantz Fanon's writing has hugely influenced my subject matter and my essay subject embodies completely the crux of what my studio work pivots around. [Post course questionnaire X2, 2013]

This indicates that a strategy of combining in-depth curriculum material, and encouragement towards independent learning and evaluating works well. Areas for future study can be introduced, new concepts demonstrated and illustrated, but the

students can also be offered something closer to their fields of experience as a starting point to assessed work. This will be analysed as a strategy in 7.

The quotes above make an informative contrast however, to B's response to the assessment, especially because in the year in which he took the course, the essay seminar did not take place. This was due to the fact that in that year, with project funding available, all extra time was given over to guest speakers, and studio based tutorials for those opting for a short essay + studio piece response to the assessment questions. Tutorials were on offer by appointment as well as drop in basis, but the group discussion on assessment topics did not take place,

The most daunting thing is trying to ingage [sic] intelligently and respectfully with a cultural history that I am still coming to terms with [Student B, Post course questionnaire 2010]

While most seemed to be comfortable that they were prepared enough by the lectures, reading lists, workshops, discussion and tutorials to engage with the essay questions, B raised a fundamental question about the ethics of delving into unfamiliar, religious or culturally remote practices and arts without first-hand knowledge,

This is a problem I found with the course. To engage with many of these ideas without direct involvement or attempting to understand them as a practitioner is problematic. This is why I did my project on cultural imperialism. If I had made work on Ogun for instance, I would have felt I was being deeply disrespectful to a belief system that I have been told about but do not in a fundamental way understand. If we had been shown and included in its practice this would be different. My opinion would have some validity [Student B; Student Research team questionnaire, q 9]

Had the assessment preparation seminar taken place in his year as well, B may well have benefitted from hearing how others in the same class were tackling this fear, both from the perspective of how they understood the course, and from their own previous experience. For example,

I studied anthropology before (but tended to focus on different regions.) So I have been introduced to post-structuralist approaches but not really applied them to these regions or art topics. I feel this course has covered a great deal in a relatively short period of time. Getting to grips with these

difference [sic] philosophies has definitely reminded me of my ignorance as well as abilities [Post course questionnaire student X3, 2010]

Having studied anthropology previously is clearly a factor in the above response, and so the student was unafraid to comment on cultures s/he did not know by direct experience or birth right. Yet s/he also points out that the Yoruba/Vedanta course enabled an application of post-structural theory to a region and cultural framework new to him, and this process flagged up an area of ignorance. This student chose to deal with that perceived ignorance by studying, and applying previous experience in a new context, thereby adding the information gained on the Yoruba/Vedanta course to his repertoire. Dialogue between B and this student would have been valuable to both students, to other class members, and indeed to the course.

In 6.2 B's challenge will be discussed fully, for it is one that arose with other students too. It represents an unintended censoring of inter-cultural engagement for fear of offending that needs to be unpacked on a course such as the Yoruba/Vedanta one. While this was done in the introductory lecture, and individual lectures were delivered from a perspective of conscious inter-cultural reflection, the genuine fear of trivialising or offending does need to be more systematically tackled. In this section, B's reservation serves as an example of how students on the course could support each other as well as examine such doubts for the benefit of all. In 6.2 the essay preparation seminar that went some way towards this will also be considered for its further potential value. As utilised thus far, it has indicated clearly that peers studying on a demanding and multi directional course, sensitive and further sensitised by the course to issues of cultural representation, could support each other if given more space to do so. More work of the quality and confidence of student K could then emerge. The essay seminar did however serve many useful purposes, among them the opening up of a desire to tackle the subjects in written form, even for reluctant students,

I don't think I ever feel prepared to write an essay but... like I felt I wanted to write it [Student G; Int round 3]

Peer learning through crits

The seminar at the end of the Yoruba/Vedanta course was in some ways a formal one, open to dialogue and questions, but limited to a prescribed time length. Art school studio based pedagogy in general is more open ended with time. Group crits can take many hours, and even extend over a day or more. In 6.2 the question of time and length of engagement with ideas, peers and staff will be discussed in relation to the proposed pedagogy. Here it is notable that one of the ways in which students engaged with each other was in the shared studio environment, simply working side by side. As with C and J, the students whose views are presented here also spoke at length about interaction with peers, and how it could be both detrimental and fundamentally important to their own development as artists and designers. Even when desiring to see it arranged better, a shared common space both physically and metaphorically was of unquestionable importance to these students, and was part and parcel of the art school experience they craved. They also expressed surprise at the fact that many peers did not appear to feel the same, since they chose to work at home and come in only for assessments and group crits. There is much to be learnt about how students come to know and identify themselves through existent art school pedagogies, that can shed light on the education theory proposed in this thesis, and so quite some space is devoted to understanding how students experience crits, and perceive their own roles within them.

Within the responses of G and H, there was also belief that art/design students and aspiring artists/designers shared a uniquely different experience from other university disciplines, and this was for the good.

My brother does maths. I don't really see how a course like that would give you any insight into how your brain works logically or methodically,(...) I think a big part of being at art college is (...) your relationships with people that impact your work because it's not something you have to do shoved into a room by yourself [Student G; Int round 3]

This was cited in relation to the way in which education is conducted in the art school. There was a sense that high school friends and family who had gone into

other fields and other systems, would not be able to understand the way art students learn.

I think this way of learning, although it can be hard, I think it's quite necessary, and (...) I think it's definitely a really good way to go about things and I'm not sure whether... it happens so much in other universities. I was speaking to my friends where they're in more of a structured course. (...) people in other clearly different courses such as History or Geography. (...) And it always seems like they're very interested in the work but because there's a structured criteria, there's more of an incentive to get the work done, and then, not forget about it, but shut it away maybe [Student H; Int round 3]

There is evidence of pride in art school, and while both students went on to be highly critical of some aspects of it, part of their sense of themselves as individuals stems clearly from being part of an alternate educational space. Within this space, acceptance of oneself seemed to be tied in with acceptance or acknowledgment of one's work by fellow students. The pedagogic vehicle for this is the group critique. Group critiques rely for their very existence on principles of peer learning. As characterised by Elkins (2001) they can be either beneficial, or unhelpful and even destructive if not conducted with ethics or genuine will to listen to different perspectives. Yet they are quoted by all the students interviewed as valuable training in critical thinking and self-awareness, albeit difficult at times. Their value as a pedagogic tool is further discussed below. Here they emerge vividly as community building tools that have impact on the individual student being. Learning to listen and to recognise one's power to be both destructive and positive towards the individual whose work is being discussed seems key.

There was a very interesting relationship to authority figures in the students' comments on crits. Firstly, they felt that peer interaction was effective because it was more natural to understand each other than it might be to relate to the more seasoned responses of a tutor,

(...) yeah you sympathise and empathise with someone in your position more, I think, or it's easier for you to...have a connection. I'm not saying the the tutor's advice is no less- [or] at all worse- But, it's easier to connect with a peer. [Student H, Int Round 3]

Secondly, as indicated earlier, the students also had a strong sense of being part of a special community. Taking the advice of equals in a shared environment was beneficial in enhancing the sense of belonging, but also enabled critical self-reflection,

Well I guess the most obvious aspect of community in the studio is the group crits [Student G, Int Round 3]

This community was valuable because it shared a belief in its own worth and reciprocally provided a place for the individual's self-worth.

Working with peers is quite helpful as well, and hearing other peoples' comments. Because you might have an idea of what your work is about but being critiqued by other members of your student group and listening to them say that it means a completely different thing from what you [thought]. I think that helps. You become aware- become critically aware. I think that's a really beneficial process to go through and my tutors (...) always keep saying that your peer group is the most important- one of the most important things whilst at university. [Student H, Int Round 3]

Interaction in crits highlighted flaws in the work as much as it did success, and this was considered by all the students as a fundamentally important part of learning at art school, and functioning within art school education. It was important to them that honest and engaged feedback be given, and several commented that too much politeness was also uninspiring and unhelpful.

(...) I often find that no one really says anything. But I think that could just be down to the bunch of people as opposed to group crits as a method. [Student G, Int Round 3]

G went on to say,

I don't know I think I'm probably guilty of holding back as well. That's something that- I think with our class there's such a culture of let's all be friends that no one really ever wants to say something critical where as I'm quite a critical person so I always have critical things to say- not necessarily very like completely negative, but, but, no one ever says anything negative about work. So you feel you shouldn't either, which is pointless because no one's ever going to learn. [Student G, Int Round 3]

The Vedantic idea of *satsanga* plays out in an interesting way in relation to group crits. It translates to the company of the truthful, but has more general connotations of like minded company being conducive to the self development of

all in the group. Alongside the Yoruba idea Yoruba ideas of community and tenure ethics that involve critical reminders, highly effective modes of dialogue could be developed. Such ideas will be taken up in 6.2, 6.3, and the conclusions.

In applying Yoruba ideas to looking at crits and peer feedback, there is one quite important distinction to be made. The conventions and practices described in the Chapter 3 rely on a communally understood norms and parameters of behaviour. Can it be said that a parallel consensus exists amongst art students? Student C's responses in Narrative 1 would indicate not; for he differed quite categorically with basic assumptions about design practice, education and communication expressed by some of his peers and tutors. And G's statement above indicates that the process is at the mercy of individual personalities and group consensus.

Given such concerns, how are methodology/ etiquette/ ethics for crits introduced in the SRT's departments? Student F explained this occurred only in first year,

in first year... because many of us had never done a crit before, we did have guidance (...) the tutor said maybe the first place we can start is describing visually what we could see and then he would say things like, ok, what do you think this is doing and why do you think she's chosen this and why do you think she's decided to do this...but...I think, after doing it for three years ...it does come a bit more naturally to you.... I suppose it's (...) an institution in itself [Student F; Int round 3]

Even so, F's first experience of crits was difficult, especially in comparison to high school,

[At high school] we would have slightly more informal critique of our work with our tutors- teachers I suppose. But being put in that environment straight from school was like yeah-it was a really big shock and having your work- sort of ripped apart-was really hard at first and I hated critiques. But over the course of four years I've actually grown to really really enjoy critiques. I think they're definitely one my favourite aspects of the studio component [of art school] any way. [Student F; Int round 3]

F's more painful experiences seemed to have been determined in part by the personalities in her group. As in G and C's experiences, the chance make-up of individuals affected the nature of the crit,

I do think my year group in particular are very... frank (...) and if something is wrong (...) or bad, they will say it. They will state the plain and obvious and they won't beat around the bush. And at school I had been used to my

teachers saying 'yeeeah...it's good, you could develop this a bit further...' but when I sort of landed in critiques that were like 'I don't get it; this isn't effective; this isn't communicating what you want it to be doing' I think that was a bit of a harsh wake up call. [Student F; Int round 3]

This begs the question would it be useful for peers to be asked to give more consideration to how feedback is conveyed? Could peers be taught to 'lessen the blow' while communicating important critical observations in relation to the work's intentions? F's response to these questions sheds light on the way students understand criticism as a means of improving their work,

It would have been, but it probably wouldn't have been as effective. Now-a-days I really appreciate it if someone just says. (...) It's still pretty brutal (...) but it definitely means you can develop things more. It's like in an essay- if someone (...) generally commented that 'oh, its... it's not getting to the point' or something like that, it's not as effective as someone saying, ok- this sentence needs to be more clear, you need to name this person here... [Student F; Int round 3]

F draws a parallel between feedback in crits and in written essays: in either domain, it needs to be specific in order to be useful. In the highly individual world of art creation, however, what kind of specificity is possible? The standard form of an essay is understood universally in the academy, as are rules of grammar and there can be said to general agreement on what constitutes successful form and structure. If this is the student's aim, it is relatively easy to provide points on improvement, better articulation, or clarity. When students' intentions are less recognisable, perhaps yet not fully known by the student, the task becomes more difficult. The task indeed becomes principally one of listening and learning before being able to respond. So the questions arise,

- Do art schools equip students to be able to listen for diverse, potentially unfamiliar, culturally plural intentions, in every sense of the word cultural?
- Are students encouraged to consider in their responses, their own frames of reference, which can act as limitations in understanding others?

How such efforts can be enriched by Yoruba and Vedantic concepts will be taken up in 6.2 To return for now to the theme of peer learning, it seems strange in some ways that F should have grown to enjoy even difficult crits,

as hard as they are and as much as you feel your self-confidence is ripped from underneath you- (pause) I think they shed a lot of light on to your work and also the opportunity to speak about other people 's work makes you learn a lot about yourself I think. [Student F; Int round 3]

The answer seems to lie in F's ability to use each experience as a means of knowing herself, and therefore understanding the work produced better. She also expresses an appreciation of others, noting that responding to them makes her more familiar with her own tastes and principles. In dealing with hurt, F appears to employ a technique of distancing some aspect of herself from her emotional reactions to the criticisms of her work.

I have learnt a little bit to...try and distance myself from my work, whereas in first year (...) it really felt like (...) if they were critiquing [my work] they were critiquing me- which I still feel a little bit- but I don't take it as personally anymore. [Student F; Int round 3]

In this instance, the concept of jiva atman struggling to know itself and to act with detachment seems most apt. Student F seemed to be able to detach herself from feelings of hurt and obtain objectivity towards the work she was producing. A strategy born of student resilience, therefore, serves as evidence that an understanding of the self as having many aspects, and having recourse to an internal, metaphysical self can enhance students experience and will to learn.

Significantly, the motivation to develop an ability to differentiate between the self that was embedded in, or represented by the work and the self that was her person, was triggered by advice from a caring peer,

I just recall in 2nd year having quite a bad critique and feeling quite upset about it...and one of my friends said to me (...) 'they don't dislike you as a person, they're not using it as a chance to tear you apart, they're actually trying to help you (...) help you develop your work. If anything they're trying to do you a favour [Student F; Int round 3]

In answer to the question are crits also about pointing out positives, F demonstrates her own compassionate approach to peers,

Oh gosh yes, in critiques I always think it's maybe best to start off with something good...they build up- you kind of start with obvious things – you describe what you're seeing, what you're getting and then you would go on to say I think this is good, this is working well, this is successful, and that

might lead you to realise that this isn't successful, and this isn't communicating this, and so on, and so on, and so on. Yeah, I think critiques are just as much about pointing out good things as it is about pointing out bad things. [Student F; Int round 3]

So it seems understandable then that students ultimately felt that,

(...) as we move through life it's going to be peers that define everything, not really tutors (...). [Student G, Int Round 3]

The role of the tutor in a crit is of course also significant, and can alter the sense of purpose and tenor of a crit session. In his department, G commented that students were assessed on "verbal communication" as in participation in group crits, and that this encouraged some to speak for the sake of being seen to do so, with lack of any other purpose. Tutors present did not seem to intervene in the quality and content of peer feedback.

I find like there's a few people who will say things but they're normally just saying things (...) because (...) your marks increase if you speak up in crits, but they'll say something which is completely arbitrary just to get their two pence in [Student G, Int Round 3]

This is an example of how the good intentions of tutor designed peer learning can backfire and also disturb the dynamics within a group of students.

A makes a powerful observation, in connecting the quality of peer feedback with a general lack of visible, overtly expressed departmental curriculum. Instead, in her department it was expected that students would thrive by not being dictated to. This was experienced by A and many of her peers as a curriculum whose strategy was,

...basically to leave you alone [Student A; Int round 1]

In crits therefore, it was difficult to know what kind of helpful comments could be made, other than supporting the stated aims of peers. Pushed to appear more mature, knowledgeable and critically aware than they felt, feedback from some could easily become more about the speaker than the reviewee's work,

The only thing I can see coming from this is an over-compensation where you fight to prove that you understand, developing stubborn standpoints rather than well-rounded analysis. It encourages the loudest and the more

self-confident in debates to rise to the top, whilst the quiet and less confident float to the bottom. [Student A, post-graduation reflective essay]

She reflected on both the positives and the negatives of an open ended curriculum with little or no taught sessions, comparing it to reassuring didactic teaching methods experienced while on student exchange with a North American art school. Less defined methods at ADIX led to isolation and survival reactions by students. In crits this manifested either as students talking aimlessly or withholding comments,

The onus on the individual to develop in this way [without guidance] fosters an unrealistic attitude to the arts where a certain kind of intelligence thrives. With self-confidence being required to progress, any struggle you might have leads to low self-esteem which creates a downward spiral of very low productivity. [Student A; post-graduation reflective essay]

Almost in direct contradiction, however, A also emphasises the independence and self-sufficiency that emerges from having to fend for oneself in relation to lack of curriculum or guidance on how to deal with crits,

I see this as something [the home institution] really benefits from – a more school-like, classes based approach could easily result in less substance and thought behind the work, and less ability to have critical discussions. [Student A; post-graduation reflective essay.]

She concludes that her exposure to two different types of art education made her experience more formative, and that by way of planned curriculum,

A combination of both [types of education] would be ideal [Student A; Int round 1]

To summarise on group critique: on the positive side, the quotes above indicate that crits can nurture empathy, provide a platform for regular peer interaction, and provide thought provoking feedback. On the negative, they can create a sense of rejection, damage self-esteem, and encourage conformity to popular trends. *For those that already have the wherewithal to negotiate these potentialities, crits seem to become exponentially more useful.* F spoke of the benefits of self-development that come from reflecting on daily peer encounters in sustained art school attendance. In her case she seems to have been capable of gauging the impact on herself,

That's something I will definitely take away from art school (...) You're constantly checking in with yourself I suppose...(…) Reassessing yourself- I think your values- not values- but your perspectives change a lot in art school(...) so you're forced to re-evaluate things. To re-evaluate your principles (...). So (...) one result is obviously you change and mature quite drastically during art school. (...) a lot people come away with a better sense of self... a stronger sense of who they are and who they are in relation to other people. And I think that's such an important part of being a human being... [Student F; Int round 3]

It is notable however that F sees this as something that occurs, but is not necessarily planned by art school,

(...) I think it (...) happens kind of organically. It's not part of the course structure or part of how the school operates, it's just something that ... maybe it's the nature of fine art practice, I don't know. [Student F; Int round 3]

Pressed for more on how they know themselves in relation to others, F continues,

I think maybe a part of it is you're thrown into this hotpot of people with drastically different views to yourself and you're kind confronted with these people that have yeah-completely different world views to you- so I guess you do kind of learn (...) 'how do I react to other people? How do I (...) position myself and my opinions in relation to others? How do I let other people affect how I think and how I am?' [Student F; Int round 3]

So the question arises, what if such "re-evaluation" and reflection, including active consideration of the values one brings to the group, were part of the planned aspects of the art school year? Do crits serve the full purpose of such a process, or are they too arbitrarily dependent on the peers and tutors present? As run at present, they seem to be at the mercy of chance,

(...) you can show the same work twice and have a really good crit and a really bad crit depending on the people, and it depends on where you are in the crits. If you're first thing in the morning people haven't really woken up and they haven't really started yet, then maybe you won't get so much out of it, but if you have it at the end of the day maybe people are a bit more comfortable with each other and people have established more of a repartee, you actually get a lot more out of it. [Student F; Int round 3]

Elkin's assertion that higher art education is "under theorised" (Elkins 2001) is a challenging one, and there is not the scope in this thesis to examine it thoroughly. However it does underline that experiments such as the one attempted in this

thesis are needed, building theory that is specific to art school, but potentially applicable to all students because it addresses learning and teaching processes and student well being. The stock art school technique of learning through group crits, in conjunction with Yoruba/Vedanta and other principles emerging from this research could greatly enhance art school experience. An appreciation for what Freire calls *true dialogue* is clearly present in the SRT's descriptions of the crits that have gone well. The possibilities and potentials of such techniques will be taken up in 6.2 and 7.

Finding and defining the self through resilience

Support from peers played a great part in the experiences of many of the students quoted above, and this section looks at this phenomenon as a form of resilience. There was much in the students' statements that demonstrates Barnett's *will to learn*. In studio, problems cited ranged from lack or shortage of resources, absence of taught curriculum, difficulty with course work, cultural differences with tutors and/or peers. When asked why they kept going, or what made them keep on problem solving, there were various answers, ranging from fear of failure to inspiration derived from elsewhere as shown in Narrative 2. In the Yoruba/Vedanta course the main difficulties were that many students found the material overwhelming and the essay topics daunting. In the feedback questionnaires that mention this, the striking thing is that they also respond positively to the course as a whole, highlighting elements of the course that felt directly fulfilling. In interviews, SRT members have elaborated on these positive elements and shed light on why they were beneficial. Some of these are clearly tied with pedagogic techniques of the course. Students derived confidence from:

- Freedom to model or reshape assessment questions
- The essay preparation seminar
- An invitation to explore rather than come up with definitive arguments in essays tackling new material

These strategies as pedagogic devices will be discussed in 6.2. At present, the focus is on the students' resourcefulness and drive, in both studio and the course, and

how they came to know themselves better through an inner resilience. It would appear that in the face of difficulties in their general art school experience, part of the tenacity demonstrated by students was tied in with how they negotiated encounters with each other,

When I first entered art school I think I was quite naïve (...) I was more naïve than most people because. (...) in some ways I was quite worldly because I had grown up in many different cultures (...) in one way I was quite worldly, but in other ways (...) I maybe didn't have [as] good [a] grasp of western cultures as other people did, I was (...) younger than most other people, so (...) I was easily influenced by other people. (...) yeah if someone said something was cool- or if someone said something was a good idea, I'd be – oh yes. [Student F; Int round 3]

F touches on two ways in which she felt different from the rest of her peers-lack of familiarity with western culture (due to place of upbringing rather than nationality or ethnicity), and being younger. The resilience she demonstrates in her earlier quotes however seemed to be at work in this instance as well, this time not because of the group, but in resistance to it. Similarly to student C, the group's attitudes and attributes made her differentiate her own values,

And then in 2nd year I kind of had a turning point (...) for some reason [I] just (...) contradicted everything everyone said- 'if you've said that then I need to say something totally different- and if he thinks that, and if he dresses this way then I need to dress the polar opposite. [Student F; Int round 3]

She sees this too as a phase, through which she passed and emerged surer of her own beliefs and values,

And then I guess you have to (...) navigate between those two. (...) That's such an important part of self-growth, isn't it? And (...) eventually I think I've sort of learnt to not be too affected by the external world- but that's something that's quite recent I think. [Student F; Int round 3]

F's testimony touches on many aspects crucial to this thesis. The differentiation of a cultural as well as metaphysical self, form unavoidable parts of her journey in art school. Having grown up outside of the country in which the institution is sited, she experiences for the first time a sense of being an outsider. Initially she responds by trying to agree with and be like those around her; this tendency is exacerbated by being younger than the others, and far from home. Yet in F's case there is irony in

the fact that the UK was her country of origin. She was in fact returning 'home'; because the place in which she grew up was very international in its population, and in her experience cosmopolitan in its social patterns, she had not been forced to reflect on the idea of belonging. Only when surrounded by peers that were for the most part studying in the country or even city of origin, did a need for this reflection arise. This is the process she refers to when she speaks of being "forced to (...) re-evaluate your principles and things like that". Out of this process she emerges, having reclaimed her own identity, as a person with a different background and able to absorb the valuable aspects of her current surroundings- the art school. Significantly as is evident throughout this interview, she has achieved this by taking recourse to a self that is not tied to everyday experiences.

Resilience and students' own recognition of its attributes in themselves

F does not indicate, however, that she has noticed her own accomplishment in achieving such dextrous navigation of social and educational discourse. In many of the students' comments, there is a telling lack of recognition of their own abilities. It was also absent in K's recounting of her student run Soup Crits which took place in her flat and at which tutors were not present. The sessions were held at weekends, open to students of all departments and year groups, with home cooked soup served and the door open all day. K noted that students felt more relaxed and therefore participated and gained more from the forum of a crit than they might have at college. This is an inspirational instance of students taking up art school pedagogic tools and shaping them in ways that were more productive and meaningful for them. While K was evidently pleased that she and her flatmate had instigated them, there was not a sense that they had shown skill and leadership in perceiving and filling a gap in the curriculum.

Lack of awareness of their own accomplishment was noticeable too in the way several of the SRT spoke of language as used at art school. There was a sense that students had to learn certain ways of speaking about their work, to use certain vocabulary, and that the use of the 'correct' vocabulary would be rewarded with

high marks and a better 'fit' in respective departments. Terms such as 'critical' and associated terms such as 'critical thinking' came up frequently in the interviews as students related their experiences and expectations of art school. When asked if vocabulary was explained, or ways of thinking critically taught, the response was generally no,

No.... we just like just do whatever you would like to do. [Student D, in conversation with Student C]

Yet they all used discipline specific language highly efficiently, without having explicitly been taught it, and despite their fears to the contrary. Some examples are

(...) the way they use colour is not pure [Student D Int round 2]

[I] Try to explore and investigate the idea of the shapes and forms- How to use these two elements, in creating a strong sense of space in painting [Student D; Int round 2]

He's got a very linear way of designing which is very interesting because it always looks out to its surroundings [Student J; Int round 3]

The striking thing is that that no one had told them they were doing well. The same applies to the students organising student led crits, improving the experience for themselves, and students like F who developed a way of protecting herself from emotional hurt so that she could benefit from critical feedback. Even more interestingly, students often attributed hidden pedagogic strategy to situations where in fact they themselves had found solutions.

Student C

I think instead of just learning a set of skills

(...)

And being seen for what you do (...)

Might be more about the process of getting there."

Student D

And challenge you- like don't give you so high grade(...)

I think they got the strategy- they really got their strategy- yeah I think they got this....

Student C

They got the strategy and it's very weird how they get you knowing these things, and then they get you able to do something, be able to look for them, but you don't really know how it happened.

[Students C and D; Int round 2]

This conversation highlights an extraordinary generosity in the students; at the same time it indicates that there may be opportunities to point out to these students that in fact it is *they* who have developed a strategy for learning. In some circumstances they have done this due to a lack of taught material, in others due to contradictions within it, in others- as seen in some responses to the Yoruba /Vedanta course, as a means of negotiating and digesting large volumes of information (more on this later in this section). This raises an important question. Is a language for recognising and articulating one's own qualities and aptitudes as a student needed? In chapter 4, I asked, "What vocabulary can we utilise in order to express this transition from the absorption of facts to confidence within the person?" This is most critical at the juncture where students are making their way, through their own volition- their own will to learn- but are not equipped to recognise their own astuteness.

In an example such as F's, who found her voice in second year after having been a follower of trends in first year, one can see the development of mental clarity akin to *viveka*, the Vedantic quality of discrimination. The differentiation of her own core values in relation to those of the wider group, lead the way to an identification of herself. The *jiva atman* comes to know itself, and escape some of life's pressures, through its work (*karma*), in this instance, studio work. In the case of F, s/he manages to develop a kind of practice, at least in relation to the experience of crits, which moves beyond emotional reactions to acceptance of useful criticism as beneficial to the work, and not reflective of her personality. If analysed in educational terms, and actively spoken of, her techniques would be of enormous value to other students too. This will be taken up in 6.2, as will the applicability of the concept of *viveka*. For the moment, on resilience, an important issue has been identified. Problem solving is a cherished ideal in both fine art and design subjects,

but the students have no self-perception when it comes to valuing what they have done to make virtue of a lack, or enhance their own educational experiences, and their own sense of self-worth.

A similarity exists in the Yoruba/Vedanta course feedback forms. Despite having produced successful work, and reporting quite important shifts in their perception, students were given no means of knowing they had done well, other than through feedback on their assessment submissions. These submissions, being tied in with university regulations and departmental mechanisms, were returned indirectly. Written feedback was fulsome, efforts praised and acknowledged, but feedback focussed on the strengths and weaknesses of *the work*. This is standard and sensible practice, and even falls in line with the concerns of a crit- in that the focus is on the product- the work. In the case of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, however, unlike the crits, it might be beneficial to do the *opposite*, or to provide opportunity to speak of both the person and the work. This would certainly be the case if the course, or an off shoot of it, were to directly engage with questions of the metaphysical self and its meaning in learning and teaching. More personal verbal feedback following written feedback, in which the student is able to self-evaluate too, would be a crucial addition. The danger then, of dashing the aspirations and efforts of the will to learn by ending a significant journey for the student with a cold numerical or letter grade could be averted.

The following are demonstrations of resilience in different forms shown by student on the Yoruba/Vedanta course.

Desire to broaden one's horizons

G noted that he opted for the Yoruba/Vedanta course from the menu of second year elective courses *because* of the unfamiliarity of the territory it covered, as did several others. These students were attracted to the newness of the subject matter- new to them though ancient in origin, demonstrating a desire to seek new knowledge,

Well I'd say (...) the main reason I did the course was because it was completely unfamiliar. Yeah (...) I don't really agree with the whole it's too

ancient or (...) It's not as evolved necessarily in terms of the process of western philosophy. I think it's kind of better that it's stayed quite... I don't know how to phrase it, I think it's nice that it's quite detached from everything you would know from before because (...) there's no other real way to broaden your horizons.... [Student G; Int round 3]

Categorically stated is a desire to "broaden your horizons", rather than to stay within the world view offered in studio and on more usual critical studies courses. It is notable that G also demonstrates that a hierarchical understanding of western and non-western philosophy is already in place in his mind; however at the same time, G suspects that some imbibed ideas may need re-evaluation. He senses that entering new intellectual subject matter would help to question, or at least recognise preconceptions,

(...) another main reason I took it was I wanted to sort of shift my opinions on things (...) I liked the idea of it as going to change the way you view things. And I think it has. Whether it was obvious throughout that it was doing it (...) in doing this process now, I don't know if my opinions have changed, but I've realised them, if that makes sense. [Student G; Int round 3]

By "doing this process now" G refers to reflecting on the course for the 4 Minds interview, and joining the SRT. This is a truly useful piece of evidence for the value of following up assessment feedback with reflective dialogue – enabling student and tutor to capture what has been experienced on a personal level. In relation to the CARD, it offers a way of identifying potential entry points for further reflection.

Breadth of curriculum

One of the recurrent comments in course feedback questionnaires over the years has been that even though enjoyable, the sheer volume of new information could seem difficult to assimilate. H in his post-feedback questionnaire notes,

"Where to begin researching-on such broad and new topics"

suggesting that the course could improve by,

Perhaps covering less overall, but concentrating on particular ideas. Was overwhelming at times [Student H post-course questionnaire 2013].

At the same time, with regard to difficulty, newness and breadth of subject matter, he states,

Yeah- I haven't been familiar with it, but, but I welcomed the chance to beginning to learn about it heavily. (...) I said it quite a lot of times, the good thing, or the really positive thing about this course was- it opened you up to some ideas- you don't necessarily have to take them or pursue them, but but this early on it's made me aware that there might be another way of thinking, or.. yeah, yeah, I think that's really really important. [Student H Interview round 3]

So there is an element of contradiction in H's statements, but seen from another angle, the apparent discrepancies in opinion are manifestations of his own agency in making sense of the experience. He chooses to focus on his interest in the subjects offered; he grasps the connections being made, between the "sometimes overwhelming" volume of ideas, and proceeds to stay with what he can work with, flagging up what could come in the future,

Would love to research more into Yoruba philosophy and the need to understand traditional philosophies and attitudes in particular to the land, in order to contribute to contemporary actions in sustainability [Student H post-course questionnaire 2013]

The key factor for H has been the opportunity to deal with new ideas offered on the course over a sustained period of time, its chronological position in his career at art school, and, significantly for this thesis, the way in which it was taught,

(...) because [of] a lot of the ideas [on the course] being interlinked and inter dependent, I think I've learnt a lot from that and and I think more people should be coming into contact with that way of ahhh contemplating or positioning yourselves whilst making work, or just within the context of your life. I think, like seeing things as a smaller part of a larger entity it can- is quite apt for studio practice or for an art school...way of working. [Student H Interview round 3]

H states that the volume of ideas presented was made less difficult by showing connections between them and that this technique of interlinking makes the course relevant to studio practice, as a way of thinking and working; and the methods and the contents of the Yoruba/Vedanta course could enhance studio learning and teaching and benefit first year students too, if delivered over time,

(...) a term learning about it worked, like being introduced to those ideas this early on in your degree course, I think it, maybe even in first year, (...) the ideas could be approached as well. (...) I don't think it could become overwhelming unless it was, ahh, dictated or taught in an overwhelming fashion. [Student H Interview round 3]

H flags up the course's strategies as significant in his being able to make use of the material, and there is much to discuss later, but to return to the theme of recognising student resilience, it is important that H notes changes in his own attitudes. More could be made of these shifts in perception by enabling students to recognise their own active roles in their learning; for they demonstrate that they are processing the course and applying some of its ideas to their lives and to their understanding of what is important to them as values. In answer to the question, "has the course better equipped you to challenge cultural stereotypes?" H replied,

Yes- more of an understanding of how other cultures work- more respect- aim to consider some ways of thinking in my own life [Student H post-course questionnaire 2013]

To summarise: The students' resilience in the face of academic difficulties, their spirit of enquiry and curiosity in signing up for the course could be more overtly recognised, and celebrated. Where they acknowledge changes in their own attitudes, this most difficult of experiences should be acknowledged as such. This would greatly enhance their appreciation of their own qualities and attributes. All of the above also applies to the students' resilience in relation to difficulties with studio based learning and teaching. *Using the concept of viveka to describe this process of increasing one's understanding of oneself and one's world would be most useful.*

Finding and defining the self through pedagogic strategies applied by tutors

The aims of the Yoruba/Vedanta course have been explained in the introduction. Its strategic structural place in the 4 Minds project explained in Chapter 5. Further

details are provided in appendix 4, including specific lectures and assessment questions. All of this is summarised here for convenience:

Aims and methodology

1. Provide richly researched, informative, and selected material on Yoruba and ancient Indian art and philosophy.
2. Contextualise the ideas presented in contemporary nations and countries in which these originated (Present day Nigeria and India).
3. Contextualise the ideas presented in relation to experiences more accessible to contemporary art and design students in the west. This is done by using as entry points: Yoruba and Hindu ideas about gender, male/female dynamics, love and relationships, creativity and the function of artists in society. (These are explained via art objects, conventions of theatre and performative religious practices).
4. Challenge cultural stereotypes and expectations by showing through comparison the open mindedness, flexibility, and present day applicability of certain key Yoruba and Hindu/Vedantic philosophical concepts.
5. Use postcolonial theory in relation to Yoruba and ancient Indian art and their study, in order to demonstrate the historical dimensions of cultural stereotypes, its applicability to understanding modern and contemporary art and design.

Pedagogic strategies:

1. Combine traditional, written, densely informative lectures with ad hoc conversational pauses.
2. Open the floor to questions at end of each lecture- sometimes stopping mid lecture for questions.
3. Intersperse the lecture series with workshops in which students often work in pairs to examine/ dissect key concepts.
4. Provide a comprehensive list of assessment questions but also invite students to create their own if desired.

5. Offer three modes of assessment, to allow students to apply research practices and concepts from the course to their studio work, and to allow their strengths to be accommodated
6. Invite students to tutorials to discuss the assessment or any aspects of the lectures

Some of these aims and methods are now evaluated through the lens of student feedback. As indicated early on in the thesis, student responses in the Yoruba/Vedanta post course questionnaires and SRT interviews showed that the students had noticed certain aspects of this pedagogic strategy, and also flagged up others that I had not thought very deeply about. The impact of peer learning in the essay preparation seminar was one such. As explained in chapters two and three, the very subject matter of the course, ancient Indian and ancient African art and thought, requires that philosophical concepts and religious practices be addressed. To 'read' the art of these traditions, a familiarity with mythology, belief systems and main philosophical debates in the traditions is necessary. Thus the course addressed from the outset, matters phenomenological. Understanding meaning in the Yoruba and Hindu aesthetics and art, requires a grasp of the intentions and experiences of the makers, and the societies for which they were produced.

For art and design students, an important entry point was the very materiality of some of the objects and customs discussed. The concepts behind metal casting, painting, theatre and other art forms were studied for practical as well as theoretical information. Both traditions are premised on a belief in the human being having multiple layers of self hood. Thus representation of the human body in particular opened up an entirely metaphysical space, allowing for the introduction of more abstract concepts of mind and self. Because these are tied in with the very form and techniques of many of the ideas discussed, the question of what is the self was never far away. Students did pick up on this concept and it seems to have contributed to the durational impact of the course.

Student F cited "self-awareness" as a skill that the course fostered,

I think the main (...) skill that you either have to have or sort of develop during the course is that kind of self-awareness that I was talking about. (...)
[Student F Interview round 3]

Workshops in critical thinking

F ties this growing “self-awareness” to the workshops within the course,

I think mostly those little seminar things you made us do, those group exercises- I remember one specifically and it was like take something out of your pocket, and describe (...) how it relates to you (...)[and the culture from which the object comes]. Yeah! I remember that totally stumped me. God! And I thought about it for weeks afterwards- honestly like, it really threw me! (...) The group workshops- that was one of the best aspects of the course for me. [Student F Interview round 3]

Apart from the exercise in which students visualised themselves seated in the lecture hall, followed by the question, who is observing whom (described in Narrative 1 student J) the remaining workshops used in the Yoruba/Vedanta course were developments of workshops done in other settings; they were premised on recognising one’s own pre-conditioned mind set, and had been used in settings that strove to instil inter-cultural awareness. They were also premised on a technique of allowing participants to arrive at their own conclusions, while challenging them through simple questions and activities to recognise assumptions and patterns in thinking. In the Yoruba /Vedanta course, this technique was applied to establishing and understanding of postcolonial theory by demonstrating its applicability to our own everyday reactions. This was a deliberate ploy, hoping to avoid alienating students by seeming to harangue with morals and instructions. For K, this was a successful technique,

(...) Just having something planted in your mind- like when you were talking about um- oh like who’s heard of philosophy- who’s heard of this philosophy, who’s heard of African philosophy and (...) just planting that realisation, (...) that becomes almost like a skill- because (...) It’s something that you keep- as a more generalised thing rather than specific knowledge.
[Student K Interview round 3]

K refers to a preliminary question put to the class at the beginning of either the introductory or post-colonialism lecture. A show of hands was requested for the

questions, “Who has heard of the term ‘philosophy’?” Then, “‘western philosophy’?” Then, “‘eastern philosophy’?” Then, “‘Indian philosophy’?” Then finally, “Who has heard of the term ‘African philosophy’?” The dwindling number of hands, (sadly there have been no contradictory results in eight years of teaching the course) opens up questions about the education system that the students are in. This method of revealing underlying structures in society and education is used wherever possible within and between lectures in the course. It is also used to unpack some of the stereotypes about African and Asian thought that students are familiar with, by comparing the stereotypes with the actuality of some of the complex, radical enquiry that exists within the traditions discussed. Ideas about the nature and function of religion frequently come up, and students comment that the process makes them look again at assumptions previously made,

It’s made me more aware of ways of approaching the ideas of culture and examining my own prejudices even if I didn’t believe I had any [Student G; Post course questionnaire, 2013]

Criticality and subtlety in approaching different cultural stances, initially brought out in the course, stayed with K beyond it, as evidenced by her bemused account of a trip to India, in which she found herself at odds with a friend who had acquired fixed definitions of religion,

Yeah (...) just after the course had finished I went on holiday(...)to India with (...) some (...) friends, and [one of them] is (...) a researcher in religion, and the [other] (...) went to (...) [a redbrick UK university] (...) and it was quite this funny debate (...). Obviously she’s quite knowledgeable, really brilliant at arguing things but (...) [the researcher] was like talking about (...)Hinduism (...) as a culture and not necessarily like-as this steadfast belief, or like a religion in the Christian sense of the word religion; (...) he was talking about the word religion being like a bad translation [and that] the definition of religion kind of comes from Christianity (...) like someone being Hindu because they’re immersed in that culture- it’s like part of their identity, it’s part of like their way of navigating life. And that being a legitimate thing. And I felt I was able to kind of tune in to what he was saying far more, just because of like-almost the brain exercise of having done... the course. [Student K, Int round 3]

K’s friend, on the other hand, was unable to understand this way of looking at Hinduism,

Whereas (...) [pause] if you kind of take it as (...), like water tight argument, then (...) then you're just like 'Oh that's not religion because the definition is djadjadjadja'. [Student K, Int round 3]

So the course appears to have nurtured some insight into the narrowness of certain existent academic definitions, particularly in relation to non-western ideas, but most interestingly *what K observes is her own ability to see in a more flexible way*, and to relate quite naturally to the broader way in which the researcher was describing religion. Another student, quoted earlier referring to previous anthropology studies, made a connection between the pedagogic strategies of the course, his understanding of social structures, and the broadening of his cultural interests,

I'm not yet sure how this course will contribute to my understanding of society but examining the basis of social structures feels healthy. plus the extra artist nights have opened up a few more social options/experiences. I find it refreshing to hear new modes of thinking. [post-course questionnaire 2010]

Self- affirmation

For B, the course provided support for the way in which he understood the purpose of art and society,

As an art student I am dealing with belief, architypes and traditions of ways of seeing. Seeing other traditions gives a great insight into the internal common ground that we all seem to hold regardless of cultural contact. [Student B, Post course questionnaire]

B also found in the course a validation of interests that he had been unable to engage with in either other theory/ critical studies course, or in studio departments. He had been surprised by what he had found at art school,

I didn't expect art school to have a set culture; I thought it would be open to everything

Instead, for B there was enormous difference between his home and national culture and the general ethos of the art school; the ease with which myth, religion, and the secular co- existed in his home country, jarred in contemporary art school, which he found to be "very rigid". For him there was a clash "between culture in

[home country] and here”. And therefore, the “values on which the [Yoruba/Vedanta] course was based” was “almost a relief” [Student B; Int round 1].

B’s answer to the question, “Which aspects of the lectures were of relevance to you as a student of Historical and Critical Studies?” is thought provoking,

(...) the course as a whole is the first genuine attempt to give what is being taught a real context in terms of broader world culture and our discourse within it. [Student B, Post course questionnaire 2010]

For B learning about different cultures has not only been of interest intellectually, but it has strengthened his self-belief, in that a mainstream school activity has resonated with deeply held interests and outlooks; it has confirmed both his approach to art, and validated his hankering for looking at the myths and complex histories of Celtic traditions, something he had been discouraged from in studio, being told it was too romantic. Far from alienating him with unfamiliar material, the Yoruba/Vedanta course has done the opposite, affirming his own beliefs about humanity. It should be recalled, however B was quoted in the last section as hesitating to write about Yoruba or Hindu ideas out of reverence, not wanting to misrepresent. Instead he applied post-colonial theory to the re-interpretation of a family archival film of his grandfather as a colonial director of an early 20th century South African gold mine.

The implications of B’s hesitation are discussed in 6.2, but here it is more relevant to note that he availed of the degree of freedom in the assessments – to make up one’s own question or to relate the lecture material to a specific interest. This helped B to further strengthen his own sense of self, his critical abilities, and even it could be argued, to deal with an existential dilemma caused by a clash of his personal values with those of a beloved grandfather enmeshed in colonial structures abhorrent to B.

As seen in J’s narrative too, the course played an empowering role for her as a person by engaging with intellectual and cultural traditions that she had been born into. In her case the social, cultural, geographical, and ethnic divide between the site of the art school and the place of her origins was greater than B’s. She had

already thought deeply about her cultural and ethnic roots and was both critical and proud of the traditions they represented. She had not found the possibility of furthering this thinking elsewhere in the institution. This was also the case for another student who used the opportunity of the course to undertake studio work in which she could explore some aspects of her heritage. Taking up a question on Sanskrit theatre and the aesthetic theory of the eight essential emotions, she created a quilt and researched the theory,

It has helped my understanding on the philosophical side of things because being [nationality] and brought up in a [name of religion] household, some of the ideas applied to me anyway so the lectures sort of helped me understand things in my own life a bit more [student X4, post-course questionnaire 2010]

The course spoke to individuals in a way that goes beyond cultural specifics too, and what runs through the feedback that addresses the metaphysical self is a sense that a doorway has been unlocked. For H, the course opened up avenues he was yet unable to define, but that felt significant in a way that went beyond the school,

Yeah (...) I think it was the first course definitely at this institution that I felt that- (...) that you weren't just learning things to be learnt, but you were learning things that were necessary to yourself [pause] [Student H Interview round 3]

The metaphysical self

As with postcolonial theory in application to academic and everyday matters, the metaphysical self too, was left to the growing understanding of the students. It was discussed in relation to the art works and informally in discussion that came out of the lectures, and therefore present throughout the course, but no lecture was solely dedicated to either tradition's view of the self. F however was drawn to finding out more.

[the idea of] the 'Ori' [Yoruba concept of 'inner head'] (...) was really interesting. After the [Yoruba/Vedanta] course I took a course on meditation. I thought here were quite a few things that resonated with it... [Student F Interview round 3]

The topic of meditation classes was not formally introduced, though at various times there have been students on the course who were familiar with it in one form or another. In fact what was given on the course was a warning that organisations related to specific or loosely related well-being or spiritual matters could vary greatly in reliability. Some could be inviting, even seductive, but turn out to be quite manipulative. I was keen not to push students into the arms of exploitative individuals or groups. As explained previously, an important ethical duty as the course lecturer/ author was to advise students that critical faculties and training in critical thinking would be justifiable and necessary in evaluating the extent to which an organisation could be of use to them. The valuing of interpretation as central to the religions referred to in the lectures was also flagged, and examples given of liberal, compassionate, flexible outcomes, as well as divisive, excluding or dangerous ones. F, as quoted above, seemed to find a meditation class that was beneficial to her, and was able to use concepts from it and from the course to improve her experience of studio practice and assessment. To complete the quote above, F went on to say,

(...) having a (...) self that's not affected by the superficial toils of everyday life-and mindfulness, I guess that's the term they use now-a days. (...) So it had a lot of resonance with [the course] -And that's not something that's taught at art school-not taught in all Higher Ed. [Student F Interview round 3]

The course was designed principally as a cultural studies course. Its culturally specific subject matter required an explanation of the way in which the individual, society, and a non-physical self lies embedded in the artefacts and creative works presented. Since it was not meant to be a religious studies or philosophy course as such, no single lecture was devoted to the idea of the self. Instead the idea is present throughout the lectures either in background, or as tool of decoding the works presented. *This tool seems to have an impact beyond this purpose, and sheds light on how it could be a key method in the proposed pedagogy towards which this thesis aims.* Question 8 of the student research team questionnaire asked,

“Many of the lectures introduced ideas about the philosophical or spiritual self, and the individual’s relationship to society. Were you aware of this aspect of the course?”

Some responses are copied below,

Yes this is something I was already aware of. I am still surprised that it isn’t discussed as part of the main (...) degree as it seems central to the production of art in general. [Student B; Student Research team questionnaire 2010]

Yes it has made me consider the philosophical idea of the ‘self’ at the moment it seems to be relevant to my own life [Student X5; post-course questionnaire 2013]

It has, and it's been interesting learning about ideas of the 'self', and the 'soul' on this course because my second elective Historical and Critical studies course was 'An Introduction to Philosophy' which was studying only western philosophy (...). Something that really struck me in these studies was the constant questioning [Student A post-course questionnaire 2010]

Yes. And this is very important to all artists. I hope to incorporate Hindu ideas of Self into future art practice. [post-course questionnaire 2010]

Even if they don't directly influence my own ideas of 'self'- knowing they exist does help with confidence to explore/expand [Student X3; post-course questionnaire 2010]

Many students found it difficult to grasp the idea of a metaphysical self, but they preferred to be left to work it out for themselves, as shown by H, who found the idea,

Mm, yeah really difficult! At first it baffled me, because (...) - it was beyond imagination...almost. [Student H Interview round 3]

When asked however, if the ideas would have been more useful more directly taught, replies were very interesting in relation to how students like H enjoy independent learning, and shed light on the roles they may look for in tutors,

(...) gradually learning about it, or having like small insights- (...) it was almost like someone giving out a thread. And then pulling it back, so that you saw it but wanted to follow. (...)Yeah, yeah, it was baffling, but gradually I’ve begun to- understand- that that can exist- I’m not really sure at the moment what the other self might be, I feel that it has a lot to do- I’m not able to pinpoint

it, but I'm really really glad that it's made me aware that there's room for that within an individual, like within your life. [Student H Interview round 3]

Student G too felt that a more direct and extended explanation or application of the ideas in class might not have been beneficial,

(...)because I've learnt it for myself I don't know how I would have been taught it or not- or I guess I have been taught it but you sort of led to it quite subtly so my only thing is if it was introduced consciously whether it would have the same impact. [Student G Interview round 3]

Student F felt individuals did need to make their own journeys with these ideas, but pointers could be provided in the art school environment. As stated earlier, F had been inspired by the Yoruba/Vedanta course to take up a meditation class which she found very helpful in the stressful final year of art school. Asked if it would be a good idea to have such classes within art school, she commented,

It's kind of a hard thing to teach people. You can't really teach people to be mindful [self-aware]. You can kind of put things in place to help someone discover that but it is something you have to do yourself. But I don't think those stepping stones and that guidance is really something the art school does. [Student F; Int round 3]

Unlike the rest of the art school curriculum, however, she felt that the Yoruba/Vedanta course did plant self-awareness as,

Something that was [pause] encouraged ...or maybe just (...) gave us a head start or a nudge to... or an opportunity to do those things, an opportunity to think in a different way. [Student F; Int round 3]

Assessment

In relation to self- discovery, what can be learnt from the SRT's comments on assessment on the course? Partly in response to B's highlighted hesitancy to offend, and partly because some submissions in the past had jumped to conclusions and indeed had misread some lecture and book contents, some further thought was given to the way in which the assessment was approached. In 2013, the class was as always, encouraged to be rigorous in research, but also assured, or warned, that the subject matter was too vast and too big to allow for quick argumentative essays or

studio pieces. The point was to engage with one specific aspect of the knowledge gained, to spend time with it, read further into it, and to use the submission as an opportunity to explore. Students responded well to the invitation to make sense of the menu of concepts and ideas in their own way, seeing it as a chance to apply the knowledge gained to a task they had some control over. K found this helpful for several reasons,

Yeah it's like you were saying (...) for a 2nd year essay for [the critical studies department] you don't have to (...) have figured out, proven; -it's an experiment; and I felt like I did come to maybe not a conclusion, but um fairly solid ideas. But approaching it without that being the number one objective, that was really refreshing [Student K Interview round 3]

A degree of conjectural reasoning, and experimental application of the ideas encountered was welcomed, but an insistence maintained that the work be well researched and the research documented and referenced. Risks could be taken, in venturing interpretations and asking questions through the writing, as long as they were grounded in study and logically presented. (K's essay has been quoted earlier). By contrast to well-intentioned but rigid sounding advice on essay structure and particularly on constructing academic arguments, (some of which I have given myself in the past on other courses!), students found the advice given on the Yoruba/Vedanta course assessment more inviting because of its openness to experiment with ideas.

This difference was noted by K and contrasted also with her experience of taught Philosophy at High School,

in school in philosophy it would be like pick an argument, any argument (...) and argue it as hard as you can and destroy the other argument like, but...Does it help you...What does it do? What does it do? [laughs] it passes the exam (...) because [it's seen as] the most important thing, whereas actually as subjects they should be ends in themselves. [Student K Interview round 3]

Allowed to think through their writing and research, students gain an opportunity to grow into opinions based on better understanding of subjects, rather than adopt views too hastily. Such an ability to distil and develop an idea can only be beneficial

to the creative mind, and to the society in which the person operates, be it as a member of a group, an institution, or family and society.

The assessment part seems really exciting- to take academic learning and freely apply it to our own practices. In my case it offers an academic space to try something out with Visual Communication. [Student X3; post-course questionnaire 2010]

The contemporary nature of ancient ideas

These responses cast a contrasting light on debates on the value of traditional or ancient ideas in contemporary contexts. One of the consistent demands made of the critical studies department of the art school within which the Yoruba/Vedanta course was offered, is a desire for more 'relevant' courses. These are thought by many studio department heads to consist of only contemporary art and design contents, or information directly relevant to it. Apart from a geographical bias that imagines this relevance to stem from North American and Western European cultures and histories, the instruction above also indicates an assumption that older histories and ideas have no value for contemporary artists and designers in training. Several questions arise immediately- at what historical moment can one place the beginning of relevancy to contemporary artists? Can one assume the limits of interests and preferences of hundreds of students- the "hot pot" of diverse individuals referred to? And most importantly, in any age, has an individual ever lived out a life completely cut off from the past and its myriad influences? On the narrow definition of relevant described above, the Yoruba/Vedanta course should not exist in an art school and should not have communicated to the students as it has. The material is vastly different from other courses on offer, contemporary societies that have emerged from it are also very different from the one ADIX functions in, and it is for the most part delivered in a lecture based, teacher/taught format. In relation to the more personal or contemplative questions raised in the Yoruba/Vedanta course, these are premised on texts that are thousands of years old, yet students clearly found them relevant, as exemplified by F's response when told of this challenge to the department,

I don't really agree with that though, because (...) things you take away from that course (...) [such as] that concept (...) the "ori" things like that are so fundamental to the human condition- they're (...) timeless. They're not affected by (...) temporal events. They're things that are important to – to be poetic- to the human soul (...). I refer back to that meditation course I took- things that they were telling us about are (...) discovered thousands and thousands of years ago, and maybe we've forgotten about a little bit. God! I don't think they're irrelevant at all! [Student F; Int round 3]

Asked if she felt that the questions asked in the philosophies introduced in the Yoruba/Vedanta course were questions that are asked today, F replied,

Yeah! And will continue to be asked for the rest of time. [Student F Interview round 3]

One of the ways in which the course was made more directly communicable to the class, as listed in the six strategies listed above, was a deliberate referencing of current affairs in relation to the ideas introduced. Such content was increased in 2013 when the course title was changed to "Contemporary Contexts for Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity, and Self". This helped to introduce a direct dose of critical realism. There is a danger that students might perceive, or think that the lecturer perceives, some kind of perfection in societies depicted. All the lectures take a critical look at the ideas presented, highlighting the inspirational and positive, as well as the negative and harmful potentialities of the ideas discussed. The change of name in 2012-13 was an extension of this effort.

An example of this contextualisation was the inclusion of contemporary news items that touched on themes arising in the lectures. In January 2013, as part of the discussion around a lecture titled "Male/Female Energies in Indian Art" which is essentially an art historical and aesthetics driven lecture, it seemed important to tackle perceptions, misunderstandings or romanticised views, either positive or negative, about these ideas in modern India. Bringing up a highly reported news item of the time seemed not only useful, but necessary: the internationally discussed news of a particularly brutal gang rape of a young student in New Delhi, India, a few short weeks before the course began, could not be wilfully ignored. Attitudes expressed by the culprits, by politicians, and by public outcry, across the length and breadth of India had as much to say about Indian art, aesthetics,

traditions and society, as did the artefacts, beliefs, symbolisms and potential re-interpretations presented in the lecture. While apologists for rape emerged in the guise of supposed upholders of traditional roles for men and women and resistance to 'modernisation', so too, from the same society, did mass protests and calls for justice, changes in laws related to rape, and an examination of the confusions and usurpations of tradition. The contradictions around the terrible case, and their parallels in contemporary western society, were an important if tragic foil to ideas of male and female complementarity and potential for harmony and recognition of male and femaleness beyond gender that were embedded in the art works and literature presented in the lecture.

Students therefore commented that the Yoruba/Vedanta course offered specialist information in a broader context, locating it alongside more familiar historical events, art histories, and ideas. Most importantly, they responded to the way in which the course addressed their concerns as art students and as human beings.

(...) I suppose what it is actually (...) its the fact that its "ideas...on creativity... and self" so its these things that (...) even if ... even if you haven't been introduced to it, in like [in] a academic way, everyone at art school is going to be thinking about these things. (...) - those ideas- they're not that foreign, so it's probably looking at ideas that people think about in relation to their own practice [Student K Interview round 3]

They had not heard of Yoruba masquerade or its mythologies, but they could understand the dualistic nature of Ogun, who embodied creativity and destruction, especially when this concept was compared with the romanticised idea of the lone artist/ genius.

A painting student wrote on this comparative topic,

The history of the Yoruba tradition and the history of western practices seem to have little in common, aside from an interest in African art by some western artists. However there is an interesting parallel between the Yoruba philosophy concerning creation and destruction, and the way in which the western art audience justifies art. In Yoruba tradition, the relationship and interdependence of creation, or life, and destruction, or death, is recognised as an essential and natural part of the order of life. It is not recognised as openly in western culture, but can be seen in the western attitude

about how art is made and what defines an artist. In this way, the interconnectedness of creativity and destruction manifests itself in western culture as well. If art may still be used as a measure by which to assess culture, than it would seem that in fact there are many important similarities between the Yoruba, Europeans, and North Americans [Essay no 2; 2003]

They had not heard of Sanskrit drama, but they could relate to its startlingly contemporary experiments with space and time as intrinsic to performance.

One student, tackling the essay question on Sanskrit theatre's play with the depiction of time and space, *natyayita* (metatheatre), began with Aristotelian theory later codified in Renaissance times as the three unities of: time, place, and action, all expected to be depicted in theatre with consistence and no deviation.

[Aristotle's three unites are] a key to understand the difference between the conception –depiction of time and space in Sanskrit and Western drama. According to Hindu theory time is seen as continuum, and infinite, endless cyclic nature of creation and annihilation. [Essay no 3; 2006]

Many were not familiar with postcolonial theory, but they understood in a more personal way when they learnt that the entire collection of West African wood carving in the Pitt Rivers and British Museums came from the sacking of Benin City in colonial times. A place of art treasures could also be the result of power dynamics in which one culture could own or diminish another. Others chose to analyse recent events or attitudes in their home cultures in the light of critical cultural studies.

One student, in the essay question on Said's discourse on culture and their own view of it looked at attitudes to asylum seekers in the UK. Beginning with a description of neighbours' anger that she had signed a petition for the right of refugees in her area stay there, she moved on to family history,

What is the line of distinction between 'our own' and other people who live in Britain having emigrated from elsewhere? I am Irish Catholic, my grandparents came from Ireland a hundred years ago, seeking asylum and facing the same problems of prejudice. Yet still my grandparents, who suffered effects of anti-Catholicism well into their teens have no sense of empathy [Essay no.4; 2008]

Many students over the years have chosen to use the course as a springboard from which they understand their own practices and contexts better:

A design student wrote about globalisation from a postcolonial perspective, reflecting directly on how artists can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable interaction between different cultures and economies. *[Essay no.5; 2003]*

Another design student wrote about how the very first questions posed in the course had led him to question some assumptions in his field and in his department,

In an era in which relationships between people of different nationalities and cultures are becoming more and more frequent, the actual situation has been leading to the creation of conflicts and misunderstandings that are affecting our lives. The task of my [studio] project was to re-think the ritual of tea in (...) modern society or just make it more pleasant. As said before my idea of the actual [contemporary] society and what I learnt from this course, led me to challenge the brief, provoking and playing with the words of the brief. *[Essay no. 6; 2004]*

A painting student, taking the powerful influence of “the other” on European modernism, wrote a paper examining the ways in which three of his heroes had responded to influences from Africa and Asia: Kirchner, Picasso, and the author Herman Hesse. *[Essay no.7; 2003]*

The presence of research as a tool played a significant role in opening up this kind of understanding and experimentation with ideas. The usefulness of systematic and dedicated research practices were exemplified in several ways. Firstly, it was hoped that the lectures would be recognised as having required effort and depth of questioning. Secondly, in each lecture efforts were made to correlate the more difficult or challenging aspects with more everyday experiences. In this way, the course aimed to address common human concerns while according the dignity of specificity to the cultures and objects presented. In this way, research became a tool for ethical practice. On reflection, the combination of demonstrations of rigorous research practices, critical enquiry, self-reflection and a conscious effort to connect theoretical ideas with lived experience seems to have led students to look more deeply at what constructs their perceptions of the world. For many,

realisations about culture, history, upbringing also led to questions of who they were beyond these influences, and the ideas embedded in the works discussed provided starting points towards this contemplation. Thus encouragement towards disciplined enquiry (research) and reflection on how knowledge is formed and informs our sense of self could be another key strategy for the proposed pedagogy.

Summary

The pedagogic strategies of the course were noticed by students as a way of suggesting important ideas that encouraged their critical skills in cultural and artistic studies, as well their curiosity about a metaphysical self, providing

(...) building blocks almost of like basic knowledge. That seems like a **skill** like it just seems like something you want to have under your belt [*Student K Interview round 3*]

Yeah (...) I think that [the course] made me realise there's a- or opened my eyes to a different way of being critically aware- or contemplating ways of living, or ways of interpretatating [sic] your- the life of the self... and how you view that into a context of (...) society or, where we are at the moment, at art school. [Student H Interview round 3]

This “different way of being critically aware” included the way ideas of the metaphysical self, of social responsibility, and the use of a postcolonial critical lens. Finally, this section can be summed up by these words of feedback,

As an art student, I am a person. The lectures were about world history and culture and philosophy which is relevant to everyone. As an art student this has fed my subject matter (...). [Student X2; Post course questionnaire, 2013]

6.2

Reflection on the Yoruba/Vedanta Course and 4 Minds in Relation to Main Sources

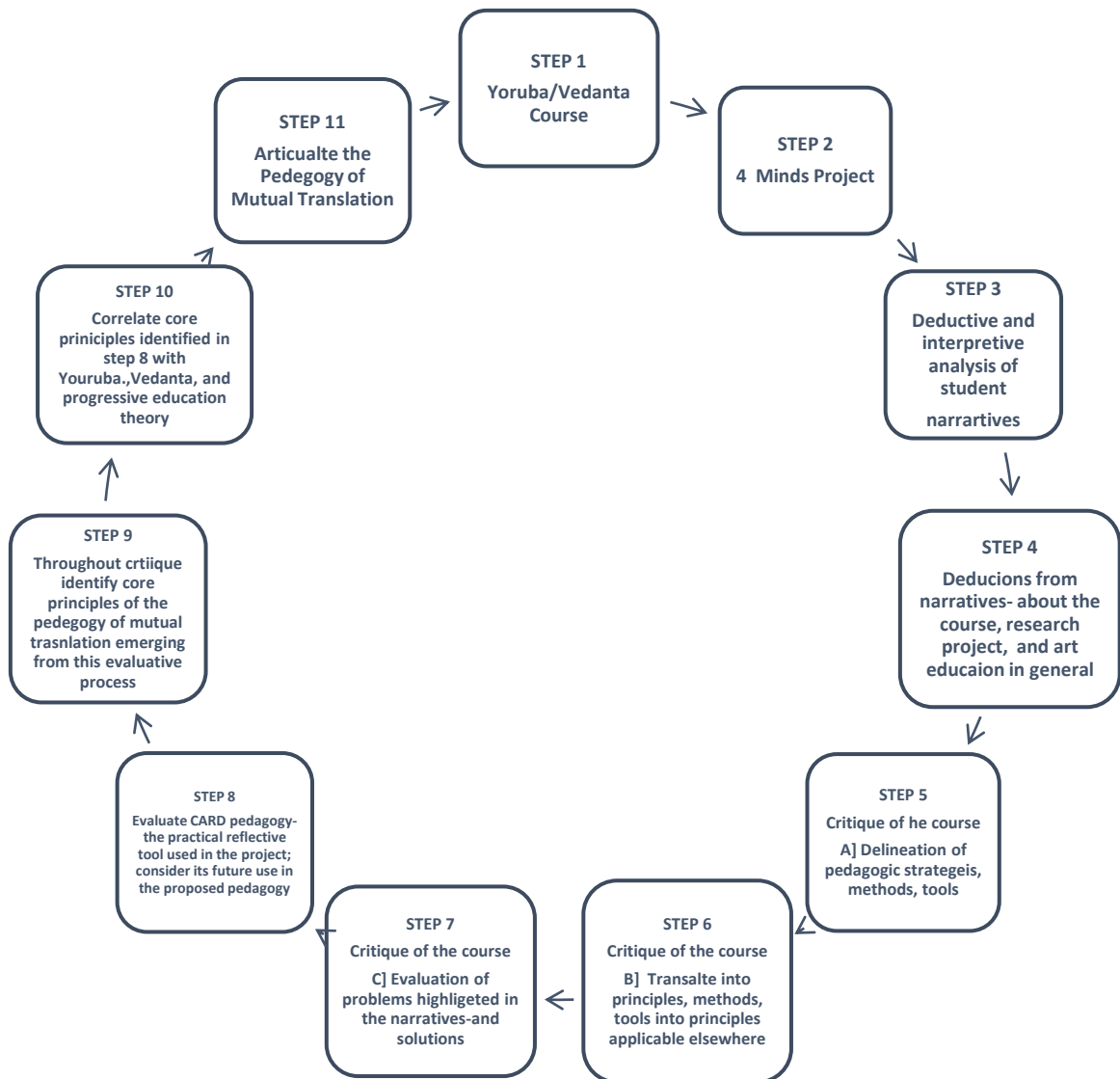
In this section, key insights gained from the narratives are further investigated, and applied to the Yoruba Vedanta course, and the 4 Minds research project.

Implications of the data for students and tutors are identified and principles applicable beyond the course articulated. This section thus moves towards step 6 of Elliott and Timulak's model of phenomenological interpretive analysis, that of "abstracting the findings". It also serves a reflexive function, highlighting moments of clarity or decision on definition of pedagogy of mutual translation.

Chronologically, this research can be visualised in eleven steps: from the delivery of the Yoruba/Vedanta course to articulation of pedagogy of mutual translation. The steps are presented in Diagram2, whose circular nature intimates the reflexive quality of the project, and echoes elements of CARD. While all stages of the research have moved towards defining a new pedagogy, it is ultimately dependent on recurring circles of action and reflection. The process is mirrored in the pedagogic philosophy and practical ideas that have emerged, which will inform further versions of the course. Further, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that principles identified through the reflective process are applicable to more general principles of learning and teaching that are not dependent on knowing the Yoruba/Vedanta course. The proposed pedagogy will however, be premised on selected aspects of the main sources: Yoruba, Vedantic and education theory of Freire and Barnett. It will specifically draw from the Vedantic idea of *karma yoga*, (non attached work), *viveka* (discernment), and Yoruba emphasis on the interrelationship of self and society articulated through the *ori* (inner head); Barnett's will to learn as a bridge between Yoruba, Vedantic, and progressive education philosophies; and Freire's critical consciousness and true dialogue. These are proposed as parallels to the dialogic and the critical in Vedanta and Yoruba thought, in relation to education and the ontological student being. Hence

the full title: Pedagogy of Mutual Translation: A Yoruba and Vedantic Interface for Art School Pedagogy.

Diagram 2: Circular path of the research process



In chapter 1, the term translation was established as a metaphor for trans-cultural aspirations. Constraints imposed by mono-cultural models were discussed; these

inhibit, because they are unable to facilitate full participation by transnational / transcultural subjects. In the introduction, Walter Benjamin's essay on linguistic translation, with its concept of translation as returning to the original (Benjamin, 1999, pp.70-82, 257) was cited. The word translation, used in this way was inspirational at an early stage in the thesis, when it had struggled to find a language to express its concerns. It recalls the beginnings of thinking about mutuality embedded in the title of the thesis. Benjamin speaks from a Universalist position that asserts the existence of a "pure" language that resides in all great literature. Transferred onto education, this principle implies that all educational paradigms of value resonate with, or reflect timeless qualities that exist beyond intellectual differences. Such qualities would be the "translatable" in education, in the way that Benjamin speaks of,

Translatability [as] an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential they be translated; it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability (Benjamin, 1999, p.71)

Underlying this research therefore, has been a search and definition of the translatable in education- essential pre-existent concerns that would be addressed by any education theory of significance. It can be said that this search had begun even before the encounter with Benjamin's essay, which is why it had such impact, causing me to backtrack from a comparative approach to one in which common fundamental principles in each of the intellectual traditions studied could be a starting point for devising a new principles applicable to education: The combination of four very different sources as theoretical grounding had of necessity to rely on the existence of *translatability* in education. At first glance there is little in common between the sources, and they do not address art education directly. They each speak, however, in their own ways, about the individual as formed by and yet removed from society, acting in the physical world alongside others, striving for self development, and struggling to comprehend their own agency. On this level they could be put into conversation with each other; however there were ways in which the Yoruba and Vedantic metaphysical self, portrayed through the way in which these traditions speak of mind and levels of consciousness, could inform an

interpretation of the ideas of Freire and Barnett. This combination would address the student at social and metaphysical levels.

In chapter 4 the four theoretical sources for this thesis were examined in relation to each other; the following was stated,

- Freire's combination of Marxist/Humanist idealism and post modern inter-subjectivity addresses Barnett's call for nurturing the will to learn, by recognising the wherewithal or the specific circumstances and knowledge with which students arrive.
- Freire's recognition, that individuals in society are "conditioned but not determined by their circumstances" and can acquire agency through "critical consciousness", has direct bearing on education.
- Freire's claim, in later works, that an indeterminate relationship with history, one that allows for change and reflexive consideration of the individual's understanding of him/herself, can be spoken of in Barnett's educational vocabulary; it can be achieved through the instilling and nurturing "dispositions" and "qualities", bringing real growth and change.
- These dispositions and qualities include a desire for creative, cultural and political self determination, formed by the students themselves. In this process they negotiate the desires and aims of others around them.
- Through "true dialogue", structured by "critical consciousness", or awareness of the wider contexts within which individuals encounter each other, students can bring about change and development in themselves, and in their society/ pedagogic environment.
- The Vedantic concept of *karma yoga* (non attached work), arrived at by cultivating *viveka* (discernment), correlates with true dialogue and critical consciousness, for they both require an ability to step back from immediate desires or reactions, in order to find solutions or take actions appropriate for the moment.
- The Yoruba concept of action as "actualisation" of the inclinations of the *ori* (inner head) requires critical reflection to determine which of the *ori's* dispositions to follow, how and to what degree. This too resonates with

viveka, critical consciousness, true dialogue, and awareness of one's own and others' ontological as well as physical being.

- Applying all four together would make for a more efficient and meaningful art education, in which students' ontological being is recognised alongside their cultural/political being, and they are able to gain agency in relation to their own personal growth.

In the Yoruba/Vedanta course, ontological concepts of the self and its detachment from, as well as its relationships with society, have been inserted into a critical studies curriculum; In the 4 Minds research project, their impact has been studied from a pedagogical perspective. The use of existent phenomenological interpretive methods in analysing the data has made it possible to present the findings in a way that meets the academic criteria of the British Higher education system that this research initially addresses, and is informed by. It serves also, however, as another layer of translatability, since phenomenological concerns are all to do with the self coming to know itself. This impulse underlies all the sources and methods that have shaped this thesis.

In the introduction to chapter 6, it was suggested that 'the phenomenon in question is the students' sense of self, what this constitutes, how it emerges in the everyday experiences of art school education, and how it might have been shaped by ideas presented in or related to the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the 4 Minds project. From these gleanings, a pedagogic proposal emerges.' Much of this has been established in the narratives of nine students' experiences, with additions from other classmates. Their statements demonstrate the way they gradually became aware, or had their earlier awareness reinforced, of themselves as beings beyond physical identity. This data is now studied for implications for the proposed pedagogy of mutual translation. Reflections and observations are discussed in relation to theoretical underpinnings and these are presented in a three part structure. Important areas of note and/or concern that arise from the student narratives are presented in the main body of the text.

Each of area of note/concern is followed by a text box in which solutions to problems, or ideas for building on success are listed.

Underneath each text box, the areas of note/ concern and proposed solutions are put into dialogue with one or more of the theoretical sources of this thesis. The insights provided by that dialogue are then studied for what they can tell us about the student as metaphysical being, and the translatable in education.

The Yoruba/Vedanta course- Pedagogic strategies and principles arising

Narratives 1,2, and 3 were structured by three categories, peer learning, students' own tenacity, and pedagogic strategies applied by tutors, including the Yoruba Vedanta course. This allowed the following deductions to be made,

- Peer learning was highly valued by all the students
- Students had inner determination that pushed them towards reaching their goals
- This determination could be hampered as well as furthered and encouraged by peer feedback
- The content of the course, though unfamiliar to the majority of students interviewed, had registered with them as interesting and relevant to them as people.
- The contents of the course had opened up their understanding of the metaphysical self and this appealed to them as an area to continue thinking about
- Students had responded to pedagogic strategies of the Yoruba/Vedanta course
- The 4 Minds project, and the CARD, for those students that tested it, proved to be beneficial to them as a means of reflecting on their educational journey

In reflecting on this data and in taking a critical look at the course, the first step was the identification of its pedagogic strategies. The strategies were either deliberately employed in the planning of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, or assume importance because they were noted by students, or they have emerged from analysis:

- a. Provision of information rich curriculum
- b. Sharing of tutor knowledge and research as starting point; tutors as learners
- c. Research spoken of as a tool for self-knowledge
- d. Introduction of discourse on the potentially hegemonic nature of education systems; reflection on one's own assumptions and where they come from; challenge through curriculum content that questions assumptions on one's environment.
- e. Critical realism brought in through contemporary contextualisation
- f. Unlocking doorways of interest for students to develop further
- g. Challenging the known
- h. Supporting the students' tentative efforts- in learning, questioning, exploring new ideas, self criticality
- i. Research invited as exploration, not necessarily argument
- j. New information and different world views presented through what already valued by students—i.e. creativity; relationships; finding place in the world
- k. Filling gaps in the curriculum- material from Yoruba /Vedanta course is not present elsewhere in the institution. It would appear it is also rare in art schools in general.

These strategies flag a number of insights:

- There is still plenty of scope for traditional lecture theatre based learning
- Fuller impact of the lectures however, relies on mixed methods and tools- lectures are interspersed with workshops and exercises that illustrate important concepts contained in the works

- A reminder that tutors were once students, and continue to be engaged in inquiry is a good communication tool.
- As a starting point for engendering understanding about unfamiliar subjects, research is best approached as open enquiry, rather than the construction of arguments at the outset
- Inviting an approach of ‘not knowing’ can be liberating and engender creative and rigorous inquiry
- “planting ideas” [student K] or offering “threads”[Student H] rather than offering defined alternatives is an effective tool for encouraging questions about society and education; this transfers responsibility and agency onto the student
- This approach is effective also in broaching the metaphysical self.

These insights into the Yoruba/Vedanta course can be simplified into three philosophical principles:

Learning about others enables learning about oneself.

One’s relationship with one’s work can be a doorway to the metaphysical self.

Seeking knowledge and understanding is an ongoing process.

Appearing simple at first, these principles contain several theoretical references. Specifically, they relate to Vedantic ideas of universal Consciousness and the theory of *karma*. In addition, they speak to Freire’s idea of critical consciousness. In Barnett’s terms, they explain how the students’ will to learn and will to proffer can be supported.

In Vedanta, as was shown in chapters 2 and 4, the self with which we identify on a day to day basis enacts our intentions and works, but beyond it is another self that is “identically the same in each person” Hodgkinson cites analogies from various Upanishads about the Vedantic concept of the universal self (2006, p.46). In the analogy of the jar, Brahman, or the real, or Consciousness, is compared with infinite

space without boundaries; in our limited perception of ourselves however, we see it as divided into separate entities,

The space in a jar is the same as that outside the jar. We are tempted to say that it is part of the one space, but even that is questionable. A part has limits, but so called 'parts' of space have no limits at all. Space is utterly seamless. Jars of course are limits, but they do not limit space, they only limit the things genuinely contained within them. (Hodgkinson, 2006, p.47)

Other analogies contained in the Upanishads describe the relationship of Brahman to individuals as the sun to sun rays, and the oceans to waves. All of these imply a temporary- or *perceived* separation of one unity. Vedantists argue that, trapped within the unreal temporal space of *maya*, we limit our understanding of who we are to the 'I' of familiar name and form, (our bodies and personal identity). Body and mind, while arguably instrumental in attaining self knowledge, also have limiting function,

What for a human being is equivalent to the jar? The word *upadhi* is used in Vedanta to mean 'limiting adjuncts'. A person's limiting adjuncts give a false view of the self. They include all the features of body and mind, including location in time and space, causal relations, like parentage, and all the qualities that make the person-for practical purposes –distinctive. Thus good qualities such as virtues, bad qualities such as vices, genuine qualities, such as skills, and imaginary qualities, such as delusions about one's ability are all *upadhis*. Insofar as they induce the person to say 'I am so and so' they comprise a false picture in his mind of what he is in reality (Hodgkinson, 2006, pp. 57-58)

We fail therefore to see not only our own 'true' nature as infinite and timeless, we also fail to see the unity of all things in others. Once inspired to reach self realisation, so that the perception of separation from Brahman can be removed, it becomes possible to see Brahman in all other beings. This is why Swami Nikhilananda in his translation of Sankara's *Atmabodh* (Self Knowledge) states that in this visualisation of the unity of all beings lies a rationale for mutual respect and democracy.

Hodgkinson explains,

The doctrine of the identity of the individual self with the self of all others, though contrary to everyday belief, may be acceptable to those who have some sense of community of spirit, or even just of a common humanity.

Advaita Vedanta, however, goes much further than this. It denies not only the duality of 'I' and 'you' or 'I' and he/she, but also the duality of 'I' and the world. In other words, it is not that conscious beings (or at least human ones) are regarded as essentially one vis a vis a separate unconscious world of material things; it is that everything, conscious or otherwise, is regarded as one. (2006, p.59)

This also why engendering an interest in a variety of cultures and viewpoints through education can make us question our own values and assumptions. When coupled with the suggestion that beyond the interesting differences there also lies a unity, the other becomes 'us' and 'we' become the other. In this way, while critique of cultural practices might of necessity take place, the assignment of an irredeemable 'otherness' that clouds our judgment at times is removed. Critique can then be more communicative, being based on greater efforts to understand other perspectives.

Rather interestingly then, in this philosophical system, contemplation on the 'I' that is universal allows the 'I' that is operational on the mundane level to be more efficient and efficacious. The reason for this is not that a supernatural force will provide answers, but rather that by shifting attention away from the desires of the mundane self, an individual is able to focus on the work to be done. Clarity about the doing of the work allows it to resolve itself while, as Vedantists say, "I do nothing". *Karma* (action) or one's daily work then becomes the gateway to understanding oneself and others. Many arguments exist within analytical texts of Vedanta on the theory of *karma*, and it has become an overused phrase in western popular culture. For the purposes of this thesis however, the single message that underlies them all is the most significant, and sufficiently serves a purpose in education: action, or work that is undertaken without attachment to either desire for personal reward, or fear of failure, is work that takes the individual closer to self realisation, and a sense of being at peace with ones surroundings. In the context of art education, having a sense of detachment while engaged in difficult and demanding work, receiving feedback on it, providing commentary to others, will encourage the will to learn as well as the will to offer.

This does not mean negative feedback can never be given on work that needs more development, misses its aims, or requires more thought on ethical matters. On the contrary, theories of unattached work would imply that more holistic critical judgment can be made on both the work, and on the way feedback is delivered. Communication is an ongoing process, as is the acquisition of knowledge, that often changes our own and others' perspectives on our work. Freire's proposition of critical consciousness applies here too. Rather than repeat methods or insensitivities we may have experienced in the past, he suggests that critical reflection will allow an alternative to emerge. Without it, once a student who may have suffered in past crits begins to feel in command, either through greater recognition of peers and tutors, or through their own overcoming of criticism, s/he may become oppressive in giving feedback to students, who are perceived as weaker, or 'other' to the group consensus on good art, etc.

In summary:

A study of strategies identified in the Yoruba/Vedanta course led to the identification of three underlying philosophical principles: Learning about others enables learning about oneself; one's relationship with one's work can be a doorway to the metaphysical self; and seeking knowledge and understanding is an ongoing process. When examined in relation to specific aspects of Vedantic thought and Freire's critical consciousness, it became possible to see that personal development and progress in work is a product of dialogue with others. By introducing students to theories that presented a common humanity, a new way of understanding their everyday experiences was opened out. The theories presented suggested that each member of the class- 'teacher' and 'taught', were persons beyond these roles- and that finding out about one's personhood could be done by learning about others who at first appeared to be completely different, remote, or other. The role of critical thinking came across too, in several ways: Firstly, in making connections between ideas from very different sources; secondly in looking carefully at one's own assumptions about oneself, others and culture in general; and thirdly in examining motivation in work.

The Yoruba/Vedanta Course-Fear of causing offence through working with ideas encountered on the course

B was concerned that the course encouraged assessed work to be created in response to lectures from regions unfamiliar to him, and felt it would be disrespectful to the cultures to attempt this without having first-hand experience of the religions and customs referred to. This response brings to mind my own exasperation over the years with ill considered attempts at multiculturalism in schools, in which vast swathes of knowledge and cultural output were poorly summarised; even worse, knowledge was at times absented and replaced by superficial representation. Some of these methods reduced representation to physical presence of different minority groups, (a laudable ambition in itself), and confused it with acknowledgment of the intellectual specificities of cultures introduced. Specialist and more time consuming representation of ideas, histories, contradictions, were missed out. Serving *samosas*, I would cry, does not mean that pupils understand Indian culture, or that they can challenge racist stereotypes; the Italian Renaissance, would generally not be introduced by inviting local Italian families to make pasta in the classroom! Was I now guilty of encouraging similar superficial engagement with Yoruba and Hindu /Vedantic ideas?

In Appendix 4 the history and intentions of the course are laid out and its contents explained in detail. Its strategies have been delineated above, so it should be clear that depth and detail were key concerns in its preparation and delivery. Apart from this concern regarding working directly from Yoruba or Hindu ideas, B's responses are otherwise positive. (He mentions the "relief" of validation of his cultural interests, and welcomes the space to consider his existent awareness of a metaphysical self.) His issue seems to lie therefore, not in the contents, but in the assumption that students could or should engage with the ideas in their own studio work or essays immediately after the course. Students such as B are well aware of colonial readings of these works, or of historical misinterpretations, some of which are pointed out in lectures. It is just this kind of sensitive and thoughtful individual

who has so much to contribute to cultural studies. Hence the course should do more to address such fears, by pre-empting, discussing and critiquing them. One possible solution is to make more use of peer learning. B's concerns are contradicted by those of X3 who had studied anthropology, and therefore began with a confidence to speak of "other" cultures. X1 perceived a lack in his previous education, but used the skills gained in the past to add to his experience of the present. Indeed he expanded previous skills by applying them judiciously to new areas of knowledge, also gaining perspective on his education to date.

Peer learning in the Yoruba /Vedanta course could be enhanced by highlighting its importance by making space for it

- Arranging for teams of students interested in particular areas covered on the course to meet outside of course time and reporting back to the whole class from time to time, on questions, dilemmas and discoveries
- ongoing 'crits' on potential research and art works that could emerge from the material studied
- Inviting students who have heritage from the cultures and nations mentioned in the course to share their perspectives, if willing to do so.
- Discussion groups to explore the issue raised by B and other concerns of inter-cultural dialogue

These insights speak to the Vedantic notion of *satsanga* (good/true company) and karma as the constitution of the self through work. In Vedanta, the theory of *karma* implies that all actions are causally linked to the degree of self realisation of an individual. The tendencies we demonstrate in our lives are a mirror of the degree to which we have come to realise that Brahman, or Consciousness is every individual's true nature. The greater our self knowledge, the more likely it is that our mind will select just action, not motivated by greed or desire, but most appropriate for the moment and situation at hand. It is through our actions that others know us; we define, and/or reveal ourselves through our actions, and so it makes sense that

the doctrine of karma is one whose obscure origins lie in the question of self-constitution through action (Ganeri, 2012, p.8)

An art student's *karma* or action can be seen in several ways: s/he has to produce work; be able to articulate her ideas and aims; receive feedback from tutors and

peers, and must herself offer critique to peers. All the students interviewed spoke warmly about the benefits of receiving feedback from peers, bringing to mind the idea of *satsanga*, or the company of the truthful. The implication in this phrase, applied to many groups, from fellow disciples of a particular teacher, to the company of like minded individuals all working towards a similar aim, is that according to the level of our self-awareness, we seek company that reflects this. This idea will be further discussed later, but here it is proposed that the group critique can be viewed as a kind of exercise in cultivating the 'good' as in clarity through discourse. In K's account of her "soup crits" there was a notable sense of students' openness to each other, unhampered by the authority of the tutor. This added the benefit that those who may have put on a show of certainty or one-upmanship for the benefit of the tutor, were not tempted to do so. A spirit of curiosity prevailed, and the students sustained themselves both physically by serving food, and intellectually by sharing ideas, sources, inspirations. From K's account it seems they were remarkably lacking in competitiveness; egos were not inflated, but nurtured in a way that allowed them to find appropriate actions in relation to their work. In such an atmosphere, B's doubts could have been shared and resolved. Whether he then proceeded to use Yoruba ideas in a direct way in his work, or decided to further reflect on it, he and the group would gain perspective from airing his concerns and hearing from those who took a different approach.

There is another type of underlying problem however, in B's hesitance that needs to be examined. This type of sensitivity flags up a fear of dealing with perceived 'others' due to respect, and is commendable when seen in this light. There is a danger, though, that through such hesitancy students site ideas from out with their own spheres of knowledge as so remote and esoteric that they cannot be spoken of. What begins as respect is in danger of colluding with hierarchies of academe. Since this was clearly opposite to B and the course's intentions, it deserves some further reflection. It raises interesting questions about who or what is considered authentic, since B states that had he first hand explanation from practitioners of Yoruba religion, he might feel more confident with using the ideas creatively. There is validity in this statement, for book learning alone can be misleading, the work

produced from it may lack nuance, or be simplistic in interpretation. At the same time, why is this challenge not put to other forms of art, art history or philosophy? Do students ask to meet practicing Christians should they choose to work from a biblical tale or the many literary and linguistic tropes that are based on it? And most importantly, what can be considered one's own experience? While the presence of religious ideas in Yoruba works might appear to be the barrier, the block may actually be constructed on the geographical and academic distance between their places of origin and a British art student today. African art is mediated in the art student's experience through colonial history, from its valorisation as formative of 20th century abstraction, to its misrepresentations in Primitivism. Hence the relationship between African art, contemporary art, and art historical canons need to be examined. This history is touched on and illustrated in several lectures. Such political critique could be enhanced on the course, and legacies of colonial histories in contemporary art discourse discussed further, so that students who were afraid to offend might see the complexities that lie behind such a response. They could then be free to either engage with African and south Asian ideas that interested them, mindful of the approaches they did not wish to emulate, or move on but in a more informed manner.

Hesitancy to engage with non western ideas, out of respect, or through a sense of strangeness also demonstrates the influence of hegemonic academic culture. To follow the line of enquiry applied above, can 21st century students actually know with accuracy how a medieval English painter, or Florentine Renaissance sculptor *felt*, and what he *believed*? Likewise, an abstract expressionist from the 1960's; and cubists in their first imagining of non figurative art, in response to the science and philosophy of the time? The fact is in order to arrive at this understanding they need to be informed of the history, politics and society of the times. The fact *also* is that students can readily relate to these figures and periods of western art, due to having been introduced to them, and told they are important to art, throughout their education. And so employing empathy, leaps of imagination and through art historical study, they find themselves able to identify with chronologically and geographically distant 'foreigners'. Why should the same not be possible with other

fields of knowledge and experience? It is only their absence in the curriculum that creates the fear of doing so. What is required is rigorous research, and conscientious self reflection on motive, validity and integrity of one's interpretation. These are neither impossible, nor do they fall outside of the remit of an artist or designer working from any other source. The difference lies, in the validation and security provided by inclusion of certain materials in the curriculum, and general ethos of a programme of study. The extent, to which certain subjects are normalised, while others placed outside, is illustrated by a reversal of this argument. Would a person of Indian or Nigerian origin be considered gauche or insensitive for speaking of Medieval English painting, Renaissance sculpture, Cubism, American Abstract Expressionism? Clearly they would not, so why should a British art student hesitate in working from African or Asian art? By placing the work of other cultures outside of one's legitimate reach, what else is being said? Ultimately it would seem that some fields of knowledge are being normalised, made neutral in access, while other fields are considered unsafe territory.

Breaking down the questions in this way, and the peer learning possibilities mentioned above would instigate a culture of taking time to digest ideas and to debate their meanings. This would also help those students who found the curriculum too rich and demanding, or wished for more time with each set of ideas. At times submitted essays have needed more research, or better construction of arguments, or a more in-depth application to the question at hand. These are academic writing issues that can be more overtly addressed within the course, but as responsibilities are also shared by the critical studies department with which it resides. This location of difficulties with assignment topics within the sphere of academic writing as a whole is also, in a sense a form of 'normalising' the subject matter.

Such strategies can add to what has already been done over time.

- Guidance on approaching essays, essay preparation, and discussion of the issues has gradually been increased.

- The 2013 essay preparation seminar was an example of such guidance, but also interjected a space for peer learning. (B was in the previous batch of students)
- Also in 2013, students were advised that argument was not looked for as much as engagement and investigation. This was accompanied by a warning that the complexity and newness of the material, and the short time allowed for each topic by the length of the course, meant that the essay or any practical work ensuing from it would of necessity need to be conjectural and explorative.
- The questions too, were designed to require care with reading and application. They could not be answered without reading beyond the lectures, and inter-connective thinking.
- Students were invited to frame their own essay questions should they wish to do so.

All of these strategies mitigate against overly reductionist submissions. It would indeed be disappointing if the course were to foster a careless boutique culture in which students, dazzled by new ideas, were to rush into works that misinterpreted what had been learnt. It is worth noting, however, that in the studio work submitted during the 4 Minds project, this was not the case; nor was it a frequent occurrence in essays submitted over the years. Towards the task, as well as towards the cultural ideas discussed, the submitted work was consistently thoughtful and respectful, with some exemplary pieces created, as quoted in narrative 3.

The course would benefit from consciously tackling the questions that arise from the dichotomies outlined above: respect that results in 'othering'; information taken as based on experience but actually culturally preconditioned; normative function of educational systems that inadvertently exclude whole bodies of knowledge.

- Work produced in previous classes could be shared, or particularly good examples discussed in relation to their dexterity with inter-cultural issues; all may not agree, so this would be a good starting point for debate and grappling with the subject.
- Key extracts from lectures, or reference to specific texts, could be included alongside each assessment question therefore supporting those who are unable to attend the preparation seminar, and those who are more daunted by academic writing and research.
- Locate difficulties with the assessment alongside academic writing challenges in general; thereby normalising the subject matter, but signposting support for research and writing skills.

These insights speak to the Vedantic understanding of mind. In particular, they relate to the relationship of *manas* (cognitive mind) with *buddhi* (determinative mind/wisdom). B's desire to balance personal interest with ethical use of knowledge given to him shows that students self awareness is imminent in all learning and teaching situations. In encouraging further reflection and interaction around the dilemma he faces, the political and cultural ramifications of his instinctive response can be recognised, and process of sifting through these can be instigated.

In chapter 2 Vedanta's conceptualisation of mind was introduced, as a "psychic organ" consisting of four parts which themselves are part of nineteen mediators of experience in the waking state. Each has particular functions, and influences the choices and actions of an individual. Nikhilananda's explanation of Sankara's definition of four aspects of mind is repeated here: Manas has a cognitive function, recognising phenomena; *Buddhi* has a determinative function, reflecting on, interpreting cognised data, and determining appropriate action; *chitta* is the site of conditioned consciousness, emotions and attachment – through it the *jivaatman* experiences pain and pleasure; *ahamkar* is the 'I' of conditioned consciousness- through it we identify with the body.

Through *manas* we are able to comprehend new ideas, work creatively with them, and propose new works, but it is through *buddhi* that we arrive at ethical use of the knowledge we are given in education. To apply this framework to B's dilemma, it is *buddhi* that would prevent the misuse or superficial use of important cultural concepts introduced in class, for it is also *buddhi* that causes B to question the rightness of using cultural material unfamiliar to him lest he disrespect it through ignorance; in discourse with X3, who had previous experience with studying different cultures, the emotional and intellectual aspects of the situation could be worked through. Such discourse would also involve *ahamkar*, ego, for each student is engaged in developing a sense of self, determined largely through what they believe and the work they produce. Having been introduced to the idea of *atmabodh*- self knowledge that goes beyond ego boundaries, may free up the students from a well intentioned sense of difference that inhibits real exchange of ideas. So there is a kind of hermeneutic function in selecting 'right' action while maintaining an awareness of its ultimately feeding into a greater Consciousness.

The individual has capabilities of discrimination, or discernment, *viveka* and that gives him/her choice. This of course applies to tutors planning a course as much as it does to students. Specialists are not necessarily needed to help a student make an essay more readable. They are however required, in order to instil sensitive and flexible understanding and negotiation of different cultural perspectives; to do so may well require the use of strategies of more than one discipline. The Yoruba ideas that are contained in the course for example are not found in art historical writing about African art, they are found in books on anthropology, philosophy and cultural studies. The Vedantic ideas presented here are often hinted at or couched in mythological explanations in Indian art books, but when viewed in conjunction with Indian philosophy books, the art works' wider functions and messages emerge.

Summary

B's hesitancy has provided a valuable tool for reflecting on potential dangers of translation and usurpation of complex ideas from cultures beyond the immediate cultures of the art school. At the same time, it flagged up an equally unproductive

potential of avoidance for fear of misrepresentation that could serve to cast only certain cultural areas as 'normal' and valid for academic engagement. By looking at the situation through a Vedantic understanding of mind as multifunctional, and work as a means of understanding and developing the self, it became apparent that the provision of multiple types of research and learning was key to a pedagogy of mutual translation. Since we are engaged in a search for educational principles that touch on what it means to be human, we can indulge in many languages and discourses. Transferred onto academe, we have therefore to look at the way in which different disciplines speak of the human being, shapes our understanding of each other. Interdisciplinary and inter-cultural strategies therefore become paramount.

The Yoruba/Vedanta Course-*Breadth of information on the course and time*

Another concern highlighted by the data is the amount of material covered by the course. For the SRT, this was mitigated by the way in which it was taught, and they also had the opportunity to mull over its contents through involvement with the 4 Minds project. For others, though enjoyable, the sheer amount of information was overwhelming. How can this response be dealt with, without losing the intercultural quality of the course? This too was an element that the students all seemed to enjoy. None of the feedback asked for Yoruba and ancient Indian ideas to be separated out. This in itself is curious in some ways. Since university subjects are usually delineated by region, it might indicate that art students are more accepting from the outset of unusual juxtapositions and compilations of ideas. They are after all creative and innovative thinkers by trade. Should it be desired, how could the course material be separated out?

- One way of separating the material, while maintaining the diversity of the course, would naturally be to double the time in which it is taught. It could be a two term elective, if the departmental structure would allow.

- Another would be to cluster the information around themes that are readily understood by the students and draw them to it in the first place: space, creativity, and self. This would allow more detailed discussion of the metaphysical self, taking it from the traditions to the students own experiences and backgrounds.

In doing the latter however, there may be the danger of the students confusing one tradition with the other. The current structure of the course makes a clear break between Yoruba and ancient Indian ideas with the lecture on postcolonial critical theory. In both these potential solutions, there is one crucial factor in common: time. The students need time to stay with an idea long enough for questions to form, changes in their thinking to be recognised, and information to be filtered into knowledge that feels owned by them.

Within the limitations of an eight week course, one way of doing this might be the writing in of a voluntary informal meeting towards the end of the academic year in which the course was taken.

- Developments and questions that have arisen since completing the course could be shared and supported between students and tutor.
- Students could then take this further themselves should they wish to.
- Peer mentoring/ exchange/ collaboration could then continue well beyond the course

These ideas, of arranging meetings outside of the course and beyond its time limit bring to mind the Yoruba idea of education as *eko*, a lifelong journey. They also speak to Freire's idea of true dialogue based on *critical consciousness*. Both of these envisage education as a dynamic, long term and interactive process between people, and between the personal and the public. As shown in chapter 3,

Education for the Yoruba is life-long process. Education is seen (...) as an integrative and formative effect (...) to enable [a person] to live effectively and responsibly in the society. (Fayemi and Macaulay –Adeyelure, 2009, p.44)

The Yoruba language itself was shown to have many different terms for education and its functions because it refers to the contextualised application of these attributes: *Eko*- wisdom, including ethical values; *imo* -knowledge, *Ogbon*-

understanding; iwe- literacy, *ile-iwe* –schooling; and others (Fayemi and Macaulay – Adeyelu, 2009) That contextualisation implies continuous re-evaluation of ritual, learning, belief. In encouraging students to meet after the course, they would take on the ideas contained in it, widen them and create their own creative intellectual trajectories. With time to read further and perhaps to experience some of the crafts, skills, concepts in their own ways, their understanding, and their work would acquire maturity, and quite likely lead in unexpected directions. Meeting the tutor- or other tutors as fellow researchers in the field would also shift the learner-teacher dynamic, transferring responsibility more evenly or even reversing it. For students would soon become experts if not on whole tranches of philosophy or history, but certainly in their own takes on it. *Being*, in the Yoruba as well as Vedantic world view is a continuous process of encountering –both the present empirical world and its metaphysical counterpart. In Yoruba custom this inter-action is kept in continuum through ritual; in Vedanta through meditation, and mindful action. In Freire’s later work this process is expressed in his rejection of theoretically driven education systems that take away the self determination of the students. He came to feel, for example, that rigidly applied, Marxist strategies that should have been liberating became deterministic instead; they produced students not only dependant on book learning, but also in danger of becoming teachers who suppressed independent thought in education and society. *Critical consciousness* applies here, as defined in chapter 4,

- “reflection on practice” (Freire, 2001, p.30) that recognizes the direct relationship of theory to practice.
- “epistemological curiosity” (2001, p.32) that emerges from the acknowledgment of mutuality between learner and teacher.
- “methodological rigour” (2001, p.33) that, risks stepping outside of one’s certainties, in order to allow new ideas to come forth.

Critical consciousness is grounded in the particular circumstances of the present moment seen in historical context. That combination of observations of past and present, their patterns and inter connections, allow meaningful alternatives to

emerge. Proposing courses as starting points would allow students to put critical consciousness to work, and so,

the learners will be engaged in a continuous transformation through which they become authentic subjects of the construction and reconstruction of what is being taught, side by side with the teacher, who is equally subject to the same process. (Freire, 2001, p.33)

This would also bring about a shift in relationships within the course. Student to student, individuals would become stronger in some areas, more theoretically oriented in material that interested them more. They would then be in a position of exchange with each other, teaching, explaining, and questioning each other as peers. Those with more developed thoughts on one concept or area would be able to exchange this learning with those with similar growing knowledge in other fields. Between tutor and students, by meeting after the course was complete, the teacher-taught relationship would have more chance of shifting to one of fellow researchers in a community of learners. The term *satsanga* could even apply. There might be a potential for harmful power dynamics such as those that emerged in A, and C's narratives, in which only certain types of voices were heard in crits. These could be avoided, or handled effectively through awareness and application of Freire's three principles of critical consciousness, which aims at breaking recurring cycles, that repeat the inequalities of the past.

Equally relevant are Yoruba tenure ethics, which remind individuals in any position of authority or power that the trust of their community is premised on their recognition of their own responsibility. In the scenario of self structured student learner communities, 'power' as such would no longer be with the tutor, but with each student as s/he took command of certain areas of learning, however briefly.

Summary

Within the Yoruba/Vedanta course agency was fostered in several ways, freedom to shape or propose assessment questions, freedom to explore rather than to be tied to previously learnt formats for essays defined by argument, and the choice of applying research to studio practice accompanied by a short piece of contextual writing. It is in the time and space that follows the delivery of curriculum material,

however, that students can develop real agency, and self awareness. That post-course space for the SRT was taken up with the 4 Minds project. It can be replicated with more student autonomy, inviting them to study, reflect on and further question material given in the lectures; they would then assume the responsibility that lay previously with the tutor. In taking on that responsibility, making decisions about how they will proceed to deepen their understanding of and utilisation of curriculum material, students have of necessity to consider, question, and evolve their own existent world view, and the identity that is shaped by it. CARD can come in at this point, as will be discussed in 6.3. In pedagogy of mutual translation, this principle would be recognised, and the task then would be to structure year groups in such a way as to allow for interaction across and vertically amongst student groups at different levels in the institution, sharing common philosophical goals. While the Yoruba/Vedanta course is restricted to a course timetable, the principles emerging from this research can transcend year groups, courses, and specific assignments.

The Yoruba/Vedanta Course- Self, Society and Personal Endeavour

At an ontological level, self awareness was intimated as significant within the course by explaining the metaphysical meaning of the works and concepts introduced. This explanation required the imagining of a self that was not the name and body – a self that had many levels of consciousness, and an ability to experience life in a different way. The impact of this was demonstrated by many types of response in the data:

- F went on to do a meditation class.
- H stated that he was “really, really glad that it’s made me aware that there’s room for that within an individual”
- G experienced the important realisation that the course had made him examine “my own prejudices even if I didn’t believe I had any”
- J, X4, and B encountered in the course for the first time at art school, an acknowledgment of their ancestral/parental/personal cultural heritage and its intellectual domains. For J this was particularly impactful, since she had

had since childhood a curiosity about the Hindu concept of the self, and a critical take on its religious practices.

Each of these examples demonstrates that the idea of a self beyond personal identity did resonate with these contemporary art and design students; SRT members and course questionnaires also indicated that students felt the idea would benefit friends on other courses and art education in general. As a means of support in moments of struggle, and as inspiration for work that was free to work with questions broadly termed 'spiritual' in nature, the idea of bodies of theory that could inform an emergent sense of self was welcomed. Speaking of the metaphysical self seemed to support the will to learn, and the will to proffer ideas and experiments. There was also a sense that this area was not addressed elsewhere in art school curricula, and particularly not in studio practice. The students' responses also indicated a cultural/political dimension to the kind of self knowledge the students were looking for. In chapters 1 and 4, it was shown that these two identities are intricately intertwined in a learning environment. As things currently stand in Britain, acknowledging a students' cultural identity has generally been left to multi-cultural, anti-racist discourse, or other equalities agendas. At school level, in relation to non-western culture, attention tends to focus on acknowledgment of racial, ethnic, and familial cultures of minority cultural groups of former colonies. The aim is to empower minority ethnic groups by inviting them to include their own culture, and certain elements of it are written into the school's usually extracurricular, but sometimes subject based course material. While such aims are laudable and successful in many areas, they also perpetuate a hierarchy of mainstream material on the one hand, and additional material aimed at balancing the society we live in. So for art students, and the institutions they enter, this perception of a normative 'mainstream' contemporary art and design culture, and minority diversions from it is already in place. Coupled with Eurocentric curricula this differentiation has a polarising effect. In order to enter mainstream contemporary art spaces, metaphorically and as expressed in real support and encouragement, students often feel the need to narrow their frames of reference, and to stray away from subjects of importance to them. This was discussed in an

autobiographical as well as theoretical light in chapters 1 and 4. It has been borne out by student J's experiences nearly thirty years later.

For students of African and Asian, or other heritage considered 'minority' in the UK today, this narrowing of horizons can have a two-fold effect. Firstly, assuming Eurocentric contemporary art and art historical curricula as norms makes incomplete the student's aspirational vision of his or her future. How is a will to learn to be supported, when it cannot aspire towards completeness? This is not to say that 'minority' students cannot learn from and thrive within European ideas and arts, or that they somehow have secondary right to it. Quite to the contrary, there are notable successful British artists who have done just that. What is in question is the subliminal political message that European and North American art *is* art, open to all, and the rest is additional. And what is the effect of a community that supports the will to learn by encouraging experimentation, but is unable to deal with the offerings of students whose work draws from these 'additional' spheres of knowledge? J's narrative was hugely informative in this arena, expressing disappointment at omissions in 'world histories' that left her with no sources for improving her knowledge of buildings in her country of parental origin. Whereas her originality as a designer might have been deepened and informed by the living education of witnessing a society in flux and change, with thousands of years of design history, it had instead to be put aside. Equally important was the extraordinary humour and spirit with which she had dealt with assumptions from both her parental community and school peers who each stereotyped her in their own ways; it seems a great loss that she was unable to bring any of this characteristic "wherewithal" to the work in her department.

Leaving out African and Asian ideas from mainstream art school curricula, particularly in the current post-modern era, also has the effect of precluding any inclusion of philosophies, concepts, and religions of the South as inspirations. Indeed, as explained in chapter 1, especially because philosophies, analytical and intellectual traditions in these regions tend to be tied in with belief systems and religious practices, they come to be categorised as historical or anthropological in value, and therefore beyond the context of contemporary arts. Secondly, an

atmosphere can prevail in which further polarisation takes place between matters considered intellectual, and matters considered spiritual. Northern arts and societies within which British art schools are sited, are more readily available and familiar; they are immediately grasped as having changed, modernised, and become self critical. Non-western cultures, only viewed through colonial, touristic, or highly specialised academic lenses, appear uncritical, suffering the results of unquestioning acceptance of static traditions, at odds with modernity and rational contemporary culture. As Said would frame it, they are denied their own subjectivity. This seems most astonishing when critically aware representatives of these cultures and societies are present in the classroom. This critique is also borne out by B, who was interested in the myths and traditions of his own European heritage, but unable to get beyond reactions to imagined 'romanticism'. Also present in today's art school studios are internet savvy students with political, religious and philosophical interests in ideas from all over the world, still being taught by former students of another generation in which subject and geographical divisions were more impenetrable. Critical consciousness then could also be a valuable professional development addition, and the CARD could be its tool for self reflection.

The Yoruba /Vedanta Course could contribute to the creation of a language for intercultural interdisciplinary research and practice.

- This would include ways of speaking about the metaphysical self as referenced in the arts shown, as well how these ideas translate to the educational circumstances at hand
- As an exercise key philosophical concepts could be applied to critiquing their own work, or to current texts on art, design or social issues. For example, an active discussion of the principle of unattached work, *karma yoga*, in relation to crits; *viveka* as criticality about interaction with others, or in evaluating the success of a work in relation to its aims;
- This could be followed by workshops in which students would consciously try to locate/develop a language for the articulation of the cross cultural work they are undertaking

Where does this kind of open ended search place the self? In the introduction to his book on overlaps both through contact and through synchronicity between post modern thinkers and ancient Indian philosophy, Carl Olsen writes,

Comparative philosophy occurs on the borders or margins of scholarship, which makes it a very postmodern endeavour. (...) comparative philosophy is a risky business because we have to take chances and not be afraid to be wrong. (Olsen, 2002, p.9)

This is exactly the kind of risk that pedagogy of mutual translation must take. Its potential for freeing students to tackle difficult and unfamiliar material, perhaps comparing it with knowledge that is more readily available, was demonstrated by K's comment on being allowed to write in a more conjectural way. It brings to mind also Vedantic theories on argument, or public debate,

The lowest form occurs when the protagonists are intent exclusively on the advancement of their own point of view. Somewhat superior to this is the debate in which each rationally opposes the views of his opponent. The highest form, however, is debate in which both parties aim at the truth itself. Only the last exhibits the proper form of reason. (Hodgkinson, 2006, p.148)

An example from ancient India of the triumph of reasoned and nuanced argument over bombastic intellectual imposition, is found in a passage in the Mahabharata. Vanita writes of the female scholar Sulabha who is able to systematically dissect claims of female inferiority to men made by the scholar-king Janaka.

Sulabha begins her response with a discourse on speech. She gives a learned account of the verbal faults and the faults of judgment that can occur in speech, and says that her reply will be rational, clear, and not prompted by emotions like desire, wrath, fear, or shame. She argues that only a speaker who is able to communicate his meaning to the hearer is worthy of the title of speaker. Sulabha then proceeds to address the king's questions- who she is, whose she is, and where she comes from. Her answer is: 'As lac and wood, as grains of dust and drops of water, exist commingled when brought together, even so are the existences of all creatures' (Ganguly 1973, X 65). This is a statement of the philosophical position that the primal elements are the same in all bodies and beings, and the same consciousness pervades all existents, therefore if Janaka were truly knowledgeable, he would not ask her who she is, as he would know that she and he are essentially the same. To regard his own self as different from the self of other beings is to lack wisdom. (Vanita, 2003)

By referring Janaka to the same intellectual tradition that he claims rank and honour in, therefore,

Sulabha provides philosophical justification for equality and non-differentiation between women and men (Vanita, 2003)

Vanita's paper on Sulabha and the place of women in Indian philosophical texts is an example of the unexpectedly relevant and contemporary feel to ancient texts, and how they can be used to enliven and contextualise contemporary debates. It is very evident from existent publication and recent comparative philosophical work, that theoretical material is available to facilitate the kind of education aspired to in the pedagogy proposed here. Judging by the student narratives, however, a sufficiently flexible vocabulary does not yet exist in art school environments to facilitate it. For students with an interest in metaphysical, spiritual or non-western ideas, it is still problematic to include them in their work without having to argue for doing so, or stepping outside of the canon. Whether they have ancestral links with non-western cultures or not, students can find it difficult to apply them to their work, or even know more about them. In my own experience, students have frequently said they kept all of these interests to themselves, not bringing them up in studio crits or essay tutorials with other staff, since they would not be understood there, or even derided. This would not be the case were students introduced to the intellectual traditions of the east as discursive traditions that they are, full of contradictions, difference and debate. They also contain, as has been shown throughout this thesis, intriguing ideas on what it is to be human, and what time and space are. Such questions can serve to open out the notion of 'who am I?' 'What do I believe in?' and how do I relate to the other individuals around me?' By providing the opportunity to stay with the ideas longer, to try them out in different circumstances, materials, etc., the students are also accorded agency in defining themselves, both culturally and spiritually. They gain therefore, an ontological presence recognised by the institution. It seems very important to draw the most straight-forward and yet significant of conclusions from the reflection above: Self knowledge in the ontological sense – as awareness of being, beyond identity, can be instilled or nurtured simply by speaking of it. The concept can also be

understood critically, by contextualising it within intellectual and critical debates of the past as well as of the present.

Reflection and Analysis of the Research Project and CARD as pedagogic tool

The intentions and aspirations of the 4 Minds research project are tied in with the Yoruba/Vedanta course, and some aspects of the project have been critiqued already in 6.2, alongside reflections on the course itself. Methodology and methods of the research project have previously been presented, explaining and defining its phenomenological impulse, and the ways in which this is in keeping with Yoruba and Vedanta attitudes to the human being.

The introduction to the data chapter explained its practical and analytical processes. It also presented the practical tool devised over the course of the research project—the Critical Autobiographical Diagram CARD. This template was designed as a structure for reflecting on and noting key influences on one’s life and thoughts; it aimed to encourage students to recognise connections between family, social, educational and wider cultural spheres, and to locate the origins of formative influences on their sense of who they were. Narratives 1 and 2 provided poignant examples of how the CARD template, tested by C and J, proved to be quite adaptable, and quite conducive to contemplative enquiry. This section presents a critique of the planning and structure of the 4 Minds project, the format of CARD and feedback on it. Both are examined in relation to their aims, intentions and outcomes.

Reflections

On paper the initial planning of the project was sound, especially because it had practical flexibility built into it. Its structure allowed the discrete elective course to be used as a resource and to act as common ground after its eight week run via the virtual learning environment; this in turn provided an opportunity to revisit the contents of the course, and colleagues in the staff research team to familiarise themselves with materials the students were referring to. The course and thesis

author would also be available to provide further background and answer questions, while inviting colleagues to make their own interpretations.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns in three major areas, and how they were addressed is detailed in chapter 5. Potential lack of transparency between students and the project leader/thesis author/course tutor was dealt with in its most immediate form by removing all assessment from the project work and emphasising its voluntary nature. As the project proceeded, the role of some of the students became even more balanced with that of the thesis author as they moved from their status as respondents, to fellow researchers. This applies to C and J in particular. In listening to all the student interviews, however, there is a quality of trusting dialogue that comes across. There is a sense of shared purpose at least in examining the positive and negative aspects of art education. The students seem to have welcomed the respect accorded to them as experts in their learning and as individuals.

The second ethical consideration was colleagues' potential sense of being subordinated to the thesis author. This was explained as mainly serving to take on organisational/administrative burdens, in order to free colleagues' time for meaningful engagement. An example was the taking on by the thesis author the job of preparing and then administering the funding bid that was made for the first 4 Minds year; this enabled the invitation of guest speakers, one of whom was selected and invited by a member of the staff team. These events were highly valued by the StRT, and all attended as many as possible

Attended Tawona Sithole and Prakriti Dutta and thoroughly enjoyed both of them at the time, especially since they both involved musical performances. (...) The mathematical complexity of the rhythms was astounding, as was the communication/ interactivity between the performers. Tawona Sithole was a very engaging speaker(...) and I remember (...) sitting in circles to talk.
[StRT colleague C; Q4]

A third set of ethical issues has to do with vulnerability of both staff student participants. Although anonymised, the student's critical comments about current pedagogic styles could be traced by their tutors causing unease or worse. Two

important points apply here. Firstly at the point of writing, all of the students have now left the institution or the department in which they were studying. Secondly, the majority of the quotes used here relate to the *students own solutions* to the problems encountered. This selection of the quotes has been made possible, indeed necessary, by the narrative theme *'finding and defining the self through resilience'*. The students' generosity in speaking about their tutors was also noticeable in the narratives, and adds to a quality of empathy and maturity of their responses.

The vulnerability of staff not directly involved in the research project was thus taken care of too, by an emphasis on the students' resilience. Further, any criticism that would lead to identification of an individual or department has not been included, and the institution itself has been anonymised. Potential vulnerability of staff involved in the 4 Minds project was also handled by offering anonymity; at the same time there was an open invitation for those who wished to be more openly involved with the project to be named and as said earlier, take up its ideas in their own ways.

In chapter 1 the danger was flagged up that as researcher, tutor of the course in question, and champion of certain Yoruba, Vedantic and educational principles, my analysis would be wilful and inaccurate in interpretation. It was established there that the aim of the research was to show the importance of acknowledging the cultural/political and metaphysical self, and that theoretical sources cited in combination, and in most cases singularly too, supported this assertion. Therefore reflecting on my own education and becoming more conscious of how it had shaped my pedagogic stances, was a means of identifying strategies that could then be assessed for transferability. Now, at the end of the project, with data gathered from nine students and several members of staff, evidence has been provided and discursively examined in relation to the claims of the thesis.

Successes and areas of concern

The 4 Minds research project was successful in:

1. Generating insightful interviews and engagement in real life research at a variety of levels by the SRT and some members of theStRT.
2. Engaging two of the SRT in longer term investigation and ownership of the research question
3. Sustaining interest of student respondents/ researchers for varying, but substantial periods of time. This allowed students to reflect on their own experiences and understanding of the project and its questions.
4. Identifying through analysis of data, transferrable elements of the Yoruba/Vedanta course for inclusion in a more generally applicable pedagogy
5. Generating a tool for application within the pedagogy proposed- the CARD template
6. Recording responses from a student support perspective on the CARD, to be discussed in the second half of this section
7. Providing an outlet to some of the SRT to consider ideas important to them that had no other space for expression within their educational environment.
8. Creating a space forStRT members to speak about the metaphysical self in the art school environment; enabling the articulation and sharing of their own approaches to this idea, and to education in general; capturing responses of some, though not all. ThoseStRT members who did return questionnaires and /or were interviewed noted several ways in which participation in the project impacted on their teaching and on themselves as tutors. These comments too will be discussed later in this section.

The project encountered problems in

1. Consistency of staff engagement.
 - While colleagues did participate in the preliminary exercises and meetings, the course lecture contents, or general ideas about the self were not offered to students beyond the Yoruba/Vedanta course.
 - Return of Staff Research Team (StRT) questionnaires was limited, though those that were returned were informative and helpful

2. Longevity- Since the thesis was undertaken part/time alongside a demanding and time consuming job, data was gathered over five years, 2010-2015. While this was invaluable for capturing the maturing of some of the students' engagement with the project, it lost some who left the institution or became too involved in other work.
3. Offering, in interviews, too open a definition of the self, leading to an inability to test specific concepts from Yoruba and Vedantic thought, i.e. karma yoga, viveka, ori, critical consciousness. Barnett's will to learn however was directly referred to.
4. The overall purpose of the project became diffused between capturing something specific about Yoruba/Vedanta thought and its applicability education, and more general concerns about art school education.

All of the problems listed above may be due to the project's being *too* open ended and flexible. While individual readings and adaptations of the ideas introduced were sought, and a timeline shared with all concerned, there were no deadlines set for sharing feedback/ work to the teams or to the project leader. On the other hand, viewed as an action research project, the reflexivity of 4 Minds project can be seen as having contributed to the richness of the data that was produced. That reflexivity in itself recognised the individuality, will, and sense of themselves that the staff came into the project with:

All seven of the StRT meetings revealed a real need for a space in which concerns, anxieties about education could be shared and evaluated. In a sense, they served the same purpose for the StRT as student-led crits did for students. Free of the hierarchy of institutional aims and agendas, colleagues felt freer to explore ideas of interest to them in relation to their day to day jobs. It felt counterproductive to constantly steer the conversation back to the course and the specifics of the project. An assertion of their core pedagogic convictions seemed a good entry point for honing the debate eventually. The StRT was also asked what their own

philosophical or religious convictions were, and whether they used these ideas in their interaction with students. This led to a series of presentations by several team members. Colleague E spoke on *Tantric* Buddhist principles and the significance of the *mandala*; colleague B invited a teacher of Sufi meditation to address the group and lead a short meditation session; colleague B also presented on her own collaborative practice in visual arts. This sharing of knowledge in an informal space was clearly valued by the team,

I attended all the team meetings and workshops. I found the conversations we shared and everyone's willingness to learn very refreshing. It is this generosity of spirit that has stayed with me and informs my teaching. [StRT colleague D, Q19]

All in all, the initial responses of the StRT led to an approach of moving from their already present ideas of identity and the self towards the specifics of Yoruba and Vedantic concepts. By focussing initial meetings on the team, we would also get to know each other better and colleagues would have time to absorb the contents of the course. Once the course was over, they could start to work with students in their studios, with a shared knowledge of the course contents to provide a frame within which to experiment. In reality direct engagement with the contents of the course by the StRT did not take place. In that sense, flexibility in allowing the focus to dwell on their already existent interests may not have been a wise strategy. Aimed at establishing joint ownership of the project, it may have caused a lost urgency in relation to the course; no direct staff engagement with Yoruba and Vedantic, or even postcolonial ideas emerged as studio briefs. At various points over the five years in which the project has run, however, members of the StRT have engaged with it in different ways, and in conversation about pedagogy, some insightful data has emerged.

Sufficient and rich data did emerge from the student research team, as evidenced in previous sections. A high level of engagement with reflection on education, the premises of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, and of the 4 Minds research project was already evident in the earliest interviews. This led to a realisation and a solution to what could have been the undoing of the project in the less direct engagement of the staff team: The pedagogy that was proposed had perhaps to be constructed by

tutors who had experienced something like it already as students. It was perhaps a task for the *next generation* of tutors, lecturers and teachers. Equally possibly, the 4 Minds project could be useful enough as a means of developing pedagogic theory based on student experience- a truly grass roots tactic. Immediate, systematic staff trailing of the ideas was perhaps not necessary, and could be proposed as a second step. This element was in any case dealt with by my own ongoing pedagogic reflections. No claims of neutral observation could be made, since my own inclination to believe that Yoruba Vedantic ideas were applicable to contemporary pedagogy, and the knowledge and views I held could not be bracketed, but I was listening from a lecturer's perspective, and not from the perspective of the art student I had once been. So the project was not completely without a pedagogue's lens. What is possible in art school education by others can be taken up by the students in the future, as practitioners and eventually as tutors themselves. In short, the maturity of the students' responses and their enthusiasm for voicing their opinions and experiences of education was an inspiration in itself and led to a shift in their positioning in the research project. Rather than respondents, they were invited to become fellow researchers, while the staff team could be equally informative as respondents, reflecting on the project and higher education pedagogy in general. With a list of nine students willing to participate, an effective team could be created that could reflect on many aspects of the project. In 2012, therefore, the roles of the two teams were reversed.

Staff responses and feedback

There were seven meetings in which the StRT shared their own perspectives on the research question, beginning with some presenting to the team on their own philosophical interests. Appendix 17 presents the ways in which colleagues contributed to the 4 Minds project overall. Data produced from these activities that can be analysed in relation to the aims of the thesis comprises 2 completed questionnaires (colleague C and D) and 3 interviews (2 audio; 1 recorded in notes). The most recent audio interview provides a student support perspective on the CARD. This does not create a large volume of data; the potential problem created by this was avoided by reversing the roles of the student and staff teams, so that

any feedback from staff and their participation in project activities could be studied for qualitative insights into individual responses to some aspects of the project, rather than seen as means of testing the thesis as such. In this respect, colleagues' contributions have been enriching and thought provoking. Some have also clearly been impacted by the experience. Questions about this impact elicited the following remarks in the questionnaire completed by StRT colleague C,

No negatives. Has made me more aware of my cultural short sightedness [Q 24]; It has given me much more awareness of how things connect, and how modern western ideas have been shaped by much more ancient beliefs. [StRT colleague C; Q 24 and 25]

About the team meetings and workshops,

(...) they made me aware of my lack of cultural awareness! (in a good way!) [StfRT colleague C Q 20]

And about the impact of the project on her ability to challenge cultural stereotypes,

The main one is the 'if science can't quantify it then it doesn't exist' type argument. Also the prevailing stiff upper lip approach to higher education... [StfRT colleague C, Q 30]

The self

On the question of the metaphysical self, colleague C recalled in her interview which was recorded in 2014, the 4th team meeting which had taken place in December 2009. There was a workshop, and at the end some reading material was shared. One was a paper explaining action research, and another, supplied by StRT colleague E on action research in Buddhist contexts. This workshop was titled "Inside /Outside the Body". In this the thesis author invited those present to consider the self and identity through a simple graphic illustration. A life size silhouette was made by drawing around one person lying on the floor on a large sheet of paper. Into this, using coloured paper, plasticine, drawing equipment, they were asked to situate within or outside of the body two elements. Firstly, the sources of their thoughts and feelings; if they had spiritual beliefs, or a metaphysical understanding of the self, they were asked to site these visually too, somewhere in

relation to the silhouette representing the self. Secondly they were asked to consider work- activities that were part of their identities, ranging from the mundane to employment related to creative and inter-personal. For colleague C this was an eye opening workshop whose affect she felt long afterwards,

I always think of myself as a head (...) I always think I am this clinical logical thing but it's actually quite nice to recognise...the feeling thing. And I actually do talk a lot more about intuition and gut feeling than I used to before. I feel it's ok to talk about that now whereas I wouldn't have mentioned that before. I wouldn't have felt any ownership of it either, actually, but I recognise that I do have a gut feeling, just as much as a head feeling [StRT colleague C; interview Nov 2014]

I've only just thought about that (...) when I was talking to a student a couple of days ago [advising that he] come at it from a gut position. I don't think I would probably have said that before [StRT colleague C; interview Nov 2014]

Colleague C saw herself very much as a logical thinker steeped in a science background, but had been interested in the 4 Minds project as an opportunity for collegiate interaction, collaborative teaching, and to learn about ideas new to her. The fact that the philosophical assumptions of the research question, requiring that staff understand students as much more than "a head", did not put her off the project also reflects well on its open nature. Inviting colleagues to bring their own perspectives and valuing these, was conducive to productive results as well as the problems described earlier. The step by step incremental increase of questions directly related to the thesis and to Yoruba and Vedanta ideas does need to be examined, however. With all colleagues short on time, opportunities to tackle these questions may have been lost; more could have been fitted into the first year of the project. Another development that impacted on the project vis a vis staff was the change of employment position of the thesis author, who moved from being a part time lecturer to a full time employee with the addition of programme leader responsibilities towards the end of the first year of 4 Minds. Since theStRT had not begun to work autonomously by this point, with thesis author having less time given to setting up activities, they fell by the wayside. This makes it all the more interesting to note at the end of the project, that the impact of the first year still resonates.

This is evident in colleague C's quotes above and even more so in D's experience of the project. Even though the thesis author and colleague D had known each other for some years, it was only in relation to the project that she mentioned African ancestry and her relationship to it. Immediate family culture had mitigated against acknowledgement of this ancestry, and a feeling of "shame" had developed about not knowing more. As an art student therefore, she had set out to address this gap.

My personal heritage resides in Africa, and during my studies as an Undergraduate and Postgraduate student my research interests included an investigation into Female African American Artists, Writers and Poets; paying particular attention to both the political and the personal motivations behind their ideas, their work and their lives.

At that time (1993-2000) some of my research concerns fell outside of the taught curriculum, however, as my practice was self-initiated, and self-motivated, I sought to find answers to my questions via the [institutional] library, [local] University Library, [a local specialist] Library and a variety of other sources. I was also given great support [by an individual member of critical studies staff now no longer at the institution] [StRT colleague D, Q 2]

This is remarkably similar to Student J's discovery in the 4 Minds project a space in which to voice certain ideas for the first time in art school. Previously, she had had no similar space in which she could explore her ambivalent feelings towards Hinduism within her family culture and misgivings about education that did not acknowledge cultures important to her. Colleague D mentions that she was able to conduct this study as an art student but it fell "outside of the taught curriculum". Since she was expected to work independently, she could fashion her own curriculum and avail of the help of non studio members of staff. However, since there was no presence of African ideas in the school, her only access to it was through an equalities and representation route. It was not until she embarked on the 4 Minds project many years later, as a tutor, that she was able to see any other kinds of heritage to be embraced, or a wider context to exclusion.

[the project] has given me an insight into how art, and the ways we view it, are contextualised in ways that can exclude or negate information based on certain Cultural, Political, Religious, Historical and intellectual bias. I was well aware of this based on my early research on the exclusion of people with colour, and my interests of the representation and subordinate position of Females within History, Politics, Art and society, but I had limited this

understanding to these issues alone. My '4 Minds' experience has opened my mind and my eyes to the greater context. [StRT colleague D, Q 15]

This ability to see in a wider context became apparent to colleague D soon after the project began,

(...) During the '4 Minds' course I was involved in a project in Germany that meant we had to negotiate the former German border where we visited a number of highly emotive sites. It seemed that what I was learning during the '4 Minds' staff discussions allowed me a very different perspective that has left an indelible mark on how, and who, I am. [StRT colleague D, Q 18]

Colleague D made insightful comments on students' perception of self, based on many years of tutoring on one to one basis. Asked,

Has information introduced in the lecture series /single lecture contributed to your views of the philosophical idea of the 'self'? [Q 17]

her response was,

Absolutely. Issues raised during '4 Minds' seem pertinent to a creative environment where understanding the 'self' is encouraged. However, in my experience as an Academic member of staff there comes a point in a student's journey when the 'ego' becomes greater than the students 'self', this evolution often becomes more of a negative growth than a positive development. [StRT colleague D, Q 17]

Colleague D had frequently mentioned what she saw as this preconception, that thinking about the self meant focussing on individual needs and desires even if at the expense of others. She felt it would be detrimental to become too ego driven. This is why the ideas of *karma yoga* as unattached work, Yoruba sensibilities about self and society, and Freire's *critical consciousness* would need to be introduced in the pedagogy of mutual translation. Speaking about others helps to disassociate the self from the purely personal; stated conversely, reflecting more deeply on oneself, encourages the realisation that others too are such complex beings. Providing the kind of curriculum that colleague D found lacking in her own student days, also encourages empathy; this was borne out by D's own caring attitude to students, and in her observation of her own responses during the 4 Minds project, beyond its meetings.

Colleague C also about the role of criticality. In her mind it had existed as dichotomous to more metaphysical or spiritual ideas, and she felt most students too had mostly this same impression. Her experiences on the 4 Minds project, however, had made her generally aware of all kinds of interconnections between ideas and ways of doing things. At the same time it had made her question her assumptions about universalities in spheres she had never questioned. Attending the classical Indian vocal concert and lecture by Prakriti Dutta, she had been surprised that she had not been able to recognise the specific emotions expressed by particular raga compositions. Being a pianist she had always assumed the language of music transcended words. Yet other forms of human commonalities began to emerge for her in the 4 Minds project meetings, and as mentioned previously, through her role in the NHS/GSA mindfulness project.

(...) ideas (...) Wee points of connection,(...) like constellations. Not everything is connected but (...) there's points of connection and it would be different for different people depending on your insights into it. But there's an awareness that there's points of connections- I don't know what they are yet but I can just glimpse them (...) It's not crystalline. Part of that is that I've not pursued it in great depth [StRT colleague C; interview Nov 2014]

The demonstration of connections between ancient and modern, north and south had had an interesting affect on C's understanding of criticality. She saw in the interconnectivity foundational to the project logic and critical thought that she would formerly have associated only with more "clinical" or neutral, empirical intellectual positions. She also experienced similar "glimpses" in meetings and in listening to colleagues; yet this critical thought was in a sense muddying the waters, by suggesting commonalities between unlikely counterparts. This rethinking of the act of critical thinking and its role in learning opened her out to the prospect of encouraging students to

consider things that are beyond their a range of experience. Not to belittle another point of view [StRT colleague C; interview Nov 2014]

Colleague D had a similar comment,

I would say that the '4 Minds' Project has influenced my research practice. What was delivered in this project was exceptionally thorough and has

encouraged me to look far far beyond what I know to discover a broader set of connections between differing topics. [StRT colleague C, Q 26]

Again, the value of theories such as critical consciousness, education as life long process, and many of the themes of this research are borne out. It is also evident that had colleagues had more time to give to the projects, a great deal of pedagogical material could have been developed out of it, applicable to their own departments bringing in their own very varied perspectives.

This is work perhaps that can be done after the thesis is complete. Shortage of time was the major impediment cited by theStRT for not developing the ideas into studio based briefs. It is also possible that the material itself seemed too great in volume to absorb, and colleagues may well have had the same hesitations as Student B. Indeed as D stated, in response to a question asking why she had chosen not to present to the staff,

I felt out of my depth and therefore unable to speak with the correct amount of knowing that I felt was needed in relation to the subject of Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self. [StRT colleague D Q 23]

While she could have presented on other ideas as other StRT members had, she clearly felt she wanted to engage with Yoruba/Vedanta ideas but felt ill equipped to do so. At the same time, the project seemed to deepen D's concerns for nuance in making cultural references. Asked if taking part in the project had increased her confidence in challenging stereotypes,

Yes it has. In a department that deals with the image, I have always questioned students who's work addresses, usurps or perpetuates cultural stereotypes. My understanding, knowledge and dialogue are greater since participating in the '4 Minds' Project. This allows me to further challenge these assumptions and ultimately allows students the space to further examine their ideas, issues and concerns. [StRT colleague D; Q 30]

It would seem that while the philosophical basis of the project was found overwhelming in some ways, when resources offered were used, they proved useful, and the material became more accessible,

As much as it was difficult to find the time to fully participate, I thoroughly enjoyed the entire experience. I found listening to the VLE lecture recordings especially enjoyable and enlightening. [StRT colleague D Q 32]

The project also affirmed the role of dialogue between practitioners, and indicates a desire amongst staff to have space to reflect on pedagogy in general. This was summed up by D,

I attended all the team meetings and workshops. I found the conversations we shared and everyone's willingness to learn very refreshing. It is this generosity of spirit that has stayed with me and informs my teaching.

D's responses also underline a need to find ways to inspire tutors to remain committed to pedagogy. Staff too, require the nurturing of their *will to learn*, and *will to offer*; time carved out for extracurricular cross departmental meetings or social gatherings could create a greater sense of community for this to happen. D was able to regain perspective on teaching itself at a time when she was feeling jaded,

I firmly believe, for me, that the timing of the '4 Minds' course was perfect, as I had become entirely disenchanted by the ever-increasing demands of teaching. What I have learnt has allowed me to find a healthier balance, one that has given me a clearer understanding of the whole and how best to utilise my energies so that I can continue to be a dedicated and committed member of staff. [Q 23] The impact was immediate, and I think the timing was just what I needed to refresh and reaffirm my commitment to better teaching. [Q 27] [StRT colleague D;Q 23 and 27]

Overall then, it would seem the open endedness of the enquiry within the project was problematic but not unproductive. While it produced fewer direct responses the applicability of Yoruba/Vedanta ideas, and to the notion of introducing ideas about the metaphysical self into art school education, it elicited unique responses of another kind. Authored by colleagues themselves, the ways in which they engaged with the project may have had greater long term impact in opening doors of thought – the “planting of ideas” that student K spoke of.

This is evident in C's “wee glimpses” of inter-connectivity, and D's affirmation that,

My involvement in the '4 Minds' Project has had a positive impact on my pedagogic practice. It has brought a certain sense of balance to how I tackle the demands of my job. It has also enabled me to better engage with

students, where a broader approach, along with a greater understanding of students needs and cultural differences has allowed me to better discuss and inform their concerns, issues and ideas. [StRT colleague D; Q 24]

In summary,

Altogether the student research team provided direct evidence towards the value of injecting a dialogue about self in education, and of using Vedantic and Yoruba ideas to do so, in conjunction with theories of Barnett and Freire. Data gathered from the staff team provided insights of a different kind that indicates concrete possibilities which can be used to address staff more directly in future.

- The project was able to gather more data that addresses the main research question from the student research team.
- Student narratives and archives of the project contain many examples of inter-cultural, interdisciplinary essays and studio work that can be shared to illustrate the concepts of the pedagogy of mutual translation.
- Two of the student team, C and J went on to genuinely become fellow researchers testing the CARD, as well as well as contributing valuable insights connected to the educational and philosophical themes of the project.
- Student C also contributed reflections on the project in relation to his own journey into becoming a teacher.
- In relation to the staff team, as the project unfolded, sufficient time was not given to the direct testing of specific Yoruba, Vedantic ideas in new studio briefs; ultimately the strategy of taking on all organisational and administrative roles may have backfired, since no other colleagues had responsibilities that might have kept them activated.
- They staff team was able to demonstrate through their willingness to share and listen to each other the value of pedagogic reflection done in group settings; in meetings they spoke with passion about pedagogy; they showed that tutors too need their wills to be nurtured; and it is worth noting that colleague D has embarked on a PhD in Education since commencing the project.

And finally, the impact of the “Inside/Outside the Body” workshop indicated that a visual, physical articulation of open ended terms such as the self could be an exciting way forward in addressing the questions raised in this thesis with both staff and students.

The Critical Autobiographical Diagram- a phenomenological device developed for this thesis

Students C and J both responded to the instructions for completing the CARD in individual ways, diverging from them from outset. [See chapter 5 for the outline and instructions they were given] The way in which they both worked with it reflects their personalities and their ways of thinking. C compressed all of his reflections into one ring, adding a year later further text boxes emerging from it to add analysis of the statements originally inserted. J changed the suggested sequencing of the rings. Rather than positioning the school and year group as the next ring, she added a layer to represent family, friends and relatives, expatriates of the country from which her parents had come to the UK. Their views and opinions were frequently cited in J’s interviews; in the CARD it became possible to visualise the chronology of some of these comments in relation to other aspects of her life at the time. J’s diagram [Appendix 14] was astonishingly detailed and although finding it overwhelming at times, she used it to plot out patterns and interconnections in her life that she felt it was important to acknowledge. C’s diagram [Appendix 15] was compressed and synoptic.

In an email exchange looking back at the CARD, and its format, C commented,

In relation to your questions I think I made the diagram a bit schematic because of the limited space [time] and thought that I have managed to dedicate between all these areas that I identified while putting them in relation to each-other. [Student C; email 2 Nov 2015]

At the time of making the diagram (July 2014) he had in fact already established a thread between his art school experiences and his family upbringing; as quoted in narrative 2, it was on returning home after graduation that he had recognised the

similarities of his family culture with the attitude to people aspired to in principles and methods of “Empathic Design” taught at college. It seems from the quote above he had at the time been unable to connect this directly or indirectly to his current concerns as a trainee teacher. A year later, (August 2015) he sent a PowerPoint presentation in which each slide re-presented the original CARD entries with two additional text boxes, one for a reflective/analytical comment on the entry itself, and one for the way in which both sets of observations fed into his growing aspirations for pedagogy. For C the format of concentric rings seems to have asked for too much too soon, and so he condensed the exercise into reflective statements at the outset, but then in time was able to break down the process of connecting different experiences up to the present by taking it one chunk at a time,

I think I am better at clarifying things when I take them one at a time, so thank you for asking about things that I expressed too generally or vaguely. [Student C ; email 2 Nov 2015]

Although I had not felt or implied that his original CARD was vague, I had enquired why he had chosen not to use the concentric ring format. C’s response flags up key points for development of the CARD. Visual thinkers have different ways of reducing complex ideas into schematic form, and it might be useful to present several possibilities for the format at the outset. This is borne out by Colleague E’s feedback on the CARD. She felt that it could be particularly useful to dyslexic students since it helps the user to visualise life experience as a whole. In this way it is similar to mind mapping,

We recommend to dyslexic students to mind map. Because if you’re dyslexic, you like to have the whole picture in your mind all the time. This kind of breaking down into analytical parts [in CARD] - it just makes sense because none of the parts communicate with each other separately. (...) We always work with mind mapping with students who have dyslexia. (...) Linear thinkers are not so keen on mind mapping. It’s too busy, they don’t understand which way they are supposed to go, they don’t see it....Your eyes literally scan a page differently if you have dyslexia. You don’t do any linear skimming or scanning, you’re kind of looking at the whole view all the time. For a dyslexic student this is not overwhelming the way it may be for someone who just likes one piece of information at a time. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

So it is quite possible that the way in which C and J approached the CARD was a reflection of their learning styles, and this could be valuable information in itself for a tutor and for themselves.

Email exchanges with both C and J regarding changes they had made are indicative too of the way in which pedagogy that invites agency and authorship in learning processes can be productive. Neither hesitated to change the diagram to whatever form they needed, and as research partners, they put the ball back in my court to respond to their innovations,

I made a little diagram with some detailed text for each circle, tailored to my experiences. I hope that the style of it (my little tweaks in Photoshop) will not affect its purpose and that the content fits the objective that you set out for it. I am curious to see how this will be put in context. It's a bit like what I'm doing for my dissertation about Montessori kids back home (which is a bit more behavioural). When there is something else that I can write up (...) please do not hesitate to let me know. [Student C, email 2: 03 Feb 2014]

Student J's diagram was greatly detailed. It charted family and personal history as well as the Yoruba/Vedanta course, 4 Minds project meetings, and significant conversations in her educational journey, with teachers, tutors, and peers. For her it served as a way of working through all these influences and many points of conflict. The process was very much a live one; the diagram seemed actually to become a part of working ideas and at times painful memories through, rather than simply recording them. Significantly J used the term "unravelling",

I keep on unravelling things and making connections. It is quite exciting to do. It was difficult to do at time because I had to come to terms with things [Student J, email 3: 31 Jan 2015]

This sense of unfolding realisations had certainly been part of my own use of this form of reflection, enabling me to gain clarity on the direction in which I wanted the thesis to move. At the start of J's narrative it was explained that during the life time of this research project, she had become disenchanted with her studio discipline, and after a period of crisis had decided to move to another one. In the process of negotiating the move, she had also discovered that she was dyslexic. Offered an

opportunity to take a break from the project in this complicated period of time, she had chosen to continue with working on the CARD, stating that she felt it would help her. In the process of dyslexia screening, she had met colleague E from student support, who was part of the 4 Minds staff research team.

Colleague E felt that the CARD had been helpful to J, especially because it had been available to her in a period of transition,

You wouldn't get this [level of detail] from every student, but you might do. She's coming at it (...) at a transition point in her life (...) [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

In relation to general art school education, colleague E commented that key moments of change were not discussed with students within their academic programmes, but did arise regularly as issues, or gaps, in meetings in student welfare and support. She cited important decisions that students had to make, such as whether to stay for an Honours year. At times students did not understand the meaning of the term, at times they were unclear about its implications; most importantly, the lack of a conversation about the decision meant there were no means of ascertaining what was most fitting for the individual and why.

So for transition periods [the CARD is] a very useful process. To get students to think, well where have you been? Where are you going? -On that kind of learner journey. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

However the time that would be required to process the CARD, and for a tutor to read and make sense of it would be impractical within the time allotted per student in a support department,

We do a very superficial interview that covers the information here (...) By reading this (...) it helped give me detail, but for me it's too detailed for working with the student. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

Colleague E felt from the perspective of student support services as they stand, the CARD could be overwhelming for students, even dyslexic students. Indeed J's

narrative quotes her saying that at times it was so. This was partly due, however, to her own decision to consciously work through all the different strands of her life, charting very specific conversations and decisions; it was also because in her life of multiple cultural influences, there were many views of the same ideas that had fought for her attention while growing up; it was also a likely outcome of the format of the CARD. Colleague E felt this could be,

(...) contained (...) Maybe the main events in your life and gradually develop that. This is very much more reflective than the kind of knowledge we look for. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

So as a tool for student support, the guidance and demonstrative format for the CARD would have to be considerably modified and perhaps be more restricted in design and requirement. The number of entries required could be limited; alternatively a two tiered model could be offered: A more detailed one for the student, and a smaller version, with selected entries, for discussion with the tutor. For the purpose of encouraging a student to know themselves better, however, an oversimplified model presented at the outset could be counter-productive, implying that memories and life experiences should be slotted into a limited number of boxes neatly fitting to a page. It would also put the onus on the student to change the diagram, and not all would have the confidence to do so. Many would make their experience fit the format, and if the message was that it needed to be quickly understood, they might well decide to exclude complicated inter cultural observations, and issues important to them. The dilemma faced by “non-traditional” researchers (Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters 2013, p.311) discussed in the introduction to this thesis and in chapter 1 comes to mind here; as does B’s sense of a lack of place to put his interest in mythological and folkloric ideas. A diagrammatic format for self reflection that seemed to over emphasise simplicity could convey a disinterest, in complexity and difference. Like academic research paradigms that are unable to accommodate arts or practice based enquires, or that are unsuitable for certain types of areas being researched, such an oversimplified format could force students to censor and shoehorn their experiences into a normative model, or to feel compelled to push themselves into an hieratical stance.

Speaking to colleague E about the CARD brought up another major difference between the roles of tutors from different areas of the school. As welfare/support tutor, E felt it was very important to ask direct questions of students about their health and well being. In this way, she would have been aware that J had suffered from depression, and that C had undergone major surgery. For studio staff this is not the norm, and for critical studies staff, who meet students even less often, it is particularly difficult to ask such direct questions. There is also a reluctance to move away from the position of seeing oneself and ones students as anything other than “a head” as described by colleague C. Nonetheless, tutors have pastoral duties towards their students, and as established in earlier chapters, the *will to learn* cannot be nurtured without recognising the student as cultural, political, and metaphysical being.

For J the CARD seemed to serve the purpose of articulating aspects of her being, her past, and her aspirations that she had not been asked to express previously. Having mentioned childhood depression for the first time, when we met informally at the point when she was about to leave her department, she placed it the very centre of her CARD, differentiated by colour as well as position. She was actively trying to fight off slipping into this state again, and so it was crucial to understand how it had come about, and how she had dealt with it in the past. Concerned that dwelling on it may precipitate such a slide, I asked if she had considered this possibility. Her response, as previously quoted, was that doing the diagram had helped “to come to terms with parts of myself” and also,

(...) working from my teenage years (...) was difficult but interesting to see how I have progressed clearly. [Student J, email 1: 16 Jan 2015]

Looking back to teenage years and visualising their relationship to the present seems to have helped her recognise progress, and this has contributed to her enjoying the process. There is a clear sense of wanting to share the insights gained, and of pride in the diagram as work and as a piece of research,

Yeah, it feels like a labyrinth! I just wanted it to be readable in case you wanted to print parts of it out. So the font is 12pt I think. I might resize it to

an A0, or a 4 A0s in case I needed to print it and put it on a wall one day. Haha! It lured me into a deep thought but it didn't entirely upset me. Some days I got fired up to complete a circle! It was pretty exciting times seeing things piece together! [Student J, email 1: 16 Jan 2015]

For student J, the format and instructions were not overwhelming in themselves; she seems to have taken to them quite naturally. The amount of information and entries generated did feel unmanageable at times, but the connections she began to see, brought control; she could see how she would make use of the memories and influences of the past, and this made the difficult process worthwhile. She also offered practical suggestions, relating to scale and time. She suggested that a paper version of the CARD could be useful and more immersive. By sticking notes on the wall, floor, etc, the person reflecting could dwell on specific entries longer, returning to them, moving them around to alter relationships between events as they became clearer or shifted in importance.

J found completing the CARD a helpful and interesting activity, and contributed valuable feedback to it as a researcher. Her diagram clearly lays out how vital for her has been the existential question, 'who am i?' Similarly cultural and political questions about what it means to be Hindu, of a particular nationality in origin, and British have all been mapped out and made a visible part of her representation of herself. She also conveyed responses of friend's outside the 4 Minds project, who had not done the Yoruba/Vedanta course. She reported that they asked enthusiastically about CARD, and felt it would be of benefit to them, particularly at moments of indecision. For her it had not been detrimental to look back at a painful and difficult phase in her life, in fact empowering to see that she had come through, and to map in strategies she had used. For other students however, the exercise could potentially open wounds that the tutors involved may not be in a position, or have the training to deal with. A concern throughout the development of CARD has been the fear that it could make students more vulnerable in some circumstances. When asked about this, Colleague E commented that it was for this reason that,

We [in student services] would not work at this level for that reason. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

In some ways this contradicts what colleague E says about asking direct questions, such as “have you ever had depression”? Once answered, it would be necessary to arrange for appropriate advice, and the information could not be ignored. What she seems to be wary of is an invitation to look at past relationships and experiences outside of a clinical counselling space; and also the fact that such observations brought to the surface in pedagogic spaces may not be appropriately dealt with. This would have to be “carefully managed” Kept at a less personal level, however the interconnections that emerge in using the CARD could be helpful to many students. For colleague C it was a question of making it clear what was asked for in the diagram. From my perspective, and experience of using self reflection in Masters induction and research training sessions, not related to the 4 Minds project or Yoruba/Vedanta course, this was indeed true. Students did find it surprisingly grounding to be asked to quietly consider the question,

“What brought you to this particular course?”

More will be said about this in the concluding chapter, but here its relevance is in the possibility of using autobiographical reflection in a non –invasive way, simply by stating that the purpose is not to create a personal diary, but a kind of pathway working back from the present to inspirations in the past. Colleague E also observed that the approach embedded in the CARD, coupled with the philosophical grounding on which it was based would be beneficial to many students. On a practical level too, it would help students to approach other tasks with more respect for their own existent knowledge and their own opinions, since the exercise,

Is real- the student has a real emotional response. [In other tasks] the student is so dis-attached from the reality [of what is being asked] We get students coming in [saying] I’ve got to do three artists, and [on looking at the brief] you say no, you’ve got to do research on three things that you find interesting (...). [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

This is a good example of how it cannot be taken for granted that students will understand that their opinions matter, that they come already with much to offer, and that a great part of becoming an artist or designer resides in forming their own views. Does understanding the request for 'three things that interest you' as a request for information about other artists, indicate that the students do not consider themselves interesting? Colleague C comments that it is a sign that the assignment, or the way in which it was explained, does not sufficiently hold a "mirror" to the student. She feels this also about various ways in which reflective practice can end up being ineffective in learning and teaching situations.

For me reflective practice always has to have a mirror, so what is the mirror? (...) A reflection needs to have an object outside of yourself to look into itself. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

She finds this element missing in otherwise interesting and enjoyable group activities organised by tutors, or journals set as ongoing tasks. The activities can be undertaken in a "mechanical" kind of way if the tool i.e. the workshop or framework for the journal, does not help the student to see themselves. Tutors need to know and make clear, what is the tool for this reflection?

Is it (...) talking to your peer group? Is it (...) a set of questions-you know-how you gave the students a set of instructions [with the CARD]. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

The CARD, she stated, would be "a very useful tool" because it does provide such a mirror. Colleague C also spoke about the difference between useful reflection on the self and what can end up as "navel gazing" and too centred on a more superficial sense of self that can create rigid thinking and a less helpful kind of self affirmation,

So there needs to be some tool there for the students to use for reflection. Or else for me it's navel gazing, endless navel gazing. It's 'I'm a victim' or 'I'm a hero' [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

This is an important issue for the thesis. How to differentiate, in introducing the idea, between the self that in Vedantic thought is tied to the emotions and the illusionary world, and the Self that is Consciousness. Since the CARD asks students to think carefully about the specific circumstances of their lives, how can this be conducive to transcending the limitations of the ego self? On this colleague E felt,

No, I agree with Socrates on this one-examine your life...yep, because by doing this you have to become aware of yourself (...) and you can't (...) realise that it's an illusion unless you're aware of this self. So in Buddhism, what they do is they actually encourage you to be very aware of yourself... 'who are you?' [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

This acute awareness of the body and the personality lead to a different understanding of self since examining the person that you are from all angles logically includes the question,

Who will you be when your body dies? (...) so they really get you to examine [your life] because by the over analysis of it they prove that there's something [else] there. They take you to pieces essentially- I'm not my body; I'm not my mind; I'm not my relationships; so what am I? [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

This Buddhist practice is related to the Vedantic meditation practice of *neti neti* mentioned earlier. There are differences too between Vedantic concepts of *jiva atman* and Buddhist principles of the "Buddha nature" of which colleague E spoke. That is not the subject of this thesis, and there are many other more relevant points to be drawn from colleague E's interview on the CARD. From her perspective as a member of staff who works directly with individual students in a welfare and support capacity, she encounters students in a variety of often quite difficult circumstances. It is useful to hear from her the potential dangers and the values of encouraging students to see themselves and their lives more clearly. From her perspective as a person with spiritual aspirations, and an understanding of human beings as having a deeper side that needs to be acknowledged, it is encouraging to find that in her view the CARD and its guidance offers the "mirror" that other reflective practices encountered by her seem to lack. From a pragmatic student

services angle it was too complex and there was not enough time allotted per student to work in this detailed way.

Applied with care and concern for the safety of all concerned, and access to appropriate care, she felt it could work in other circumstances. Tutors she felt, could learn more about their students and be better able to communicate with him, using such a device to get to know them. She also felt that it could be a useful staff development tool,

Where this would actually be interesting (...) For us we only get a tiny amount of time- we're just not allocated enough, but for (...) academic development I think [the CARD is] a very interesting way to look at students looking at their reflective practice- who they are as a reflective practitioner. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

So in understanding students it could be helpful to look at how they engage with the CARD process, and to go further,

It might be a really interesting way for staff and students to communicate. Because it is very reflective. [StRT colleague E; Interview 1]

A key to pedagogy of mutual translation in which staff and students are able to better communicate and acknowledge each other as persons could lie, therefore, in their first getting to know themselves better, and the CARD could be a tool for entering this process.

In summary,

- The CARD offers a tool for fostering reflective awareness of one's work and oneself.
- Phenomenologically, it serves to clarify meaning in past experiences.
- Its instructions and terminology could be further clarified to invite its principles to be used without having to keep to a particular format.
- Several formats could be offered as examples.

- Staff would also need to be self aware in asking students to undertake this reflection, providing or seeking support should difficult issues arise.
- Tutors can learn about what is important to students through CARD, and also gain insight into their learning styles.

For J, the cultural and political affirmation of the course's presence at art school, and the dialogue made available through the 4 Minds project, allowed her to reach back to ontological inklings she had had since childhood; it also enabled her to explore intellectually traditions she was both drawn to and highly critical of. The CARD allowed her to capture all these achievements and that in itself was a powerful resource that bolstered her sense of self and helped her to understand her experiences and speak of them to others. For C too, engaging with the CARD encouraged him to think further and to articulate connections between his family upbringing, his undergraduate education as a designer, and the teacher that he is becoming. Returning to the CARD after a year, he was able to expand on the format he had created for it, and add analytical statements – observations as well as aspirations for the type of pedagogy he hoped to create for design students of the future. The CARD's potential for use in pedagogy, with all the caveats discussed in this section, seems therefore sound.

Conclusions- Pedagogy of Mutual Translation

In chapter 1 Benjamin's essay on translation was evoked; his assertion that meaningful translation begets an "afterlife" in which "the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well" (Arndt, 1999, p.74) was found applicable to inter-cultural discourse. It can be said that in order to translate ideas about the self in Yoruba and ancient Indian traditions, contemporary art education practitioners must examine their own existent practices, methods and assumptions as well as create new ones. This is especially important where existent terminologies and methods cannot make suitable space for "the hybrid moment of political change" and the interstitial "something else besides" (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 40-41) that occurs when discourse is open. Similarly a new vocabulary is needed so that art education can have an ontological conversation about being an artist or designer, and about creativity itself. Consideration needs to be given too, to the negotiation of possibilities of universal human experiences and drives that bring about empathy, highlight commonalities, and at the same time maintain discrete creative voices. In this research such an attempt has been made. To do so, the structure, aims and content of the Yoruba/Vedanta course from which it sprang have been evaluated, and applications to art school pedagogy in general considered. Students' roles in the project have evolved over time, with some having less contact with the project, others more long term, and one becoming a teacher himself in the years that the project took place. From my perspective, in gauging the extent to which Yoruba, ancient Indian and Vedantic ideas can communicate to art students today, fresh light has been cast on them as highly compatible with reflexive learning and teaching methods. With an additional layer of contemplative reflection on the self, these practices can be powerfully affective. Seen in this way, Benjamin's afterlife of translation has occurred: Yoruba and Vedantic ideas themselves have been transformed and re-contextualised. The process therefore has truly been an act of mutual translation.

In pedagogy of mutual translation, what other forms of mutuality exist? The preceding chapters have laid out the many ways in which the concepts of Vedanta, Yoruba thought,

Barnett's ontological pedagogy and Freires' critical consciousness can be put in conversation with each other. This is one form of mutuality: it requires an impulse, and an ability to logically derive compatibility between diverse concepts. It looks beyond binaries sometimes imposed between north and south, philosophy and religion, education and social transformation, and creative and politically aware pedagogy. It seeks out, to return to Benjamin's metaphor, the translatable in all these ideas. It seeks to define that which all education must aspire to.

At their core there is commonality between *Karma yoga* and *viveka* of Vedanta, the *ori* and social contract of Yoruba thought, Barnett's *will to learn* and *will to proffer*, and Freires' *critical consciousness* that leads to being *fully human*. Each of these recognises the individual as a combination of inherent and/or socially constructed impulses, engaged in an ongoing journey; on this journey agency is negotiated and constantly evolved for the present moment. There is freedom, but its value lies in apprehending the reality of every moment as existing in relation to the last and the next. This is another form of mutuality: the individual is not suspended in space, but in a continuously inter subjective relationship with the other and with time itself.

The means of this negotiation of agency, and of understanding reality, is work. Work, in this thesis refers to action and interaction, not limited to vocation. The appropriateness of any action is arrived at through critical thinking that is ethically conscious. Through the lens of all four sources, the work of being a student in a process of learning has been explored. The student narratives provided many examples of how they survived and thrived despite sometimes difficult and even adversarial circumstances. To do this they drew from in-built reserves of energy and intention. The ideas they were exposed to via the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the 4 Minds project helped them to see that these in-built reserves had many names in philosophy. For the research project, this was called the metaphysical self, and students were introduced to how Vedanta and Yoruba thought envision it. Through the course and through the 4 Minds project they encountered a way of thinking about work in a more detached way, and thus encountered a self that was not affected by praise or criticism, but could learn from both. This is another form of mutuality: through his work the individual is able to interact with the world, and yet in learning to deal with responses to the

work, both positive and negative, s/he also acquires through work a possibility of withdrawing from the world.

Human creativity, too, is work. In art school, the students' work was for the most part focused on expressing personal vision; they strove to create a personal visual language that would communicate to others. In this process they got to know themselves better, to understand tastes and inclinations towards types of work. In creating their own language they had also to consider the language, or languages that it was *not*. In differentiating between forms of art practice, media, concepts that did not seem to reflect them, students nonetheless acquired knowledge about those other ways of working. Similarly in crits and class discussions, they became attuned to each other's languages, and found aspirations that they had in common as well as differences. This is another form of mutuality: work allows us to know ourselves and to know the other; in knowing the other we know ourselves in a more complete way; the processes of creativity open the door to perception of the metaphysical self.

Post colonialism was demonstrated through the structure and ethos of the Yoruba/Vedanta course and the 4 Minds project itself. Critical contextualisation through visiting speakers and references to current affairs in India and Nigeria lessened the chances of romanticisation of their histories and philosophies. For the majority of students it was a first encounter with an unapologetic but discursive and critically aware presentation of ideas from Africa and ancient India. Affinity with these ideas, or an ability to engage critically with them, was brought about by introducing them in the context of themes that were central to the students: creativity, time, space, identity, and the self. This is another form of mutuality: consideration of universally shared principles or concerns enables better understanding of one's own; understanding history as interactive and the present as a product of the past, seeking out lost connections, enriches the history one is making in the present.

Fundamental concepts of Yoruba and Vedantic thought have an adaptability built on deep understanding of human traits and impulses that extend to or can be applied to civic life. That understanding recognises the complexities of individuals and societies, and presents truth as multiple in viewpoints. It also brings these ancient philosophies into the arena of

contested subjectivities associated with post modern ideas. In Yoruba and Vedantic thought, however, there is an expectation of agency in ethically assessing appropriate action in any given circumstance. This pre-empts a kind of impasse that arises from post-modern notions of plurality, in which all experience is seen as constructed, and so moral and ethical judgments can seem best constantly deferred. This in turn leads to scepticism about ideology or belief of any kind. This was discussed in chapter 1.

Yoruba logic writes in multiple viewpoints that ties in the idea of human beings having responsibility for maintaining balance between them. By incorporating the cosmic into human ethical frameworks, (Abimbole, 2001) it places the onus on human beings to understand their own natures and takes away a potential abuse of power by religious or civic leaders. Critique of power is expressed in ritual, such as reminders to *egunegun* masquerades described in chapter 3: momentarily elevated to great religious significance, they were reminded that the respect and freedom they were afforded by society came with great responsibility (Oke,2007). These often humorous injunctions repeat the message that as well as being conduits for the cosmic world, they are ordinary citizens too; the songs reveal a sophisticated and deliberate slippage between being in, and observing religion and religious instruction. In the “ritual affront” (Pemberton, 1989) to the regional king by local leaders in the festival of Ogun, an aspiration towards dialogical relationship with power is demonstrated, premised on the idea that leadership requires humility. In Ogun’s tale of hubristically crossing the abyss of transitional void between cosmic and mortal realms, (Soyinka 1995) there is a prescient tale about the dichotomous but interrelated nature of curiosity and daring, alongside the inevitable dangers of an unfettered will. This is another form of mutuality: religion and belief support the individual and society, but if corrupted by uncontrolled power become as oppressive as imbalanced civic power; both can be kept in balance by critical judgment, which is reinforced by custom and ritual that speaks of it. Individual agency lies in realising this interrelationship, and creatively expressing it.

In Vedanta, work is the immediate conduit to self knowledge. A universal Consciousness, described as *Atman*, or *Brahman*, is the immutable causal factor of the universe; it is formless and lies within all things. Human beings, unaware of their true nature, labour under the illusion that they are separate from Atman, and continue to experience the joys and sorrows of everyday existence until they realise the truth that all separations are unreal.

The road to this realisation, and ultimate escape from rebirth has to be constructed by the *jiva atman*, or the metaphysical self or soul that journeys through recurring rebirths; the *jiva-atman* carries with it a 'balance sheet' of past actions. All experience is said to be the outcome of past actions. Again, it is an emphasis on work, action, or *karma* that in Vedanta prevents such an outlook from sliding into fatalism or uncaring attitudes to the suffering of others. So for the person doing well, rather than sitting smugly pleased with unknown past life actions, his responsibility lies in responding with critically and morally evaluated judgement. Agency in this scenario lies in the making of that judgment and its intention. The person that looks for praise or fears adversity remains trapped in the illusory world. To those who believe in this doctrine, that a person's *jivatman* goes on being reborn until a birth in which s/he realises that s/he is in fact one with *Atman*, unattached work is a route to liberation from rebirth (Hodgkinson, 2006; Nikhilalanda, 1978). The person that takes action in a way that is free of attachment to outcomes for herself, is a *karma yogi* (Nikhilalanda, 1978) Regardless of belief in rebirth however, all work can be carried out on this principle. When we remove personal hurt or pride from our responses to criticism or advice, we are best able to learn from it, or fight it, whichever is most appropriate. The balance between different aspects of the mind, thought of as a perceptual organ in Vedanta, enables judgement action that is done for the sake of the work itself, and as such is 'disinterested'. Such action dissolves the destructive nature of the ego. A sense of 'I' is needed to act within the perceptual world, within society, but knowledge of a continuum between all things scatters petty attachments such as wanting to be proven right, or to prove the other wrong, etc. This idea has profound implications for education, making a path for effective teaching, learning and representation. This is another form of mutuality: there is a continuous movement between action and inaction, between assertion of the individual and a stepping back to observe and learn from each action taken, each work done, and each interaction with others.

All of these relationships of mutuality and interconnectedness follow cyclical and concurrent patterns, echoing the concept of cyclical time that lies at the heart of Yoruba and Vedantic thought. All four sources for the proposed pedagogy were aligned to each other in Table 5, chapter 4. As a comparative device it started with Barnett's vocabulary for the student being, positioning the other three sources in relation to these terms. The entries to this

table however, need not be vertically stacked. They become even more interesting when reorganised in a circular way, echoing cyclical patterns underlying the core concepts of all the sources. Studied in this way, the main common principle between all four sources emerges: self knowledge grows in relation to work and interaction with others.

In Diagram 3, p.299, the contents of the table from chapter 4 have been further simplified and arranged as a flowing circle of concepts and corresponding behaviours and outlooks. Whichever way one organises the text from 4 and its follow up, the following can be concluded:

1. Vedantic ideas of *karma yoga* and Yoruba ontological emphasis on self in relation to society resonate.
2. A combination of the two invites critical engagement with one's surroundings while nurturing a deep sense of selfhood that is at once removed from and empathetic to others.
3. Aligned with Barnett's will to learn, and Freire's critical consciousness, these concepts point towards a pedagogy of immense imagination that is able also to nurture the transnational, trans cultural and displaced or culturally alienated student. It responds to Appadurai's call for "global imagination" in making sense of the modern world
4. A judicious application of all four theoretical sources together will also build on the evidence that has emerged from the 4 Minds project: staff and students alike were drawn to a dialogue about a non material self, and several applied it in their own ways to the work they returned to.
5. The applicability of this combination and of Vedanta in particular has been supported also by my own reflections on experiences in education as a student, as a researcher, and as a teacher and lecturer. It has created a new kind of conversation amongst colleagues and students who were involved in the project and in some case in those who heard about it from student participants such as J.
6. Autobiographical reflection emerged as a tool for enabling consideration of the self at physical as well as metaphysical levels. The CARD grew from my own attempts to

locate key early influences on my own pedagogic aspirations and techniques. Through the project, these early influences have informed conversations with colleagues, and opened new possibilities for some of them as well as the students. As with the resonance between Yourba and Vedantic ideas and reflexive teaching practices and reflective learning strategies, feedback from staff and students has provided much insight into possible further connections and applications.

7. Alongside tools such as CARD, scholarly engagement with the intellectual and philosophical texts of the traditions and authors discussed can expand on the work begun here. In pedagogy of mutual translation, alongside critically reflecting on their own experiences of education, and on contemporary social structures or issues, students would acquire a habit of questioning their own assumptions about social issues, about their understanding of art, and people, through a broadening of perspectives. This too was demonstrated by comments made by members of the student research team.
8. Judging by colleague E's responses, the CARD framework could also be used for staff development and has potential for student support if sufficient time with each student could be allotted.
9. A pedagogic environment of this combination would therefore be transformative in opening the potential of education as a space for mutual listening and dynamic exchange taking existent or discipline specific ideas into new pathways and bridges.
10. In instilling thoughtful listening and critically informed engagement with ancient ideas, have greatly different customs and arts, but share many conceptual traits, many of which have a timeless applicability, this pedagogy would become a catalyst for reflective social cohesion.

In other words, by contrast to the modernist paradigm of artist as necessarily at odds with at least mainstream social constructs, the curriculum, methods and principles of a pedagogy of mutual translation, proposes the opposite: Creativity, imaginative thinking, and openness to risk in challenging orthodoxies contribute to a vibrant and inclusive society. To bring this about, the educator makes efforts to broaden her own cultural horizons, and ontological awareness; in keeping with the metaphor of translation, s/he creates not predetermined bridges that all students need to traverse, but streams and rivulets that diverse students can

build their own means of crossing, trespassing, in order to re landscape the other side. One of the interesting interstitial occurrences in this research has been the sourcing of new writing on not just the similarity, but the actual historical influences of Hindu and Buddhist thought on western philosophy. Schopenhauer's reading of the Upanishads has already been mentioned, but the trajectory reaches further,

The Upanishadic idea that the self is not an object was transmitted to Schopenhauer, who read the Latin rendering of a Persian translation, and from him to Wittgenstein to Sidney Shoemaker. The Buddha's ideas about selflessness and emptiness, as well as stories about this teaching methods, found their way to china, from where, with the help of of the Jesuit missionaries, they entered that 'arsenal' of the Enlightenment, the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* of Pierre Bayle, a book plundered by many Enlightenment thinkers including, notably David Hume. (Ganeri 2012, p.7-8)

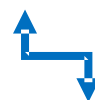
Pierre Bayle was (...) one of the sources on whom David Hume (1711-76) relied when he was writing the Treatise at the Jesuit academy La Fleche; another was Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715). Who wrote Conversations between a Christian and Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher, published in 1708. (...) A good deal of what is recorded in [Bayle's] *Dictionary* as 'Chinese' is in fact a description of the life of Buddha, including descriptions of the emptiness of the soul and the doctrine of karma. It remains a distinct possibility therefore that the origin of some of Hume's ideas, including the idea of the self as a bundle of perceptions, will one day be traced backwards to the Silk Road (...).(Ganeri, 2012, p.236)

It would be part of pedagogy of mutual translation to make such interconnections from the past known, for the fuller picture of human history they would provide, and narrow perceptions of north and south they would challenge. Finally, in keeping with the circular nature of Vedantic, and Yoruba views of time, and Freire's critical consciousness, I find myself reflecting on that which came from existent art school pedagogy into this project. Apart from the enjoyment of crits and the mounting of exhibitions communicated by the student research team, there is another factor. As a former art student, as a practicing artist, and the girl who fired ceramics that were far too large for guaranteed survival, it is possible that this thesis may never have been written without the almost absurd confidence that art school can instil when compatible learning and teaching styles coalesce. The sheer audacity of the comparison attempted here may not have emerged from a traditional university department, and may not have garnered support in the hands of less open minded supervisors. And so, in recalling the cautionary tale of *Ogun* and the inevitable but

dangerous crossing of the abyss of transition, this thesis ends in the hope that it will speak to some, and be used with care.

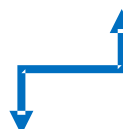
Diagram 3: Common themes in the four sources in relationship with Pedagogy of Mutual Translation

Instruments of action and learning			
Vedanta <i>Karma yoga/ non attached action; History of the jiva atman inclines individual towards types of responses to a given situation, but vivkea/criticality determines action</i>	Yoruba <i>Characteristics of Orisa/ deity affiliated with the individual reside in ori</i> <i>inclines him/her towards types of action; but society expects individual to act with awareness of the flaws of the deity as well as the strengths</i>	Barnett <i>Will to learn; resides in student being; emerges and is kept alive when students are recognised as ontological beings as well as physical and intellectual ones</i>	Freire <i>"True dialogue"; calls for "solidarity between the world and its peoples"</i>



Conceptual link to metaphysical self and its agent			
Vedanta <i>jiva atman</i>	Yoruba <i>ori/inner head</i>	Barnett <i>student being</i>	Freire <i>Reflected in deep empathy of individual who is "fully human"</i>

Aspirations for individual working with self awareness			
Vedanta <i>Carrying out 'work for work's sake' without expectation of reward and not constrained by fear of failure or criticism</i>	Yoruba <i>Embedded in concept of balanced interaction with society; leaders' social contract</i>	Barnett <i>Will to offer/ will to proffer</i> <i>Emerges when will is nurtured in the pedagogic environment</i>	Freire <i>Ability to see that individuals "conditioned but not determined by history"</i>



Characteristics of person working with self awareness			
Vedanta <i>Aware of consciousness, Atman; therefore able to act dispassionately but with care</i>	Yoruba <i>Awareness of life as process of continuous learning; differentiates between eko() and imo()</i>	Barnett <i>Dispositions: Care, authenticity</i> <i>Qualities: Courage, resilience</i>	Freire <i>Treats reality as process, as transformation</i>

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Paper appendices appear in sequence from the next page onwards.

All digital content is contained in the CD here:



Appendix 1

Images of work produced for the degree show in 1980

Appendix 3

SCQF Level Descriptors

Appendix 11

Interpretive Process: SRT statistics leading to themes and categories

Appendix 11c

Analysis Process: Themes arising from post course questionnaire

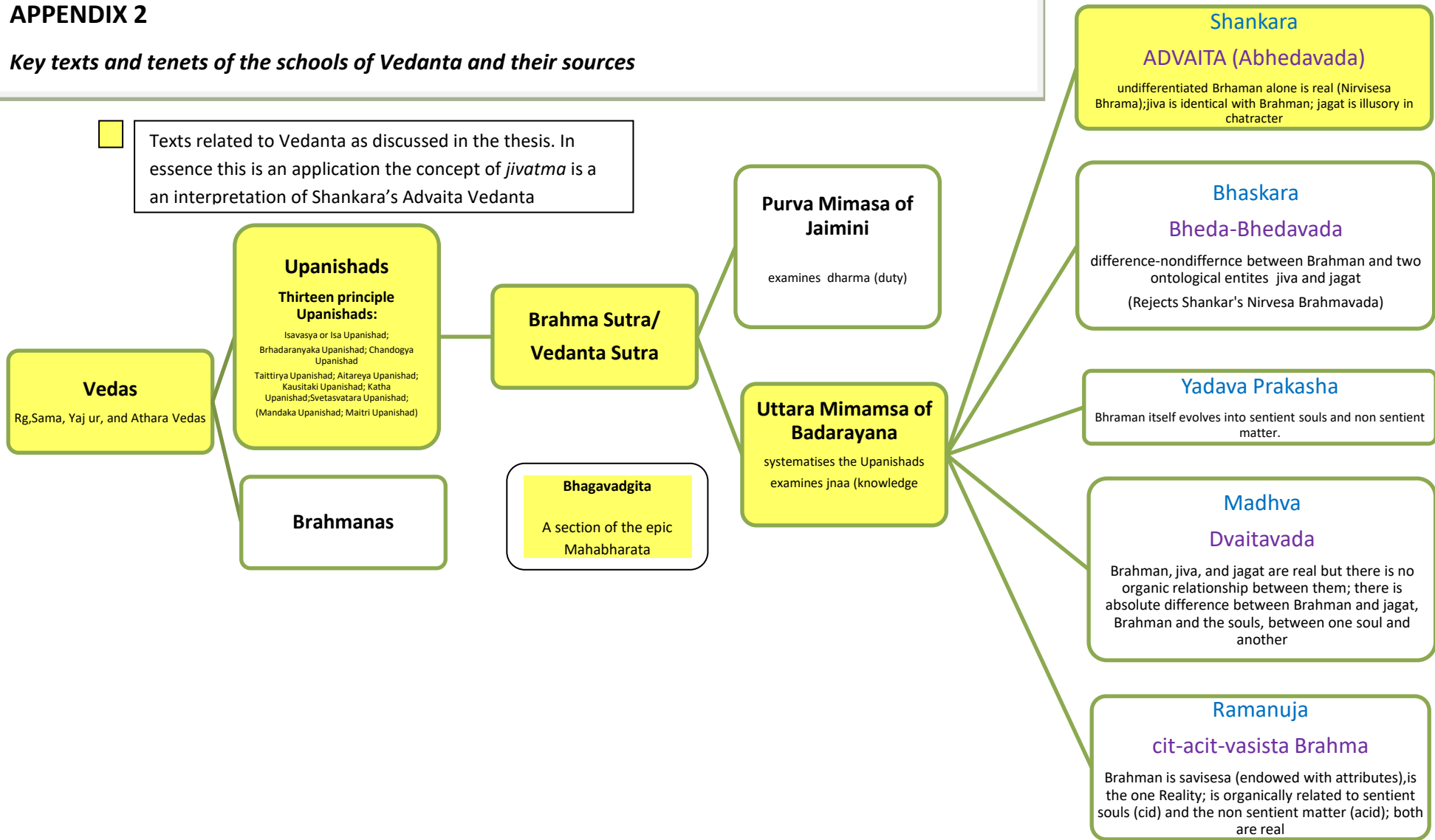
Appendix 13

Images of Exhibition-First Year department collaboration with 4 Minds

APPENDIX 2

Key texts and tenets of the schools of Vedanta and their sources

Texts related to Vedanta as discussed in the thesis. In essence this is an application the concept of *jivatma* is a an interpretation of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta



APPENDIX 4

Evolution and contents of the undergraduate course “Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity, and Self”

BACKGROUND:

The evolution of the course that is referred to in this thesis as the Yoruba/Vedanta course in itself sheds light on the themes of the research. It was my solution to the critical studies department’s request for a course that dealt with race, equality, and post colonialism. I had already co-ordinated for the department a Study Day titled “Cultural Territories” in which race and representation was an overall theme. This had emerged from the outreach part of an art /dance contemporary art project based on research into Sanskrit drama, the funding for which had been tied to education and equalities issues. Postcolonialism had figured as an element in this project. My own interests and frustration at the lack of breadth and representation in the curricula offered at university had led to my masters research paper, “The Abyss of Transition: Yoruba Ideas on Creativity Compared to Picasso’s Africa”¹ The paper had taken a comparative approach to Primitivist readings of African art as exemplified by Picasso, and the actual complexities it contained, exemplified by Yoruba thought. Writing the course enabled the inclusion of much of this material, and also the introduction of ancient Indian aesthetic theory and art, delivered through a postcolonial lens that remained aware of the art school settings and western academic setting within which it was delivered. In order to address race and representation, and to tackle the previous lenses through which students may have encountered African Art and Indian art, postcolonial be present throughout. This presence would also demonstrate the applicability of postcolonial theory to contemporary and divers cultural contexts. The course, its contents and ethos would also provide opportunity to share the knowledge gained in the research for the

¹ University of Glasgow 1996

Talacchanda project, a two year Scottish Arts Council funded exhibition and education project recently completed .²

Most importantly, however I set out with almost missionary zeal to share my excitement at the applicability of Yoruba and ancient Indian ideas to contemporary art and design; I was also intrigued by the resonance of these philosophies with post-modern ideas that were, by 2004 part of the very fabric of art school culture. Looking back at this narrative of the origins of the course, it is evident that Barnett's *will to learn* was in action. So too was the *jiva atman* engaged in action that needed to be done, and resilience, in risking an unusual combination in the course, deviating from the remit.

The course launched in 2003. Useful indexical information about these years is summarised here:

Academic year	Number of students	Notes	Number of students who joined the student research team
2003-04	23		n/a
2004-05	26		n/a
2005-06	27		n/a
2006-07	34	First time research session in prep for assignment	n/a
2007-08	Not available	Departmental decision made to reposition all 3 rd year electives to second year	n/a
2009-10	15	4 Minds project begins; many extra activities including a concert and two guest speakers	3
2010-11	29		1
2012-13		Title changed to " <i>Contemporary Contexts for Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self</i> " - research session in prep for assignment	5

² Talacchanda was a visual art and dance collaboration with India based *Bharata Natyam* performer Anjana Rajan, exploring contemporary interpretations of the ancient Indian aesthetic treatise *Natya Sastra*. It premiered at the British Council New Delhi 2000, toured to Edinburgh 2001, and the Tramway, Glasgow 2002.

The course began life as a third year elective short course, and in 2007-08 a departmental decision was made to reposition all 3rd year electives to second year. It was at the time that the material was too difficult for second year students whereas third year students could be expected to have a greater grasp of reading and academic practice. On the whole this has not proved to be a problem, the main text analyses the measures that have brought this about. The 4 Minds post course questionnaire asked if the students had any opinion on the positioning of the course and one of the repeated responses was that being introduced earlier to these ideas gave students more time to assimilate and use them in their art school career.

The introduction to the Yoruba/Vedanta Course in 2003-04 read as follows:

**SHADES: Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on
Creativity, Space and Self**

"If you don't sell your head, no one will buy it"
Yoruba Proverb

How much of our worldview is a construct of our cultural conditioning, and how much is the product of individual thought? To what extent are we able to exert any control at all on the ways in which we receive and perceive information- particularly about people and places which are unfamiliar to us?

And to what extent do we willingly allow ourselves to be led by established opinion?

Starting with these broad questions in mind, this course sets out to examine the inter action between different cultures through the arts.

Lectures and workshops exploring the political and social implications of cultural representation, will be counter pointed with insights into Yoruba (once pan-African, now found in SW Nigeria and the African Diaspora) and ancient Indian (South Asian) ideas on art and creativity. The surprising parallels of some ancient African and Indian concepts to contemporary feminist and 'individualist' debates will be discussed.

Not 'round the world in 80 days', but a recognition of the many nuances of human experience, and an attempt to engage in an in depth way with some of the motivating factors of creative practice.

You will also have the opportunity to research the relevance of the course contents to your own artistic or design practice, if you choose.

This course is a follow up to the recent [...] study day "Cultural Territories"

When the 4 Minds project began, in academic year 2009-2010 the course was still titled as it had been at its inception in 2003. The research project continued into academic year 2012- 13 [with a gap in 2011-12] so the student research team came from three year groups, 2009-10; 2010-11; 2012-13. The title of the course was

changed in 2012-13 to “Contemporary Contexts for Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self”, in order to reflect its contemporary relevance more explicitly and state it at the outset. This was also influenced by recurrent reminders to critical studies staff that they were sited in a contemporary art institution and that academic as well as studio curricula should include current subject matter. The first version of the course descriptor, shown above, was changed in 2009-10 because I had thought it might not be clear enough about the contents of the course. However, noting in discussions the apparent appeal to students of unpicking cultural conditioning, the original opening question,

“How much of our worldview is a construct of our cultural conditioning, and how much is the product of individual thought?”

was revived in the 2012-13 descriptor. In 2009-10 however, the descriptor read as shown below. Beginning with a quote from the fourth century CE Sanskrit playwright *Kalidasa*, whose work would feature in the course, it laid out the key themes that the course would cover. It also flagged up the fact that the course was tied in with a research project,

**SHADES: Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on
Creativity, Space and Self**

***“Not all is justified by the name of old,
Nor is the new poem never extolled-
(the wise) examine, then select the best from both,
but fools merely parrot other’s quotes.”***

From the Sanskrit play Malavika and Agnimitra: Kalidasa, c 500 CE.

In this course, ideas on creativity in Yoruba (now found in SW Nigeria and the African Diaspora) and Hindu (ancient Indian) traditions are introduced. The crucial role assigned to artistic practice, and depictions of time, space and life energies within these philosophical outlooks are also explored. Surprising parallels of some ancient African and Indian concepts to contemporary feminist and ‘individualist’ debates will emerge in discussions. We will also examine the significance of inter action between different cultures through the arts in the past, and the legacy left by this past for artists today. In particular, the notion of primitivism and the irrational exotic, evident in early European responses to Africa and the ‘East’ is deconstructed and contrasted with one African and one South Asian world view. The course aims to help us reflect on the many nuances of human experience and insight, and to learn to recognize the ways in which these come into being through creative practice.

The course and your studio practice:

This year 'Shades' is part of a cross school research project in which a new philosophy of art education is being constructed, based on a synthesis of principles from Yoruba, Hindu Vedantic, and Post Modern theories.

Students will have the opportunity to relate the "Shades" course content directly to their art/design practice. Those who are interested will have the option of creating a studio piece with documented research in response to assignment questions in place of the traditional essay.

*Visiting Artists **Tawona Sithole** and **Abdul Hakim Onitolo** will contribute seminars and studio feedback"*

Throughout its life the course has followed a structure of eight lectures interspersed with short workshops. The lectures are presented in two blocks, with the lecture on postcolonialism coming in between the two. The first block covers an introduction and the Yoruba material; the second covers the ancient Indian material, and ends with a lecture that takes a critical look at the role of education in forming our world views; this final lecture also showcases contemporary art from the modern day nations, India and Nigeria, from which Yoruba and Hindu/Vedantist ideas originate. There has been some slight repositioning of the order within the sequence of Yoruba and ancient Indian sections of the course, but these are of no great significance. The lecture list that was distributed in 2009-10, the first year of the 4 Minds research project, provides an accurate picture of the lecture and their contents. It also shows how activities of the 4 Minds project were positioned into the course timetable:

List of lectures delivered on the Yoruba/Vedanta course as listed in 2009-10: first year of the 4 Minds Project

**SHADES: Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on
Creativity, Space and Self**

Year two elective course
TERM II 2009-2010

LECTURER: Ranjana Thapalyal
[work email address]

14 January

INTRODUCTION

The "4MINDS" interdisciplinary Action Research project GSA 2009-10

How Shades is a core component of the project and the opportunities it presents
Some aspects of Yoruba Art
Some aspects of ancient Indian Art
The need for post colonial discourse in understanding these today- problems with
museumology and art school traditions
Choosing our place

KEY READING :

Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Editor) (1998) *African Philosophy-An Anthology*_ Blackwell Philosophy Anthologies, Blackwell

Hayward Gallery exhibition catalogue, Michel, George (editor). *In the Image of Man- The Indian Perception of the Universe through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*.

See introduction by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan. 709.54/HAY

Ashcroft, Bill and Griffiths, Gareth. (Eds) (1994) *The Post-colonial studies reader*. London, Routledge. 325.3/ASH

21 January

OGUN: THE ORISSA WHO ASKS QUESTIONS

An introduction to key beliefs in Yoruba thought as expressed in the dualist nature of Ogun, the deity who carries both the creative and destructive principle.

The significance and implications for society of honouring the iconoclastic nature of Ogun.

KEY READING :

Soyinka, Wole. (1976) *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge University Press. 808.8996/SOY

Eades, J S. (1980) *The Yoruba Today*. 709.6/EAD

Authorised online version of the book: <http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/YorubaT/>

28 January

YORUBA METAL CAST SCULPTURES

Africa's ancient bronze-casting traditions; iron and ideas of transformation; the "discovery" of bronze sculptures in Africa; responses in 19th Century Europe; the legacy of discourses of disbelief.

KEY READING :

Herbert, Eugenia. (1993) *Iron, Gender, and Power*: Indiana University Press. 709.6/HER

Royal Academy exhibition catalogue (1995). *Africa: the Art of a Continent*. London. 709.6/ROY

Abiodun R, H J Drewal & J Pemberton [eds] (1995): *The Yoruba Artist*. Washington DC. 709.6/ABI

Museum of Cultural History. 1985) *I am not myself: the art of African masquerade*. Los Angeles, University of California. (Monograph series; no. 26). 731.75/COL

4 February

EDWARD SAID AND POST-COLONIALISM

Main principles of post-colonial cultural theory; Edward Said's role in its formulation; application of post-colonial critique to modernism, post modernism and art history in general.

AND

Visiting Poet/ Musician TAWONA SITHOLE

Poet/ Musician Tawona Sithole will speak about oral history traditions and recite some of his contemporary poetry. Later in the term there will be an opportunity to discuss your Shades related studio work with Tawona

KEY READING:

Ashcroft, Bill and Griffiths Gareth and Tiffen, Helen. (1998) *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. London, Routledge. 325.3/ASH

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, London. 306/ BAH

Said, Edward. (1978) *Orientalism*. London. 940.071/SAI

Said, Edward. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. London. 325.3/SAI

11 February

FEMALE/MALE ENERGIES IN HINDU ART

The cyclical pattern of creation, preservation and destruction, and the deities associated with this: Brahma, Vishnu, Siva and their female aspects, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Parvati.
Purusa and Prakriti
Philosophical roots of these ideas.

KEY READING :

Hayward Gallery exhibition catalogue, Michel, George (editor). *In the Image of Man- The Indian Perception of the Universe through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*.

See introduction by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan. 709.54/HAY

Craven, Roy. (1976,1987) *Indian: Art A Concise History*. London. 709.54/CRA

Mitter, Partha. (2001) *Indian Art*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. 709.54/MIT

Radhakrishnan, S. (1927) *Indian Philosophy Volume 1*. Delhi, Oxford University Press. 180/RAD

Swami Nityanand (compiled by) (1993) *Symbolism in Hinduism*. Mumbai, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. [294.5/NIT](#)

Ratnakar, Pramesh. (2000) *Hindusim*. Silverdale books, Bookmart Ltd. 294.5/RAT

25 February

TIME SPACE METAPHORS IN INDIAN ART

Depiction of time and space in Hindu art and its relationship to philosophical concepts.

KEY READING : As lecture 5 and:

Johnson, Dwight William. *“Exegesis of Hindu Cosmological Time Cycles”*

<http://westgatehouse.com/cycles.html>

Burgess, Ebenezer (1858) *Surya Siddhanta –a Textbook of Indian Astronomy*. Online version (1998)

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dYd79GvCfiAC>

26 February 6.30 pm [Lecture Theatre]: Visiting musicians PRAKRITI DUTTA and VIJAY KANGUTKAR

4 March

SANSKRIT DRAMA

Insights into Hindu art and thought as manifested in production techniques and characters found in its ancient plays; 19th Century European responses, the "victorianisation" of Sakuntala.

The *nava rasas*- aesthetic theory of the eight emotions.

KEY READING :

Miller, Barbara Stoler. (1999) *The Plays of Kalidasa- Theatre of Memory*. Delhi , Motilal Banarsidass Publishers pvt ltd. 800.92/KAL

Thapar, Romila (1999) *Sakuntala-Texts, Readings, Histories*. New Delhi, Kali for Women. 800.92

5 March 1.30 pm [Lecture Theatre]: Visiting artist ABDUL HAKIM ONITOLO

11 March

PRESENT-ing the FUTURE / RECOGNIZING THE PAST

Multicultural and inter-cultural strategies- is pluralism possible?

Artists' critiques of the contemporary art establishment;

Contemporary art from India and Nigeria;

Earth Democracy- an example of philosophy into action on the pressing contemporary issue of Sustainability

KEY READING :

Nisbet, Robert. (1980) *History of the Idea of Progress*. London. 170/NIS

Gundara, Jagdish S. (2000). *Interculturalism, education and inclusion*. London, Paul Chapman. 305.8 GUN

Mason, Rachel (1999) *Beyond multicultural art education : international perspectives*.- Münster, New York, Waxmann Verlag GmbH. 707/BOU

Fusco, Coco. (2001) *The bodies that were not ours : and other writings*. London, Routledge in collaboration with Institute of International Visual Art. 704.949325/FUS

Adrian Piper Research Archive <http://www.adrianpiper.com/>

Shiva, Vandana (2005) *Earth Democracy- Justice, Sustainability and Peace* 577/SMI

Workshops

There were several short workshops devised for the Yoruba Vedanta course, some of which I came to use later in Masters teaching. In Narrative 3 chapter 6.3, F refers to the “Pocket Object Workshop”. In this students are asked to take from their pocket or bag any object without giving it too much thought. They are then asked a series of questions that leads them to become aware of how their description of the object is conditioned by their background and education. Over the years it has always been interesting to note even their vocabulary is shaped by the studio discipline they are studying. Questions also arise about how and where information can be sought to find out what cannot be seen, what is actually seen in the materiality of the object in front of them and what is ‘known’. An overarching question in this workshop is,

“what does this object tell you about the culture from which it comes?”

Students work in pairs and a significant part of the workshop’s purpose is achieved by the fact that they initially keep their observations to themselves. They then swap objects with each other. This brings out fascinating differences and similarities in the way the object is described according to the subjectivity or otherwise of the students’ approaches.

Another workshop used in the early years of the course was to do directly with language. Small groups of students are given two envelopes, one containing words, and the other containing definitions, to be matched to the words. The widest possible definitions for words such as ‘culture’ ‘heathen’, ‘civilised’, ‘primitive’, ‘modern’ and others are provided in the envelope. The purpose of the workshop is to underline the way in which we can inadvertently carry unintended meaning in our vocabulary, and also the way in which culture and language are so interconnected and constantly shifting.

An example of a visual workshop used on the course is one in which an image of a Yoruba *Gelede* masquerade is projected and students are asked to describe what they see. They are then asked, “Are we looking at Art?” Interesting discussions

ensue, especially in more recent years, about performance as art, and spectacle; however the consensus tends to be that this is about religion and specific to place. Students are then surprised to be told that in fact it is quite likely they have seen all of the separate elements of the image *displayed as art* in museums: the fabric in departments of textiles, the headdress in African wood carving, etc. A realisation of the role of museology in shaping our view of the world occurs.

In Narrative 1 chapter 6.1, J speaks of a workshop in which the metaphysical self is directly spoken of, by way of explaining the language of Indian art and literature. This is a simple and quick 2- 3 minute experiment aimed at introducing the idea of the self as constituted of many parts, some more evident than others. The students, seated in their lecture theatre seats are asked to sit up straight, close their eyes and relax. For a minute or so they are asked to become very aware of the textures of the chair they are seated, on the clothes they are wearing, and the weight of their bodies on the chairs. They are asked, in other words, to become viscerally aware of their physical presence. They are then asked to visualise themselves seated in this position as though seen from the ceiling. After a minute or so they are asked to return to the earlier awareness of their physical bodies seated in particular ways in particular chairs. Next they are invited to slowly open their eyes and resume a normal stance. They are then asked if they all managed to 'see' themselves seated on their seats, as if from an aerial view. In the various groups with which this has been tried, the general consensus has been affirmative. The students are then asked,

"Who was watching you in a seated position, if you were seated in the chair?"

Responses are given such as "the imagination", "the mind", etc. These are all accepted as valid, and the Yoruba and Vedantic idea of the mind being one part of a composition of physical, psychological and metaphysical aspects of the self, is introduced. Students are told that much of the philosophical quests of these cultures are aimed at understanding and defining the mind, the self, and a

metaphysical self; that this quest has spawned many analytical traditions in the case of ancient India, and great discourse embedded in myths and art works of both.

All of the workshops used in the Yoruba/Vedanta course are designed with two main purposes. Firstly to break down difficult concepts and secondly to alert students that all of us have much more by way of opinions and even with we 'see' from through the prevalent views of the society in which we live.

Assessment

Examples of some excellent student essays are given in within the narratives presented in chapter 7. There was a choice of modes of submission from the outset. Students could either write an essay of 2000 words, or write a shorter text but also submit a piece of art and design that also responded to the selected question. It was expected that background research would be done and fully referenced and that the way in which an art or design work was responding to the question would be explained. In 2006-07 a third mode of assessment was offered, a curatorial rationale and planning for an exhibition responding to the selected question. Again, reading and background research had to be evidenced. In 2012-13 due to a departmental decision, the possibility of producing a practical work alongside shorter text was withdrawn from the course. In 2010, however all three options were available. In three of the years in which the course ran, students were invited to a voluntary extra session in which all the essay questions were discussed by the group, with input from me regarding sources and possible pitfalls. Mostly these were treated as peer learning sessions, in which students could share concerns and explore ideas together. This proved to be very popular, and student comments on it have informed a significant thread in this thesis: peer learning as means of identifying with the group as well as a means of getting to know one self better. These sessions, their impact on the students and implications for pedagogy are also discussed in the analysis chapters. Assessment questions offered in 2010:

SHADES: Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Creativity, Space and Self

Jan – March 2010

Essay questions

These can be adapted for either of the three assessment options

- 1) The dualist nature of the deity Ogun, bearing both the creative and the destructive impulse, is central to and emblematic of Yoruba thought. It is evident in Yoruba metal cast sculptures and other art objects. Discuss.
- 2) Discuss the Yoruba idea of the inter-connected nature of creativity and destruction in the context of the modernist belief in the isolated artist-genius.
- 3) In the early 20th Century, artists and scientists were engaged with the idea of defining a “Fourth Dimension” Compare this with the Yoruba idea of the transitional “Fourth Space.”
- 4) Yoruba ideas on creativity contrast sharply with early 20th century ideas about “primitive” art that fuelled the imagination of artists such as Picasso. Discuss some of the social and political influences that made Euro centric readings of the art of Africa possible.
- 5) Edward Said demonstrated in his writing the extent to which a belief in culture as a “refining and elevating” activity can lend itself to creating xenophobic responses to “other” cultures. Discuss Said’s comments and formulate a definition of the word ‘culture’ as you experience and understand it.
- 6) In Sanskrit drama, many theatrical devices and the term “*natyayita*” bring to mind western 20th Century dramatic theories that moved away from realism towards what Lionel Abel defined as “meta –theatre”. Discuss the depiction of time and space in Sanskrit theatre and compare with some aspects of modern theatre.
- 7) In the play “Sakuntala and the Ring of Recollection” by Kalidasa, two complex female characters, Sakuntala and her mother Menaka are portrayed. What kinds of evidence do they provide of ancient Indian ideas about femininity, and about male- female relationships?
- 8) Examine some of the apparently contradictory ideas about women and their place in society which emerge Indian philosophy and aesthetic theory. Can parallels be drawn with current feminist and post feminist debates?
- 9) The ancient Indian dramatic treatise the Natya Sastra defines a repertory of eight essential emotions to be conveyed in art and drama. Discuss the *navarasas* and then consider a 20-21st century art object or art movement –does it convey a ‘predominant emotional state’?
- 10) The ideology and methodology of the Earth Democracy movement resonate with Hindu Vedantist and Yoruba ideas on individual responsibility and community action. Should philosophy be a base for practical action required in environmental work today?

On analysis, as discussed in the main text, several pedagogic principles, methods and tools used on the course are identified as transferrable, and are presented as a table here:

Pedagogic principles, methods, and tools of the Yoruba/Vedanta course		
Principle	Method	Tools
a. Provision of information rich curriculum	Well prepared lectures, drawing from focussed research done by lecturer; explanations of key concepts; historical context of ideas	Illustrated lectures: notes and images on power point; Handouts: summaries of key facts, concepts, terminology and sometimes additional information; lecture slides made available to students after the lectures- in early years by CD Rom placed in library; latterly via a virtual learning space. Extensive reading list with subheadings to locate resources on particular themes of the complex series of lectures; Visiting performers and contemporary interpreters of the traditions: when funding available.
b. Sharing of tutor knowledge and experience in research as starting point for students' own trajectories; tutors as learners	References to research process, search for sources, difficulties encountered. Introduce idea of inter-disciplinarity, as method for going beyond limitations of strictly art-historical approaches In the first years of the course, the bulk of the lectures pertaining to Yoruba thought were drawn from the lecturer's recently completed M.Phil research paper.	Images from study visit to British Museum archives; discussion of issues that arose Reflections on art school as source of some questions asked on course. Critique of some of the hurdles to the research enquiry through postcolonial lens.

<p>c. Research spoken of as a tool for self-knowledge</p>	<p>Convey, where possible / appropriate the personal aspect of choices made in the research and in experience of education Critique absence of 'non-western' cultures and regions in art school education, via its impact as denial of important intellectual domains, and when experienced as denial of heritage Expand on how these experiences can form the basis of expressive work and alternative teaching practices</p>	<p>Share observations made as student of art / art history: African art only heard of in relation to cubism; lack of course on African and Asian art at university; own desire and efforts to fill this gap through reading, research, seeking expertise. Course signposted as a research based response to these experiences, <i>offering alternative views</i></p>
<p>d. Realisation of the potentially hegemonic nature of education systems; reflection on one's own assumptions and where they come from; challenge through curriculum content that questions it.</p>	<p>Juxtaposition of events and facts as seen from different cultural and historical perspectives; Noting of connections between cultural outputs and political norms of an era (discourse in <i>Culture and Imperialism</i>, 1988; Bhabha in <i>The Location of Culture</i> 1994)</p>	<p>Questions posed in introduction to course-"how much of our world view is shaped by..." Workshops -that shed light on the interconnection of socially imposed and personal views: Visualising the self; pocket object; matching word and definitions</p>
<p>e. Critical realism brought in through contextualisation</p>	<p>Include in lectures current images and information of art production and aspects of society in contemporary Nigeria and India Connect/ relate these contemporary observations of India and Nigeria with similar events, attitudes, contradictions in the UK and other northern societies; View historical events through a contemporary lens, and vice versa</p>	<p>Examples from both countries and regions: Current news articles; contemporary commentaries and scholarship Images of contemporary cities - universities and modern life Criticality in the two traditions, and in contemporary life Contemporary art and design</p>
<p>f. Unlocking doorways of interest for students to develop further</p>	<p>Provide enough contextualised information for the student to grasp main points, or identify with certain aspects; provide or point to material for students to add to lecture based learning Ask questions: to encourage thought on education systems, and to inspire reflection on identity and self</p>	<p>Workshops: Visualising the self; pocket object; matching word and definitions Reading list; illustrations Discussion and dialogue Performances, dialogue with those with first-hand knowledge of the cultures studied [When possible]</p>
<p>g. Challenging the known</p>	<p>Use workshops to allow students to uncover, or express awareness of stereotypes, established misunderstandings about the regions discussed; also to uncover and locate assumptions embedded in language; introduce themes of representation.</p>	<p>Workshops as above Critique of 'the academy' -limitations of modernist art history; e.g. problems and legacies of "primitivism" Alternative views and ways Comparison of indigenous and early European readings. E.g. Quote from Picasso <i>cf</i> Yoruba proverb</p>

<p>h. Supporting the students' tentative efforts- in learning, questioning, exploring new ideas, self criticality</p>	<p>Offer a variety of assessment topics; allow students to shape the assessment questions in order to fit with interests/ concerns closer to them; allow students to propose their own assessment questions, as long as related to the themes of the course. In shaping questions, offer opportunity to make personal connections to the theories discussed.</p>	<p>Preparation Seminar for assessed assignment 1:1 tutorials Enable students with heritage from the cultures discussed to use the material in their studies and work Encourage postcolonial critique to be applied to reflection on own education, upbringing, etc.</p>
<p>i. Research as exploration and investigation, not necessarily argument</p>	<p>Invite conjectural approaches that require depth of research but are not tied to establishing a particular stance</p>	<p>Demonstration and suggestion of comparative approaches, so that students can engage with newer concepts in relation to those they already have a grasp of Reminder that information too new to be pushed into watertight arguments</p>
<p>j. New information and different world views presented through what already valued by students—i.e. creativity; relationships; my place in the world</p>	<p>Articulate course foci as themes of importance to art and design students, and recognisable by them: space, creativity, self. Communicate this connection through course title and ethos of the lecture series; select arts and concepts from the traditions that demonstrate engagement with these themes. Reflect in assessment questions, the relationship between students' experiences, and the intellectual domain of the course.</p>	<p>Highlight, illustrate, explore in both traditions: -key role of creativity /the arts as philosophical expressions of the group. -Interlinked nature of creativity and destruction [e.g. Yoruba deity Ogun; Hindu time cycles of creativity, preservation; destruction] -Ideas about human relationships, gender, individuality [e.g. Yoruba social structures; Hindu <i>purusha prakriti</i>; Vedantic <i>jiva atman</i>]</p>
<p>k. Filling gaps in the curriculum-material from Yoruba /Vedanta course not present elsewhere in the institution. It would appear it is also rare in art schools in general.</p>	<p>Challenge normative nature of curricula limited to European and American referents, by inclusion of this other intellectual domain; critique impact of exclusion of this material; introduce postcolonial, inter cultural, and inter disciplinary critique Spark and validate students' interest in these</p>	<p>Insertion of Yoruba and ancient Indian content to menu of year 2 electives- thereby normalising scholarly and artistic pursuit of these ideas</p>

4 minds Project Timeline, SRT details, Interview dates and venues

Timeline

A call for staff participation and initial meeting took place in June 2009, after which the project can be visualised in four phases.

PHASE 1: OCTOBER 2009-June 2010

A successful application was made to the institution's learning and teaching fund to support extra activities during the Yoruba/Vedanta course.

Lectures were recorded.

The course, at the time still called 'Shades: Yoruba and Ancient Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self' was used as a central means of disseminating philosophical/theoretical basis of the research project. An initial staff research team was set up in June 2009.

The ground was laid for what was initially thought of as a student focus group, by inviting them to join the research project at the end of the course in March.

Colleague A enabled the project to reach first year students by incorporating it into an existing yearly project. This culminated in their exhibition in March 2010, images from which can be seen in Appendix 13.

The 4 Minds VLE was established and flagged up as an archive, information hub and central point of contact for the course and ensuing project. It was created in December 2009, prior to the commencement of the course and made available to the staff team, second and first year students involved in the project. It included recordings of lectures and of special events such as talks and performances by visiting speakers, fora for dialogue with visiting speakers, and post-course feedback questionnaires. Special events related to the project included:

writer and musician Tawona Sithole on cultural traditions and resistance in colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwean society; artist and academic Dr. Abdul Hakim Onitolo on Yoruba concepts and their trace in his work; classical Indian *Dhrupad* singer Prakriti Dutta, accompanied by Vijay Tendulkar on *pakhawaj* (percussion), a performance and talk on the place of emotions in Indian music.

PHASE 2: JULY 2010-MARCH 2011

The above exercise was repeated, with the exception of visiting speakers, as the funded phase was by this time complete. However recordings made during the 2009-10 visits remained available via the 4 Minds VLE.

PHASE 3 NOVEMBER 2011-JUNE 2012

Due to unavoidable circumstances the thesis author took a year's leave in academic year 2011-12, so the Yoruba/Vedanta course was not delivered that year.

PHASE 4 JULY 2012-June 2015

More detailed interviews and discussions with key members of the student research team who became more deeply involved in the research.

SOURCES OF STUDENT DATA PRESENTED AS TABLE

<i>Research team member and where known earliest motive for joining the Yoruba/Vedanta course</i>	<i>Assessed submission for Yoruba/Vedanta course</i>	<i>Relationship of project to personal work</i>	<i>Post course questionnaire, date; a/y when Yoruba/Vedanta course taken</i>	<i>4 Minds Student Research Team questionnaire and date</i>	<i>Number of interviews and dates</i>	<i>Other contribution to the research project</i>
<p>Student A Had enrolled on the Yoruba Vedanta [then 'Shades'] course because of an earlier lecture on Cultural Memory, given by the Yoruba/Vedanta course lecturer.</p>	<p>Film in real time of changing sky over 24 hours, seen through wire figures viewing it; conveyed idea of multiple internal and external views that are possible, depending on viewer's context.</p>	<p>Went on to write her final year dissertation on inter-textuality in social practice (out side of the 4 Minds project, but influenced by lecture on Cultural Memory and themes in Yoruba/Vedanta Course)</p> <p>As a member of the student team, incorporated postcolonial theory and the concept of inter-textuality through studio work.</p>	<p>YES Date: a/y 2009-10</p>	<p>YES Date: Spring 2010</p>	<p>1 Interview ROUND 1 16, 18 Nov 2011 Team meetings; conversations with student J Dec 2013</p>	<p>Reflective essay on art school pedagogy 1 year after graduation DATE-..March 2013 student meetings Conversations with thesis author on her studio work</p>

<p>Student B</p> <p>Newness of the material was attractive, but also found many themes in the Yoruba/Vedanta course resonated with his interest in pre Christian Irish mythology and spiritual ideas that he found difficult to assimilate in his studio practice.</p>	<p>A photographic essay critiquing a local museum's collection of colonial era artifacts.</p>	<p>Was intrigued by what he described as an open way of teaching on the Yoruba/Vedanta course that led to an interest in pedagogy itself.</p> <p>Attempted ancient Indian theories of time in relation to photography as a medium that "is time". Unable to complete</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Date: a/y 2009-10</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Date: Spring 2010</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Interview ROUND 1</p> <p>16, 18 Nov 2011</p>	<p>Post course discussions</p>
<p>Student C</p> <p>Initially allocated to the course by department as had missed elective sign up. Became intrigued by newness of the material.</p> <p>Saw possibilities for philosophical concepts encountered on the course as a basis for design; found ancient Indian emphasis on arts as part of the fabric of society and culture resonated with his sense of absence of this synthesis in his own educational training.</p>	<p>Essay on stage design in Sanskrit drama.</p>	<p><i>Vastu</i> theory, the traditional science of spatial alignment in the architectural design and construction.</p> <p>Considered possibility of proposing this theory as environmentally beneficial and sustainable, in contemporary contexts.</p> <p>Searched for opportunity for direct 'hands on' practice, after graduation, since felt this element was written out from his</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Date: a/y 2010-11</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Date: Spring 2011</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Interview ROUND 2, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p>Skype and other informal discussions; student meeting;</p> <p>design portfolio and art teaching portfolio created prior to enrolling on teacher training programme;</p> <p>short essay inspired by Interview 2 "<i>Can Art and Design Education Benefit from Cross-Cultural Awareness?</i>" [August 2012]</p>

		theory oriented department				
Student D		Art and Painting as expression of sublime (CHECK THIS WITH INTERVIEW NOTES)	NO	NO	1 Interview ROUND 2 13, 14, 16 JUNE 2012	
Student F			YES Date: a/y 2012-13	Not requested as interviews followed immediately after post course questionnaire	Interview ROUND 3, 4	EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE RE 4 TH YR DISS student meetings
Student G			YES Date: a/y 2012-13	Not requested as interviews followed immediately after post course questionnaire	1 Interview ROUND 3	student meetings
Student H			YES Date: a/y 2012-13	Not requested as interviews followed immediately after post course questionnaire	1 Interview ROUND 3	Email correspondence while on exchange; Exhibitions student meetings
Student J			YES Date: a/y 2012-13	Not requested as interviews followed immediately after post course questionnaire	4 Interview ROUND 2, 3, 4, 5	Email dialogue re CSR diagram; extensive work on diagram methodology; conversations on Indian culture cult, difference, change and adaptation in ancient traditions; pedagogy; student

						meetings
Student K			YES Date: A/Y: 2012-13	Not requested as interviews followed immediately after post course questionnaire	1 Interview ROUND 3	Student meeting

SRT Interview dates and venues

Interview ROUND 1

Date: 16, 18 Nov 2011

8 months after completion of Yoruba/Vedanta course in a/y 2009-10

Venue: Institution Research Department

Interviewees: Students A, B, and two others who did not join the team

Type of record kept: Written notes

Interview ROUND 2

Date: 13, 14, 16 JUNE 2012

At point of undergraduate degree show to be followed by graduation and departure from the art school.

Venues: Site of degree shows; home of thesis author

Interviewees: Students A,C,D

Type of record kept: Audio Recordings

Interview ROUND 3

Date: 29 MAY 2013; 26 April 2015

*2 months after completion of the Yoruba/Vedanta course [students G,H,J,K]**25 months after completion of the Yoruba/Vedanta course [student F]*

Venue: Institution Research Department

Interviewees: Students F, G, H, J, K. Student F appeared on 29 May 2013, but a combination of technical problems and lack of sufficient time led to this interview not taking place; it was subsequently done in 2015 after the student had been on exchange for a year, returned to the institution and renewed contact with the thesis author.

Type of record kept: Audio Recordings

Interview ROUND 4

Date: 6+ 10 DEC 2013

9 months after completion of Yoruba/Vedanta course [Student J -6 Dec 2013]; 18 months after Graduation [Student C- 10 Dec 2013]

Interviewees: Student J: Student C:

Venues: Student J-seminar room in institution; Student C- by skype from Bucharest

Type of record kept: Audio Recordings

Interview ROUND 5

Date: 17 DEC 2014; 35 months 2015

33 months after completion of Yoruba/Vedanta course :[Student J- 17 Dec 2014]; 35 months after graduation [Student C-24 May 2015]

Interviewees: Student J; Student C

Venues: Student J- Institutional office of thesis author; Student C- by skype from Bucharest

Type of record kept: Audio Recordings

Appendix 6

4 Minds project in Yoruba/Vedanta course: organisational data and work produced in first iteration

<p>TIMING: 8 weeks: January- March 2010</p> <p>Students informed at outset that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course this academic year tied in with the 4 Minds Research Project, facilitated by the 4 Minds virtual learning environment. • They would have the opportunity to remain linked to the research project beyond the course should they choose to do so. 	
Number of students enrolled on the course	12
Assignments submitted	<p>9 x studio piece supported by 1000 words of researched text, stemming from one of the assessment questions.</p> <p>1x essay</p> <p>i.e. 10 out of the total 12 students on the course opted for the 'Shades' assignment. As one of two electives they take, they have the choice to submit work for either one.</p>
Inter-departmental tutorials in studio where appropriate	<p>1x Vis com tutorial- involving colleague D (Vis Com tutor) lead researcher Yoruba/Vedanta course tutor)</p> <p>7 x other tutorials- involving lead researcher (course tutor) with students submitting studio work, in their studio spaces.</p>
Student Questionnaires returned	10
Interest expressed in keeping in touch with the 4 Minds Project	3

APPENDIX 7

SRT interview extracts underlining student preferences in art school pedagogy

Student	Favourite	Least enjoyable aspect of art school education
Student A	“Learning about your own individual language” “not in isolation-; <u>through group work.</u> ”; peer learning and student community	Isolation; left on own to learn; most feel pressure when isolated
Student B		“When did staff stop teaching?” didn’t expect art school culture to be “set”
Student C	Ability to draw/ learn from external cultural activities, society in general; understanding that design not just about making objects, but about interactions	Value of consulting with real life social organisations and individuals undermined by poor preparation from ethical and rigour of research perspectives; Disconnect with actual requirements in industry-some training in object design would be useful for employment
Student D	Peer discussions; ability to draw/ learn from cultural activities, society in general;	“fast food” teaching approach. [too many short meetings with different tutors often giving very different advice, of varying degrees of relevance to student] “50 %” from so many tutors!
Student F		
Student G	Peer learning and student community	Lack of skills training; lack of context or preparation for self reflective departmental feedback forms which are mandatory
Student H-	Freedom; peer learning and student community	Freedom also least favourite /most difficult to handle
Student J-	Working in studio; contact with peers.	Lack of teaching “wish it wasn’t so student led”
Student K-	Working in studio physical studio space; “network”/“community” that “will push you forward”	“Lack of workshops” [insufficient access to technical facilities and support]



STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM

Contact Details and Permission Form

Please note contact details are for project records only and will not be passed on.

Name	
Institution of Study	
Department	
Contact Address	
Telephone Number	
Email address	

I agree to join the '4 Minds' Education Research Project as a member of the Student Research Team, and I have read the outline, aims, objectives, and timeline of the Project.

I understand that the lead researcher, Ranjana Thapalyal:

- Is conducting this research in conjunction with the course 'Shades: Yoruba and Ancient Indian ideas on space, Creativity and Self' which I have attended in -----(year)
- Is conducting this research in conjunction with her ongoing doctoral thesis, registered at Goldsmiths College University of London, Department of Education.
- Will refer to discussions, findings, and critiques conducted by the Student Research Team in the thesis.
- Will fully credit any images of my work, any quotes from questionnaires or discussions, and any ideas I may propose in the course of the research project that are directly utilised in the formulation of the pedagogic theory we are working on.
- Will make anonymous any of my quotes or observations where I feel this is appropriate.
- Will join me in critiques of the studio work I will undertake as part of the Research Project, but will not formally assess or mark the work.
- Will respect my privacy and keep confidentiality on findings and discussions, especially where these are of a sensitive nature with regard to staff-student relations or critiques of current teaching systems and structures in my institution.

I understand that as a member of the Student Research Team, I am moving from a respondent mode of interaction with the project, to a more pro-active one. I am therefore responsible for,

- Reading and abiding by the Glasgow School of Art Research Ethics Policy <http://www1.gsa.ac.uk/downloads/research/Research%20Policy.pdf>
- Participating in team meetings, reading preparatory material, and keeping in touch with the lead researcher and team members.
- Keeping confidentiality on findings and discussions, especially where these are of a sensitive nature with regard to staff-student relations or critiques of current teaching systems and structures in my institution.
- Treating fellow team members with respect, observing confidentiality as above.

4 MINDS art education research project 2009-2013
Phase 3: November 2011-July 2012

Appendix 8 *cont'd*

- Ensuring that I fully credit team members including the lead researcher, should I quote them, their work, or show images of their work in any context within and beyond the project.

I have read and understand the above agreement, and also understand that,

- My involvement in the project is voluntary and that it will not contribute to any assessed course work
- I can withdraw from the project at any time should I wish to do so.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Banner photo credits, Left to right : **Composite head of Vishnu** (Vaikuntha) 11th century CE, Salonki Michel, George (editor): *In the Image of Man- The Indian Perception of the Universe Through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*. Hayward Gallery, 1982. ***Flying female warriors** 11th century CE, Chandela's Michel, George (editor): *In the Image of Man- The Indian Perception of the Universe Through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*. Hayward Gallery, 1982 ***Ayagpatta** in cosmic diagram, Mathura, 1st century CE, Kushan Red sandstone 89x 92 cm Michel, George (editor): *In the Image of Man- the Indian Perception of the Universe through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*. Hayward Gallery, 1982. ***Mask head** Yoruba, Ife 12th - 15th century CE Copper 33 x 19 cm. The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Lagos. Royal Academy exhibition catalogue (1995). *Africa: the Art of a Continent*. London page 416. ***Ogboni head** Terracotta, 18th - 19th century CE (?) Private collection, Brussels. H. 38 cm Royal Academy exhibition catalogue (1995). *Africa: the Art of a Continent*. London pages 416, 418.



STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE Glasgow School of Art NOVEMBER 2011
Please return by email to r.thapalyal@gsa.ac.uk

NAME:	
DATE:	
STUDIO DISCIPLINE (DEPARTMENT):	
Academic Year in which 'Shades' course undertaken: <i>please delete as appropriate. (n.b. the course did not run in 2008-09)</i>	2003-04/ 2004-05/ 2005-06/ 2006-07/ 2007-08/ 2009-10/ 2010-11

1. Did you do a 'Shades' assignment at the time you took the course?

2. If yes, please briefly describe the assignment submitted, including media and dimensions if a studio piece.

(If you have a jpeg of the practical submission it would be very helpful to have it copied in/ attached to the questionnaire)

3. After submission have you done any further work on the ideas incorporated in the studio piece/essay submitted?

4. If yes, please describe how the work has 'stayed with you'.

IE have you worked further with the medium, the concept, done further reading, etc.?

5. Have any events/ ideas/ individuals encountered since the Shades course encouraged you to further develop ideas generated by the course?

6. Have any hindrances come in the way of your continuing with the above ideas?

7. Thinking back to the Shades course can you identify any particular aspects of the experience of being on the course as having become a longer-term interest?

8. Many of the lectures introduced ideas about the philosophical or spiritual self, and the individual's relationship to society. Were you aware of this aspect of the course?

9. Do you think the student experience would benefit from or perhaps suffer from more direct engagement with ideas about the philosophical or spiritual self? For example, what if an exercise in meditation, or a session of yoga were possible within the course?

10. The Shades course contains a significant amount of discourse on the relationship between culture, politics and society, and of the power structures that are in place in the education system. Did this have much impact on you at the time of the course, and have you thought about it since in different contexts?

11. Looking back now, has doing the course had any impact on your understanding and expectations of art and design education? Or of art and design practice?

12. Do you have any suggestions as to whether any aspect of the course could be applicable in studio or academic settings beyond the course?

13. Do you have any suggestions as to how this could be done?

14. At the time you took the Shades course, were you in second year or third year?

15. Have any thoughts on whether the course is more appropriate for 2nd year or 3rd year students?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Banner photo credits, Left to right : **Composite head of Vishnu** (Vaikuntha) 11th century CE, Salonki Michel, George (editor): *In the Image of Man- The Indian Perception of the Universe Through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*. Hayward Gallery, 1982. ***Flying female warriors** 11th century CE, Chandela, Michel, George (editor): *In the Image of Man- The Indian Perception of the Universe Through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*. Hayward Gallery, 1982. ***Ayagpatta** in cosmic diagram, Mathura, 1st century CE, Kushan Red sandstone 89x 92 cm Michel, George (editor): *In the Image of Man- the Indian Perception of the Universe through 2000 Years of Painting and Sculpture*. Hayward Gallery, 1982. ***Mask head** Yoruba, Ife 12th- 15th century CE Copper 33 x 19 cm. The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Lagos. Royal Academy exhibition catalogue (1995). *Africa: the Art of a Continent*. London page 416. ***Ogboni head** Ferracotta, 18th - 19th century CE (?) Private collection, Brussels. H. 38 cm Royal Academy exhibition catalogue (1995). *Africa: the Art of a Continent*. London pages 416, 418.

**Contemporary Contexts for Yoruba and Ancient
Indian Ideas on Space, Creativity and Self
January- March 2013**

Tutor: Ranjana Thapalyal
Student Feedback - YEAR TWO SURVEY 1

Thank you for your time and for your attentive participation in the course this term.

Please answer the questions below as fully as possible. Your replies will contribute to the inter-cultural education research base from which the course has developed.

Your replies will also contribute to the discussion of Art Higher Education theory of teaching (pedagogy) in the inter-disciplinary research project called '4 Minds'.

NAME (may be left blank, but if you wish to be contacted in relation to the research project connected with this course, please state your name and email address)

DEPARTMENT:

DATE:

YEAR GROUP: 2ND Year

1. Which aspects of the lectures were of relevance to you as a student of the Forum for Critical Inquiry? Please state why.
2. Which aspects of the lectures were of relevance to you as an art student? Please state why.
3. Can you indicate how much of the information was new to you? All? Most? Some? None?
4. Were you surprised by any of the lecture contents?
5. Has the course contributed to your understanding of art history/ cultural studies/history?
6. Has the course contributed to your understanding of art?
7. Has the course contributed to your understanding of society in general?
8. Has the course contributed to your understanding of the philosophical idea of the 'self'? Does that feel relevant to your own life and circumstances?

9. Has the course connected in any way with your artistic practice?
10. Has the course contributed in any way to your understanding and expectations of contemporary art and design?
11. Had you an introduction to Indian or African art, either contemporary or traditional, or to inter-cultural issues in education before this course? If so, please state where you received this information.
12. Do you think that your involvement in the course will better equip you to challenge cultural stereotypes? If yes, can you state how?
13. As you embark on an essay, can you indicate what initial difficulties/doubts you may be having? (There will be fuller space to discuss these in seminars and VLE forums)
14. Were the course contents well researched and clearly presented?
15. Have you any suggestions for improving the course?
16. Do you agree to this questionnaire being anonymously quoted in research related to the '4 Minds' education research project?
17. Would you be interested in maintaining contact with an ongoing research project connected with this course? If so, please ensure you give your name at the top of this form.
18. Any other comments?

END

APPENDIX 11 b

Process of Analysis- based on Elliott and Timulak’s six steps to qualitative analysis (2005)

Data	Meaning units	Shortened meaning units	Domains of the phenomena- Recurrent themes that are used to organise the meaning units	Categories Regularities, similarities, that link the domains and meaning units to the hypothesis and proposed pedagogy INTERPRETIVE IN NATURE	Abstractions of the main findings
<p>Transcripts of Interviews, questionnaires, meeting notes from student team meeting. Number of sources vary between students, depending on length and depth of involvement with the research project [see Appendix 5]</p>	<p>Extracted quotes from individual students</p>	<p>Distilled rephrasing/synopsis by researcher Of the phenomena highlighted by the students</p>	<p>D1 KNOWLEDGE, ACHIEVEMENT, GUIDANCE D2 EXISTENT CURRICULUM D3 SKILLS as measure of progress D4 PERCEPTIONS and EXPECTATIONS OF STUDIO PEDAGOGIC ENVIRONMENT D5 PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEDAGOGIES OF STUDIO DEPARTMENTS and DEPARTMENT OF THEORY/CRITICAL STUDIES D6 PHYSICAL SPACE D7 PEER LEARNING D8 SELF/IDENTITY “WILL TO LEARN”/ D9 RESILIENCE D10 YORUBA/VEDANTA COURSE</p>	<p>peer learning and a strong sense of identity with a community of learners came across in each of the interviews.</p> <p>students’ own tenacity, and resilience in trying circumstances.</p> <p>pedagogic value of the Yoruba/Vedanta course, over and above its contents.</p>	<p>>><i>This links to Yoruba and Vedantic ideas of the self and the social, and to Freire’s idea of becoming “fully human”</i></p> <p>>><i>This links to their will to learn as Barnett sees it</i></p> <p>>><i>This links to Yoruba and Vedantic ideas of the role of the teacher or leader, progressive education theory that proposes reflective and reflexive education practices, Freire’s identification of a problem of self perpetuating repetitions of oppressive education practices, and how they can be pre-empted.</i></p>

Appendix 12

Staff Research Team [StRT] contributions to 4 Minds Project

4 Minds team member	Accessed Recorded lectures	Attended 4 Minds special events	Attended 4 Minds meetings	Presentati on to staff team	Studio collaboration:	StRt questionn aire completed	Interview
Staff colleague A [Fine Art]	Yes	Yes except when away.	All except when away	No	Facilitated incorporation of 4 Minds into first year project and exhibition	No	Yes May 2014
Staff colleague B [Fine Art]	No	Yes except when clashed with timetable	Yes, and organised one visiting speaker to address staff team about Sufism.	Yes	Offered thesis author opportunity to join year 4 Crits which unfortunately clashed with other teaching commitments	No	No
Staff colleague C [Design]	Yes towards end of the project	Yes	Yes except when away	No	Out with the course. Facilitated Y/V course student's work in Studio and partook in joint tutorial with thesis author.	Yes	Yes Nov 2014
Staff colleague D [Fine Art]	Yes late in phase 4	Yes except when away	Yes except when away	No	Facilitated Y/V course student's work in Studio	Yes	No
Staff colleague E [Student support]	No	Yes except when away	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Staff colleague F [Education Technology]	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes.	No	No
Staff colleague G	Not applicable – unable to continue with project due to illness						