Encountering Tamil communities in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia: A reflexive study of learning about 'the other' and self

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Dedication

This PhD thesis is dedicated to the memory of Devi Aramagum (1948 - 2013).

Where this journey truly began.

Abstract

This study is situated in a globalising world where cultural flows of people, practices and ideas are part of everyday life (Appadurai, 2001). Literature in the field of intercultural studies (e.g. Angrosino, 2007; Liamputtong, 2010, 2008) and the connected field of culture and identity (e.g. Crewe & Maruna, 2006; Hopper, 2007; Lawler, 2008) show that these cultural flows have some generalisable impacts on the way life is lived across the world, but they are also experienced in particular and diverse ways by individuals throughout the world. The study examines these flows through two inter-connected perspectives. From one perspective this thesis is a narrative-based inquiry into the effects of globalisation on middle-class Tamil peoples living in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia. From another perspective it is a critically reflexive account of one person's efforts over a period of five years to understand and forge intercultural relationships with an 'other' culture in this globalising world. From both perspectives, the study is about 'transformation' for middle-class Tamils in Chennai, and Melbourne, and for the author, as the researcher.

My PhD journey began as an investigation into the mediating impact of the English language upon cultures and cultural practices of Tamils living in two geographically distanced parts of the world. However, soon into the study I came to agree with a range of researchers, such as Crystal (2003, 2006, 2008), Graddol (2010), Kirkpatrick (2010) and Pennycook (1994, 2003, 2007), who point to *globalisation* and globalising practices as the major driving force behind the newly attained status of English as a (or the) global language. And so my reading broadened and a more complex picture emerged. Thus I became sensitized to the influence of globalisation on cultures, cultural practices and the language of the Tamil peoples in Chennai (and on Tamil diasporic communities in Australia). I explored the concept of globalisation through a range of theorists (e.g. Chirico, 2014; Robertson, 1992; Robertson & White, 2007; Turner, 2010b) and, importantly, Eriksen's (2014) key concepts and dimensions of globalisation. I worked with Appadurai's (1996, 2001) 'global cultural flows' to explain the shifts and transitions in national and international economies, political interactions, and an increasing sense of compressed time and place.

The study is underpinned by a humanistic philosophy in the interpretive paradigm. I work with social constructivist theories associated with the social construction of meaning (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The work of Burr (2003) and Gergen and Gergen (2001, 2004, 2009) are particularly important in the way I position myself as an intercultural

researcher (see also A. Gray, 2003). Conscious of the tendencies in ‘insider/outsider’ debates to descend into simple dualism, I have taken on the role of ‘invited guest’ in my investigation ‘into’ these cultures and cultural practices. This methodological stance enabled me to participate in the daily activities, interactions and events of some Tamils in the course of my learning about the explicit and tacit aspects of Tamil cultures. However, I am mindful of Said’s (1978) warnings of the dangers of propagating colonialist approaches to power, exploitation, and control in research. My strategy, in this respect, has been to develop a distinctly reflexive narrative-based inquiry that draws rigorously on theorised notions of narrative, story and experience throughout this thesis (Etherington, 2004, 2007, 2009).

I conclude that the linguistic and cultural practices of the middle-class Tamil participants in Chennai, India, as in Melbourne, Australia, are being significantly influenced by a range of globalising flows that can be seen to be in a state of profound “transition and transformation”. Individual Tamils and Tamil communities in Chennai are beginning to challenge the deeply held view of traditional cultures as being static, prompting them to engage in new identity work as they are impacted upon, and to some extent, engage with these global flows. In Melbourne, the middle-class Tamil families are in a complex process of transitioning into Australian social and cultural life, while consciously attempting to maintain what they see as ‘their’ traditional cultural practices. Globalising flows are having particular but quite diverse impacts on the identities and cultural practices of middle-class Tamil families, such that the deeply felt notion of the ‘joint’ family is changing, as indeed it has been changing over the course of the last one hundred years.

My experience as an intercultural researcher, even one who was to a significant extent an ‘invited guest’, is that the journey of intercultural research is a slow and complicated one that requires time, patience and resilience in order to build understandings of an other’s cultures and cultural practices in a globalising world. I learned that I needed to be continually and reflexively open to difference and to transformation in ‘the other’ and ‘the self’, and to the ways in which my own background and cultures *are* unavoidably mediating the ways in which I learned about and understood the experiences and cultures of the middle class Tamil communities.

This PhD study demonstrates what is possible in a globalising world when participating in intercultural encounters. It also reveals that these encounters can lead to further engagement through patience, attitudes of inclusiveness and reciprocity, understanding, and sensitivity.

Publications

Parts of the text draw on publications by me as a single author and as co-author, as listed below:

Goward, P. (2014). Rags to riches. In J. Brown (Ed.), *Navigating international academia* (pp. 121-132). Rotterdam: Sense.

Goward, P., & Zhang, H. (2014). English language education in China and India: A comparative study of history and politics. In R. Chowdhury & R. Marlina (Eds.), *Enacting English across borders: A critical study in the Asia Pacific* (pp. 248-263). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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Preface

I'd seen a film and heard stories but I'd never been to an Indian wedding. My heart was racing in anticipation as I stepped into the ladies dressing room. I drew breath as I entered. It had a high, white-washed ceiling, and pale blue walls printed with dark marks from years of bodies rubbing and pressing, the paint peeling and chipped revealed broken bricks and mortar. Fluorescent lights exposed every nook and cranny, even the dust moats floating, flashing and winking in the air. And, except for a few wooden benches laden with clothes and multi-coloured draperies, it was packed with dark coloured women of all shapes and sizes, dressing in a dazzle of colours and sparkling gems. Hot, fleshy forms, sweated in the heat as they turned and twisted. Giggles of shared amusement and low murmuring chatter mingled with children calling and clinging. I undressed and stood alone, to one side, white, exposed in a petticoat and blouse. Six yards of silky cloth tangled around my feet. Aashi smiled knowingly, and bustled over. Wordlessly she shook out the folds, and together we wrapped and coaxed the cloth into the softly draped garment. The crowd pressed in, noticing the spectacle. Warm, plump hands reached out—fondling, smoothing, pinching and pinning. I emerged like a queen, as the crowd pulled back, with murmurs, clucks and utterances in an unknown tongue. I was gently pushed in front of a full length mirror. But who was that person on the other side?

(Penelope Goward, Reflection from Journal notes, September 2013)

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Ghanta[1]: Introduction to the Study

> Globalisation introduces new territorialities and temporalities to a person's cultural identity which results in influencing contrastivity, interactivity and multiplicity of individual identities. In other words, exposure to multiple 'others' via the media, travel or while living in another country, may contribute to an individual becoming able to understand, compare and contrast the concepts of 'self' and 'other' much better. (Hamid, 2014, p. 6)

Cross cultural and intercultural encounters between neighbouring nations and cultures have been taking place for thousands of years, through trade, commerce, exploration, and wars. In today's globalising world, such cross-cultural and intercultural encounters have proliferated to become increasingly rapid movements of people, practices and policies across the world through migration, technology, communication and travel (Appadurai, 1996; Chirico, 2014; Crane, 2008; Eriksen, 2014; Robertson & White, 2007). *Connectedness* and *interconnectedness* have become bywords of globalisation (El-Ojeili & Hayden, 2006a; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). It is important to point out that globalisation is not just an international phenomenon. It includes dynamic movements of people, practices and policies *within* countries and nation states as much as between them. It occurs sometimes by chance and sometimes by design, but in so many ways it offers opportunities and benefits aplenty (Connell, 2007; Crane, 2008; Croucher, 2004; Hopper, 2007).

Yet there are other aspects of globalisation that are not so attractive or positive. Our newspapers regularly report cultural tensions, sporadic eruptions of violence and ongoing wars, reminding us that the globalising flows of people, practices and policies across cultural borders do not inevitably produce opportunities and benefits for all. The literature, also documents instances of cultural, religious or political 'encounters' that can fester into 'sores'

[1] *Ghanta*, is a Sanskrit word meaning bell. In the Hindu religion the ringing of the *Ghanta* is an invocation to the deity to listen to one's *prãrthnã* or prayers and to be blessed. It is also to attract attention and signify that it is the beginning of prayers. A bell also spiritually energises, through sound, the immediate vicinity of a shrine (Bhalla, 2007; Michaels, 2004). I choose this word in association with this chapter to signify the beginning of my thesis story.

of misunderstandings, prompting clashes between peoples and ideologies, resulting in destructive intercultural interactions and relationships (Chirico, 2014; Leung, Hendley, Compton, & Haley, 2009). The first few months of 2015 have illustrated this with disturbing clarity. In the western world, we need only think of the terrorist attack on the offices of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris (Mohamed, Ryder, Macfarlane, & Park, 2015); the days of protests, “civil disorder” and the imposition of curfews in Baltimore, USA, following the death in custody of local resident, Freddie Gray ("Freddie Gray fallout," 2015); and in Australia the violent clashes in capital cities when the group “Reclaim Australia” railed against what they saw as “Islamic extremism” and those who they saw as wanting to “change the Australian cultural identity” ("Reclaim Australia clashes," 2015). Globalisation is clearly not a recipe for intercultural harmony where understanding the other is an evitable outcome.

It is in this context, where cultural flows and cultural eruptions are part of everyday life across the world, that this intercultural study is situated. This PhD thesis is an account of one person’s efforts to understand and forge intercultural relationships with an ‘other’ culture in this globalising world. These efforts are wary of speed and haste, favouring slow and careful building of relationships, learning as much about oneself as one does about the other. It is also an account of ‘transformation’, which as this thesis shows is happening with middle class Tamils in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia—two cities brought into closer proximity by globalisation. For me, too, as the researcher, globalisation and transformation are connected in ways I could only understand *after* my journey of encountering and learning more about Tamil peoples and cultures.

This thesis is a critical account of my journey as a global citizen and researcher, seeking to understand globalisation in and through my inquiry into an ‘other’s’ cultures and cultural practices—those of middle class Tamil peoples living in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia. I have constructed the account from journal entries made over five years of my experiences living with particular Tamil families in Chennai, and being invited into family homes as a ‘guest’, originally in Chennai and later also in Melbourne. On the one hand, this thesis can be read as a multi-voiced inquiry into Tamil lives and cultural practices within the flows of globalisation. On the other hand it can be read as a reflexive autobiographical inquiry into my experiences of living with these peoples and of making sense of these experiences. But first, I provide a brief summary of how I, as an outsider to India and the Tamil communities, began my PhD journey and this study.

I first visited India in the 1980s. At that time, I viewed India as ‘other’ and different, and was fascinated by the mythology and exoticism of the Orient (Spivak, 1990). I can now see that these were Western-oriented unexamined views, similar to those that Edward Said (1978) and others term “colonialist”. When I returned to the subcontinent in 2007, it was to tour across India and attend an Indian wedding in Chennai (Madras), Tamil Nadu. This special occasion triggered my curiousity in ways that were not just a fascination with the exotic. Indeed my interest in the exotic ‘other’ began to transform into a genuine desire to learn and understand more about a culture and a people I was still barely able to understand.

Every visit to India over several years since that wedding, increased my familiarity with Chennai and its people and moved me beyond infatuation and intrigue. I began to feel more comfortable and connected to surroundings whose previous meaning for me had been as ‘other’. I began reflecting on and asking deeper questions with each visit. For example, I observed and was puzzled about why the Tamil families I stayed with would often use some English words, *my* language, when talking in what I had to that point characterised as *their* language. My casual curiosity grew into intellectual intrigue as I sought to understand why some young Tamil women were often wearing ‘western styled’ clothing like mine, rather than their traditional sari, even as I attempted to assimilate with my new Tamil friends by wearing their traditional saris and taking on a number of their cultural practices. My earlier assumptions that middle class Tamils were maintaining their traditions and cultural practices against a tidal wave of western practices such as I enacted on a daily basis was challenged by comments I heard from Tamil friends arguing that the traditional ‘joint’ family in their culture was changing. I heard older Tamil grandparents bemoaning the fact that many of their younger ‘married women’ were now working in professional roles, as of course they had been doing for some time in my country and the West. It was not long before my intuited understandings of a single Tamil culture were being troubled by a more complicated set of experiences and understandings, than ‘me’ and ‘them’, ‘mine’ and ‘theirs’, ‘I’ and ‘other’.

My initial plan for this PhD had been to explore Tamil culture or cultures with a particular focus on the English language. I was interested in exploring how it was influencing the Tamils living in Chennai, India. In those early stages of the study, I learned how global English is conceptually framed and how the English language seemed to bestow power and social advantage to individuals in developing countries, such as India, and to whole nations. I investigated the mediating impact of the English language upon cultures and cultural practices through engaging with debates by linguists and educational reseachers alike. I

speculated, along with so many researchers in the field (e.g. Bryson, 1990; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Crystal, 2003, 2006; Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Pennycook, 1994, 2007; Saxena & Omoniyi, 2010), about the future of nation states whose history had been significantly impacted by the introduction of the English language and its associated cultural assumptions.

However a range of other researchers, such as Crystal (2003, 2006, 2008), Graddol (2010), Kirkpatrick (2010) Pennycook (1994, 2003, 2007) have pointed to globalisation and globalising practices as the major driving force behind the newly attained status of English as a (or the) global language (see also Chotiner, 2010; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Samir Dasgupta & Kiely, 2006; El-Ojeili & Hayden, 2006a; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Saxena & Omoniyi, 2010; Seargeant & Swann, 2012; Siemund, Davydova, & Maier, 2012). All these scholars tend to agree that the concept of globalisation can provide explanations for the shifts and transitions in national and international economies, political interactions, transcultural flows, and an increasing sense of compressed time and place.

I also commenced my research with a focus on interviewing women from the Tamil community. Not only because I was able to enter people's homes as a woman meeting other women, which I explain in the methodology chapters, but also because at that early stage I was interested in their roles and whether they influenced the differing ways that the English language was spread across society. However, again it became apparent that as I interviewed women in their homes I had access to Tamil families in unexpected ways, and other data and broader issues became apparent.

Thus, as I engaged with these ideas and the broader issues emerging from my early interviews, my reading extended and a larger picture emerged where I understood that my study of middle class Tamil cultures was situated in, and mediated by, a globalising world. Thus I became attuned to the influence of globalisation on cultures, cultural practices and the language of the Tamil peoples in Chennai (and on Tamil diasporic communities in Australia). Hence to discuss 'other' cultures, which included middle class Tamil peoples in Chennai, India, and of course my 'own' cultures as a researcher in this study, globalisation could not be ignored or marginalised. Consequently the focus of my research shifted to incorporate a more comprehensive understanding of the global dimensions of the local phenomena I was investigating. My contributions to knowledge, the purpose of the study and the research questions also shifted and evolved.

The Distinctiveness of My Study

The distinctiveness of my thesis and its contribution to knowledge in the area of intercultural studies and studies of culture and identity derive from the methodological approach I have taken to inquire into Tamil cultures and practices. Methodologically, I did *not* attempt to replicate past anthropological and ethnographic studies where researchers have attempted to position themselves as objective and disinterested inquirers and thus capable of generalising their findings in regard to one cultural or intercultural space in the form of a "large narrative of explanation" (A. Gray, 2003, p. 182). Instead, I have focused on the details and nuances of the 'particular' of my experiences in and with Tamil families in Chennai. Rather than broadly expansive representations of culture, I wanted to generate 'situated knowledges' of cultures and cultural practice, and I felt the only way I could do this was through the construction of a narrative-positioned sense of truth (A. Gray, 2003, p. 183). I have drawn on a number of practices and methodologies associated with Narrative Inquiry. Rather than rigidly follow any one prescription as to how that Narrative Inquiry should be enacted (see Parr, Doecke, & Bulfin, 2015), I developed a distinctive form of narrative-based inquiry that draws rigorously on theorised notions of narrative, story and experience, and yet is open to a number of creative research practices. Throughout the study I have positioned myself as an intercultural researcher (A. Gray, 2003), while constantly subjecting to scrutiny what that term might mean. In that respect, there are elements of reflexive autobiographical narrative throughout this thesis (Etherington, 2004, 2007, 2009). That is, in the process of inquiring into what I initially understood as 'other' cultures and peoples in the form of middle class Tamils in Chennai and Melbourne, I have also been engaged in a rigorous research process of inquiring into and learning about myself and my complex relationships with the 'other'.

Research Questions

It should be clear from the above narrative-based account of the emergence of this study, that my research questions were not formulated early in the project and preserved against all that I was learning along the way. Rather my three research questions were distilled over time as the focus of my study became clearer and more defined. Two distinct areas were provisionally demarcated in the questions.

The first two questions are focused on generating knowledge about middle class Tamils and Tamil cultures and practices:

(1) In a globalising world, to what extent do middle class Tamil communities in Chennai (India) and Melbourne (Australia) maintain connections with what they see as their traditional culture/s and cultural practices?

(2) How do these Tamils experience the tensions between connecting with their cultural 'roots' and responding to cultural change in this globalising world?

The third question examines the critical and grounded reflections on my journey as an intercultural researcher. It signals the strong reflexive and autobiographical dimensions of the study.

(3) As an international traveller, learner and researcher, how does my own background and culture mediate the way in which I learned about and sought to understand the experiences and cultures of the Tamil community?

Needless to say these questions are interconnected in many ways, as my thesis goes on to demonstrate.

Research Approach, Personal Stance and Position

I considered several different methodologies at the beginning of my study, which were somewhat eclectic and unfocused. Over time, I became clearer about my theoretical foundation and "research lens" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 45), and in that respect this study bears out Hamilton's (2005) controversial claim that most researchers "only know what they are doing when they have done it: and only know what they are looking for after they have found it" (pp. 288-9). This study partly supports Hamilton's claim, but what has been evident from the earliest moments of this study is that my research would be underpinned by a humanistic philosophy in the interpretive paradigm, by theories of social constructionism and theories associated with the social construction of meaning (Clandinin, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), particularly the work of Burr (2003) and Gergen and Gergen (2001, 2004, 2009). I discuss this more fully in the Methodology Chapter 5.

The epistemology of the study is built on this theoretical foundation and so I can now state with confidence that my study is best categorised as a qualitative socio-cultural ethnographic study, with a focus on culture and identity, language and people. It became clear to me fairly early in the study that I should consider an ethnographic approach. I explored other approaches such as 'Case Study', but I chose Ethnography so that, as much as possible, I could participate in daily activities, interactions and events as a way or method of

learning about the explicit and tacit aspects of the cultures I would be studying (Angrosino, 2007; Davies, 2008; Liamputtong, 2009; Murchison, 2010). I discovered that Ethnography, like Narrative Inquiry, was not 'simple', just because its methods resemble everyday approaches to living in the world, and just because its data collection is through seemingly 'natural' observation, conversation and discussion. I was conscious, again from quite early on, there was a risk that if I allowed the stories merely to speak for themselves, as it were, I would end up producing a "non-reflexive and naïve approach" to storytelling (A. Gray, 2003, p. 20). My approach to ethnography avoids this, since the epistemology "acknowledge[s] the constructed nature of knowledge through social processes … and the notion of 'truth' … or claims to truth" (A. Gray, 2003, pp. 20-21). The study is underpinned by a set of understandings that appreciate "as researchers, we can never capture the 'whole truth' or any aspect of the social and cultural … [rather] we … produce a version [or versions] of the truth" (A. Gray, 2003, p. 21).

Throughout the writing of this thesis I have attempted to be reflective *and reflexive* both personally and epistemologically in my deliberations and in my writing practices (Davies 2008; Etherington, 2004; Luttrell, 2010). I realised that a "reflexive[e] [approach] enable[d] [me] to provide information on *what* is known as well as *how* it is known" (Etherington, 2009, p. 89). Only through taking a reflexive approach could I hope to achieve some degree of ethical integrity and methodological transparency in the study. I tried to be open to and considerate of other views. Where possible, I have tried to incorporate others' views and voices in ways that ethically honoured and respected the Tamil peoples of Chennai and Melbourne who were participants in the research, and with whom I developed a relationship based on reciprocity and mutual trust. Thus, I, as a *reflexive* ethnographic researcher and an active contributor to knowledge building with my participants, have been able to create and present a critically nuanced, theoretically rigorous narrative by means of an ethnographically flecked Narrative Inquiry methodology.

Since the earliest work in the area of Narrative Inquiry in education in the 1980s, the practices associated with this research methodology have been widely interpreted as falling within social constructionist philosophy (Clandinin & Caine, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thus, the narratives told to me by my Tamil participants and reconstructed by me, and the narratives I have generated myself as part of my autobiographical writing, came together in the overarching narrative of my PhD study. In this way, narratives embody the *what* and the *how* of communication in all dimensions of this PhD—communication between my

participants and me, and between myself and my reader. I make no apology for positioning myself as a narrator of the study, which often involves using first person pronouns in my writing.

The meaning-making process, which is often referred to as ‘analysis of data’ began in a sense with consideration of both the transcripts of the interviews I had conducted with my participants and the research journal entries I had kept over five years. The themes that emerged from my data were analysed and interpreted as stories, and it was my voice as the researcher that then presented these stories from my participants which shaped and described a reality to form ‘the particular’ and ‘truth’. During my study, I realised that utilising narrative in critical, creative and rigorous ways in research was difficult to achieve. According to Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2008) this is because there are many stories that contribute to and influence one’s life. Thus, it behoves my identity as an intercultural researcher, and a reflexive one at that, to be open to stories with multiple interpretations, and to apply my competence to plumb the depths and nuances of the stories and experiences I present in the thesis artefact.

As an intercultural researcher I needed to remain mindful of the ethically complicated dimensions of my study, and not just the rudimentaries of ‘gaining consent’ with the ‘subjects’ of my inquiry. This required rigorous preparation and ongoing attentiveness to complex ethical dilemmas such as spending periods of time hosted by and living with the participants of my study (Delva, Allen-Meares, & Momper, 2010; Liamputtong, 2008; Siljanen, 2009). How could I gain sufficient critical distance from these participants to respect and do justice to their stories and yet generate insights into the stories? Therefore I have been from the outset concerned not to replicate colonial or previous anthropological studies which positioned the participants as ‘other’ both in terms of their cultural practices and identities but also as the ‘subjects’ of the research. Attitudinally, I tried to avoid colonial attitudes of power, exploitation and control (Tedlock, 2011). Also I was aware of and guarded against any remnants of xenophobia and imperialism that may have become insinuated into my narratives and my research practices (Gobo, 2008; Lassiter, 2005; Liamputtong, 2009; Murchison, 2010).

It became clear early in my thesis, that if I wanted to undertake serious research into Tamil cultures and cultural practices I needed to learn much more about India, about the Tamils and appropriate social conduct for a woman (let alone a woman researcher), and I needed to learn more about Hindu customs and rituals. In the field, I needed to be culturally

sensitive, mindful of power relations and I needed to be always improving my intercultural competence in dealing with difference (Deardorff, 2009c; Jackson, 2012; E. W. Taylor, 1994). I explain in Chapters 5 and 8 aspects of my own history and biography that sometimes made this particularly challenging. In my fieldwork I was always interested in "narratives of equality and human community" (Said, 1993, p. xiii) and in my thesis I looked for the emergence of new narratives that emanated as much from my participants as from me, in a co-production of knowledge and insights into Tamil cultures.

The Data

Throughout my whole PhD journey, the analysis and interpretion of my data were dynamically mediated by my emerging awareness and developing understanding of the literature, of the experiences I was encountering, and of myself. As I spent more time with Tamil communities, and as I undertook a rigorous program of reading about these peoples and their cultural practices, I began to develop a sense of Tamil cultures and identities that was not so much a pure essence that needed to be preserved, but rather a dynamic concept mediated by global movements of people, practices and policies and by the many dimensions of globalisation (Appadurai, 1996, 2001, 2013; Eriksen, 2014). However, I was careful not to *impose* them upon the data in some decontextualised, a-cultural notion of 'processing the data'. For example, when I analysed interview scripts and my journal entries from that time, I allowed themes to emerge from my deep engagement with the experiences presented in the stories and my equally deep sensitivity to the ways in which language mediated these experiences. I wove together the stories from my participants to form an underlying narrative, and used the esearch literature to explain and theorise that narrative. I also decided to write this thesis and my particular interpretations of the data often using first person pronouns, following in the tradition of critical ethnographers such as Bochner and Ellis (2002) and Chase (2010), narrative inquirers such as Clandinin and Connelly (2000), and reflexive qualitative inquirers such as Etherington (2004, 2007, 2009). I take responsibility both for the accounts I construct of the stories and reflections of the Tamil participants I interviewed and lived with, and for the way my own voice mediates and is interwoven amongst my interpretations and my representations of my participants' stories and reflections. Writing in this way was challenging, because my personal, professional and researcher identities shifted and changed as I grew with knowledge and experience. In addition, the notion of representing 'the truth' or the multiple truths of my own experiences and those of my participants sometimes became perplexing. And yet, as Savin-Baden and Major (2013) put it "it [was]

only by realizing that both researcher and participants' perspectives are complex and contested" (p.463) that I realised my *and* my participants' beliefs, values and thus truths are all subject to different interpretive practices by me as the researcher and by the readers of this thesis. In order to build some integrity and trustworthiness in my writing and research practices, I have attempted at all times to make transparent the process of constructing interpretations and 'truths' which means making explicit the theories, concepts and research methods underpinning these processes.

The Structure of the Thesis

The organisation of this thesis draws on the foundations of a traditional thesis structure, but there are variations as well. The Table of Contents page represents an intercultural space where the traditional chapter headings, for example the literature review and methodology, are juxtaposed with the rituals of daily life that my participants practised such as *Snanam*, *Bhakti* and *Puja*. This Table of Contents page also signals that this whole research enterprise is an intercultural work involving the crossing of borders (Giroux, 2005), and so in each chapter I have provided a brief explanation of the chapter title as a footnote.

'Chapter 1: *Ghanta'* provides a brief background to the study, introduces the research questions, and the main theoretical and ethical groundwork of the thesis. Following is my Literature Review which is structured over three chapters. It begins with a context 'Chapter 2: *Om*' sets the scene and outlines key knowledge about the history, geography and some demographic details of India and Tamil Nadu. It also explores the history of the English language and its role in India as well as a brief overview of Tamil cultures and practices. The other two Literature Review chapters (3 and 4) set out the conceptual framework for the study. 'Chapter 3: Drawing the *Kolam*' enacts a socio-cultural exploration of globalisation, identity and cultures. 'Chapter 4: *Snanam*' explores how globalisation and notions of culture are applied to the Tamil experiences in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia. The Methodology section of the thesis is also divided into three chapters 5, 6, and 7. 'Chapter 5: *Arti*' discusses the importance of my methodology and my position as an ethnographic intercultural researcher within the study. 'Chapter 6: *Pranayam*' explains the methods I used to collect the data and details how the interviews were conducted. 'Chapter 7: *Bhakti'* describes and discusses the ethical underpinnings for this study, and how I analysed and interpreted the data to make meaning. The discussion chapters are also presented as a group of three. 'Chapter 8: *Puja'* presents a reflexive, narrative account of my journey to prepare myself as an ethnographic intercultural researcher exploring an-other set of cultures and

cultural practices. ‘Chapter 9: *Mantra’* and ‘Chapter10: *Tapas*’ present the voices of my participants with interpretations and understandings. Chapter 9 focuses on how my participants perceived the influence of the global English language, and Chapter 10 explores my participants’ perceptions of the shifts in the cultural practices and traditions in contemporary Tamil communities; and, the changes to the structure of Tamil middle class families. ‘Chapter 11: *Arati*’ summarises the thesis and presents conclusions and recommendations.

The next ‘Chapter 2: *Om*’ provides the context for my journey as a global citizen and begins a careful process of setting the historical and cultural scene for my study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2

Om[2]: Context of the Study

> You learn a lot about peoples, cultures, and histories different from your own, enough to begin to know what you're missing. (Clifford, 1992, p. 110)

This chapter is the first of three chapters in which I critically review a range of literature relevant to my inquiry into middle-class Tamil cultures and cultural practices in Chennai and Melbourne, from the perspective of a middle-class Australian global citizen. The review is divided into the following areas: Chapter 2, Context of the study; Chapter 3, Globalisation, culture and identity; and Chapter 4, Globalisation in India and Australia. In reviewing these areas, I take care not just to represent and critically examine the range of knowledge and debates evident in the research literature, but also to use reflexive narrative methods to make explicit (where appropriate) the journey I have undertaken in getting to know this literature and to experience the range of issues that it encompasses.

Early on in my PhD journey, I made the assumption that I would be able to navigate and inquire into the Tamil cultures easily. I initially saw this as an uncomplicated study because of my previous knowledge and educational work with migrants, and extensive travels around Asia. These experiences encouraged me to believe that it would be a simple matter of interviewing people, gathering data, analysing that data and then presenting my results. Over time, I recognised that there were two other key elements I had not included: (i) myself and the journey that I was undertaking; and (ii) learning to be a researcher undertaking a study of a culture unfamiliar to me. Hence I began to understand that conducting ethical intercultural research required more rigorous preparation, which I explain further in Methodology Chapters 5, 6 and 7. This preparation necessitated that I learn about India, about Tamil communities and cultural practices, about Hindu customs and rituals, and

[2] *Om* also written as *Aum* is used when chanting before an auspicious occasion. *Om* is considered a sacred word, representing the rhythm and melody of life, and the sound of *Brahma*. A, U and M representing salutes to the gods *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* and the three Vedas Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Sam-Veda (Bhalla, 2007, p. 14; Michaels, 2004). I choose this word in association with this chapter to represent the rhythm and life of the Tamil peoples.

about how to be interculturally competent and sensitive, I present some of what I learned in these areas in Chapter 8. The more I explored, the more I learned about India, and the more I realised there was to learn.

In the beginning of my exploration, I reflected that I saw India as a land of contrasts, which is a typical view held by many westerners. For example, I easily saw the contrast between the richness of the culture and history against the over-population, overt poverty and lack of social and physical infrastructure, overlayed with a patriarchal society. In addition, as I explored further a dark underside of India emerged for me, one that I was not prepared for, because of my view of India as exotic, spiritual with age-old wisdom. I was not prepared for the deeply entrenched discrimination towards women from birth to death, and the knowledge that children are resources to be used for labour and worse (Chari, 2011; S. B. Desai et al., 2010; Sharma, 2004; J. P. Singh, 2005).

This chapter is a summary of a range of literature I was reading about India, its cultures, languages and cultural practices. It also draws on consultations I had with people from India and Tamil Nadu as I sought to better understand the geography and history of India generally, with a particular focus on Tamil cultures. The chapter, importantly, also engages with the notion of intercultural competence, which was so important in my vision to be an ethical intercultural researcher. I inquire into a range of understandings of this concept, and what I needed to be aware of and be sensitive to during the study.

India

India is the seventh largest country in the world, separated from mainland Asia by the Himalayas, surrounded by the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Arabian Sea in the west, and the Indian Ocean to the south, see Figure 1. below (Maps of India, 2014). Chennai, one of the sites for gathering data, is the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu, which is in the south-east corner of the country. India's population, as of the 2011 National Census, was 1.2 billion and has increased by more than 181 million people in ten years. In 2015, according to India Online (2015), Indiastat (2015) and Worldometers (2015), India's population was approximately 1.28 billion people[3] which makes it the second largest population in the world, second to China (The Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011). India accounts for two and a half per cent of the world's geographical area, yet it supports 17.5 per cent of the

[3] Gathering data for population statistics is difficult because of insufficient data on birth records and poor record keeping of the population in the past (Agrawal & Kumar, 2012, April 6; UNICEF India, 2015).

world's population. The nation of India is a Union of States, and its constitution identifies it as a "Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic". The Republic is governed according to a Westminster parliamentary system of government and the aforementioned Constitution of India, which was implemented on 26 January 1950 (Guha, 2007; Keay, 2011; National portal of India, 2014).

Figure 1. India States and Union Territories, 2012

In just over two decades, since 1991, India haschanged its economic policies to become a more open economy, encouraging further open trade with foreign investors and as a consequence has had enormous economic growth, and a steadily expanding middle-class (Goward & Zhang, 2014; Mishra, 2012; The National Research Council). It has moved from formerly being seen as a producer of crafts and textiles, to where it is today, emerging as a global economic force with an economy of around one trillion United States dollars (Alessandri et al., 2012).

India hosts a diversity of religions. It is generally regarded as one of the world's most spiritual countries, and is largely considered the birthplace of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Indeed religion is integral to India, with most people claiming to live by their spiritual, religious, and philosophical beliefs and practices. According to some accounts, the majority of its people have lived peacefully and respectfully in their communities and villages with a range of religions over many centuries (Census of India 2011, 2011; Daniélou & Hurry, 2011; Walsh, 2011). Paradoxically, according to the Preamble to the Constitution of India (Forty-second Amendment, 1976) (Government of India, 1976) it is a secular nation. However, contrary to common sense western understandings of *secular*, this amendment means that secular politics aims to prevent any particular religious philosophy or body from influencing governmental policies, and so every person has the right to practise any religion they choose. Furthermore, the constitution insists that the Indian Government and all people treat all religions with equal respect. Most of the world's Hindus live in India, representing about 85 per cent of the population, which equates to approximately one billion people today. India is also one of the world's largest Muslim states, with 13.5 per cent who follow Islam. The other religions in India are Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism; together these contribute to less than one per cent of India's population (National Informatics Centre, 2005, p. Section: People). In summary, India's religious diversity is rich and wide and, like the country, has a long history of religions introduced by conquerors, refugees, traders and uprisings. And yet, in India peoples have lived to a large extent peacefully with each other for centuries.

History

India is one of the oldest civilisations in the world with a kaleidoscopic variety of rich cultural heritages. Until recently, according to Keay (2010), there was a lack of reliable sources of historical information about India. However, in the last fifty years with developments in several disciplines such as science, archaeology, architecture, philology, and linguistics, new information from research has become known and so a more comprehensive picture has emerged about India. This section discusses the origin of the word 'India', the chronology of India's history—north and south—the impact of English colonialism, and the emergence of India as a Republic.

The name India originated from the Persian 'Hind[h]u' and over time changed with the influence of Greek, where the 'h' or aspirate was dropped and it became "Indoi", which meant the people who lived beyond the Indus river, and over time Indoi became "India". The other name given was 'Hindustan', which came through the Arabic and related languages. It

was the word India with the ‘h’ retained, and hence the ‘Hindu’ religion (Keay, 2011; Wood, 2007).

The chronology of India’s history is spread over thousands of years. From many accounts, it began from the Stone Age settlements throughout India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan over 500,000 years ago. India’s history is so rich and complex that I only have space to consider below what I deem to be the significant periods. They are the Vedic period (1700-500 BC) when the caste system was introduced, the invasion of Alexander The Great (327-323 BC), and the many dynasties (321 BC-550 AD). In the north of India, in the seventh century, the Rajputs held kingdoms and provinces across north-western and central India. Their power was diminished during the Mughal invasions in the eighth century, and other northern parts of India, and later under British rule in the sixteenth century (Keay, 2011; Wood, 2007). In the south of India, the Dravidians ruled in relative peace and stability, such as the Pallava Dynasty (400-900 AD), The Chola Dynasty (900–1300 AD), Chera Dynasty (800–1300 AD), the Pandya Dynasty (1300 - 1400), and the Vijayanagara Empire (1336–1565). Tamil was the main language and Tamil literature and poetry thrived during those times. These great kingdoms also built magnificent Hindu temples, sometimes the size of small villages. They were used for worship and by the local regional people for protection when under siege. Due to the geographic location, trade and commerce were the major sources of income to fund these temples. The Dravidians traded with Rome until AD 300, and exported goods such as silks, spices, gems and animals (for example monkeys and peacocks), and then traded with Asian regions known as Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Cambodia today, in the following centuries. In the sixteenth century, the Dravidians traded with European merchants, and then the English who established the East India Company in 1600 (Keay, 2011; National Informatics Centre, 2005; K. A. N. Sastri, 2009; Storti, 2007; Thapar, 1966; Walsh, 2011; Wolpert, 2005; Wood, 2007).

The East India Company is often spoken of as changing India’s destiny substantially. It shipped raw materials from India to England for manufacture. Hence, the East India Company became very powerful in the course of extending its territories and acquisitions through force and battles. They were able to defeat the Mughal emperors in the north through to Tipu Sultan in the south, and with the use of British soldiers were able to control much of India and make enormous profits (Kishore & Ganpati, 2003; Misra, 2007; Thapar, 1966; Walsh, 2011).

In 1858, by an Act of Parliament, Indian territories came under the British Empire. Under British rule the economy was enhanced with railways, and a telegraph system and postal services. However, the poor, who mostly worked in agriculture, were neglected despite education reforms to improve English literacy and Indian languages. Desperate poverty was widespread. Nationalism and a desire to be self-governing began to grow. In this period, Mahatma Ghandi (1869 – 1948) emerged as one of the best known and influential figures in modern Indian history, where he used the application of 'non-violent protests' to challenge British rule across the country. Following World War II, Britain, now depleted and needing to focus on rebuilding its home territory, granted India its independence and created a separate Muslim state 'Pakistan', with its own governor general. In 1947 India was declared independent from British rule with its first prime minister, and on 26 January 1950 India was declared a Republic and India's new Constitution was ratified. However, it faced a daunting task of rebuilding a nation, depleted of its resources from colonial rule, and dealing with plundering, exploitation, multilingualism, diverse religions and political pluralism (Kishore & Ganpati, 2003; Misra, 2007; Thapar, 1966; Walsh, 2011).

Caste System in India

The caste system is a form of social stratification within the Hindu religion, traditionally considered a way of dividing labour, and was developed as part of a feudal system in the post *Vedic* period. *Jāti* refers to birth occupation, in that one is born into a caste or occupation. The *Jātis* are often thought of as belonging to one of the four *Varnas*, that is the *Brahmins* or *Brahmans*, as priests and teachers; *Kshatriyas*, the warriors and rulers; *Vaishyas*, merchants; and *Shudras*, labourers. The *Dalits* or Untouchables, also called *Harijans*, form the fifth division (Chandra, 2003; Wiser, 1936). St. John (2012, p. 103) argues that the British Raj, far from undermining the caste system reinforced it, and to some degree is responsible for today's modern day caste system. Although considered illegal to discriminate on caste grounds today, caste still has a strong bearing on work availability and choices (L. Sankaran, 2013; I. Singh, 2012), and is strongly held in marriage practices and politics (Chandra, 2003; L. Sankaran, 2013).

The Languages of India

Indian censuses since 1921 have presented different figures of the number of languages in India. Numbers vary from 150 to 1500, depending on how the dialects and languages are classified. The number of official languages currently stands at 22, the largest

number in the world for any single country. Hindi, in Devanagari script, is the Official Language of the Union and English is used for certain purposes such as administrative, scientific, and parliamentary documents (Nilekani, 2008).

Chaudhary (2009) states that Sanskrit, one of the world's classical languages, is still studied, learnt and used in Indian schools today. Significantly, Sanskrit is deeply joined to the Hindu culture. On any significant auspicious or inauspicious event such as a death ritual, wedding, daily prayers or even a formal occupation of a house, some Sanskrit mantra or song will be included, irrespective of caste, class or gender. Even if the meaning is not understood, Sanskrit will be used on these occasions and is thus kept 'alive', although ironically, according to Chaudhary (2009), even if it remains in an unchanged form. Furthermore, in Tamil Nadu, Sanskrit is studied up to middle school levels; and, in Hindi based government documents, Sanskrit is still being used to coin new technical and administrative terms. Therefore, Sanskrit, though not the vernacular, is still drawn upon as a language resource.

The English Language in India

The English language is often spoken of as one of the most powerful and influential forces shaping India towards what some claim in the literature as being one of the world's 'super powers' (Chari, 2011; S. B. Desai et al., 2010; Guha, 2007; Nilekani, 2008; Rothermund, 2008; Tharoor, 2007). In seeking to understand this state of affairs, the discussion in this section explores some of the history and background of the English language in Indian demographics and cultural policy, and begins to explore the impact of the English language on Indian society in recent times.

The role of the English language in India is changing, impacting on regional languages, and contributing to the debates around Hindi as a national language and the education system. Most significantly though, as Graddol (2010) and others (e.g. Nilekani, 2008; Sheorey, 2006; Tharoor, 2007) claim, English has brought many benefits to modern India. It has also created fundamental social divisions between those who can speak English, and those who cannot.

In a country with hundreds of languages, spoken in 30 states and five Union territories (Khubchandani, 2008), English is the most frequently taught second language in 27 of the 34 states at the upper primary level of school, and 21 of 34 states at the secondary level. And actually, over a quarter of all secondary schools in India now claim to offer English as a medium of instruction (Goward & Zhang, 2014; Meganathan, 2011, p. 19).

English has the status of an official language in many regions, and is used for "official purposes within the State" (Government of India, 1949) which Kachru and Nelson (2006) express as "intranational" purposes, where English becomes a 'link' language or medium to communicate inside and outside the country. The ability to speak and understand English is widely associated with status and social advantage (Dheram, 2005; Graddol, 2010; Meganathan, 2011; Sheorey, 2006). Gramley (2001) maintains that in India where several regional native languages compete with each other—for example Hindi, Bengali and Tamil—English is used as a supposedly "neutral" language. This means that English then functions as a *High language*, in that it is used as the spoken and written language in formal or public situations. Local languages are considered to be *Low languages*, and their domains are characterised by informal, private, vernacular and oral communication.

In the 1990s, according to Sedlatschek (2009), there was an upsurge in learning English, as a consequence of the economic reforms in 1991. Also transnational companies relocating to India increased the demand. Even in Bollywood, according to Sheorey (2006) and Chaudhary (2009), actors prefer to speak in English when interviewed, even if the film has been produced in Hindi. In addition, according to editors Iyer and Zare (2009) in their book *Other Tongues*, the publishing industry has significantly changed over the last 60 years. They say that the English language has moved away from perpetuating the values of colonial imperialism and now conveys the language of a globalising world and in many cases westernisation. As Sedlatschek (2009) observes, in India it is the mark of modernisation, and an entrée into a globalised world. It has become the language for global economic and political contexts and the medium to discuss scientific and technical, medical and legal expertise.

English has had mixed effects on Indian society, with its range of castes. Ravi Sheorey (2006) and Ramanathan (1999) put forward the view that the English language in India has the potential to divide Indian society through access and opportunity. They observe that the advantages and the 'power' in society are towards those who can speak English, that is, those who are primarily the upper and middle classes who can afford English medium schooling and college education. English has been the language of the middle classes in India since colonial times and is increasingly so in today's world where those of the colonial middle class seek to preserve their middle class status through English language skills in the newly privatised work sector (Donner & De Neve, 2011; Fernandes, 2006; Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009). Proficiency is seen as an imperative to maintaining social status, taking

advantage of the growing technological infrastructure and information technology businesses and related industries where the jobs are well paid and rewarded. The strong competition for limited places in the Indian Institutes of Technology, for example, attests to this demand. It has also prompted families to send their children to western countries for higher education, bringing mixed consequences; an Indian diaspora is spreading across the globe and/or returning home to take up lucrative jobs (Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009).

Ravi Sheorey (2006), Ramanathan (1999) and Kishwar (2005) propose that the poorer and /or lower castes have reduced access to English because typically they live in the rural areas with reduced access to English teachers and English medium schools. They tend to be denied opportunities afforded by the upper and middle classes, including well-paying and stable professional jobs.

English has become the 'career language' due initially to the use of English in university and college education. It is used in government and the private sector with the rise of the middle class and the need for English speaking workers in 'call centres' and the global services market with 'voice-based' jobs. Those who advocate English as a 'career language' in India see it as the entrée into higher paying jobs and admission into the middle class (Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009; Graddol, 2010; Guha, 2007; Meganathan, 2011; Nilekani, 2008; Roberts, 2006; Sedlatschek, 2009; Sheorey, 2006). However, this issue is one that is set to possibly divide a nation. According to Graddol (2010), the *scheduled castes and tribes* (two groups of historically-disadvantaged people recognised in the *Constitution of India*) contribute to approximately 28 per cent of the population, and the general attitude of more privileged classes towards them is that they are not deserving of social and economic equality (p. 463). Furthermore, a child's educational opportunities, if they are from these *scheduled castes and tribes*, are greatly reduced, because of their inability to access quality English medium schools (Goward & Zhang, 2014).

Historically, Sedlatschek (2009) and J. Mukherjee (2010) assert that English was the third European language to reach India in the sixteenth century. A Christian, Roman Catholic Jesuit priest acting as a missionary was the first to settle. Later, according to Nilekan (2008) Chaudhary (2009) and Ostler (2011), the English language became one of the major trading languages or a 'port' language in the 1500s, following Vasco de Gama's exploratory travels. It began as a pidgin tongue, and was made up of a blend of Hindustani, Portuguese, French, Dutch and English. Traders were keen to learn the 'rich man's language' and so it became established. Later, in the 1600s, the *East India Company*, a trading company established

under the British Queen Elizabeth, began to trade with India and China. Therefore, the English language's singularity of power in India was firmly established. Over the next two hundred years, the East India Company took direct control of India as the British Raj, when the Government of India Act (India) was enacted in 1858 (Keay, 2011). Although India appears to have had a linguistic advantage because of British colonisation, English was an imposed language, used and taught by and for the privileged—it was (and continues to be) a language of authority, power and status. Hence it has often been viewed with suspicion and seen as representing colonialism and a divider of people (Nilekani, 2008). When the British colonisers left in 1947 the English language was tainted with this legacy. Paradoxically when India became a republic, the English language performed a different role but still with power attached. For some, it has since played a major role in administratively unifying the country, acting as a joining and linking language—the *lingua franca*. Furthermore, for the *Dalits* or what was previously known as the *Untouchable* caste, the English language signified freedom from the nuances and historical ties to Indian literature and Hindu texts, where the caste system was deeply embedded and where Untouchables were imbued with the stigma of low status in society and outright discrimination. English for the Dalits, then, was appropriated as a representation of hope for emancipation, and the ability to unite through a medium where their voices could be heard (Lyer & Zare, 2009; Mitchell, 2009; Nilekani, 2008).

During the 'East India Company' era, the East India Company Act 1813 (UK), also known as the Charter Act of 1813 (UK), through an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, renewed the charter issued to the British East India Company, which continued the Company's rule in India. The Act expressly asserted the Crown's sovereignty over British India; it allotted 100,000 rupees to promote education in India; and, allowed Christian missionaries to come to British India and preach their religion through schools. Also, a financial provision was made to encourage Indian literature and the promotion of science (Dheram, 2005; Keith, 1961). This Act laid down the foundation for English language education in India. In 1833 when the East India Company faced bankruptcy and wanted to reduce administrative costs, a proposal for cheaper local Indians was accepted. It was decided that to save money they would employ local Indians to do the administrative and clerical tasks, rather than use the expensive English clerks brought from England. Thus, English became a 'library language' used for reading and the translation of texts, and not for

everyday usage. Also, commercial teaching of English and Christian missionary zeal to spread their religion was on offer, and added to the spread across India (Ostler, 2011).

Another significant milestone for the English language in India was established when Thomas Macaulay, a law officer to the Supreme Council, in 1835 drafted 'Macaulay's Minute on Education' (Clive, 1973; Ghosh, 2009; Sabin, 2002). From then on, English became the official language of education and of the government (Sedlatschek, 2009). Henceforth, Macaulay was credited with introducing the English language into the education system in India. Although according to Graddol (2010), the Minute "appears to deprecate the value of Indian languages, elevate the qualities of English, and declare that English should henceforth become the medium of education in India" (p. 62). There has been much discussion and debate about his Minute ever since because of its underlying prejudices (see e.g., Clive, 1973; Dheram, 2005; Hussain, 2012; Jayate, 2007; Keith, 1961; Reddy & Reddy, 2012; Srinivasan, 2008). Nevertheless, it was a momentous factor in the establishment of the use of English and bilingual education in India, and encouraged the rise of an "Anglophone subculture" (J. Mukherjee, 2010, p. 170; Sedlatschek, 2009, p. 13).

Following the official departure of the English colonisers in 1947, an education legacy was founded, the *British Council*, and established in 1948. Its mission was and still is to "promote a broad and wider appreciation of British culture and civilisation [by] encouraging cultural, educational and other interchanges between the United Kingdom and elsewhere" (The British Council, 2013a). Since then, it has developed library services, training programs and reports, and is still highly active in the development of English language policy and programs today (Dheram, 2005; Graddol, 2010; The British Council, 2013b).

In 1950, when Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, declared English to be the official language for 15 years, this was written into Article 343 (1) of the Constitution of India (Nilekan 2008; Guha 2007; Chaudhary 2009) for the Proceedings of the Courts, and administrative bureaucracy. However, in 1967 the 1967 Language Act (India) was amended so that both English and Hindi were deemed official languages (Nilekan 2008; Guha 2007; Chaudhary 2009). Both languages then served to link the south and the north which, according to Nilekan (2008), was politic, and in hindsight managed to prevent internal power struggles that could have broken apart the newly forming India (Goward & Zhang, 2014).

Demographics of the English Language in India

India is not based on a single race but on many. To outsiders, it is not often understood that the identity, manners and physiognomy of each region or state are different, and each has its own language, culture and traditions. For example, there are several languages in the state of Gujarat, and Hindi is spoken in many of the northern states of India, whereas in the southern states of India, Telagu, Malayam and Tamil are spoken (Chaudhary, 2009; Tharoor, 2007). And so it is not surprising, according to Ramachandra Guha (2007) and Tharoor (2007), that English has become the language in common, where people establish communication in English and then move on to a known or shared language when possible. Yet, capturing the demographics of the English language in India is 'patchy' according to Graddol (2010), because of poor records and some people not even being registered as having been born, and the census data to some extent being out of date. Hence, English language data can only ever be roughly estimated. For example, it is estimated that between 10 million to 350 million Indians speak some English, and in the future the number of Indians speaking a dialect of English will outnumber the combined total of native speakers in Britain, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia (Graddol, 2010). On the other hand, Sheorey (2006), Roberts (2009) and Graddol (2010) quote the number of English speaking people as approximately five per cent who speak it socially and in official capacities, and that most Indian graduates are able to speak and write in English. If one considers that five per cent of 1.2 billion people is about 50 million people, then India has one of the largest English-using populations after the United States and the United Kingdom.

Another indicator of English usage is the number of English language daily newspapers, which have a circulation of over three million copies and often one copy is shared and read by several people in a community or a family (Goward & Zhang, 2014). Also, Sedlatschek (2009) refers to survey results published by Raja Ram Mehotra, in 1998. Nine domains were identified where English was used. The first three were in "trades and commerce", in relation to correspondence and reading financial newspapers and magazines. The others were: "Administration", for the writing of official documents; "Education", when providing information in classes; "Family" situations and events; "Recreation" when watching television; "Hotels and restaurants", when interacting with guests and customers; "Sports", when listening to sports commentaries or reading sports magazines; "Politics", when delivering lectures and issuing orders; and, "Religion", when reading religious works. However, as Sedlatschek (2009) observes, Mehotra has not captured the subtleties of English

as an embedded language. For example, those who are multi-lingual, use English in the following ways. When amongst close intimates, the native mother-dialect is used. When traveling, shopping or mixing with acquaintances, the local or regional language is used. However, when in a deluxe hotel or restaurant or traveling first class, English and only English is used. He also notes that amongst friends English is often the only shared language. This then presents the conundrum of 'Indian English'.

Indian English

Indian English or "IndE" is a new hybrid English that has been gradually emerging over several decades according to Sedlatschek (2009). This has been due to ongoing contact with Indian languages, and its use by Indians with various linguistic backgrounds. The structure of IndE, such as the sounds, rhythm, vocabulary and sentence structure, have morphed and changed in response to the local language and communication needs. Nilekani (2008), Tharoor (2007) and Chaudhary (2009) consider it to be a 'popular dialect' or a mixture of English and the speakers' own mother tongue. It could be derived, for example, from Bengali and English or 'Benglish', Hindi and English or 'Hinglish', and Tamil and English or 'Tanglish' with distinctive variants and legitimacy.

Those who speak this dialect, Tharoor (2007) and Kurzon (2008) propose, often believe they speak 'the Queen's English' but in practice, their speaking goes beyond the *Oxford English Dictionary's* "words of Indian origin". For example in the Malayalam language, from the state of Kerala in the south of India, the word 'veranda' or 'verandah' means a large, open entryway, sometimes enclosed and often extending from the roof and across the front and sides of a house. Bengali, from the region of Bengal, has the word 'bungalow', which is a one-storied thatched or tiled house, usually surrounded by a veranda. Indian English also incorporates syntax such as "It was good, no?" and "I am seeing this drama thrice already". J. Mukherjee (2010) also includes loanwords such as *coolie* for porter or luggage-carrier, *goonda* for hooligan, and *mela* for crowd. He also maintains that Indian English speakers have created a new vocabulary, made up of English words such as "batch-mate" for class-mate, "to off/on" for switch off, "shoe-bite" for blister and to "prepone" for, to bring forward in time; and some archaic English words, such as "thrice". Tharoor (2007) passionately advocates for "Indian English", and argues strongly that the terms and usage in an Indian context "would be impossible (and unnatural) to convey in an 'English' translation" (p. 463). There has been transcultural exchange of words from Indian languages into English. For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, first published in 1884, includes

Indian words such as ‘champue’ (shampoo), ‘veranda’, ‘cheroot’, ‘curry’ and ‘typhoon’ (Nilekani, 2008; Paul, 2003). These are still in use today, and many more have infiltrated into international usage of English. Another view of Indian English is that a small group of young Indians, often elite, speak English in a way that is distinctly ‘Indian’ yet “unmarked” (Graddol, 2010; Sheorey, 2006). It is a type of English preferred by the Indian broadcast media, traditionally heard during cricket radio commentaries. This elite English is often mistaken as part of the national language identity, but even so, it sometimes enables wider comprehension.

Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998) reflected, near the turn of the twenty-first century, that perhaps Indian English was suffering some “insecurity” (p. 3), similar to Indian nationalism. But as the twenty first century has emerged, J. Mukherjee (2010) posits that Indian English is part of the “Indian identity-construction”. He refers to the increasing number of Indian fiction writers, who, although they may be writing in English for an international audience, have adopted an “Indian cultural experience and storytelling” (p. 177). Writers such as Arundhati Roy, Aravid Adiga, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, Neel Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth—many of whom have won the “Man Booker Prize” for Literature or have been short or long listed—are a tribute to that distinctively hybrid Indian expression.

Another view of Indian English is put forward by Nilekani (2008) where he describes English as the “auntie tongue syndrome”, which was first coined by Dasgupta (1993). Nilekani states that English is the language that unifies and connects, an “associate official” language, with which everything from business to gossip is discussed. Unlike Tharoor (2007), Nilekani is less passionate about Indian English, and he matter-of-factly states that English is a *second* language for most who speak it in India. He contends that it has arisen through a history of ambivalence, because of India’s mixed relationship with the United Kingdom, and has more to do with India’s development as a nation in its search for identity and unity. He argues that those Indians who were well educated in English, during colonisation, became aware that they were denied power as they were relegated to the junior ranks of the bureaucracy, and also many were left unemployed because these jobs were highly sought after and contested. This paved the way for unrest and conflict towards the colonising English. Paradoxically, according to Nilekani (2008), the English language had the effect of unification because they had a common language for communication, and an ability to access newspapers, publications and literature across the world, which offered them

insights into the rise of colonies against imperialism. This in turn brought about a shared sense of Indian identity and led to the formation of 'resistance' against the domination of the English. However, as Pennycook (2010c) suggests, given that India is such a diverse country in both language and regions, there are arguments for India to adopt Indian English as the *lingua franca*. J. Mukherjee (2010) concludes that Indian English is a "semi-autonomous variety" and in a "steady state of progressive forces of language change and conservative forces of (native) norm persistence" (p. 177). That is, Indian English has two forces, one that keeps it close to local use and the other that keeps it close to what is perceived as 'native English' for the sake of international communication. In conclusion, the English language is a powerful force for both unification and diversification, and is a contributing factor as India explores its newly forming identity. The next section discusses and focuses on the Tamils, in India and in Melbourne, Australia.

The Tamils in India

The Tamils originated from the south of India, now known as the state of Tamil Nadu situated south of the Vindhya Mountains, often referred to as the mountains that divide the north from the south in India. Tamil history and cultures are rich and complex, and extend some 2,000 years. They are well documented by authors such as Aiyangar (1923), Chaturvedi (2005), K.A.N Sastri (1966; 2009) and R. Sastri (2002). I offer a brief overview here to provide some background and context for the purpose of this study.

The main source of historical information about the Tamils, also known as Tamil literature, originated with the *Sangam Works* and was written by Tamil scholars, who were considered to have been 'Aryan'. Many scholars since have drawn upon the Tamil literature to describe Tamil cultures (Aiyangar, 1923). The Tamil people are known as 'Tamilians' or Tamils. They are descended from a Dravidian ethnic group and speak Tamil as their native language. They are one of the largest and oldest of the existing ethno-linguistic cultural groups of people in the modern world. The earliest presence of Tamil people has been dated to megalithic urn burials, from around 1500 BC and onwards (Chaturvedi, 2005; K. A. N. Sastri, 2009). It was when the Aryans from the north moved into south India in approximately 1000BC that historical accounts began (K. A. N. Sastri, 2009, p. 13). According to Algeo and Pyles (2004), languages belonging to the Dravidian group were once spoken throughout India. They were also considered one of the aboriginal languages of India which were affected by the linguistic Indo-European invasion approximately 1500BC by the

Aryans. The Tamil language, with its own identifiable grammatical rules, was recognised in the 1300s.

There is a long history of Tamil Hindu temple architecture in most of the major cities across Tamil Nadu. For example, the production of *Chola* period bronzes, especially the *Nataraja* sculpture, has become a symbol of Hinduism (Anantharaman, 2006; Michell, 1993, 2003). Tamil performing arts, *Bharatanatyam*, are in the classical form, whereas the popular forms known as *Kuthus*, are performed in village temples and publicly on street corners. Tamil cinema is popularly known as *Kollywood*, and is an important part of the Indian cinema industry (Velayutham, 2008). *Carnatic* music is the classical form, and the famous Carnatic music festival, also known as the 'Madras Music Season', is held annually in Chennai. It was established by The Academy of Music in the 1920s (The Music Academy, 2013). Tamil cuisine is mostly vegetarian, and usually heavily spiced, with what the western world knows as "curries" (Wood, 1995).

In conclusion, the English historian and broadcaster Michael Wood (Jeffs, 2009; Wood, 1995, 2007) offers an acute observation. He remarks that the Tamil people represent the last surviving classical civilisation on Earth where they appear to have preserved substantial elements of their past, in regard to their culture, music and literature, which survived quite successfully until the end of the twentieth century (Wood, 1995). However, with globalisation and the opening up of India's economy, Tamil Nadu in the last fifteen years or so is being transformed by the establishment of transnational companies which are having particular effects on its history and culture. I discuss this further in Chapter 4.

Tamil Community in Melbourne

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) (2014a), people classified as Tamil are those who speak Tamil, and whose ancestors were Tamil or those who identify with Tamil culture. For the purposes of my study, this definition, although satisfactory, does not delineate those who originated from India and Sri Lanka in all situations. However according to the 2011 census, there were 50,151 people who spoke Tamil at home, which is 0.23% of the Australian population. Most Tamil speakers were born in Sri Lanka (39.6%), followed by India (34.9%). In Melbourne, there are two suburbs where Tamils tended to reside, Dandenong and Glen Waverley (Special Broadcasting Service, 2014a), but where they originated from was not clear. Furthermore, because of Tamil refugees and immigrants from Sri Lanka, most of the data is centred on this

group. Little information is available about Tamils emigrating from India. However, my investigation into the Tamil culture and its preservation in Melbourne showed a range of organisations, for example, four Hindu temples, several Tamil schools that teach the Tamil language and aspects of the culture to children on Saturdays, and several *Bharatanatyam* dance schools and *Carnatic* classical music schools. Lastly, there is the 'Valluvar Foundation' (2013) incorporating the 'Australian Tamil Academy', 'Tamil Research Centre', and 'Valluvar Arts Centre' which teaches and promotes the Tamil language and traditional cultures, and has its roots in Tamil Nadu.

Previous Ethnographic Studies of Culture and Cultural Practices in India

Previous studies that are directly relevant to my study can be grouped into two broad areas. The first group focuses on Indian women, including one study located in Bombay and the other study located in Melbourne. The authors in the first group of studies position themselves as originating from India, although their status in terms of insider or outsider is not clear and is not discussed explicitly. The authors in the second group make it clear that the researcher is a 'white' outsider. One study, in this second group is located in the slums of Madras (Chennai), and the other study is located in south India with a focus on the ethical issues of conducting health research. All of these researchers are women, and each overtly discusses her role and position as a researcher. I will discuss each one briefly, starting with the researchers who were investigating the lived experiences of Indian women.

Costa-Pinto's (2008) PhD thesis examines the migration narratives of women from India from three ethnicities, Anglo-India, Sikh and Tamil, all of whom were living in Melbourne. Similarly to myself, Costa-Pinto used narratives as a way of exploring the topic. She describes herself as a "Goan", that is, a person from the state of Goa, on the west coast of India. Costa-Pinto initiated the study from her own experience of immigrating to Australia, to understand the experiences of other women from India. Although she separated out the participants' stories from her own, she ultimately brought them together in her final analysis. Costa-Pinto talks of these women juggling work, home and the community on two level: as immigrants grounded in Melbourne, and online, as they maintain connections and relationships with 'home'.

Sadarangani's (2005) thesis focuses on living with women in Bombay (Mumbai). She observes their daily domestic routines and Hindu rituals and compares these with those of women from India who live in Hawaii. She relates very little of her own experiences, and

focuses primarily on the women she observes and interviews via a survey. This study was useful for me in the early stages of my study because I could gain some insights into the daily routines and rituals for women who practise the Hindu faith generally and so compare this with my own study. Methodologically, I was also encouraged to explore alternative approaches to research involving narrative and reflexivity.

Vera-Sanso's (1993) study, although over twenty years ago, was set in the slums of Madras (Chennai) and provided a critical account of various perceptions of gender in India. In particular, she was interested in exploring Indian perceptions of herself as a white, British woman. I found her reflexive and reflective observations and narratives resonated with my own experiences. Although my study included middle-class women and families, many of the values and attitudes had not changed in the intervening twenty years, even though the women I met with and interviewed were of a higher status in society. Also, some of the attitudes expressed towards Vera-Sanso were similar to the ones I encountered. Lastly, similarly to myself and my study, Vera-Sanso's reflections about preparing herself as a researcher, were invaluable. Even though she claims to have prepared diligently, my view is that it was only partial preparation, and it was during fieldwork where she learned the most. I discuss this further in Chapter 8.

Riessman (2005) writes in her 2005 account of her fieldwork experiences in the south of India in 1993-4. Her argument is for "ethics-in-context" (p. 473) based on relationships formed in the field. Riessman maintains that the western notion of ethics is not always applicable in other contexts and in some cases makes for conflict. Her point is that western ethical assumptions are not always transferable, and in the case of gaining ethical consent and confidentiality to participate in a research study, need to be modified. I discuss and compare my experiences in the field with hers in Chapter 7. What I discover is that although twenty years have passed since her fieldwork and ten years have passed since her journal article, I agree with her supposition and so similarly adjusted and allowed for the cultural context, in my study.

Thorough preparation to do intercultural fieldwork is a theme common to Vera-Sanso's and Riessman's studies. Both are aware that they were outsiders and westerners, undertaking studies in locations that were unfamiliar to them. Likewise, I too realise that I needed to move from the tourist's gaze to being a grounded, ethical researcher. This next section discusses the notion of intercultural competence, and where I position myself with respect to the literature and the research I have undertaken.

Cultural Competency

Prior to my discussion of the literature on intercultural competency, I will commence by positioning my identity and myself as an intercultural researcher. I draw initially on the work of Peter Adler (1977) who in 1977 described the characteristics of what he termed "multicultural man" and his or her suitability for working across cultures. He stated that:

> The identity of the "multicultural", far from being frozen in a social character, is more fluid and mobile, more susceptible to change, more open to variation. It is an identity based not on a "belongingness" which implies either owning or being owned by culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality. In this sense the multicultural person is a radical departure from the kinds of identities found in both traditional and mass societies. He or she is neither totally a part of nor totally apart from his or her culture; instead, he or she lives on the boundary (Adler, 1977, p.26).

On the surface, this description seems to suggest that it is possible to transcend one's own culture, which seems attractive and plausible, particularly in today's globalising world. However, Sparrow (2008) argues that this describes a notion of a white, western male who possibly does not exist and does not represent a desirable model for cross cultural communication anyway. Like Sparrow (2008), I view intercultural competence, personal growth, and an ability to mediate and communicate based on values of 'connection', 'interaction' and 'shared meaning' as central to the construction of my identity. Thus, I do not see myself as an individualistic "multicultural person", but someone who is attempting to be integrated in more complex ways with the range of cultures and cultural positions I am researching. I now move on to discuss the literature, which supports this view.

Australia, like the United States and the United Kingdom, is increasingly multicultural, moving towards a land of minorities where in the future "no group, including Whites, will be able to claim a majority of the population" (Deardorff, 2009a, p. ix). Hence, as Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) propose, there is an imperative that in Australia and other nations we should develop intercultural understandings and an ability to live and work with people from different values and backgrounds. Not only is this important for the everyday person but also for the intercultural researcher.

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) define intercultural competence as the "appropriate and effective management of interactions between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioural orientations to the world" (p. 7). This is similar to the definition that Deardorff (2009b) offers, except that she

refers to it as the external outcome of intercultural competence: it is "the *effective* and *appropriate* behaviour and communication in intercultural situations" (p. 479). Spitzberg and Changnon liken intercultural interaction to intergroup interaction, that is, the individuals within a group and their interactions are what matter. How these individuals within a group interact, and the influence of the group they belong to and their cultural affiliations and characteristics, become what they term an "intercultural process" (p. 7). They reviewed several models of cultural competence and observed key elements that are common to all of them: motivation, knowledge, skills, context, and outcomes. Each model is developed to suit a particular discipline or paradigm, for example global competencies, intercultural adjustment, intercultural communication, human resources management, organisational and business models. There are too many for me to explain comprehensively in this section. I will say, however, that Spitzberg and Changnon's critique of the models are that the interactions are mostly on the rational level, and the application of emotional theories would be an important improvement to such rationalist studies. Furthermore, many of the models suggest that they are adaptable, but their concern is that this has not been adequately tested. Another concern is that the models have been developed in western or Anglo contexts, with an emphasis on individuality and assertiveness, whereas an eastern view might give more weight instead to empathy, sensitivity and conformity. Lastly, they posit that because there are so many models and many appear similar to each other, more effort could be put into evaluating and testing the models, so that a more disciplined model could successfully integrate the diversity (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Fantini (2009) offers a view of cultural competency which he describes as a "framework for a holistic view of intercultural competence" (p. 458). He proposes that:

> Attributes most commonly cited in the literature … are flexibility, humour, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and suspending judgements. The three interrelated areas are the ability to establish and maintain close relationships, the ability to communicate with minimal loss or distortion, and the ability to cooperate to accomplish tasks of mutual interest or need. The four dimensions are knowledge, (positive) attitudes (or affect), skills, and awareness. (Fantini, 2009, p. 459)

Deardorff (2009b) too has a model, the "Process model of intercultural competence" (p. 480) (see Figure 2. below) which incorporates the individual and the interaction between individuals and between an individual and other cultural groups. This means that the degree of cultural competence depends on the level of attitudes, knowledge or comprehension and

skills. With this model she argues that it is possible, therefore, to assess and self-assess intercultural competence through various methods such as case studies, interviews, observation by others, judgment by self and others, analysis of narrative diaries, portfolios, critical reflection and use of multiple data collection and corroboration (Deardorff, 2009b, 2011). And she argues against surface-level knowledge of foods, greetings, customs and facts to assess intercultural competence. She further suggests using an assessment plan with goals and learning objectives (Deardorff, 2009b, 2011). However, she warns that, as in all assessment processes and procedures, there are problems and pitfalls, such as not clearly defining goals, having a poorly written assessment plan, leaving assessments to the end of a project or process, or only using one tool or method for assessment.

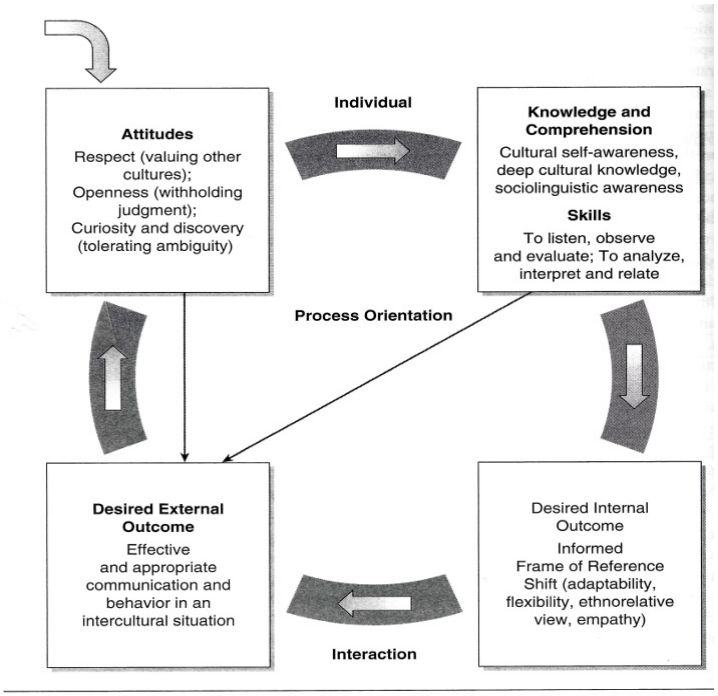

Figure 2. Process model of intercultural competence

As a novice ethnographic intercultural researcher I found Deardorff's process useful, but in practice, I only applied it when I was at the point of 'collecting data'. Furthermore, in the beginning of my study, my exploration of the literature was not extensive. Therefore, I drew very much on my experiences of working with migrants, my travels and readings such as Liamputtong (2010, 2008). But I did set myself learning goals as I identified challenges and areas that I needed to reflectively and reflexively examine and change within myself. I discuss how I did this in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8, where I narrate my experiences.

In conclusion, as M. J. Clark (2012) explains, a responsive intercultural researcher will probably attain or have these types of characteristics:

- Self-awareness and self-understanding … about views of race and cultural diversity and understands his or her own cultural beliefs, values and norms that influence relationships with others.
- Awareness and understanding of the culture in which he or she is working.
- Social responsiveness and ethical responsibility, willing to work toward greater multicultural understanding in the larger society and willing to make an effort to include diverse cultural groups in all work.
- Willingness and capacity to employ techniques and strategies to promote effective intercultural interactions. These include effective communication, use of theories and paradigms developed with diverse groups, use of diverse research teams and strategies to make research procedures compatible with group norms. The effective researcher also focuses on topics relevant to diverse groups, partners with participants and respects participants' language and cultural heritage. (M. J. Clark, 2012, pp. 28-29)

To a large degree, because of previous encounters, I had worked towards a high degree of self-awareness and self-understanding about my own culture, prior to visiting Chennai (India) to gather and generate data. I had invested large amounts of time reading about India, the Tamils and the Hindu religion, and talking to Tamil people living in Melbourne. I believe that I am an inclusive person by nature, and so have a diverse range of friends and work colleagues from different cultures who I have worked with in team projects, and who encouraged a range of ideas. Lastly, I value the importance of good communication, and so ensure that topics and language are respected, acknowledged and accounted for.

However, as M. J. Clark (2012), Deardorff (2006, 2009b, 2011) and Fantini (2009) discern, despite the best of intentions, with these characteristics in place and sound preparation, there are always challenges when in the field. I believe that it was *because* I was curious, open and willing to admit I had made mistakes that I learned more. I identified challenges and misunderstandings through a process of acknowledging my physical discomfort when I did not understand what was happening around me or that 'the atmosphere had changed in the room', which I discuss in Chapter 8. I also self-assessed my practices in my research journal and diaries. I discussed conundrums with my PhD supervisors, and discussed difficulties directly with the families that I stayed with in Chennai and colleagues who I have travelled with at different times. Furthermore, I was always ready to apologise, attempt to understand the situation and, if not at least accept it, rectify the situation where I

could, and learn. In return, I found a similar respect was given to me, and it seemed to me that we all learned. I discuss this further in Chapter 8, when I narrate my experiences.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presented a range of literature relating to India, Indian history and culture, and the preparation needed to undertake a study of another culture. Firstly, I briefly explored the history and culture of India and the Tamil peoples. I characterised India as a vast, complex and ancient land, whose cultural heritage extends back over thousands of years; Tamil cultures and cultural practices extend perhaps even further.

I also discussed the importance of the English language in India and, how it has affected India significantly in the last three hundred years. I showed how English has been a trading language, then a colonial language, and more recently a 'link' language within India that also has the potential of empowering those who learn it, and disadvantaging any who do not through the processes of globalisation.

I also reviewed several other related studies in south India and Melbourne, which in various ways informed the design and methodology of my study. These included stories of ethnographic studies of Indian migrant women's experiences in Australia, the daily lives of Hindu women in India, and the complicated negotiated role of white, western researchers in south India and the implications for my study in the area of ethics and how I am perceived as a researcher.

Lastly, I investigated the notion of intercultural competence and its importance for an intercultural researcher in an era of globalisation. I observed that I needed to distance myself from any trite view that Adler offers, and so through a process of learning Deardorff's model and taking on the salient lessons from Liamputtong, I presented a position as to what intercultural competence means, and how to apply it in my daily life and role as an ethical intercultural researcher.

In the next chapter I present the conceptual framework that supports this study, and I discuss the literature on globalisation, culture and identity as it relates to my study of middle-class Tamil peoples in Chennai and Melbourne.

Chapter 3

Drawing the *Kolam*[4]: Globalisation, Culture and Identity

> There is no striving to enter the kingdom of culture, one is already in residence (Posnock, 1998, p. 5)

The next two Literature Review chapters investigate the nature and relevance of globalisation and globalisation discourses in the cultures and cultural practices of middle-class Tamils in Chennai and Melbourne, and also the ways in which globalisation and discourses of globalisation mediated my work as researcher in this investigation.

At the commencement of my study, my research questions focused on the effect of the English language on the Tamil community. Consequently, the purpose of my early readings had two major foci. One was to learn about India and the Tamils; the other was to understand the origins of the English language, to examine the history of the English language in India, and how it came to assume the role as the *lingua franca* in India. In developing a position with respect to the role of globalisation in this history, the work of a range of researchers—especially Crystal (2003, 2006, 2008), Graddol (2010), Kirkpatrick (2010) and Pennycook (1994, 2003, 2007)—was particularly important for this study. Others also contributed some valuable perspectives (e.g. Chotiner, 2010; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Samir Dasgupta & Kiely, 2006; El-Ojeili & Hayden, 2006a; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Saxena & Omoniyi, 2010; Seargeant & Swann, 2012; Siemund et al., 2012). All these authors tended to agree that various discourses around globalisation can help to provide explanations for the

[4] The *Kolam* is a system of geometric line drawings in front of a home or prayer room within a house. It is comprised of curved loops, drawn around a grid pattern of dots, depicting flower petals and elaborate designs, and often made with finely milled rice flour in different colours. It is to welcome visitors and bring luck and prosperity to the family. In days past it also told stories and provided news about the family within (Bhalla, 2007; Hancock, 1999; Nagarajan, 2007; Shanthi, 2012). I choose this word in association with this chapter to represent the framework of the study.

shifts and transitions in the national economies, political interactions, transcultural flows, and an increasing sense of compressed time and place.

As I engaged with these ideas, my reading broadened and a larger picture emerged where I understood that my ethnographic study was inevitably situated in a globalised world. It would be important for me to see myself as an ethnographic, intercultural researcher operating in that world and influenced by these globalising forces. As the study progressed, I became more sensitive to the influence of globalisation on the cultures, cultural practices and language of the Tamil peoples in Chennai and on Tamil diasporic communities in Australia. Hence to discuss another culture (the Tamil peoples in Chennai, India) and of course my own culture as a researcher in this study, globalisation could not be ignored or put in the margins. Consequently the focus of my research, as I will explain further in Methodology Chapter 5, needed to shift to incorporate a more comprehensive understanding of the global dimensions of the local phenomena I was investigating.

The process that I used to identify relevant literature included searching with the following key-words: global, globalisation/globalisation, nation-states, English language, culture and identity, cross-cultural, inter-cultural/intercultural, India, Tamils, diaspora, colonial and post-colonial, orientalism, East-West divide, middle-class Tamils, families in India, Indian economics, Hinduism, and the role of women in the Tamil cultures and across India.

My expanding search of the literature showed that cross-cultural, intercultural and transcultural studies should apply to the kind of educational research I was undertaking in today's globalised world, and that this research should include a range of post-colonial research, researchers and discourses.

Thus, I have divided the second part of the literature review about globalisation into two chapters. The first, Chapter 3, reviews different understandings and definitions of globalisation, and considers its effects on national and local communities, cultures and identities. In Chapter 4, I offer an explanation of the effects of globalisation on India and Australia with a particular focus on notions of multiculturalism in both countries. In India the focus is on middle-class Tamils and Tamil Nadu's changing economic environment; and in Australia, the focus is on globalisation and multiculturalism. I close by returning to a discussion on the dominant role of the English language in globalisation.

Globalisation

The vast body of literature on globalisation tends to present the current historical moment as characterised by a rapid movement of people, practices and policies across the world. Globalisation (or globalization) —sometimes referred to as *globalisations* (Chirico, 2014; Samir Dasgupta & Kiely, 2006; El-Ojeili & Hayden, 2006a; Gills, 2006; Ray, 2007; Ritzer, 2007b; Robertson, 1992; Robertson & White, 2007; Turner, 2010b) —is a frequently used and highly contested term in the literature, especially in fields such as economics and culture. Turner (2010b), Eriksen (2014) and Robertson (1992) are typical in acknowledging there are disputes over definitions of globalisation and its future, but claiming there is reasonable consensus that "globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness about the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). Some authors point separately to the increasingly rapid and easy exchange of commodities (Robertson & White, 2007).

Connell (2007) explains that during the 1980s the term "globalization" was popular amongst business and management theorists, and it was used to explain economic strategies of large transnational organisations based in Europe, Japan, and the United States. Indeed, this is how early references to globalisation appeared in the financial sections of newspapers and journals. Connell goes on to assert that around this time sociologists began to explore the phenomenon and its effects on society. Globalisation became a new form of society, and writers such as Ulrich Beck (1992) in his book *Risk society: Towards a new modernity* foregrounded discourses of globalisation and suggested that there were new ways of being in the world. According to Beck, peoples throughout the world were living in a new kind of capitalism, economy, global order, and society. New ways of seeing oneself were developing. He claimed that sociologically there was a paradigm shift and a new frame of reference emerging for understanding the world and cultures.

In 1996, Huntington describes the early debates about understandings of globalisation as a "clash of civilizations". Later, Choudhary (2007) proposes a model to understand globalisation, where he divides the definitions of globalisation into "interpretation" and "meanings" (p. 13). He maintains that where globalisation is "interpreted", it tends to suit the dominant discourses of economics and power; and, those who view globalisation as having "meaning" see globalisation as culturally situated, and more as a concept open to contestation. Some other researchers challenge the normative discourse of globalisation, known as *anti-globalisation* movements, although "ironically [they too are] also an

expression of globalization" (Turner, 2010b, p. 9) (see also Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Kellner (2010) further maintains that notions of globalisation can be imposed on peoples, often through cyber or online computer mediated activism. Wallerstein (2000) is another example of those who strongly argue against the term globalisation, claiming that it is misleading. He proposes the term "transition" instead. However, it should be noted that Wallerstein takes more of an economic view of these concepts (Robinson, 2011). This robust contesting of globalisation discourses is illustrative of the diverse perspectives taken across the world, perspectives which are powerfully mediated by the history, geography, culture and politics of the researchers and writer. It is fair to say that writers and researchers from developing nations or post-colonialists who identify with the challenge of peoples from these countries in the face of globalising forces, generally distrust the prevailing dominant discourses that tend to proliferate in more privileged nations. For some in those poorer nations, the concept of globalisation represents the division of the world economically into those 'who have' and those 'who have not'.

Robertson and White (2007), El-Ojeili and Hayden (2006a), and Rizvi and Lingard (2010) maintain that for many people globalisation is primarily driven by economic discourses. But this does not stop them from arguing that globalisation is very much about *connectedness* and *interconnectedness*. They claim that this is evident through the mediating effects of information technologies in telecommunications that compress time and space, with a resulting rapid global flow of information. Connectedness and interconnectedness are also evident in the emergence of global or multinational/transnational institutions and social movements that oversee, promote, regulate and reject aspects of globalisation. And Eriksen (2014), in a widely accepted approach to defining globalisation, refers to it as "transnational connectedness" saying it "encompasses important, political, cultural, and environmental dimensions" (p. 1).

In fact, the concepts of globalisation and global flows are hardly new. Eriksen (2014), Nederveen (2004) and Wallerstein (1974, 2000) argue that globalisation flows have been observable for hundreds of years, and they point to the ways in which various parts of the world have been interconnected in previous centuries through what might be seen as globalising processes. Gannon (2008) proposes different phases of globalisation: "pre-modern" (prior to 1500), "modern" (1500-1945) and "contemporary" (1945 onwards) (pp. 13-30). He likens them to contemporary globalisation processes, in that they are similarly

uneven and multi-centred, and he says that these stages have not always been sequential, nor do they have clear beginnings and endings.

Sen (2010) suggests that many see globalisation as a form of westernisation or as a continuation of western imperialism. He argues that this is not necessarily a bad thing, because over the centuries all major nations have learned from each other. He cites China in the last millennium as being a leader in technological developments, where paper, suspension bridges, and even the wheelbarrow were ideas and artefacts that spread across the world. Also he points to India where mathematics was developed, but which soon reached and influenced European education and thought through Arab mathematicians. He maintains that globalisation is neither 'eastern' nor 'western', but claims that it is western ideas that tend to be more powerful in influencing the global world in recent times. If anything, Sen (2010) maintains that we need to critique these ideas for anti-western rhetoric and pro-western bias.

Eriksen (2014) points to the invention of the telephone in the late nineteenth century as increasing communication speeds and thus changing perceptions of distance and space. He shows how this continued into the twentieth century with the invention of the aeroplane, motor vehicles, radio, and a range of computers and digitally mediated technologies.

Indeed, he invokes globalisation in seeking to explain a range of world events since the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and since the end of the *Cold War*[5] (Eriksen, 2014; Ray, 2007; Robertson & White, 2007). Other phenomena that are commonly seen as associated with the growth in globalising processes include: the exponential growth of the Internet; the rise of nationalism (as if to resist the growth of globalisation); and the outbreak of ethnic and religious wars (Eriksen, 2014). There is a further dimension introduced by Hopper (2007) who remarks that depending on the criteria set to define globalisation, different understandings are possible. He gives an example of Jan Nederveen (2004) who criticises Anthony Giddens (1991) for being Eurocentric and western in his definition of globalisation, accusing him of cultural and historical narrowness in overlooking the ways that globalisation predates the 'rise' of the West. Furthermore, Pennycook (2010c) argues that we have moved into a new era of thinking about Empire, politics and culture. He points to past debates about imperialism and the territorial expansion

[5] The sustained state of political and military tension between powers in the Western Bloc, that is the United States with the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) and others, and powers in the Eastern Bloc that is, the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact, circa 1947–1991 (Hanhimäki & Westad, 2003).

of a nation, whereas today globalisation discourses encourage debate to explore notions of decentralisation and to think outside nationalist frameworks.

Additionally, under the broad topic of globalisation, there are other debates, which include explorations of notions of 'global versus local'. Such debates have been around since the notion of globalisation was first discussed in the 1980s. According to Connell (2007) the term "glocalisation" arose through the Japanese business jargon to describe local and global marketing forces of transnational corporations and advertising companies. She further argues that there is little likelihood of resolution to these arguments, and to some extent they have intensified through the introduction of a range of neologisms. For instance, Ritzer's (2004) term "grobalisation" describes a process in which growth imperatives drive organisations and nations to expand and dominate the local, such that the "purely local" is disappearing (p. xiii).

Turner (2010b) and Kellner (2010) maintain that globalisation is sometimes spoken about in dichotomous terms—dividing those who take an optimistic view of globalisation from those who do not. They claim that before '9/11'[6] in New York in 2001, globalisation tended to be viewed optimistically. Views since then have soured, as militarism, war, terrorism, slavery, drugs and crime have been increasingly emphasised in media debates. Writers such as George Ritzer, in *The Globalization of Nothing* (2007a, p. 3) argue that globalisation contributes nothing, where " 'nothing' refers to a social form that is generally centrally conceived, controlled, and comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content"; and cultures and traditions are being devalued. The global economic crisis in 2007 and the consequent global economic recession have sometimes been cited in support of this kind of critique(Baily & Elliott, 2009).

More recently, Eriksen (2014) claims that globalisation has been discussed quite thoroughly and is so evolved that its characteristics can now be identified. He proposes a number of "dimensions of globalization". The dimensions of globalisation in the twenty-first century, according to Eriksen (2014), are disembedding, speed, standardisation, connections, mobility, mixing, risk, identity politics and "alterglobalisation". The next sections follow Eriksen's framing, discussing each of these dimensions in turn.

[6] Referring to a series of coordinated attacks on 11 September, 2001 in Manhattan, New York, and Washington DC, USA.

Dimensions of Globalisation

Disembedding

Disembedding or 'delocalisation' explains the manner in which aspects of society have become abstracted from their origins, so that where an artefact was made or produced or where a practice originated is now deemed unimportant. This process is also associated with a tendency to ignore, trivialise or de-emphasise history in everyday cultural practices because "as a rule, anything that can be accessed anywhere is disembedded" (Eriksen, 2014, p. 19). An obvious example is the use of money. It has become abstracted to the point that "plastic cards" or a virtual currency such as *Bitcoin* [7]can be used for monetary transactions (Eriksen, 2014; Inda & Rosaldo, 2008). Another example is that transnational financial processes and mass migration have led to increased opportunities for intercultural contact, leading to plural and multicultural societies. This has caused traditional cultural and territorial linkages to be dislodged, so that cultural experiences and identities become separated from places originally inhabited. This is closely associated with migrant and diaspora groups, who use a range of strategies to adapt and preserve their cultural traditions in the process of physically moving to new situations and environments. Hopper (2007) calls this "cultural deterritorialization" (p. 48). One manifestation of this is the rise in the number of interracial couples, and their children. Hopper (2007) cites evidence that, for example, that in the United Kingdom "mixed race" is now the third largest minority group, and in the United States of America a new social term is emerging, "generation EA" or "ethnically ambiguous" (p. 146).

For my study, I found it useful to understand disembedding and cultural deterritorialisation from the work of Velayutham and Wise (2001). They explored "cultural borrowing and appropriation" (p. 143), rather than gender and discrimination, in the context of multiculturalism in Australia. Their concern was the use of Hindu religious images in a "1999 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Sleaze Ball", with the theme of "Homosutra". Their criticism was that the organisers of the event had made no effort to enter into conversation with the Hindu religious communities and had not offered any explanation to the wider public about their intentions prior to the event, including homosexual peoples who practice the Hindu religion. Velayutham and Wise (2001) argue that this type of behaviour is:

> … involved in cultural borrowings, nostalgic re-appropriation and pastiches of different styles owing to the fact that there are few "innovations" to move to

[7] Bitcoin is a payment system introduced as open-source software in 2009 by Satoshi Nakamoto (Nakamoto, 2009).

> because of the speed and diversity of images presented, and no newly "discovered" cultures and societies to primitivise or exocticise. (p. 151)

In short, the use of Hindu imagery had been disembedded from its original source and had been emptied of meaning, for the sole purpose of "celebrating and consuming the 'exotic' … rather than engaging (sympathetically, or otherwise) with the spiritual dimensions of Hinduism" (p. 152). For some, this caused a "destabilisation of the legitimacy and spiritual authority of Hinduism" (p. 153).

Speed

Speed and acceleration of flows traditionally associated with globalisation potentially bring disparate and far removed parts of the world together, mostly through improvements in technology such as the telephone system and the Internet. In addition, Eriksen (2014) and Inda and Rosaldo (2008) observe that speed becomes apparent with 24 hour trading, 24 hour parcel delivery, availability of products from different countries so that it is not necessary to travel abroad to obtain them, speeding up of production and distribution processes, and that even newspaper articles have become shorter for ease and speed of reading online. He drolly comments that even breakfasts have been made shorter. That is, the traditionally widespread practice of eating cooked porridge for breakfast has given way to quicker processes of preparing and eating toast or cornflakes, or for many people, not eating breakfast at all. In this perspective, everything in a globalising world it seems is moving faster and faster.

Kellner (2010) further argues increased access to the Internet means that it is now widely used for political purposes, to easily and quickly promote agendas, and broadcast political views through social media networks and various online tools. The Internet also has the potential to bring people together, and overcome the "digital divide" through new education and the growth of infrastructure in developing nations.

One compelling example that relates to this study is transnational Tamil television. According to C. Sankaran and Pillai (2011), although in the 1980s there had been a national Tamil channel, its offerings were limited and Tamil audiences were low. In 1993, the DD Podhai, Tamil language cable channel was launched. The audience was both within India as well as outside, in countries such as Australia, Canada, Malaysia, parts of Europe, Singapore, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, and United States of America. The program genres now range from films, news and current affairs, to infotainment. Countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, who have large diasporic communities, have also developed their own local

channels to build on this offering. Prior to this, access to India and cultural maintenance was via films and occasional visits to one's ancestral land—invariably by wealthier Indians. Thus, these migrants and diasporic communities would construct and hold on to notions of 'their culture' as it was when they left. However, with an increase of Tamil satellite channels with its transnational media, an almost daily engagement with Tamil culture is now possible. Thus "the diaspora interacts with ancestral culture in a more familiar way, as it becomes a lived culture instead of merely inherited legacy" (C. Sankaran & Pillai, 2011, p. 280). Transnational media then offer ease of access to one's ancestral homeland and representations of culture and in the case of India the "possibility of experiencing contemporary popular culture flows" (p. 280) without leaving one's diasporic home.

Lastly, Eriksen (2014) points out that even though there are perceptions that the pace of flows has accelerated through globalisation, there are examples where it has not. Bourdieu's view in 1996 (as cited in Erikesen 2014) is that even the sharpest of minds need time to reflect and analyse to make sufficiently nuanced decisions and explore complex problems in the world. And, another example is participation in ceremonies like Hindu weddings and temple rituals, where even though we may be in a speeded up world, these ceremonies and rituals are often performed slowly as they have been for thousands of years.

Standardisation

Standardisation refers to a growing tendency to produce sameness in processes, systems, policies and practices and is most powerfully evident in attempts to create conditions for easy measurement comparisons. This has been evident over time with the introduction of the metric system, global banking systems, global time zones, standard sized shipping containers and, importantly, language, such as English for transnational connectedness. On the one hand, these global connections enhance connectedness through networks of communication systems, media flows, flows of people, and virtual communities on the Internet. And on the other hand, paradoxically, the distance between cause and effect or between shared understandings of cultural practices can become enormous. This was illustrated so powerfully in the global economic crisis in 2007 (Baily & Elliott, 2009) when home mortgage financial transactions were effortlessly transacted across nations, thanks largely to standardised systems and processes, and so brought seemingly confident, healthy and profitable countries like Iceland, Greece and Spain almost to financial ruin (Eriksen, 2014).

An example in relation to this study, is that India, like most countries, has had to grapple with and align itself with the processes of globalisation and the economic liberalisation of markets and cultural flows. This became particularly evident in India in 1991 through a series of economic reforms. Motivated in part by the country's balance of payment crisis and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which was designed to help address this crisis, the government of the day signalled a systemic shift to a more open economy with greater reliance upon market forces, a larger role for the private sector including foreign investment, and a restructuring of the role of government (Ahluwalia, 2002, 2006; Panagariya, 2008). One consequence of this was the shifting of information technologies to Tamil Nadu, which is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Mobility

Mobility in globalising times takes many forms, for example tourism, school and academic exchanges, and business people moving with seeming ease between countries. It also entails the mass movements of refugees, economic migrants, domestic labourers and sex workers. Mobility can be chosen, enforced or deprived (Eriksen, 2014; Ritzer, 2007b).

Understandings of mobility in globalising times also include migration and the theories of 'transnationality' and 'transnationalism' which are applied to the re-organisation of populations. Transnationality is a term used to explain the formation of new communities and identities not defined through the usual traditional reference points of geography or nation-state. Discourses of transnationality encourage a focus on the processes that link people, communities and institutions across borders of nation-states. Therefore, the transnational ties of recent migrants to their other home are sometimes more intense than in the past, due to the ease of travel and communications.

With respect to Indian people, a new type of dual citizenship has been recently introduced, such that with globalised labour markets the Tamil diaspora has increased across the world. With the advent of cheaper commercial air travel, the mobility of Tamil diasporic communities has increased, hence raising the possibility of keeping up with local and cultural shifts and flows, and on their return to India exchanging ideas vis-à-vis their current locality (C. Sankaran & Pillai, 2011). Incidentally, I was told by two participants in my study that workers from other states of India had been attracted to work in Chennai because of the increased work opportunities.

Transnational processes through migration present considerable challenges to nation states, such as in the provision of labour opportunities. However, according to Ritzer (2007c), more recently there has been a turn in transnational processes and flows that has directly affected migration. Wealthier nations, such as Australia, the United States of America and United Kingdom, are using exploitative systems of colonisation in order to try to become closed nation states (which I discuss in the section on globalisation and culture later in this chapter). In the popular press and newspapers these countries are sometimes referred to as 'gated nations' with strict border controls; this way these nations feel they can pick and choose who they admit inside their borders. They can curtail the mobility of unwanted migrants or refugees, and on the other hand attract and retain tourists and wealthy foreign students. Another twist in transnational migration practices is that inequality and globalisation are also major causes of migration, whereby highly skilled and educated people from poorer nations can move to wealthier nations through various migration schemes and, in turn, deplete their own nation's skills base (Ritzer, 2007c).

Mobility also encompasses globalising cultural forms and flows, belief systems and ideologies through the rapid growth of the mass media. The notion of the global village has been popularised through Marshall McLuhan in his books in the 1960s: *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man* (McLuhan, 1962, 2011) and *Understanding media: The extensions of man (McLuhan, 1964)*. Through these publications, McLuhan argues that on the one hand, global media have created opportunities for the growth of civil society. But on the other hand, the global media exploit and commercialise culture and cultural practices to the point of triviality. McLuhan (1962, 2011, 1964) also argues that these global media reduce culture to the lowest common denominator, whereby entertainment more than formal education determines the ways in which large numbers of people understand themselves and their place in the world. One example he describes is the ways news broadcasts are presented in passive and minimalist 'ten second grabs' of information or video clips, so that the information is easily understood with simple text (McLuhan, 1964). On reflection, I could not help but think of the Latin phrase *panem et circenses* (bread and circuses), which originated with Roman satirist and poet Juvenal (circa A.D. 100) during the Roman empire. The expression could still be current today, as it aptly describes the power of the global media which not only makes entertainment possible, but overlays even the serious aspects of the dissemination of information to make it inconsequential or sensational.

Mixing

Eriksen is very interested in the ways in which ideologies become mixed through globalisation. The notions of cultural purity and cultural mixing in a globalised world are clearly topics of contention here. Eriksen (2014) developed a model (see Figure 3. below) where possible discourses about culture and identity can be theorised. Amselle (2001) and Hannerz (1996) cited in Eriksen (2014) are among a large number of researchers in the field of cultural practice who claim that there is no such thing as a 'pure' culture. They argue that cultural mixing has always occurred, and that it has just become more intense with increased mobility in a globalised world. Eriksen's model draws attention to the fusion and mixing of languages, food, music, customs, clothing and fashion, and urban youth cultures for example, often referred to as *creolisation* but more generally as *hybridity*.

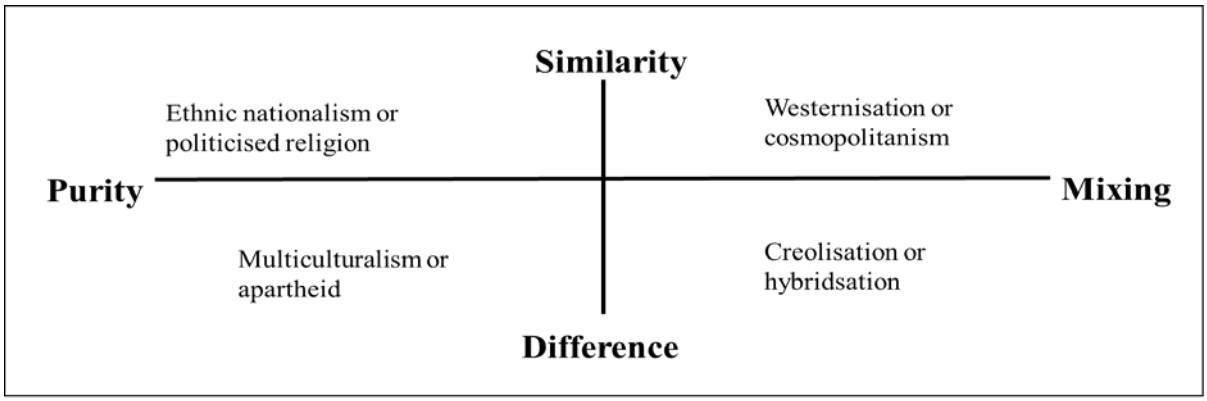

Figure 3. Possible positions in discourses about culture and identity

Other cultural theorists of globalisation categorise the complicated flows and mobility into three concepts: homogenization, heterogeneity and hybridisation (Nederveen, 2004; Robinson, 2007). Homogenisation describes the phenomenon where cultures converge into commodities offered under the title of world cuisines, world tourism and cosmopolitanism, for example. The most striking illustration would bewhat is sometimes called the hegemonic *Americanisation* or *McDonaldisation* through the rise of the McDonald's chain of restaurants worldwide, where local food and the practices associated with preparing and eating are replaced by a uniform global standard (Ritzer, 2007a, 2013; Robinson, 2007). And yet, globalisation has sometimes promoted heterogeneity, difference and autonomy amongst cultures, and there are ways in which globalisation can be seen to stand for resistance to homogenisation. Hybridisation, for instance, focuses on new and evolving cultural forms and identities produced through transnational processes. In the literature that investigates and

advocates for these examples of globalisation, an homogenised view of globalisation is deemed to be an inadequate response to a constantly changing world (Robertson & White, 2007). However, as Nederveen (2010) reminds us, globalisation is more than "nation plus" and localisation is more than "nation minus" (p. 329).

Ritzer's (2004) view is that there are many advantages to a globalised world, but as we move forward "what is needed is a world in which people continue to have the *option* of choosing the local—a world in which the local has not been destroyed as a viable alternative" (p. 184). This suggests the local can be distinguished through its own local context and have a 'particular' meaning, rather than having to accept a universal generalised meaning. Further, it is more likely that there is a complex history associated with any understanding of the local. Thus the local can be seen as part of a wider network, and understood as bounded in provisional ways (Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005).

In relation to these ideas of mixing are the tensions of cultural practices that occur on the edges or boundaries of these localities and fusions of culture and identity take place through "negotiation, transcendence, transformations, and reframing" (Eriksen, 2014, p. 119). These ideas are central sources of interest for my study. The issues and questions inherent in my more generic discussion above are of great importance to me as the researcher. They have prompted me to ask: What are some distinctive cultural practices amongst the Tamil community in Chennai? How have those practices been affected by forces of globalisation? Can the Tamil community be seen as remaining distinctive with the influence of globalisation or is any sense of a distinctive identity being gradually 'lost' in the dispersion and mixing that Eriksen is referring to? And, will the Tamil community merge with all of India and so become merely another cultural commodity of antiquity and fascination, available for consumption by globally travelling tourists? Eriksen's dimension of mobility alerts us to the ways in which globalisation has dual flows. It brings us closer together through communication and travel, but also accentuates our diversity and differences in values, societies and opportunities, and who we are as people and nations (Eriksen, 2014).

Risks

There are many risks, especially for smaller more vulnerable nations or cultural groups in a globalising world, a world that moves more quickly and where flows between neighbouring nations or cultural spaces are increased. For instance, there is greater likelihood and ease of spreading physical disease through tourism and travel. Trading in weapons is

easier and for many, the increased threat of terrorism and climate change is an ever present danger (Eriksen, 2014). As transnational organisations and industry move in to local communities, Tamils in Chennai must confront a range of practical and health issues, and their sense of their culture and cultural practices is challenged as these organisations also introduce western practices. (See Chapter 4, for a more detailed discussion.)

Identity politics

Eriksen (2014) posits that maintaining a predictable and secure cultural identity group is problematic in a globalising world, because of the prevalence of cultural mixing. Identity politics can be seen as related to the dimensions of disembedding, in that the more abstracted that notions of power, culture, and media flows become, the more one is likely to see an opposite reaction called 'reembedding'. This results in a perception that one needs to create more local products, and more distinctive cultural and power bases. According to Eriksen (2014), identity politics is a response to globalisation, in that the more globalisation unifies the world, the more identity politics will fragment it. He claims that these two forces "are two sides of the same coin, two complementary tendencies" (Eriksen, 2014, p. 159) where identity politics is the creation of bounded entities that contribute to nationalism or separatism of faith or religious systems, and ethnic groups or groups of cultural movements. Eriksen (2014) sums up identity politics neatly in the following way:

> Identity politics is a true born child of globalization. The more similar we become, the more different [some of us] try to be [in order to sustain some sense of a distinctive identity]. Paradoxically, however, the more different we try to be, the more similar we become—since most of us try to be different in roughly the same ways worldwide. (p. 160)

No doubt this is influenced by the standardising forces of globalisation, too. Chirico (2014) on the other hand is clear that globalisation does not mean homogenisation. She claims that for every cultural or global import there is a local twist.

Hopper (2007) has proposed the concept of "cultural deterritorialization" (p. 48), which I referred to earlier in this chapter. This concept describes the disruption between culture and territory, where people, media images and cultural symbols can alter perceptions of the places people inhabit. This disruption is achieved via television, film, art, billboards, clothes, food and countless consumer items, and even architecture of homes and buildings. Hence those who are migrating are influenced by the place they reside in, but their presence in turn influences the culture of the host country. Another but different example is the

invoking of dormant traditions which are revived and used for commercial and political purposes (Giddens, 1991), such as when Indigenous cultures are perceived as depending on tourism for economic sustainability.

One of the challenges of my study has been how to better understand the relationship between the local and the global, where local practices of the Tamils in Chennai (and Melbourne) have been in so many ways influenced by globalisation, and where other cultural practices have joined with those of particular Tamil localities or communities. One way of explaining this is to say that local communities in Chennai have been translocated beyond the local. Another is to say that the Tamil localities are penetrated with global processes and restructured into new ways, organically linking them together as "translocalities" (Robinson, 2007).

Alterglobalisation

Eriksen (2014) is aware that in proposing these dimensions of globalisation, he has his critics. 'Alterglobalisation' is one of the terms proposed by 'antiglobalisation' advocates, who are not "opposed to interconnectedness, information technology, transnational trade or mobility, but rather see themselves as arguing in favour of a more equitable, democratic, and decentralized form of globalization" (Eriksen, 2014, p. 173). This notion, although relevant to a complete discussion on globalisation, involves further enquiry and exploration, which goes beyond the bounds of the research questions of this study.

In conclusion, all of these various dimensions of globalisation represent a world in a state of fluidity. Different social and cultural flows are moving at different speeds and in different directions; and whereas some parts of the world are deeply affected, others seem to be barely changing at all. That is to say globalising processes affect different peoples across the world differently, creating both risks and opportunities. Globalisation is full of ambiguities, paradoxes and contradictions which, according to Chirico (2014), El-Ojeili and Hayden (2006b), Eriksen (2014), Robinson (2007) and Turner (2010a), are not likely to be resolved in the short or medium term. It is this realisation that has inspired researchers to study the phenomenon called globalisation, focusing on particular geographic or cultural sites or particular ideas or practices that are traveling across global territories and borders. Indeed my deepening awareness of this has come to underpin my study in ways that are much more significant than I originally expected.

The next section discusses globalisation and culture, where I argue that the notion of culture—or in its pluralised form, cultures—is central to this study, and that in a globalising world the notion of culture takes on new meanings and possibilities.

Globalisation and Culture

The interconnected notions of globalisation and culture are central to my study. However as the literature indicates, these notions are currently understood and enacted in diverse ways in response to a range of factors.

Typically, nation-states like to identify themselves through establishing (and defending) clearly delineated borders or boundaries, with a consequential identification of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. In the twenty-first century, this is sometimes enacted through the employment of military services to protect national borders. Citizens are encouraged to experience their citizenship of that state through seeing themselves as the insiders. For the most part, these insiders identify with and have a sense of belonging to certain national values and participate in national practices which, in their totality, may be seen as constituting a distinctive national culture. However, in a globalising world the notion of a nation or nation state can be seen itself as shifting, moving and changing. In such a view of the world, the notion of culture/s takes on new meaning with new possibilities. And, a citizen's sense of belonging and identity must be mobile and changing as well (see Ray, 2007, pp. 74-103).

The shifts that appear to be happening, according to Crane (2008), Eriksen (2014) and Hopper (2007) are that notions of nationhood and national separateness are being challenged by globalisation and a process called "deterritorialization" (which I referred to earlier in this chapter) through migration, and economic and financial transactions. For example, Croucher (2004) contends that one explanation for this is a new sense of economic interconnectedness, as transnational corporations have the ability, competency and mobility to go beyond national borders and states. And nation states, for fear of missing out in a highly competitive global marketplace, in response, do not always use their state's regulatory powers to protect their borders or economies or markets. Rather, they allow transnational corporations to be established. Furthermore, the realm of technological development such as through the laying of telephone cables or international telephony networks or launching satellites into space encourages nation states to move beyond their own sense of nationhood, even to penetrate into other societies, and even the most closed of societies. The prevailing phenomenon is one

of blurring and shifting boundaries and it attracts widely differing responses from researchers and the general public alike.

There are proponents that maintain that the state still plays a key role in globalisation where it ensures that standards for global interconnectedness are established and maintained, such as trade and commerce agreements, aviation regulations, and global protocols for protecting the environment, consumers and data. One particularly interesting example of this is in China, where the Chinese government aims to control political commentary and social media. “Weibo” (a Chinese version of Twitter) was closed down in 2013 and the government also monitors political conversations in “WeChat” (similar to messaging systems that allow the attachment of photos) (Tsigas, 2014). Croucher (2004) contends that some states are cooperating with each other to protect their national cultures from the effects of globalisation. This can be seen in countries like France and Canada. Whatever the particular response of nation states, it is clear that their sense of identity is being challenged if not altered through globalisation, such that a new and different type of identity and a new experience of culture/s is emerging. The literature suggests that culture and cultural difference are now primary concerns in a globalising world (Croucher, 2004; Eriksen, 2014; Hopper, 2007).

The concept of culture has had different meanings at different times, and it too is very much contested. Notions such as “low culture” or “high culture” or culture that is located merely in the creative arts, are of little interest to most contemporary cultural theorists. This has been the case since people like Raymond Williams (2001) in the late 1950s argued strongly for a view of the world in which culture is seen as “ordinary”. In this “ordinary” view, culture like identity is seen as inevitably changing almost daily. For instance, Triandis (1989) observes “culture is to society what memory is to a person … When a person is socialized in a given culture, the person can use customs as a substitute for thought, and save time” (pp. 511-512) . I have found Rao and Walton’s (2004) definition of culture very helpful for my investigation into middle-class Tamil cultures in Chennai. They propose that:

> Culture is about relationality—the relationships among individuals within groups, among groups, and between ideas and perspectives. Culture is concerned with identity, aspiration, symbolic exchange, coordination, and structures and practices that serve relational ends, such as ethnicity, ritual, heritage, norms, meanings, and beliefs. It is not a set of primordial phenomena permanently embedded within national or religious or other groups, but rather a set of contested attributes, constantly in flux, both shaping and being shaped by social and economic aspects of human interaction. (Rao & Walton, 2004, p. 4)

And yet, traditionally, culture is often identified as a set of characteristics which distinguish one group from another, such that differences in politics, religions, ethnicity, gender, and indigenous cultures to name a few are prominent. For Nederveen (2004) these differences are based on three perspectives: "(1) cultural differentialism or lasting difference; (2) cultural convergence or growing sameness; and (3) cultural hybridization or ongoing mixing" (p. 44). Culture can be understood anthropologically as "behaviour and beliefs that are learned and shared: learned so it is not 'instinctual' and shared so it is not individual" (Nederveen, 2004, p. 48). This tends to present culture as more open-ended, to the point where a 'single' culture can be seen as having commonality with other cultures but also a diverse set of distinctive features. Hopper (2007) maintains that there are different types of culture, for example, business culture, popular culture, national and regional culture, and western and eastern cultures. There are also different dimensions within cultures such as institutional, political, social and economic. Furthermore, within scholarly studies there are different interpretations, perspectives and approaches. Some of these definitions may suggest that culture is stationary and immobile. Yet as Eriksen (2014) contends, in today's world culture is reflecting the mobile nature of globalisation which emphasises the transnational flows and movement. He wryly comments that the word 'culture' should no longer be a noun but a verb, to indicate how mutable culture has come to be.

Clifford (1992) and Appadurai (2001, 2013) have made connections between culture and movement, and challenge the view that culture is linked to location and place. They maintain that culture is travelling and mobile, through travellers, tourists, migrants, and now the Internet. Clifford in 1992 proposed that the world was changing and suggested that the intercultural question for travellers was "not so much 'where are you from?' but 'where are you between?' " (p. 109) . Appadurai (1996) later explains this concept with the term "global cultural flows" (e.g. 1996, pp. 33-36; 2001, p. 5; 2013, p. 61). He identifies five dimensions of global cultural flows that inform and influence identity and practices in a global world. They are: ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, ideoscapes and media scapes. "Ethnoscapes" concerns the movement of people either physically or across technology such as in social media. "Technoscapes" describes the distribution of global technologies, much of it uneven, to facilitate the global flows of communication, finances, political ideology, and employment. "Finanscapes" captures the flow of capital, currency and investment which are increasingly becoming detached. The term "Ideoscapes" suggests the flow of ideas and counter ideas and images which are modified by their context. And "mediascapes" relates to

the influence of the mass media on cultural practices at the local and global level. The last two “scapes” are dependent on each other, and intrinsically shape one’s sense of self identity and how an individual views the “other”. Appadurai (1996, 2001, 2013) also maintains that they precipitate tensions, problems, shifts and changes in local situations, when global images and ideas, confront or challenge local culture.

Hopper (2007) developed these ideas further, and claims that cultures are neither static nor stable they are evolving. He asserts that cultures are increasingly shaped by the external forces of globalisation, such that they are no longer discrete bounded entities, but are overlapping and influenced by other traditions. Consequently, according to Hopper, culture can be increasingly viewed as a process, where the functional connections between culture and globalisation are worth investigating, instead of the fixity of traditional notions of culture and or the notion of culture encouraged by nation-states. Bekemans (2002) makes a similar observation:

> Those who actively take part in global culture exchanges often experience culture as process in which their own cultural identity becomes receptive towards other cultures, but those who experience globalization as an alien process often view cultural identity in a narrow sense that rejects diversity.” (p. 156)

Hopper maintains that globalising processes encourage hybrid notions of culture, thereby lessening the view that identity is established through alignment within one culture and outside an ‘other’ culture. Even patterns of migration between ‘the West’ and ‘non-West’ countries with the resulting exchange of peoples can be said to be challenging rigid cultural distinctions. Nederveen (2010) extends the notion of hybridity and the theme of being “in-between”. He sees it as a way of looking beyond the dualities and dichotomies of East-West and large scale capitalism, and the polarisation of ideas and views. He sees new patterns of hybridity, such as bricolage or the fusion of East and West, such that Orientalist and Occidentalist constructions are blurred, if not actually dissolved in modern globalising societies.

Lastly, Hopper (2007) is confident that the notion of cultural mobility is widely accepted in a globalising world, but that it should not be over stated to the point that there is no stability anywhere any time. It is possible, he argues, to identify distinctive cultures and identities through the intersections of cultural flows with particular localities, groups, and sections of society. However, he cautions that these intersections should be explicitly interpreted through one’s own cultural framework, history and background, and one’s

encounters with other cultures and cultural flows—which are shifting and changing as a result. Therefore, he concludes, globalisation and culture are not separate entities but entwined sets of processes.

In summary, nationalism and the nation-state have played significant roles in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in shaping the contemporary world and understandings of globalisation. However, the literature suggests that in a globalising world which is shifting, moving and changing, the notion of culture must start to take on a new meaning, moving beyond being a static entity to one that is a significantly dynamic and powerful process. In turn, understanding culture as procedural has implications for belonging, identity, and identity-formation which the next section discusses.

Identity and Culture

In recent years the study of identity and belonging has experienced a resurgence, arguably because of the forces and processes of globalisation. The terms 'identity' and 'belonging' are now widely understood as complex and multi-layered, with definitions varying between paradigms of philosophy, psychology, sociology, political scienceand even mathematical, business, computer and legal theories (G. Walker & Leedham-Green, 2010). It is not my intention to examine each of those categories, because they are outside the scope of this study, but instead I will explore the nature of identity and belonging through the lens of socio-cultural theories.

In the late 1990s, Wenger (1998) contended that identity was negotiated, as one participates as a member in a social community because, he maintained, the individual is never separate from his/her community. And even if an individual does not identify with a particular community group, it still shapes him/her as a human and his/her identity. For Wenger (1998), "we know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive" (p. 153).

Later, Croucher (2004) argued that defining identity revolves around two major views. He describes these as either "primordial" or "essential", such that identity is fixed, organic, predetermined and natural; or as "fluid", constructed and multidimensional. Socio-cultural theorists tend to argue that individuals have any number of identities, and that the ways they invent, imagine or grow into each of these identities is an important contributor to their own sense of self and the way others perceive that self. They further tend to assert that

identities are malleable because they intersect and collide with each other. Inherent within each identity is a set of particular values and beliefs that may or may not be compatible with each other, for instance, identities formed around gender, family, religious affiliations, racial groups and political groups. As a consequence a third group has arisen, Croucher (2004) maintains, to straddle the two positions, namely "constructed primordiality" (p. 39). This enables humans, who have a primordial sense of belonging, to deal with the politics of identity formation, which is invariably fluid and mobile.

R. Jenkins (2008) draws a distinction between "identity" and "identification" where "identity denotes the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations with other individuals and collectivities"; and, "identification is the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference" (p. 18). He further argues that similarity and difference are the basic principles of identification and are central to the human condition. As humans we are constantly assessing others and ourselves—judging and classifying. Through such 'assessments' we identify, for example, where people belong in terms of gender, race, and status.

Lawler (2008) argues against the assumption that there is an internal primordial identity separate from society, and draws on the work of Elias (1978) who in his book, *The Civilizing Process*, questions where this has arisen from in history. He posits that it has arisen as part of western philosophy, where there is a prevailing belief in the "civilizing process", wherein etiquette, management of bodily impulses and self-control have been encouraged. This has led to a perception that one's true identity is on the inside and the social world is on the outside. Over time, this notion of identity has become reified and is now part of 'common sense' understandings of identity in the western world. This understanding sees identity as something which is formed *within* a person, rather than *between* persons and within social relations. Sociologically this could mean the decline of kinship. Thus Lawler's (2008) sociological view is that people are products of and also produce the social world, within social constraints. She argues that there is no such thing as a "normal" identity, because identity and belonging are ongoing processes negotiated throughout one's life (pp. 144-145).

Taylor and Spencer (2004, p. 4) share a similar view explaining that "identity is a work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others; constantly being re-appraised and very much linked to the circulation of cultural meanings in a society." Lawler (2008) and Taylor and Spencer (2004) explain that we are both a single unified self *and*

plural selves simultaneously. We have an identity through identification with another group, so that, for example, we identify with being a man or a woman, middle class or working class, ‘white’ or ‘black’, Jewish or Chinese, ‘southern’ or ‘northern’. We believe we become steeped in the beliefs, traditions and practices of this particular group, identifiable through shared values, beliefs, codes and conventions. These identities mark out difference between human identity groups. However, as Lawler (2008) maintains, often these differences are emphasised at the cost of many similarities. She argues that the extreme form of this differentiation provides reasons to de-humanise and exclude, even to the point of excluding peoples on the basis of being “non-human” (pp. 144-145).

Hopper (2007) theorises that identity is formed through “moments of stability” (p. 41) when groups of people identify with and internalise sets of ideas, values, symbols and artefacts. Usually this occurs when people who reside in their countries of birth are influenced by socialisation processes through living and working in the same locality, and so form attachments to them. Simon (2004) refers to this as “national belonging” (p. 15). However, this does not mean there is necessarily homogeneity or universality within one culture, as clusters and webs reflect diversity and multiple layers which have evolved over time. Within these clusters and webs, people demonstrate varying degrees of commitment towards core values, which in turn causes fragmentation and sometimes reformation of groups. Furthermore, as Simon (2004) states, there is a distinction between national boundaries and national essences which are imagined and constructed with social, cultural, and religious meanings—such that culture transcends national boundaries. Furthermore, when people move and travel from their ‘home’ culture, how they adapt to a new place and environment and what they bring, change and leave behind, also shapes their identity. In the same way it is possible to adopt and internalise multiple cultures that then shape one’s sense of identity and behaviour (Hopper, 2007).

Crewe and Maruna (2006) explore another avenue of personal identity and suggest that it is connected to one’s internal autobiographical life story or narrative. They suggest that the process of re-constructing one’s life story can help to make sense of that story and provide coherence in a chaotic world overlayed with multiple decisions and choices. They draw on the work of Giddens (1991) who maintains that “a person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor—important though this is—in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going” (p. 54). Lawler (2008) contests this view of personal identity through internal autobiographical life story, and maintains that self-

narratives are embedded in relationships (p. 30). She argues that what one chooses to remember and how it is interpreted are influenced by other socio-cultural narratives, the significance of audience, time and place, and how it is told—that is, in the context of social rules and the constraints of a society.

In conclusion, defining identity and belonging using sociocultural theories opens up a range of perspectives, including personal and individualistic or psychological notions, as well as those defined through self-narratives and relationship with others. My study draws strength from these perspectives, appreciating that in terms of identity "without others, we are nothing" (Lawler, 2008, p. 29).

Summary and Conclusion

At the commencement of my study I initially thought that the Tamil communities were being affected largely by the encroachment of the globally dominant English language. However, as I further explored and read, I realised that the identity and cultures of these communities were being mediated by a much broader concept, globalisation. In time and through a comprehensive program of reading, I came to better understand how notions of culture and identity are mediated by global movements of people, practices and policies by many other dimensions of globalisation. This chapter has explored globalisation, culture and identity through the lens of socio-cultural theories, and through this I have begun to tease out a conceptual framework for my study.

Globalisation remains a highly contested concept, dominating research literatures both within and across the fields of economics, sociology, cultural studies and education. For the purposes of this study, I define globalisation as an awareness or consciousness of the world as a whole that is connected and interconnected through information technologies and communications, transnational corporations and global flows of people, practices and policies. Anti-globalisation movements and critiques of globalisation, I maintain, are a response to and thus part of the phenomenon of globalisation.

Eriksen (2014) claims that globalisation is now highly evolved and can be understood by the following list of characteristics: disembedding, speed, standardisation, connections, mobility, mixing, risk, identity politics and alterglobalisation. I have critically unpacked each of these and discussed them alongside other theorists, occasionally providing illustrative examples that relate to my study.

For the purposes of this study, I define culture not as static characteristics that give identity to communities or nation-states, but as mediated by dynamic global flows, which in turn affect how one perceives identity and one's sense of belonging in society. I have reviewed notions of identity drawing upon socio-cultural theories wherein identity is understood as fluid and shaped by one's socio-cultural environment.

In sum, globalisation is a complex phenomenon that helps us to understand the current state of the contemporary world. It is neither good nor bad in itself. It affects everyone on the planet directly and indirectly, often in unsettling ways, and help to explain the changes we see and experience in everyday life. For this reason, it is helpful to use globalisation as a conceptual framing tool in my discussion of Indian culture, history and identity and its relationship with Australia in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Snanam[8]: Globalisation in India and Australia

> There is a compelling need … to ask questions not only about the economics and politics of globalization, but also about the values, ethics and sense of belonging that shape our conception of the global world. (Sen, 2006, p. 185)

No country is separate from the dynamism and effects of globalisation. The previous chapter discussed the concept of globalisation and its relationship to culture and identity, with some connections between the literature and my study to help illustrate ideas and arguments. This chapter, the second of two focused on globalisation, examines particular effects of globalisation on India and Australia. I have selected effects for each country that help to inform the fields of inquiry for this research. In India the focus is on middle-class families, women and work, and Tamil Nadu's changing industrial environment. In Australia, the focus is on culture and perspectives of multiculturalism. The last section returns to a discussion of the English language and its dominant role in globalisation and how it has mediated Tamil cultures, cultural practices and identities in India and Australia.

India and Globalisation

Gokulsing and Dissanayake (2009) maintain that globalisation is having varied effects on India's culture. They claim that current governments are more transparent and open to meeting the needs of its citizens, liberating its trade policies and opening its markets to the outside world, which in turn has led to the growth of the middle class and increased consumer spending. On the other hand, they and Meyer and Birdsall (2012) assert that globalisation tends to benefit the middle class, comprising approximately 200-300 million people in India, and certainly does not benefit the vast majority, approximately 1.2 billion people, who are typically categorised as poor.

[8] *Snanam* refers to the ritual of bathing. According to Hindu scholars there are different types of bathing, performed for not only physical cleansing of the body but also and importantly spiritual cleansing when performed with prayers and mantras (Michaels, 2004). I choose this word in association with this chapter to represent the flows of globalisation across the world, not cleansing necessarily, but transforming.

In this globalising environment India's middle class, according to Donner and De Neve (2011), although identified as a traditional sector of India's society since colonial times, are now emerging as a sector that is less influenced by tradition and the caste system. They tend to identify more with other middle-class peoples across the world, where "morality and respectability, gendered identities, material cultures, and the symbolic role of family values are markers of Indian modernity" (Donner & De Neve, 2011, p. 3), rather than the traditional Indian values. Hence an ever-increasing number of Indian citizens describe themselves as 'middle class' which is played out and reinforced in popular media, film, and advertising and, to some extent, equated with being 'consumers' with consumer profiles and practices.

However, Fernandes (2006) suggests that this view ignores other aspects of middle-class identity in India. He argues that the middle class are influential in shaping the nation, its politics and economics, and they are "reworking [the] social hierarchies of caste, religion, and gender" (p. 210). More than this, Fernandes (2006) asserts they are becoming a "distinctive social group with its own set of social, political, and economical interests that must be actively represented" (p. 213). Fernandes (2006) and Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase (2009) argue that although there is an increasing subset of the middle class who are benefiting, there is also an underside to the rising middle class, whose lives are becoming more difficult with inflation, rising debt, and increased competition for jobs and housing. Chetan Bhagat's darkly comic novel, *One Night at a Call Centre* (Bhagat, 2005), is a depiction of typical lives of young people, in the south of India, who work overnight in an Indian call centre that is not very successful, with demanding and troublesome customers from the United States. The various characters in the book provide insights into the rising Indian middle class who work in globalised workplaces in a changing India. As one character, Vroom, observes, "bad bosses and stupid Americans suck the blood out of our country's most productive generation" (Location 5280, Chapter 33). The book also provides a critical depiction of the aspirational middle classes in India and how they are influenced by the mass media, as part of their quest for status and wealth, as the next section discusses.

India, globalised media and middle-class identity

Speaking about western media and media practices, around fifty years ago, McLuhan (1964) claimed that the media are carriers of the ideals of a society, and in India today this is also true. Yadav (2007) maintains that the influence of the media in eastern countries is mostly through satellite cable television, and seven years ago he stated that there were thirty thousand operators of satellite cable television in India, each with a clientele of 200-500

households. In 2015, according to TAM Media Research, 234 million households have access to television in one form or another (TAM Media Research, 2015). Not surprisingly, the cable television channels show international and national films, and television news and programming. Also, foreign magazines and western style advertisements are prevalent. According to Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase (2009), this phenomenon is influencing the knowledge and attitudes of the general public and opening them to wider viewpoints and information. On the other hand, from the studies of Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase (2009), there is a distinction to be made between "western" and "modern". " 'Modernity' ", [they say is] "equated with technocratic and scientific rationality, while 'western' [is] frequently associated with morality and values, particularly those pertaining to family life" (p. 153). Hence traditional Indian families see their children at risk of being corrupted by western values and lifestyles that are depicted on television, film and the Internet. For example the effects of media are seen through recent trends amongst young people where behaviour, attitudes, ways of speaking and common dressing patterns are influenced by Bollywood films[9] and trends in western countries, such as the wearing of jeans. Large transnational corporations such as *PepsiCo*, *Coca-Cola Amatil* and *McDonald's*, to name a few, are also influencing food and drink choices. However, although India is influenced by these outside forces, many products and practices are adapted to suit Indian conditions and tastes, which include spices and vegetarian products in processed food. Traditional values and cultures are also promoted, such as stories of the *Ramayana*[10], told through an epic television serial on Indian television.

Consumerism has become an important part of Indian citizenry, due to the widespread belief that consuming helps to define status and success. Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase (2009) also suggest that older generations often resent what they see as the loss of their traditional culture and values that are being whittled away through these influences and practices. Nevertheless, in the south of India, they note that temple dancing and devotional singing are still valued and practised.

Globalisation and the family in India

The family in India, despite all romanticised ideals about traditional Indian families, is trending towards being described in ways that are congruent with the western notion of the

[9] Bollywood is the Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai (Bombay), Maharashtra, India, which is only a part of the large Indian film industry.
[10] *Ramayana*, is one of the Hindu epics and mythology, and forms part of the Hindu literature.

‘nuclear’ family with a husband, wife and children. The reasons for this shift, according to Gupta (2000), Ramu (2003) and J. P. Singh (2005), are linked to an emerging modern urban industrial economy—one of the effects of globalisation. In India, these same authors suggest that other influences (still widely associated with globalisation) have also contributed towards this shift, such as increased literacy rates, secular and mass education, salaried occupations, displacement of the agrarian economy, changes in family law related to joint property, influx of people into cities away from their natal villages, mass media, and the market economy. In addition, as Indian men and women in joint families have become better educated and are earning an income, they are reluctant to share it with a father-in-law or senior male member of the joint family. They also expect more independence and respect because of their financial contribution to the family.

The traditional ‘joint family’ in India was first described by Henry S. Maine in 1861 (J. P. Singh, 2005), as what many in the West would recognise as an ‘extended family’. This type of family has been considered widespread in India for centuries because the majority of India has pursued, up until recently, an agrarian way of living and have lived according to sacred Hindu texts that have prescribed ways of living (Bhadra, 2000; Ramu, 2003; Sharma, 2004). However, J. P. Singh (2003) disagree arguing that the vast majority of Indian people were and are landless because of their lowly castes. Consequently they have poorly paid jobs such as domestic service, labouring, toilet cleaning and sewage management where there has been no public sewage treatment works, tanning of leathers, rubbish collection and other menial cleaning jobs. He maintains it is in wealthy families with inherited land that notions of the joint family have prevailed.

Sharma (2004) and J. P. Singh (2003) suggest that the joint family forms what westerners would recognise as a “club”, where social and recreational activities are inbuilt, and all family members whatever their age, physical abilities or economic status can be cared for. The joint family has traditionally provided a space and a system for inculcating family and social traditions, values and taboos to children, particularly common deity worship at times of celebration and trouble (J. P. Singh, 2005). The key feature that is central to this family unit, however, is that property is held in common, and earnings are contributed by all members to pay for the expenses of all members. It is both a consumer and single producer unit. The law also states that every male born into a joint family is considered to be a co-owner of the family property, and the most senior male typically manages the finances (Bhadra, 2000; Gupta, 2000; Lamb, 2007; Mandelbaum, 1948; Ramu, 2003; Sharma, 2004; J.

P. Singh, 2005). Although various laws in the latter half of the twentieth century have made some provision for women, beginning with the Hindu Succession Act 1956 (India), this is still limited (J. P. Singh, 2005). Sharma (2004) further explains that a joint family is more than an economic unit and is characterised by a group of people who generally live under one roof, eat from the same kitchen and are related to each other as kindred. However, as in all large-scale social groupings and systems, there are disadvantages and problems. Sharma (2004) maintains that the joint family does not encourage the personal growth of the individuals, and to some extent, members can be seen as developing an over reliance and dependence on the senior figurehead. There is a range of other potential problems including: women tend to be treated poorly and discriminated against; often there are domestic relationship problems and conflicts that go unreported and unresolved; gender roles and workload responsibilities are unevenly distributed; often the number of children is higher in these families; and as a consequence of poor family management the division of the property can lead to poverty for all. However, Sharma expresses some hope for the future and proposes that the advantages of a joint family may be reinstituted in new ways as the modern Indian family emerges.

Even in 1948, Mandelbaum (1948), an anthropologist, observed that the joint family structure was changing in India, where the larger joint family which in many cases at that time made up a whole village, was being replaced by smaller joint families with fewer family members. His view was that this was happening because of the Gains of Learning Act 1930 (India). This Act meant that those of the higher castes who were educated “in the western style”, and as a consequence earned a higher income, were enabled to acquire their own property. This property was not considered “joint property” (Mandelbaum, 1948, p. 137), and as such this ran counter to the usual practice where all property was shared by the entire joint family. Gupta (2000) observes that family studies since the mid-1950s have been classifying families into several family patterns rather than following the simple dichotomy of either joint or nuclear. This was because scholars were reluctant to define the changing family structure while it appeared to be in transition, moving from joint and extended, towards other configurations. Gupta (2000) cites the work of Desai (1955) who analysed census data from 1951. Desai argued that the census data indicated the majority of Indian households at that time were small or medium size. He maintained that a family was “joint” only when members were related through property, income and mutual rights and obligations. He also identified other family configurations where a household was a nuclear family in

composition, but were related to other nuclear families through rights and obligations. J. P. Singh (2003) analysed the 1981 census data and found very similar trends. Despite the view that the joint family was preferred or still mainstream, both Desai and J.P. Singh argue that this is based on subjective and romanticised views with limited observations and knowledge. Since then, as Bhadra (2000), Gupta (2000), Ramu (2003), Sharma (2004), and J. P. Singh (2003) maintain, there have been numerous studies of families across India and all of the reviews and studies suggest strongly that it is the nuclear or husband-wife-children grouping which is emerging as dominant in modern India.

However, the majority of families (nuclear or joint) are still patrilineal. For instance, the choice of spouse in the majority of families is still usually arranged by parents. The notion of a 'love marriage' is still considered relatively taboo because of the requirement for family alliances and observance of caste (J. P. Singh, 2005). Interestingly, Sharma (2004) maintains that where the Hindu marriage is considered a religious sacrament, the essential core of the Hindu family will be preserved. Lastly, joint families that do remain are more likely to be landowning family groups in the wealthier sector.

As the literature suggests and as described by Lamb (2007), the various interpretations of the joint family can be seen in families across Chennai, India. In this study, all of the participants I came to know in India, and in some cases live with were middle-class families from the suburban areas of Chennai. There were three families where several generations lived in one large house, with shared kitchen and living areas, and individual family bedrooms. The other families lived in apartments with their extended families living close by. In all families, even if the parents and extended families lived in a nearby village or the children had left home, the elders were revered, and those who had passed away were acknowledged in daily prayers and memorial services in their homes, almost as deity. Photographs of them were kept in a special part of the house with garlands adorned across the photo and around the frame. Most decisions were made through a family consultation process, and usually the most senior male member made the final decision. All families appeared to look after all members of the extended family emotionally and financially and there was an expectation that all would contribute in some way.

Another important aspect of family life in India that is of interest to this study is the significance of patriarchy and patriarchal practices, which J. P. Singh (2005) maintains are evident in all spheres of Indian life. Historically this has been due to religious teachings and traditions which ensure males are central to significant religious ceremonies. All families

therefore have been encouraged to have a minimum of two boys, which has contributed to the high birth rates in India and discrimination towards women. The range of practices associated with this phenomenon has resulted in unequal access to property, reduced employment opportunities for women and generally inferior social conditions, including domestic violence due to associated *dowry* or 'bride price' conflicts.

Women in India also continue to have to deal with sexualised images of their gender in the public domain, similarly to western countries, particularly in advertising, which many older generation Indians resent. On the other hand, one only has to view women in contemporary Indian cinema taking different roles and models to realise that potential for change is evident in contemporary Indian culture, with advances in women's social position provoking new conversations and new possibilities (Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009). Recently women with improved education are asserting their human rights and there is some evidence that the current generation of women in India is slowly addressing these inequities. J. P. Singh (2005) proposes that this will influence other areas of society to the betterment of Indian society as a whole, although it is evident that the shifts and changes in society will happen slowly. Women in India are still predominantly homemakers, although this situation is slowly changing, especially in metropolitan areas and cities with increases in the cost of living. Women who do work are often considered the 'bread winners' of the house or considered to be on par with their male counterparts. However, as M. Mukherjee (2007) argues:

> The family is sustained in a major way by the multiple roles played by its female constituents; but their contribution in terms of paid work, unpaid work and care activities do not receive the recognition due from society. (p. 65).

The next section, in accordance with the focus of this study, discusses the changing industrial environment in Tamil Nadu, and hence sets the scene for my discussion of women working, and in particular women working in the information technology and software industries.

Tamil Nadu's changing industrial environment

The major industries in Tamil Nadu have been and continue to be cotton, heavy commercial vehicles, auto components, railway coaches, power pumps, leather tanning industries, cement, sugar, paper, automobiles, and safety matches. Cotton, leather tanning, and sugar have been major industries since the East India Company was based in Madras (Chennai) in the nineteenth century. The main mineral wealth of the state is granite, lignite

and limestone. The state is an important exporter of tanned skin and leather goods, yarn, tea, coffee, spices, engineering goods, tobacco, handicrafts and black granite. Tamil Nadu contributes to 60 per cent of the tannery industry in India (The Government of Tamil Nadu, 2014, p. Industry and Minerals section). Transnational companies such as Ashok Leyland, Ford, Hindustan Motors, Hyundai Motors, and Mitsubishi have also established production and expansion plants in Chennai (The Government of Tamil Nadu, 2014, Industry and Minerals section).

Taeube (2009) and Verma (2007) maintain that there is a strong information technology (IT) and software development industry presence in south India, notably in Chennai, the site of my data collection for this study. For example, "TIDEL", a software technology park, has been established in an urban area of Tharamani, Chennai. The value of software exports from the state of Tamil Nadu during the year 2012-13 was around 50,000 crores rupees[11], with a growth rate of more than ten per cent. Information technology and telecom companies such as Nokia, Motorola, Foxcon, Flextronic and Dell have also commenced production. Information technology has flourished in other parts of south India as well, such as Bengaluru (in the state of Karnataka), and Hyderabad (capital of the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana). And there are some IT and software development companies in the north, such as in New Delhi, and in the middle of India, such as in Mumbai and Pune in the state of Maharashtra. The influx of these companies in Chennai has been as a result of the opening up of the Tamil Nadu economy in the early 1990s and transnational companies seeking cheaper labour, where there were also well educated English speaking labour markets (Academic Foundation & Institute for Human Development, 2014; Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009; Khubchandani, 2008; Krishnaswamy & Burde, 1998; K. A. N. Sastri, 1966, 2009; R. Sastri, 2002; Taeube, 2009; The Government of Tamil Nadu, 2014).

Chennai is widely considered the second largest exporter of information technology and is the business process outsourcing hub of India (The National Association of Software and Services Companies 2014a). Taeube (2009) argues that this development is because of the extraordinarily high number of technical and engineering colleges in the four southern states. He quotes enrolments which make up approximately half of all the engineering colleges in India. This he attributes to higher numbers of well-educated families generally, which are linked to social attitudes towards learning and innovation, stemming from the

[11] Approximately 10 billion US dollars

particular mix of classes and castes in this region. Furthermore, Taeube and Verma state that almost every transnational corporation has located some of its departments and activities in Bengaluru (Bangalore) and the local software development companies that have also benefited and developed from their presence. Thus there is a developing and distinct corporate global IT industry, connected to and with access to "knowledge systems, technology and information flows" (Verma, 2007, p. 480). Verma (2007) raises concerns that all this focus on IT has negative implications for other dimensions of life for modern Indians in these parts of the country. In particular, there are negative influences on the health of the rural poor and an undermining of other important infrastructure such as education. Transportation and communications remain virtually ignored and inadequate.

In a labour market report by Athena Infomonics (n.d.), Tamil Nadu is described as somewhat different to the other states in India, because of these industries. Consequently, Tamil Nadu has a high inward immigration rate. It is estimated that between 40 to 50 lakhs[12] or 4-5million people have migrated into Tamil Nadu in the last decade, a trend that is likely to continue (Athena Infomonics, n.d.; Suresh & Ramesh, 2012). Furthermore, the workforce participation rate is higher than the national average. However, the demand for skilled labour is also rising which has highlighted a skill deficit. Although the immigrant labour force has basic education skills from attending schooling, vocational skills are harder to acquire because of the reduced number of training programs, both private and publically provided. In addition, highly qualified graduates are unable to find suitable work because they are over qualified, and consider some of these jobs as being menial, such as forklift drivers and mechanics, although they are well paid. In short, this makes it difficult for a person with formal education to get relevant industry skills, and on the other hand it leaves a person with vocational training with limited life skills. Thus, according to Athena Infomonics (n.d.) and Suresh and Ramesh (2012), there needs to be a revision in the labour market education and training programs, and in particular the vocational and formal education sectors. This discussion leads on to the role of women working in these industries and what that means for the changing role of women in society.

Women in the information and software industries in south India

Most of the women working in Chennai's software companies according to Fuller and Narasimhan (2008a, pp. 190-194), are not support staff such as secretaries, receptionists and

[12] One lakh is equivalent to 100,000.

personal assistants, but software engineers, who are well paid and have high status. They claim that there is a reported 35 per cent of women working in information technology (IT) which directly employs about 2.8 million, and indirectly employs 8.9 million people across India according to The National Association of Software and Services Companies (2014a, 2014b), a non-profit trade association established in 1988 for the Indian Information Technology (IIT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. Fuller and Narasimhan (2008a), Madhavi and Vimla (2011), and Valk and Srinivasan (2011) also maintain that women working in these IT industries tend to experience respect and are treated equally to men. However, when these women have an opportunity to marry, many women choose not to. Where they do remain single, it is mostly for at least one of two reasons: one, because they are seen as over qualified and men do not find this desirable; two, because if they did marry they would join their husband's family and their income would go to that family rather than support their natal family. Fuller and Narasimhan (2008a), Madhavi and Vimla (2011), and Valk and Srinivasan (2011) also maintain that often women leave the IT industry because of the traditional expectations that once married, women should not work outside the home. If they do continue to work, they are more likely to pay more attention to their families and children than their work, entrust the care of their children to grandparents rather than stop work or put them into a child care centre, and with higher incomes they are able to afford to employ workers to do other domestic duties. Traditional parents-in-law (that is, the husband's parents) often find it difficult to understand their daughter-in-law working, but accept this because of the high income and the status that this brings to the family. Furthermore, despite some apparent shifts in gender expectations and roles, many men still tend not to assist with household chores and responsibilities. In sum, many of these Indian married women who are employed in the IT industries reported that they find the combined burdens of demands at work and at home to be very stressful, a problem which is very familiar for working middle-class women across the world. Fuller and Narasimhan (2008a), Madhavi and Vimla (2011) and Valk and Srinivasan (2011) conclude that the gains that these women in IT have achieved are diminished by gender inequality in the wider society, including inadequate 'family-friendly' work and childcare policies. However, generally they have more personal autonomy and empowerment in their social circles. Lastly, these middle-class women who have benefited from globalisation are also in the minority in India, and any small gains they have in society tend not to be enjoyed by the vast majority of Indian women.

Globalisation, women and work in India

Pandya (2007) and Amutha and Rajkumar (2007) state that globalisation has presented new challenges for women's equality in India. They argue that there is a need for new policies to redistribute employment and the quality of employment, because currently there is a phenomenon they describe as the "feminization of poverty", with poor and unsafe working conditions across India.

Female labour force participation in India tells a very different story for the majority of working women in India. In the 'Census of India2001', "non-workers" included, amongst other descriptions, "household workers—all those attending to household chores like cooking, cleaning of utensils, looking after children, fetching water, and collecting firewood" (Choudhary, Tripathy, & George, 2009, p. 14). Thus, 32 per cent of India's population, and 65 per cent of all Indian females were classified as non-workers, in the same category as beggars, prostitutes and prisoners. This is a damning indictment of the role of women in India, with implications not only for women but for society at large where their contributions of work towards society and the nation are not valued and often go unseen.

In 1995, Goldin (1995) studied women's labour participation rates amongst developing nations and proposed that there was a positive "u-shaped" correlation between labour force participation of women and economic development, in that women's labour participation usually went up when female education improved and their time in the labour force was valued. Klasen and Pieters (2012, 2013) and Lahoti and Swaminathan (2013) draw on Goldin's work and argue that in their studies there is no such correlation. They argue that despite the widely touted economic growth in India, women's status has not improved overall. The proportion of 25-59 year old women in the labour market has declined by 23 per cent which is close to the lowest female participation rate in the world. This correlates with the views of Raju (2006) and similar reports by Goldman Sachs Asset Management (2010) and Catalyst (2014). They link this to a conservative and patriarchal society where supports for women educationally and in the workplace are not in place, and where particular religious views and traditions prevent women from working, and where the potential contributors to knowledge and skills that women would bring do not eventuate because men take many of the roles.

Klasen and Pieters (2012, 2013) point out that India's economy is dominated by agriculture, where women are seen as active participants, but this has not led the overall

economic growth in India as most of India's more significant growth has been through information technology which is not employment intensive. Women, who are forced to work in agriculture to contribute towards the household income, are able to combine their roles of parent and family worker on family farms. But although they are considered to be part of the labour market there is no direct remuneration for their work; they receive little or no benefits and tend to experience insecure working conditions (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008a; Ghani, Mani, & O'Connell, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2013). Coupled with this are their low education levels and high fertility rates, which further restrict them to only working on family farms. Whereas men are more likely to be employed outside the family home in construction, services and mining, women are not usually employed in these areas. Even women who are educated beyond secondary schooling have lower employment rates because of fewer job opportunities and stigmatisation if these women end up working in more menial jobs. Paradoxically, their higher education has enhanced their marriage prospects but it ties them to (unpaid) family responsibilities and duties, in which they have been highly tutored and mentored since a young age by their mothers and other female relatives. For many Indians, caring for parents-in-law and attending to domestic household tasks are the duty of all married Indian women (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008a; Ghani et al., 2013).

Choudhary et al. (2009), Klasen and Pieters (2012, 2013), and Maslaka and Singhalb (2008) support the views outlined above. They point out that women do not have equal access to employment in the same industries and occupations as men and, despite the rhetoric around equal opportunity, women are still confined to feminine roles and tasks (Raju, 2006). According to Ghani et al. (2013) from the World Bank, women's status in India is directly linked to their economic participation and opportunity, and out of 135 countries, India is ranked 123rd. They argue that economic empowerment is important for women's ability to negotiate within domestic and societal arenas, and all indications show that this negotiating power is declining. Shweta Singh and Hoge (2010) maintain that women from low-income groups contribute enormously to the economy but continue to remain at the bottom of society and have little power. Furthermore Ghani et al. (2013) quote statistics such as women only accounting for ten per cent of membership of national legislatures in 2009, and 65 per cent of women are literate compared to 82 per cent of men in 2011.

In summary, despite India's economic successes in the last decade, the overall numbers of women working in the workforce are low, and the literature on economic development indicates India's inability to reap the rewards of its success in terms of social

developments. For women this economic success has not translated into any signs of emancipation generally, and indicators are they have reduced levels of wellbeing and less access to power within the family and in society generally (Klasen & Pieters, 2012, 2013; Shweta Singh & Hoge, 2010). Furthermore, as Choudhary et al. (2009) argue, because women are not always so well educated and are not so exposed to wider thinking and social discussion, they are in many cases captive to popular culture or media-driven representations of gender and gender relations. And, even if they do work outside the home they may continue to be discriminated against or devalued by other women when they perform domestic labour inside the home. All of this is reinforced by deeply rooted culturally-determined and traditionally-determined gender roles in a male-dominated society (Choudhary et al., 2009; Ghani et al., 2013; Klasen & Pieters, 2013; Raju, 2006; Shweta Singh & Hoge, 2010).

Australia and Globalisation

Needless to say, globalisation with its flows of people, practices and policies, has also affected Australia, although not necessarily in the same ways that it has affected India. There is much to say about globalisation and its effects on Australia, but in keeping with the subject of this study and that half of my participants were Tamils who had migrated to Australia, this section focuses on multiculturalism and Australia. First, I present a snapshot of the debates in Australia around understandings of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism

The world literature on multiculturalism is vast. It should not be surprising, therefore, as Ivison (2010) and Kymlicka (2007) maintain, that the definition and meaning of multiculturalism is highly contested. Furthermore, it is also complicated by the diverse ways in which policies of multiculturalism are interpreted, implemented and practised in each region and nation, and which are often to do with patterns of immigration, original settlement and nation building. Hage (2008) agrees, and contends that searching for a universal definition is near impossible because of the different contexts, ideologies and discourses. In sum, multiculturalism means different things to different people (Hage, 2010).

Despite this understanding that multiculturalism is difficult to define, Ivison (2010) offered a definition that I accept for the purposes of this study: “Multiculturalism refers to a broad array of theories, attitudes, beliefs, norms, practices and policies that seek to provide public recognition of and support for accommodation of non-dominant ethnocultural groups”

(p. 2). The non-dominant groups may be from immigrant groups, refugees, national minority groups or Indigenous peoples. Hage (2010) maintains that it also exists as a form of cultural identity, as expressions of art and cuisine, cultural preservation, governance and intercultural relations. Ivison (2010) further argues that what is important, though, is to go beyond protection of basic civil and political rights and liberties, to a form of what he terms "differentiated citizenship that allows groups to express their distinct identities and practices" (p. 2), such that "freedom, equality, democracy and justice" are part of the maxim (p. 2), views well supported by Kymlicka (1995, 2007, 2011) and Levey (2010). Ivison further elaborates a framework, which he describes as underpinned by three broad logics: protective or communitarian multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, and imperial multiculturalism (pp. 3-4). "Protective or communitarian multiculturalism", he says, is to preserve the cultural integrity and authenticity of any group's way of life. "Liberal multiculturalism" is an approach to accommodate and protect diversity so that values of equality, autonomy, toleration or equal respect are upheld and, in particular, so that current social and political arrangements are transformed for both the majority and minority groups. The third logic, "imperial multiculturalism", is what Ivison describes as a "new version of the hierarchical and/or racialized modes of political order" (p.4).

On the other hand, Hage (2008), as cited by Supriya Singh (2011), argues that "multiculturalism is primarily a mode of integrating third-world-origin citizens into the Western nation-state" (p. 674). In many ways this is an echo of post-colonial writers such as McEwan (2009) and Young (2003). It also represents a view of how Ivison's (2010) notion of imperial multiculturalism can be played out. And it raises questions such as: who are the minorities and majorities, and why? Who tolerates whom, and why? What aspects of a culture can be accepted or not and why? Ivison also asks: what or who is the proper subject of multiculturalism? Is it individuals, groups, cultures or peoples? Is the concept of multiculturalism an attempt to protect cultural, linguistic or ethnic groups and their practices because they are human beings? Or is it attempting to promote a greater diversity of cultures, languages and ethnic groups in order to provide a richer set of choices and options for people as a whole? As this study will demonstrate, there are no simple answers or questions when discussing global flows of people. Where Australia is concerned, migration and the notions of multiculturalism are often seen as central to the success of its economy, its labour force and its prevailing identity.

Australia's multiculturalism

The *2011 Australian Census of Population and Housing* revealed that "over a quarter (26%) of Australia's population was born overseas and a further one fifth (20%) had at least one overseas-born parent" (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). That is, most Australians are either first generation migrants or they are related to parents or grandparents who migrated. Since 2007, Australians born in Asia and other parts of the world, other than the United Kingdom and Europe, account for most of Australia's migration (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). It is interesting to note that *The Scanlon Report* (Markus, 2014) also cited a total population increase of four million people from 2001 to 2013; 40 per cent of this increase is attributed to 'natural increase' and 60 per cent to overseas migration.

I want to depart, for a moment, from conventional approaches to critically reviewing the literature and present a more personal perspective on some of the historical issues I am discussing here. Such departures are, I believe, important in situating my critical view within a particular sociocultural time and space and are consistent with my commitment to reflexivity in this thesis.

I, together with many others in Australia, particularly those of us living in Melbourne, increasingly see ourselves as living in a multicultural nation. In just over fifty years, and in my lifetime, I have witnessed the country that I was born into being transformed from a nation that saw itself as a nation of Anglophiles with large numbers of rarely visible 'others', to a nation of citizens who are more likely to appreciate that they share the country with people from many cultural backgrounds and allegiances. Australia is widely characterised as a country with a diversity that entails some challenges, but also enjoys the kinds of benefits that come from a culturally rich and varied society. It is also one where all people, no matter what their colour, race or creed, have a right to live safely and be able to contribute to the development of this country (Markus, McDonald, & Jupp, 2009; Soutphommasane, 2012). Some believe that this has been possible, to a large degree, because of globalisation and the consequent mobilisation and flows of people and practices through migration. Certainly, in my life time I have experienced enormous cultural change in Australia.

I am part of the dominant culture in Australia, where I identify with being a 'white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant' sometimes known colloquially as 'WASP'. The traditional WASP narrative says that Australia, although inhabited by Indigenous peoples, was 'discovered' by British subjects who 'founded' and took ownership of the land, and established it as a colony

of Britain in 1788. In 1901 *The Commonwealth of Australia* was instituted and by 1931 Australia had nationally separated from Britain as a colony to become a member of the *British Commonwealth of Nations*, as an autonomous state (The Commonwealth, 2014). I grew up at the tail-end of what became known as the 'White Australia Policy'. One of the architects of this policy was Alfred Deakin (1856-1919), Prime Minister on three occasions in the first decade of Federation (Sengupta, 2012, p. 50). Deakin's attitude towards Asians, despite having "joined the theosophical movement, rooted in India and Buddhism" was, as Sengupta (2012) argues, unapologetic, and he set the scene for decades of distrust and xenophobia towards Asia and its peoples. Sungupta quotes Deakin:

> The yellow, the brown, and the copper-coloured are to be forbidden to land anywhere … The ultimate result is a national determination to make no truce with coloured immigration, to have no traffic with the unclean thing, and to put it down in all its shapes without much regard to cost. (p. 53)

Deakin had a significant hand in developing and introducing *The Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, an attempt to preserve a British ethno-cultural identity of the Australian nation. It was an Act of the Parliament of Australia in which Asians were considered to be "dangerous economic competitors" (Rizvi, 2012, p. 74). This policy and the attitudes that accompanied it, which were actively discriminatory towards Asians and anyone who did not speak English, dominated Australia for the first half of the twentieth century and to some extent these attitudes live on. But, as D. Walker and Sobocinska (2012) note, these views were already gaining popularity in the late nineteenth century, as illustrated by a popular novel by Kenneth McKay, *The Yellow Wave*, detailing the destructive effects of China and Russia invading Australia. Furthermore, D. Walker and Sobocinska (2012) maintain that Australian attitudes to Asia had been deeply imprinted since British settlement in 1788, identifying with the prosperous 'West' and a self-perception of entitlement. But actually, as Rizvi (2012) remarks, "Australia has struggled to establish a coherent and consistent position with respect to Asia" (p. 73).

I can remember my father, with some disquiet, in the 1960s and 1970s expressing fears about the 'yellow hordes' or the 'yellow peril' and how we were at risk of being overrun by particular ethnic groups. My cultural heritage is British, as a result of successive waves of mass immigration from the British Isles, which were sponsored by policies of assisted passage in the nineteenth century (Soutphommasane, 2012). It is from this background that I have noted the "White Australia" policy was officially and progressively

dismantled between 1949 and 1973 (Tavan, 2005), and yet its legacy in the popular imagination still appears to resonate in Australian politics. To see public expression of xenophobia towards culture in Australia that was not 'white', one only has to look to speeches in the Federal Parliament, such as the 1996 maiden speech by Pauline Hanson, who critiqued multiculturalism (and Aboriginal rights), and to subsequent speeches by Prime Minister Howard (1996-2007) who some have characterised as converting Hanson's sentiments into a policy of national fear (Gale, 2000; Soutphommasane, 2012). More recently, the current Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Tony Abbott, has publicly opined that Australia was "scarcely settled" before the British invested into the great southern land. Such comments position the Aboriginal peoples as marginal and trivial in the history of Australia, seemingly ignoring the fact they were living and cultivating the land for forty thousand years before 'white' settlement, and ignoring the legacy of their rich diversity of languages and cultural practices (Daley, 2014). But, as D. Walker and Sobocinska (2012) maintain, Australia has always had peoples from Asia. Indeed, Chinese settlement in Australia began fifteen years after the "First Fleet[13]" had landed. Afghan traders supplied the early settlers with provisions and in the 1850s, with a series of "gold rushes[14]," a number of Chinese prospectors arrived. According to Wells (2007):

> The largest foreign contingent on the goldfields was the 40,000 Chinese who made their way to Australia. In 1861, Chinese immigrants made up 3.3 per cent of the Australian population, the greatest it has ever been. These Chinese were nearly all men (38,337 men and only eleven women!) and most were under contract to Chinese and foreign businessmen. In exchange for their passage money, they worked on the goldfields until their debt was paid off. Most of them returned to China. (see subsection titled 'Multiculturalism on the Goldfields') .

However, migration from nations worldwide to form a substantial and reliable workforce for a growing economy has been at the heart of recent Australian migration policies. Following the Second World War, according to Soutphommasane (2012), because of immigration and a "Displaced Persons Scheme", Australia's population increased by six million (p. 4). These migrants came from Britain, and central and southern Europe. Wall (2006) and Soutphommasane (2012) both state that assimilation and conformity to the 'Australian way of life' were at the core of the program. Some immigrants began to return

[13] Between 1788 and 1850 the English sent over 162,000 convicts to Australia in 806 ships. The first eleven of these ships are today known as the First Fleet with convicts and marines (Dunn & McCreadie, 2014; New South Wales Migration Heritage Centre, 2010; New South Wales State Library, 2014).
[14] Discovery of gold in Australia and the subsequent rush of prospectors to the goldfields or gold deposits (Wells, 2007).

home, and those who stayed sometimes remained in their ethnic neighbourhoods. In 1973, the then Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Labor government, Mr Al Grassby, offered a new strategy, “A multicultural society for the future” (Grassby, 1973), to reflect what he saw as the changing national identity in Australia that valued and incorporated new arrivals’ cultures. This was as a result of political lobbying from immigrant groups, and more broadly an awareness of human rights since the Universal Declaration of Human rights in 1948, and social justice. This ‘new’ official policy on ‘multiculturalism’ was a “response to the social and economic disadvantages immigrants were experiencing, especially in work, education and health” (Soutphommasane, 2012, p. 11). Legislation was also changed so the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* was enacted, which meant that discrimination on the basis of exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or ethnic origin was now illegal. Thus, Australia’s national identity began to shift away from an insular ‘white Australia’ to one that was more likely to value cultural and racial multiplicity. And, according to Markus et al. (2009) language was seen as the core of ethnic diversity, where ‘multicultural’ meant ‘multilingual’ (p. 96). However as the change in immigrant profiles moved from British and southern and eastern Europeans, to Asian, Middle Eastern and more recently African populations, new questions have arisen, such as those related to culture and language, visibility of immigrants, non-Christians in a supposedly Christian society, and questions about “the ethnic balance” of Australia that tend to provoke sensitivities and feelings of nationalist discourses (Markus et al., 2009, p. 97).

Soutphommasane (2012) proposes that refugees or “boat people” from the Indochina region arriving in Australia after the wars in the late 1970s tested the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* very quickly. He asserts that their arrival raised old fears and concerns about the ‘yellow peril’ and being invaded. However, the then Fraser Liberal Government by 1983 accepted and resettled some 70,000 Indochinese refugees. This continued with some 100,000 immigrants arriving per year; at that time, thirty per cent of these were from Asia (Soutphommasane, 2012). The Galbally Review (Australia. Review of Post-arrival Programs and Services to Migrants & Galbally, 1978) outlined a model of ‘multiculturalism’ which emphasised the need for tolerance of cultural difference. The report also ratified the creation of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), originally for the purpose of assisting new migrants, which has now evolved into an educator and promoter for the understanding of cultural diversity (Special Broadcasting Service, 2014b).

Since the 1980s, the notion of multiculturalism has had its detractors with opposition to the multicultural policies and strategies by politicians, journalists and key Australian figures alike. However, most have argued that the notion of an Australian multicultural society has remained robust and relevant (Collins, 2013). As Hage (2008) concludes, this is largely because "in the 1970s and early 1980s multiculturalism worked towards integrating migrant workers into the nation-state" (p. 501). In the 1990s with the effects of globalisation becoming more apparent, changes in Australia's economy and recognition of Australia as being in the same region as Asia, trading with Asian economies and multiculturalism were encouraged (Hage, 2010; Markus et al., 2009; Rizvi, 2012; Soutphommasane, 2012). However, Hage (2008) argues that with globalisation, national economies were fast disappearing. Multiculturalism, too, was changing, such that previously powerful white, western, cultures, like Australia were now being challenged by changes in society at large, with second generation migrant families holding significant roles in the host society and an increase of middle-class migration from Asia. And so, according to Hage (2008) understandings of multiculturalism have been challenged, partly in response to advocacy by first and second (and later) generations of migrant families. Additionally, Hage (2008) claims there is now a "crisis of multiculturalism" (p. 506), and some authors are arguing that alternatives need to be sought. Nevertheless he acknowledges that although there are many contradictions within multiculturalism, a return to 'assimilation' is not the solution (p.508). As a final point, and to counter claims of a "crisis", Markus et al. (2009), in a rather forced show of optimism, argue that diverse peoples and groups have been working together amiably for years in Australia to ensure that immigrants and citizens with diverse cultural backgrounds are heard, are able to influence politics, be relatively free of discrimination and prejudice, and secure equal status with other Australian citizens (p. 105).

Singh (2011) and (Hage, 2010) propose that concerns such as racism in multiculturalism are shifting focus and are now based on identity and culture. Thus, for some 'whites' living in Australia, their understandings and attachment to Australian identity is under threat. Their concerns tend to be expressed through various public displays of identity, where they reaffirm their dominance through assertions of cultural superiority, and through the belittling of other cultures as 'uncivilised'. Such expressions are resurfacing in many ways in the twenty-first century. Hage (2010) cites the so called "2005 Cronulla Riots[15]" on

[15] The 2005 Cronulla riots were a series of clashes between different cultural groups including local Australians, originating in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla, New South Wales.

the Sydney beaches in 2005 as powerful evidence of this. More recently, there were violent exchanges when ‘Reclaim Australia’ rallies were organised in capital cities across Australia, in response to a perception that Australia was being ‘Islamicised’ ” ("Reclaim Australia clashes," 2015).

Markus et al. (2009) and Soutphommasane (2012) have a more optimistic view of multiculturalism. Markus maintains that:

> Essentially, multiculturalism [in Australia] has been a pragmatic and liberal approach which has worked very well, if slowly, in shifting opinion, policy and attitudes. It certainly faces a challenge from Australian conservatives or Islamic fanatics. But it has frequently served as a bridging and compromising influence in ethnic affairs, contributing to social cohesion rather than separatist dissension. (p. 105)

Soutphommasane (2012) argues that Australia has a successful and distinct interpretation of multiculturalism, where it is part of civic philosophy, pointing to the ‘fact’ that in Australia, “immigrants, regardless of their origin, have been granted equal rights in all spheres of society without being expected to abandon their cultural affiliations” (p. 65). Consequently, with social support services and English language training, Australia has the highest rate of citizenship in the world, in that 80 per cent of immigrants with more than ten years of residence have chosen to become citizens of Australia. Furthermore, the children of immigrants increasingly dominate the enrolments in law and medicine in elite universities above local or native Australians; rather than being segregated in ghettos, lost to poverty and unemployment. Collins (2013) maintains that unemployment rates for immigrants are, in most jurisdictions in Australia, only slightly higher than non-immigrants, but according to the 2006 Australian Census data, first and second-generation immigrants of Lebanese/Middle Eastern ancestry, Vietnamese and North African ancestry had unemployment rates two to three times higher than the average. In addition, research data suggests that while many immigrants gain employment and integrate into society, there are still some immigrants for whom integration is not possible for a variety of reasons (Collins, 2013; Soutphommasane, 2012). Lastly, Wall (2006), Soutphommasane (2012) and Collins (2013) contrast Australia’s approach with approaches of other countries that are also grappling with globalising forces and shifting flows of people and ideologies, and maintain that Australia’s model is one that can be held as an exemplar in nation building and unity.

The Scanlon Foundation was established in 2001 with the goal of enhancing and fostering social cohesion within Australia: “It was formed on a view that Australia, with the

exception of Australia's First Peoples, is and always will be a migrant nation" (Scanlon Foundation, 2014, p. 2nd para). It has undertaken surveys over the last seven years about social cohesion, immigration and population issues. In a recent report, *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2014* (Markus, 2014), the key findings were that there was a consistent pattern of positive identification with Australia, that there is economic opportunity and reward for hard work, and satisfaction with financial circumstances. According to this report, there has been a lessening of concern over issues of immigration and cultural diversity. Nevertheless, the report indicates that the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes and practices towards immigrants in Australia remains high, noting a particularly strong negative attitude towards those of the Muslim faith—five times higher than towards Christians and Buddhists (p. 1). However, as has been widely noted, discrimination and racism are inhibiting factors for participation and contribution in Australian society and this has consequences for any nation building 'project'. As President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Professor Gillian Triggs (2014, Conclusion section) maintains, attitudes and behaviour to shift the prevalence of discrimination and racism requires a combination of education, policy and legislation.

Wise (2009) takes an explicitly social view to explain the reasons she believes multiculturalism has been successful in Australia. Her ethnographic study coins the term "everyday multiculturalism" or "multiculturalism from below" (p. 21) to explain how and why diverse Australians "get along" or not. The study was located in two suburbs in Sydney where a significant proportion of the population was born overseas. She discovered that those neighbours and community groups who "got along" often had some sort of gift exchange and reciprocity, as part of developing kinship and social networks. They also had "transversal enablers" or those who understood the importance of learning about and so stepping across cultural boundaries to engage and connect to establish a relationship of parity, rather than one based on patronisation. These enablers also distributed news and information, and often hosted gatherings and events for their local community group, thus assisting those in the group to understand local and cultural expectations and customs. Wise also discovered that there could be problems if the different cultural groups were unaware of specific cultural orientations, and there were unintended consequences. Similarly, she cautions, "there also needs to be 'permission to be left alone' " (p. 42). Wise's (2009) conclusion is that there is still much to learn about why people in multicultural communities are or are not able to live and work together amicably.

A recent study by Supriya Singh (2011) about Indian students studying in Melbourne, Australia, explored their experiences of living, studying and working. Her study suggests that most young people who have travelled from India initially to study in Australia, but also to explore the potential of migrating to the country, contribute approximately three billion dollars in educational fees annually to the economy overall. However, the students *stated* that their main reasons were to improve their life choices through internationally recognised qualifications so that they could be mobile and join transnational corporations. This new type of migrant, although experiencing both discrimination and kindness from local Australians, is somewhat at a distance from more well-established Indian communities in Australia. The two groups migrated to Australia under very different conditions. According to Fuller and Narasimhan (2008b) and K. A. N. Sastri (2009) the earlier group were mostly Tamil Brahman professionals who migrated to Australia and into jobs and settled in the 1980s, as a result of anti-Brahman attitudes and changing laws in Tamil Nadu and India generally. Whereas according to Supriya Singh and Cabraal (2010), the latter group are more vulnerable because they have poorer English skills, come from different social backgrounds, often from towns and villages, are more financially stressed and have little family support at the local level. It seems that the earlier migrants are not aware that the current wave of Indian migrants are young people who have very different migrant experiences to them. Also, the "willingness of the Indian students to want to connect with both the Indian and wider Australian communities is an issue" (Supriya Singh & Cabraal, 2010, p. 28). However, as India is one of Australia's significant trading nations, the more recent group are backed by the Indian media who know how to exert influence, thus shifting the power balance (Whinnett & Hussain, 2014, January 5).

In conclusion, the understandings of multiculturalism in Australia are shifting and changing and policy seems to be changing too. Where once explicitly multicultural policy may have been based on the need to boost economic benefits and increase the Australian workforce pool, and where ethnic minorities were *integrated* into the nation, multicultural policy is now seen as affecting cultural policy in ways that seem directly attributable to globalisation. Australia has moved on from the White Australia Policy and subsequent like-minded government policies. Australia is exploring new notions of multiculturalism that reflect higher levels of global flows and mobility. However, as many studies on multiculturalism in Australia have shown, it is not only the policies and infrastructure that provide an insight into Australia's multiculturalism, but the lived experiences of immigrants

and settlers and their stories that contribute, too. Lastly, as Markus et al. (2009) assert, multiculturalism in Australia has frequently served as “a bridging and compromising influence in ethnic affairs, contributing to social cohesion rather than separatist dissension” (p. 105).

Globalisation and multiculturalism also have implications for communication and language in Australia. The next section discusses the English language as a global language and the notion of World Englishes.

Global English and World Englishes

Where once the dominance of the English language in Australia and India crudely reflected the legacy of British colonisation, much literature suggests that in globalising times it has taken on a different kind of power. In many quarters it is spoken about as the global *lingua franca*. In India, knowledge of English tends to reflect middle-class status (at least) of the users, and in Australia it has tended to reinforce western dominance. Nevertheless, exactly what constitutes the English language across the world has never been more highly contested (Bryson, 1990; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Crystal, 2003, 2006; Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Pennycook, 1994, 2007; Saxena & Omoniyi, 2010).

According to Widdowson (1997, 2003), English has been “spread” almost as a virtual language rather than “distributed” as a set of established unchanged and encoded forms and practices. Many consider that careers in business and commerce, high government positions, diplomacy, academia, sport, and science and technology, and emerging industries such as tourism and hospitality *require* fluency in English as an absolute essential in a globalising world. Accordingly, English tends to be the dominant international language of digital news organisations, academic communities, books and newspapers, airports and road signage. Consistent with the rhetoric surrounding the need for a global *lingua franca*, English holds the promise of social and economic development, particularly in countries like India (Dheram, 2005; Graddol, 2010; J. Mukherjee, 2010). Yet according to Pennycook (2010a) English as a global *lingua franca* also excludes people and nations and in some cases contributes to poverty and waste. Roberts (2006) claims that English is the first language to achieve global domination in an age of global communication, which in his view will make it difficult to dislodge in the future. However, Pennycook (2010b) puts a counter claim to this, and states that there is an increasing number of other languages on the Internet, and the dominance of English is decreasing proportionally.

Debates about the English language, how it is used and how it affects various host cultures are not restricted to debates about the global *lingua franca*. Kachru's (1982, 1985) now highly cited "three circles concept" was introduced as a way of classifying World Englishes, where "World Englishes" was intended as an inclusive term, and did not associate privilege with any one or other circle within the model. Kachru's (1982) World Englishes model (Kachru, 1982, 1985) (see Figure 4. below) provides a framework to explain the status and functions of Englishes in different English speaking countries across the world. The first circle represents those countries where English is the dominant language because of migration, and seemingly benign colonisation, in the case of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, from the British Isles. The second circle represents countries where English has a long history, but often not without conflict associated with colonisation, such as India, Nigeria and Singapore. The third circle includes those countries where English is primarily used for international trade, industry and education purposes, such as The People's Republic of China, Japan, and Korea.

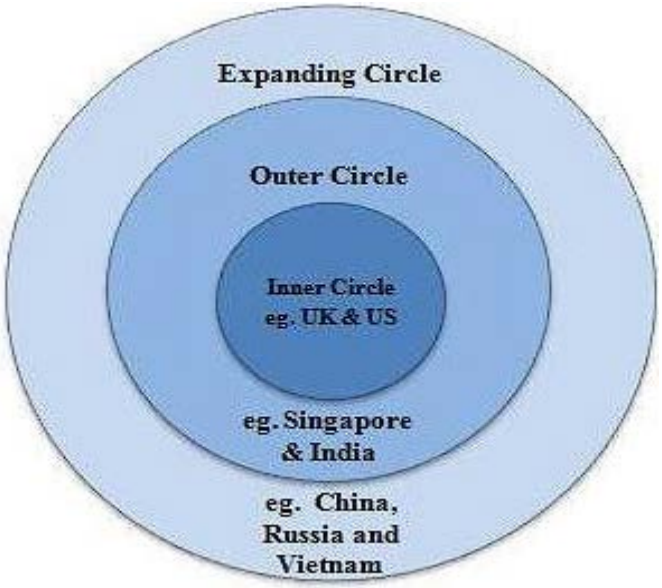

Figure 4. Kachru's (1982) model of World Englishes - Three Circles Concept

Pennycook (2010a, 2010c) argues that this is a model that appears to suit proponents of World Englishes and Canagarajah (1999) observes that the model was so standardised that it left out the "eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes" and instead follows "the logic of the prescriptive and elitist tendencies of the center linguists" (p. 180). Bruthiaux (2003) also argues against the three circles model, and states that it is a twentieth century model inadequate in a twenty-first century world. Two decades after the introduction of the model,

Kachru and Nelson (2006) maintain that although it is a concept of circles, these circles are dynamic and change in character over time. They particularly emphasise, for instance, that the Asian region includes all three circles. Saxena and Omoniyi (2010) contend that this model concept is a sociolinguistic construct, specific to territory. Furthermore, in a globalised world enlivened and complicated by human migration and transcultural flows, and facilitated by the developments in new media, the notion of diaspora destabilises simpler understandings of an Outer circle. Other researchers such as Gandana (2014) and Marlina (2013) argue that multicultural Australia too should not be seen as merely a first circle country, but rather a combination of all three circles since large numbers of cultural and business subgroups operate with English as primary, secondary or tertiary language in their day to day communications.

Bhatt (2010) takes up Canagarajah's critique of Karu's model and the lack of acknowledgement of hybridity, and argues that English no longer belongs to a single nation, but a range of different vested groups all with a stake in English, who wish to use the language for their own ends. He challenges the "politics of conformity" and proposes an alternative view where there is "the creative potential of bilingual English users" (p. 109). Pennycook (1998) contends that it is tempting to see the English language as a neutral communication tool, used as a *lingua franca* in a globalised world. In 2010, he proposed another view which challenges the system of "World Englishes", where multilingual peoples communicate in English with other multilingual peoples, producing countless variations of English. Pennycook argues that English is more than the monocentric and pluricentric models posited by proponents of World Englishes, attached to nation states. He reasons that because we live in a globalised world, which is increasingly hybrid, that "varieties of English have always been local" (p. 208) and he urges researchers to "engage … with the possibility of multiple, co-present, local origins of English" (p.208). He insists that we "adopt a translingual model of language" (p. 684) where the interlingual resources that people draw on are central to the epistemology, such that, who says what to whom and where, and what ideologies, discourses and beliefs are attached, are the key analytical questions. Thus, rather than arguments around native speaker ownership, uses and application of grammar, cultural identity, bilingualism, and code-switching, he proposes the term "trans *lingua franca* English" (p. 685) to include "*all* uses of English" and the "interconnectedness of all English use" (p. 685), where language is a local practice, and where speakers are always interacting with other speakers. As Canagarajah (2007) explains, "because the type of language is

actively negotiated by the participants, what might be inappropriate or unintelligible in one interaction is perfectly understandable in another" (p. 92).

The notion of a globalised English also raises concerns for some about reduced ability to communicate where, if the effects of heterogenisation continue, accents and pronunciation will present problems to *lingua franca* communication (J. Jenkins, 2006). Saxena and Omoniyi (2010, p. 5) explore this theme of "accents" in the spoken English language. They reason that the preference for an English or American accent does not stem from the hegemony of colonisation, but from the belief that they are associated with the centres of power in a global economy. And in India, "Call Centre accents may have emerged in the old colonial and post-colonial loci, but their reconstruction is produced for the late twentieth century and twenty-first century globalised needs (Saxena & Omoniyi, 2010, pp. 5-6). They also cite examples where language policies are linked to globalisation. One example is where China is insisting its airline pilots must learn English to meet international aviation standards, and this includes conforming to particular pronunciation 'standards'. Their other example, ironically, explains how British and American pilots must have accent training to meet the variations of English spoken around the world. For example the word "three" must be pronounced as "tree" (p. 6) in some parts of the world. They also question the premise of standardised English language tests, which are connected to and based on the expectations of dominant native English language countries. This, Saxena and Omoniyi (2010) contend, perpetuates "North-South" world labour mobility and denies migration and transcultural flows where the idea of the nation state is diminishing. In addition, they raise concerns about how English is privileged amongst the global cultural and economic elite in key areas of influence such as media, advertising and global commerce (p. 8). Furthermore, they maintain that in international trade and communication there is sometimes more tolerance and accommodation between two non-native English speaking countries or states than between a native English speaking and a non-native speaking country. Native English language speakers, according to their research, show less tolerance for non-native speakers, which is often at the centre of communication conflicts and cultural tensions. In the end, as Graddol (2010), International Business Communication (2013) and Pennycook (2010a, 2010b) argue, English serves the interests of the trans-corporate global world and follows the shifting relations of global politics.

In summary, notwithstanding the continuing debates as to what actually constitutes the English language in a mobile and globalising world, hybrid versions of the English

language are increasingly seen to constitute a global language used for international communication. Some argue that the increasingly dominant English language in a globalising world offers the promise of power and social advantage in developing nations who wish to do business with western nations. Yet others urge caution about the potential for cultural destruction that comes with a *lingua franca* that does not value or include local and indigenous languages, cultures, and cultural practices.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter explored the effects of globalisation on India and Australia with topics for each nation that suited this research. In India the focus was on the middle-class families, women and work, and Tamil Nadu's changing industrial environment. In Australia, the focus was on culture and multiculturalism. The last section shifted to the English language and its dominant role in globalisation, and how debates about the use and effect of English have played out in India and Australia.

In India, globalising processes have effected many changes in society such that there is an increasing middle class who, in order to feel modern and in order to succeed, have taken on and are influenced by norms endorsed by the global media and the range of western cultural practices. However, the majority of Indians—those who are not middle-class—enact traditional cultural practices and follow traditional Hindu ways of life. At a state level, Tamil Nadu has had a significant shift in its economy with the establishment of transnational companies, and in particular, the software industry which has attracted women into its ranks. These women are often senior and hold well-paying jobs which poses challenges for the family, such as altering the power structures. However, despite this, these women are in the minority and patriarchy underpins the social mores, although some authors argue that this is slowly changing.

In Australia, globalisation has affected many aspects of the country, including a shift in migration policies and increased tensions around notions of multiculturalism. In the past, migration was originally implemented to supplement the labour market, which upheld past notions of western dominance. Due to the revocation of the White Australia Policy and subsequent related government migration policies, discourses of multiculturalism are mediating new understandings so that notions of culture, politics, ethics and the effects of globalisation are included, and new frameworks explored.

Globalisation has vast implications for the English language as a global language used for international communication and for the different effects that forms of English have on the identity of its speakers. It has the potential to assist aspiring middle classes in their accumulation of power and social advantage, and to enable individuals and developing nations who wish to do business with western nations. In situations where there is not a shared language between nations, English has often become the trading or global language. How global English is conceptually framed and its effects on cultures and nations is debated by linguists and educators alike, and what it will evolve into in the future is still highly contentious.

In Chapter 5, I present the methodology for this study and my position as an ethnographic intercultural researcher.

METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Chapter 5

Arti[16]*:* Methodology and Epistemology

> Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105)

In Chapter 1, I stated: "The distinctiveness of my thesis and its contribution to knowledge in the area of intercultural studies and studies of culture and identity, are derived from the methodological approach I have taken in this study". Hence, my explanation of my methodological approach is long and complex. I have divided the discussion about the Methodology of this study into three chapters: 5, 6 and 7, in order to keep the discussion clear and deal with the complexities progressively. The discussion includes how I ensured that the best methodological approach was chosen and applied to generate my data and understand it, and how I learned about how to be an intercultural researcher, who was ethical and responsible in a post-colonial and globalising world. Methodology Chapter 5 is about my research approach, my philosophy about life and how knowledge is created, and how I positioned myself as a qualitative researcher doing cross-cultural work. The Methodology Chapter 6, is about my methods for generating data, and the interviews. Then, Methodology Chapter 7, presents the ethics of the study, and how I analysed and interpreted my data to make sense of and understand it.

In this chapter, firstly I describe how I ventured into this study and generated my research questions. This is followed by an outline of my research approach and position as a qualitative researcher. I then explain my understandings of Ethnography and Narrative Inquiry as research methodologies and how I combined them. The notion of reflexivity and

[16] *Arti* is a Sanskrit word, meaning an expression of one's love towards God. It is symbolised in the Hindu religion by the lighting of the lamp, which is performed before a *puja* or prayer ceremony (Michaels, 2004). I choose this word in association with this chapter to symbolise the beginning of the methodology and the philosophical aspects to my thesis.

its importance in qualitative research is also included, and its applicability in my study. I conclude with an explanation of how I have located myself as a cross-cultural researcher.

Background and Research Questions

As I explained in my Introduction chapter, I first visited India in the 1980s and returned in 2007. When I first began my study, I was intrigued about the ways in which people from India and later people from the Tamil communities were able to maintain their identity, language, and culture in the face of what I saw as a modern day 'invasion' of their cultures by the global English language, westernisation, and globalisation. I thought at the beginning of my study and with the naïveté that an outsider's perspective brings, that the Tamils because of their past would have the resources and capacity to be 'immune' from outside influences if they really wanted to. Why were they not resisting this 'invasion'? To some extent as I continued with my PhD I remained intrigued by similar questions to those I had had as a traveller, a central one being: 'How have Tamil communities *maintained* their cultures in the face of global English language, westernisation, and globalisation?'

And yet, as the study progressed, I began to realise that perhaps there was a more crucial and apposite question. I was still interested in exploring 'what was being maintained', but I also became interested in 'what was changing and why?' This line of inquiry came about as I moved from observing as a tourist, when I first visited Chennai, to becoming the 'invited guest' as I was literally invited to stay with a family whenever I visited and became more familiar with the city of Chennai, its landmarks, its people and its rhythms.

Over the course of the next seven years I visited India and Chennai several times. In 2007, I visited three times: as a tourist; for a wedding; and to accompany my family and friends on a pilgrimage to some Hindu temples in Tamil Nadu. In 2008, I toured around parts of northern India. In 2009, I visited my friends in Chennai, and attended a wedding in Delhi. In 2010, I met again with educators in Chennai and friends. In 2011, with my husband and our friends from Chennai, I travelled to the archaeological site of *Hampi* in the southern state of Karnataka, and to significant temples nearby. In 2012, I interviewed women and their families in Chennai as part of 'collecting data' for my research. In 2014, my husband and I travelled across the southern states of India, visited friends and renewed relationships. During those years, my familiarity with Chennai and its people was moving me beyond intrigue about a culture I had seen as exotic and 'other'. I began to feel more comfortable and fluent

with my surroundings. I was reflecting on and asking deeper questions with each visit, and moving beyond the tourist view and rather superficial understandings.

In order to illustrate some of this shift in my thinking, I want to present two reflections from that time that help to describe the ways I was beginning to think more deeply.

> *Reflection one.* Every time I visited Chennai I was living with and mixing with local people, and so I became more familiar with the Tamil language. Although I couldn't understand most of it, I could hear the words and differentiate that it was Tamil that they were speaking, and occasionally could work out their meanings as I started to build a small vocabulary of the words I heard most often. Over time I could also identify other south Indian languages when spoken in conversation, which became a game for me. Because I could hear the Tamil words, I could also hear English words which were peppered, quite nonchalantly (it seemed to me) throughout their conversations. When I asked people about this, they said it was because there was no Tamil equivalent. I was puzzled about why a culture would adopt words from another language. Why could they not or would not create their own words?
>
> *Reflection two.* As I became familiar with Chennai women and families over several years, I observed that many Tamil young women wore western clothes. When I enquired about this I was told that many women were working in offices and either preferred it because it was seen to be a modern way of dressing or were requested to wear western outfits instead of the traditional sari by the western companies who employed them. Following this line of enquiry, I was also told that many women were working in professional roles and were no longer 'stay at home' mothers and wives. And furthermore, many newlywed couples no longer lived with their parents in shared houses as a 'joint family', but separately in small apartments. My earlier assumption that Tamil culture and traditions were being maintained was one that an outsider or tourist would conclude. My curiosity was piqued, and I endeavoured to go further.

In parallel with reflections such as these was my own journey as a researcher embarking on a study of a culture and people unfamiliar to me, a study of an 'other' culture. Although I had worked with a variety of cultural groups in Australia, as a community health nurse and academic teacher, and had learned many lessons about my practice, I rarely had the opportunity to be confronted or reflect upon my own cultural identity, beliefs and values. In the early part of my career, when I worked in a scientific, medical and health world, it just was not done; professional discussions were mostly about the patient, the client or student. On consideration, this lack of reflection and discussion about my own cultural identity preserved a power imbalance so that the dominant culture I belonged to allowed me to continue my role comfortably and unchallenged, to minister to 'the needy', and maintain my status and social control. But it also meant I remained on the outer and disconnected from the

very people I was attempting to understand and 'to help'. In this study, I became increasingly aware that I was not researching within the safe confines of my dominant culture. I was in another's cultural space and was involuntarily in a position where my own cultural beliefs, values and practices were in stark relief. I was learning about the Tamil cultural identity as much as I was learning about mine. To illustrate, I was able to recognise that my cultural values were at stake when I felt uncomfortable in my body and I had no explanation for what was happening around me, which I explain further in Chapter 8. Thus, these types of incidents led to a further question: 'How does my own identity impact the ways in which I can understand the experiences of others?'

Over time, I distilled my thinking and my research questions. I became more knowledgeable about my study and what I was undertaking. I was able to clarify my questions to create knowledge in two distinct areas:

The first two questions:

(1) In a globalising world, to what extent do middle-class Tamil communities in Chennai (India) and Melbourne (Australia) maintain connections with what they see as their traditional culture/s and cultural practices?

(2) How do these Tamils experience the tensions between connecting with their cultural 'roots' and responding to cultural change in this globalising world?

And then,

(3) As an international traveller, learner and researcher, how does my own background and culture mediate the way in which I learn about and seek to understand the experiences and cultures of the Tamil community?

The first two questions are about exploring cultures, such as that of the Tamil peoples, to understand how they were being affected by globalisation and the trappings of westernisation during a specific period. The third question is about generating a critical account, and a better understanding of my own journey as an intercultural researcher and in so doing making my experiences and knowledge available for future intercultural studies and to those researchers seeking to understand 'the other' in a globalised world.

My Research Approach and Position as a Researcher

This research can be broadly categorised as a qualitative social science study, with a focus on culture, language, and people. It is underpinned by a humanistic philosophy and theories of social constructionism, as distinct from the scientific method or empirico-analytical paradigm (Clandinin, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Constructivist studies begin with an appreciation that people make sense of, and construct their own meanings of, their own lives and the world in which they live. Research undertaken in the name of social constructionism is usually understood to be generating rich, multifaceted bodies of knowledge which are rigorously argued but still open to debate, as explained by Burr (2003) and Gergen and Gergen (2001, 2004, 2009). Other theorists have also drawn on their work, such as Angrosino (2007), Creswell (2007, 2013) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000b, 2005, 2011). In the words of Gergen (2009) "constructionism does not itself seek to be a *final word*, but a form of discourse that will help us to avoid building worlds in which claims to Truth put an end to dialogue" (p. 166). Central to the philosophy underpinning this study is that "meaning is not inherent" (Harris, 2010, p. 3) but constructed through dialogue and debate. That is to say humans construct their own meanings—as there are many different ways of defining something—according to their cultural and conceptual resources at the time, such as information available and their social situation. Ontologically, I believe that reality is socially constructed through a shared world of understanding where "the focus is on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the world" (Kvale, 1996, p. 41). Therefore, ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative; knowledge should be an artefact, understood through a particular culture at a particular time in history—it is not discovered (Burr, 2003; Schwandt, 2003). For this reason, this study understands that "knowledge is not disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but is in some sense ideological, political, and permeated with values" (Schwandt, 2003, p. 198).

There is an interesting question as to whether the research I am undertaking in this study is better explained as Ethnographic work or Autoethnographic work. In responding to that question, I draw on the work of Ellingson and Ellis (2008) and Chang (2008) who argue that there is little or no dichotomy between Autoethnography and Ethnography. Autoethnography encompasses what one does and the 'end product', while reflexively integrating processes into the end product. (I discuss the notion of 'reflexivity' in the next section.) Ellingson and Ellis (2008) further explain that Autoethnography rests on the notion that reality is socially constructed, and is part "research process (*graphy*), culture (*ethnos*) and self (*auto*)" (p. 449). These parts are emphasised variably by different researchers and authors. On the other hand, Chang (2008) argues that the crucial distinction is between autobiographical work and "self-narratives", which is part of a broader trend in Narrative Inquiry. Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe four approaches associated with Auto-

ethnography: (1) reflexive ethnographies in which "authors use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at self-other interaction"; (2) "texts by complete-member researchers [who] explore groups of which they already are members or in which … they have become full members with identification and acceptance"; (3) "personal narratives" written by social scientists about "some aspect of their experience in daily life"; and (4) "literary autoethnography" written by an autobiographical writer who "focuses as much on examining self autobiographically as on interpreting a culture for a non-native audience" (p. 740). All of these categories have a self-focus. In this study, I drew on my own stories as data in a particular cultural context and entwined them with the stories of my participants. I do not pretend to achieve objectivity, partly because in dialogic philosophies such concepts are viewed as a positivist fantasy, and partly because I did not want to assert my particular perspective over the views of my Tamil participants, by judging and labelling what they said. Rather I wanted to "draw blurry lies between detached, external knowledge and personal internal knowledge" (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 452). Thus, using Ellis and Bochner's (2000) approaches, I used "self-narrative" as a reflexive ethnographer, as a way of analysing myself and others together.

In sum, my philosophical foundation is based on my theoretical understanding of knowledge as constructed and always open to debate and dialogue. As an intercultural researcher, the research methodology that I believed was most suitable for this study was a combination of Ethnography and Autoethnography (self-narratives as a reflexive Ethnographer), and Narrative Inquiry, which I discuss in a later section of this chapter. Before I present and discuss the combination of Ethnography and Narrative Inquiry methodologies, I want to examine the notion of reflexivity that helped me to distinguish the way in which I was approaching my study with responsibility and an ethical commitment to truth seeking, and to respecting my participants' lives and worldviews.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity has been a term discussed in the social science literature as a central methodological approach since the 1970s (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Burr, 2003; Chase, 2010; Davies, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 2011; Dowling, 2006; Dunne, Pryor, & Yates, 2005; Etherington, 2004; Luttrell, 2010a; Steier, 1991). And yet as late as 2006, Dowling (2006) was suggesting that reflexivity was still an 'emerging' methodological instrument for inquiry. Consistent with the work of Davies (2008), Etherington (2004) and Luttrell (2010), I frequently draw on and use narrative in my study, and similarly to these researchers I see

reflexivity as not only a methodological approach and instrument—a set of practices to follow—but something which places the ethics of the project firmly in the foreground.

The terms reflection and reflexivity are often used interchangeably and are frequently misunderstood (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Davies, 2008; Dowling, 2006; Etherington, 2004; Luttrell, 2010a, 2010b; Steier, 1991). Yet both are often central to qualitative and, in my case, Ethnographic research. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), "reflexivity is a process that helps researchers to consider their position and influence during the study" (p. 76), because researchers can be seen as both integral to and integrated into their research. It is a transformative process where the researcher systematically and continually examines his/her beliefs, values and identity in the presenting of his/her research story. Furthermore, as Gobo (2008) maintains, it is about accountability and ethical obligation on the part of the researcher. As can already be seen in the earliest parts of this thesis, I employ a degree of reflexivity in writing about my intercultural process of coming to know and to understand a different culture and people – and coming to know myself better in the process. But first, I want to delve further into distinctions between reflection and reflexivity and the role that each plays in my research project.

Reflexivity is different from reflection or self-awareness in research. The philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) once said, "The irony of life is that it is lived forward but understood backward"; in some ways this is a statement about reflection. There is no shortage of literature that purports to define reflection. For example, Fendler (2003) maintains that reflection is used as "a demonstration of self-consciousness, a scientific approach to planning for the future, a tacit and intuitive understanding of practice, a discipline to become more professional, a way to tap into one's authentic inner voice … and a strategy to redress injustices in society" (p. 20). In most of the articles and books that discuss the notion of reflection, many authors (e.g. Akbari, 2007; Fendler, 2003; Jay & Johnson, 2002; LaBoskey, 2010; Loughran, 2002; Rodgers, 2002) ground their understandings in the work of Dewey (1933, 1938) and Schön (1983, 1987). Dewey (1933) defines reflection as action based on "the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it" (p. 9). But there are differences between reflection as it is formulated by Dewey, and the type of reflection promoted by Schön. Rodgers (2002) maintains Dewey reminds us that reflection is a complex rigorous, intellectual, and emotional enterprise that takes time to do well. Whereas, according to Akbari (2007), Schön defines reflection as an "intuitive, personal, and

non-rational activity" (p.196). Fendler (2003) sums up the differences in this way: "These days the meaning of professional reflection is riddled with tensions between Schön's notion of practitioner-based intuition, on the one hand, and Dewey's notion of rational and scientific thinking, on the other" (p.19).

The understanding of reflection that underpins this thesis is that "through reflection, one reaches newfound clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. New questions naturally arise, and the process spirals onward" (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p.76). In this way, reflection is seen as a thinking process where I, as a researcher, think about my external world or what is around me and attempt to make sense or meaning of it. This thinking process is aided by writing notes and transformed through discussions with others, where my views are either challenged or validated. For instance, in my project, as I present and analyse the interviews I had with a range of Tamil people in Chennai, and as I write and reflect on the narratives I have written on my own journey of getting to know these people, their culture and their history, I attempt to make explicit that all this presentation, writing, reflection and analysis is influenced by my pre-understandings, underlying assumptions, theories, and language. Indeed in the process of making sense of my data, and as I have written drafts of my thesis, I have needed to make clear and explicit the way in which reflection is part of my internal processing and meaning making. In other words, I have employed *reflection* to learn through questioning and investigating (Loughran, 2002), whereas I have used *reflexivity* to generate theoretically grounded knowledge in research.

Methodologically, reflexivity is about knowledge development "during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 9). One of the key aims of reflexivity is that the researcher makes explicit his/her efforts of seeking to understand, rather than establishing a singular truth. Importantly, reflexivity can be used to stimulate critical reflection and awareness, rather than to establish an objective interpretation of reality. Luttrell (2010a) maintains that "reflexivity is at the centrepiece of qualitative research design and process ... and is at the heart of the research journey" (p. 160). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) posit that reflexivity has "two basic characteristics: careful interpretation and reflection" (p. 9).' Davies (2008) defines reflexivity as a "turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference". "Reflexivity" she says, "at its most immediately obvious level refers to the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research" (p. 4). Etherington (2004) extends this argument and maintains that reflexivity is about including the researcher's stories into the study, "thus making

transparent the values and beliefs that are held, which almost certainly influence the research process and its outcomes" (p. 27). This way reflexivity can be seen as multidimensional with layers and levels that reflect back other layers and levels—an interaction that affects all parts.

I finish my explorations of notions of reflexivity by drawing upon the work of William Foote Whyte (1914-2000), who is often credited with first introducing the term reflexivity into research discourses. Whyte's understanding as cited by Gobo (2008), was that reflexivity is "the self-aware analysis of the dynamics between researcher and participants, the critical capacity to make explicit the position assumed by the observer in the field, and the way in which the researcher's positioning impacts on the research process" (p. 43).

There is also an ethical component to reflexivity though, which Whyte's definition does not capture. For me as a narrative researcher, reflexivity is also about viewing myself as a *narrator* (Chase, 2005), in my quest to find ways to present my understandings of my interactions with the Tamil people of Chennai and Melbourne. This means, in my capacity as a researcher, I need to acknowledge and critically scrutinise my experiences and what I bring to the study. I also need to make clear when and how these experiences are changing as I reflect and learn, and as I am informed by the processes and outcomes of the research I am engaged in. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) contend, everyday "people construct their social reality … this applies to the researcher as well" (p. 269). As a narrator, it also behoves me to translate my understandings of my study in the same spirit as Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), famous for his book *Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon, 1965), as one of respecting and empowering the Tamil culture. As a narrator, it is about positioning *myself* within the context of my social and personal history, culture, environment, feelings and thoughts, when I converse with and attempt to understand my participants.

For me then, as the researcher in this study, through being reflexive I have been able to understand and make meaning by being *involved* in the stories and the lives of my participants, the Tamil families of Chennai, India, and those diasporic communities that have settled in Melbourne, Australia. It has meant meeting with people in their homes so I could be part of Tamil family life, and so be able to discuss with them the impact of an outside language and others' cultural practices on their community's language and culture. It has also meant being able to engage with Tamil families and their customs and, to some extent, with their language, although I could only speak the simplest of words and expressions to show my respect for their culture. For me, applying reflexivity to my study has allowed me to honour the research relationships I have with the Tamil families in Chennai and those Tamils

who now live in Melbourne (Luttrell, 2010a). And so when working with these participants, I align myself with Davies' (2008) understandings of society, where she draws on the work of Bhaskar (1989, 2008) and states "human agents are neither passive products of social structures nor entirely their creators but are placed in an iterative and naturally reflexive feedback relationship to them" (p. 19).

In constructing meaning reflexively, I again share the view of Davies (2008), where she proposes that participants be considered *reciprocators* and not respondents. Hence, I as the researcher engage with Tamil families as the reciprocators in co-constructing meaning or understanding of the stories they tell and any particular experience or belief they explain to me in an interview. Invariably, this has required me to use 'I' in the texts that I write as part of this PhD artefact. This is one of the ways I am signalling not that the research is all about me, but that I wish to take responsibility for the understandings and interpretations I present. In places this has meant that I use less of the "anonymous third person or the passive voice that distances subject from object" (Crotty, 1998, p. 169) in the research texts I am producing. Indeed, I am actively seeking to "undermine the myth of the invisible omniscient [third-person] author" (Chase, 2010, p. 225). Davies (2008) maintains that if observers and the observed in "objective sciences" could benefit from some degree of reflexivity and self-awareness of perceptions, then those of us in social and human research, and in my case ethnographic research, where I am searching for richness and complexity, require even more reflexivity and self-awareness of perception.

Being reflexive is not about self-absorption or introspection to the exclusion and incapacity of being open to other societies and cultures. It is the opposite. It shows that I have attempted to be open to and have considered many other views, and have the critical capacity to incorporate them where appropriate in the co-construction of meaning, in ways that ethically honour and respect the Tamil families of Chennai (and Melbourne) whom I am researching.

I now return to the discussion of how I combined Ethnography with Narrative Inquiry, and commence with why I chose Ethnography as a research methodology in the next section, followed by Narrative Inquiry.

Ethnography

I chose Ethnography so that as much as possible I could participate in daily activities, interactions and events as a way or method of learning about the explicit and tacit aspects of

the culture I was investigating (Angrosino, 2007; Davies, 2008; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; A. Gray, 2003; Labaree, 2002; Liamputtong, 2009; Murchison, 2010; Sherman, 2001). Furthermore, like Clifford and Marcus (1986) and Erickson and Murphy (2013), I decided to eschew positivist arguments about the value of a distanced, objective observer, when inquiring into a Tamil community, as advocated by some writers in the field of social science methodology approach. I wanted to be explicit about the ways I have been involved in and have related to my reciprocators' lives and stories. Further to this, I applied participant-observer ethnographic research methods, which I discuss in more detail in the next section, where I was both involved in and took responsibility for my emerging understandings and interpretations that I developed through engaging with different social beings and their stories.

Ethnography, according to Kendall and Thangaraj (2013), is often likened to qualitative, case study or fieldwork-based research, but it is delineated from these approaches by its historic development in anthropology—where the primary aim was to study people and their cultures, and to classify them. As described by Said (1978) in his book *Orientalism*, ethnographic or anthropological research was traditionally conducted by white males where the purpose was to study 'the other'. In the early years of this kind of research, cultural bias, multiple perspectives, and power inequalities were largely unaddressed, and the very cultures that were studied were reduced to their rudiments or to caricatures. Furthermore, the relationships and boundaries between the researcher and the researched were rarely discussed. However, since then, the issues of objectivity, perspective and bias within studies have been vigorously debated amongst scholars (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Murchison, 2010).

Ethnography is a research methodology not a method, argue Murchison (2010), Gobo (2008) and Kendall and Thangaraj (2013). It has been likened to a paradigm based on theoretical knowledge, belief systems and values (Gobo, 2008; Kuhn, 1962). In Ethnographic studies researchers are directly involved with the very culture/s or society/ies they are studying. Ethnographic fieldwork's distinguishing feature is "observation" (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001; Berg & Lune, 2012; Coffey, 1999; Gobo, 2008; Kendall & Thangaraj, 2013; Murchison, 2010) either as a *non-participant* or *participant*, and preferably from an insider's point of view where possible, through careful maintenance of field notes.

Traditional understandings of ethnographic fieldwork refer to primary research 'in the field', that is outside of controlled settings such as a laboratory or library. McCall (2006),

Burgess (2006) and DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) also maintain that "participant-observation" is central to ethnographic fieldwork as a major way to generate data. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) maintain this method has several advantages: it can enhance the quality of the data and the quality of interpretation of the data, and can aid in the formulation of new research questions and ideas that are grounded in experience. McCall (2006) and DeWalt and DeWalt (2011, pp. 41-66) propose the following key elements of participant-observation:

- Living in a particular context/setting for an extended period of time;
- Learning and using local language and dialect;
- Actively participating in a wide range of daily, routine, and extraordinary activities with people who are full participants in that context;
- Using everyday conversation as an interview technique;
- Informally observing during leisure activities;
- Recoding observations in field notes; and
- Using both tacit and explicit information in analysis and writing.

In this study, I drew on these elements as a participant-observer. Starting from the position of an obvious outsider, I saw that by participating in the daily lives of my Tamil participants and observing them, my knowledge and understanding of their culture and cultural practices would deepen.

The role I took as participant-observer was one where I "observe[d] and experience[d] events, behaviours, interactions and conversations that are manifestations of society and culture in action" (Murchison, 2010, p.12-13). Kendall and Thangaraj (2013) and Davies (2008) maintain that "long-term personal involvement" (p. 81) enables the researcher to become more of an insider, which is what I did in my study. As I have indicated earlier and will explain in more detail later, my involvement was sustained over several years. The term 'participant-observer' seems paradoxical (Davies, 2008), but I found that I could straddle the two different perspectives of insider or *emic* and outsider or *etic* (Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990), and so flexibly move between groups and roles. I could participate and, in so doing, naturally make mistakes, accidentally transgress cultural mores, feel frustrated at times when I had no cues or clues about what was happening and then, either at the time or later, reflect on the situation and reflexively analyse it and learn from the experience (May, 2011). As Holstein and Gubrium (2008) suggest, to bring constructionist sensibilities to ethnographic fieldwork I had to immerse myself into and understand the social nuances. Consequently I

was increasingly cognisant of my own values, beliefs and assumptions as these began to be challenged by those in the Tamil families (Delva et al., 2010). Like Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) I was "interested not in prediction and control but in understanding" (p. 4). For me, being a participant-observer also meant being reflexive, as I have discussed in the previous section, which enabled me to move beyond introspection and subjectivity, where I was able to connect to the research situation and explore my effects upon the production of data, artefacts and knowledge (Davies, 2008).

In practice, I attempted to record through an audio-recorder as much of the richness in the interview conversation and the surrounding or associated conversations so that I could later reflect on and analyse what had been said in conversation. I also used photographs, hastily scribbled notes and stories as an *aide-mémoire* (including sights, smells, sounds, and what I touched), and put them together as notes in a series of journals (see Appendix 2). Furthermore, as a participant-observer, I saw my practice of keeping field notes as a collaboration between myself as a researcher and interlocutor with my reciprocators, where I often relinquished a degree of control over the research situation and deliberately and explicitly made all my ethnographic text overt. I was able to take part in my hosts' daily lives (Davies, 2008; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Lassiter, 2005). However, due to the responsibilities of writing my PhD thesis I did not extend the collaboration to writing with my reciprocators, as Lassiter strongly argues for, but shared my understandings orally with them instead. In this balancing act of participating and observing, my role as a researcher was challenging. It required me to merge into the culture by adopting the local dress, following local customs to do with eating and bathing, and participating in daily life, which I discuss further in Chapter 8. And as Tedlock (2011) suggests, this does not mean that I had "gone native" as an earlier colonialist interpretation may have been, but one where I had cultivated friendship, sympathised, believed in and loved what I was doing. Importantly though, as Murchison (2010) suggests, as an intercultural researcher I began to understand that I needed to be comfortable with multiple and complex realities and perspectives, and behaviour.

In conclusion, Ethnography as a research methodology was eminently suitable for this intercultural study and is easily combined with Narrative Inquiry, as Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) maintain:

> The focus of Narrative Inquiry is not only individuals' experience but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted. Narrative inquirers study the

> individuals' experience in the world, an experience that is storied both in the living and telling and that can be studied by listening, observing, living alongside another, and writing, and interpreting texts. (pp. 42-43)

The next section discusses why and how I employed Narrative Inquiry as a research methodology in this study.

Narrative Inquiry

My interest in pursuing Narrative Inquiry as a research methodology is twofold: (1) I see myself as a storied and storying practitioner, and (2) I see stories as the best way of representing the nuances and complexities of Tamil cultures and cultural practices. Narrative Inquiry sits comfortably with the social constructionist philosophy I have outlined earlier in this chapter (Clandinin & Caine, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Like Ethnography it is a way of seeing, understanding and doing research (Gobo, 2008). Narrative Inquiry, when considered along with social constructionism provides a focus on relatedness, where narratives or accounts or storytelling are "forms of social action through which human life and our sense of self are constructed, performed, and enacted" (Sparkes & Smith, 2008, p. 299). They are culturally situated and so rely on shared language and the telling of stories, and socially shared conventions of reporting and so understanding. Tedlock (2011) neatly summarises this: "narrative is a fundamental means of imposing order on otherwise random and disconnected events and experiences … [whereas] storytelling and the self are closely linked" (p. 335).

Narrative research as a practice is diverse and interdisciplinary, and is still evolving with different approaches taken depending on the researcher's interests, assumptions and discipline (Andrews et al., 2008; Chase, 2005, 2011; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Trahar & Ming, 2015). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) argue that central to Narrative Inquiry is that it is the "study of experience as it is lived" (p. 69). They specify the dimensions of Narrative Inquiry as attention to temporality, sociality and place. They describe temporality as the notion of continuity of experience, from past to future. Sociality is the concern with both personal and social conditions, and their connection and interaction with their surrounding environment, factors, forces and people to form a context. Sociality is also about the relationship between participant and the inquirer, such that the two can form an 'inquiry relationship'. Place is about the specific boundaries of the setting where the inquiry is situated.

I chose Narrative Inquiry as a methodology essentially because of the recognition that stories are fundamental to who I am. For this reason I will start with some reflections about myself, drawn from my journal.

> I am charmed by the person who converses in reflections and stories. But I am not necessarily speaking about the raconteur. I am talking about the person I happen upon while travelling or converse with at a party. These are the kinds of people I select as friends and confidants. When I was younger I didn't value conversation and interpersonal dialogue as I do now—as a to and fro dynamic—listening, reflecting on points made, questioning, and sharing thoughts while talking. I was socially awkward and felt shy, and was unsure of myself in company, rarely revealing myself to others in conversation. My early career was as a nurse where caring for people was central to the job, but I suppose I enacted this caring through bedside physical tasks and nursing or medical duties, and this involved more of a clinical or even technical interaction than through a two-way conversation or dialogue. Later, when I retrained to work in community health and family therapy, I began to learn about the value of connecting and engaging with people through narrative. This in turn ignited an interest in writing, communicating, and language, and a consequent interest in developing skills in those areas. With this background, I was drawn to a narrative-based research approach. (Research Journal, March, 2013)

Stories are also fundamental to my sense of myself as a researcher because the use of numbers, facts, objective knowledge, and the statistical coefficients are not useful in my understanding of people. However, this way of perceiving and understanding the world is a more recent realisation for me. But before I present that story, I want to discuss how Narrative Inquiry is defined and understood in methodological literature.

Qualitative researchers tend to rely on words to describe, discuss and analyse their work (although some also use multimodal forms). The use of *stories* in qualitative research is characteristic to Narrative Inquiry (Chan, 2015), where according to Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) "the story is one if not the fundamental unit that accounts for human experience" (p. 4). But what is defined as a story can vary within the framework of narrative research and can be "both the method and phenomena of study" (p. 4). Rosen (1985) proposes a valuable definition of narrative which is particularly pertinent to this PhD study. He distinguishes between 'the story', what he calls "the events being referred to", "the narrative" which more specifically refers to "those events being verbalized", and finally "the narrating", which he defines as "the act of producing the narrative" (Rosen, 1985, p. 14).

Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) maintain that Narrative Inquiry is not just another strategy within the qualitative approach, but that it has "territorial markings" of storytelling

that distinguish narrative researchers from other qualitative researchers (p. 4). They propose the following literary devices as central to the repertoire of writing approaches used by narrative researchers: metaphor, plotline, characterisation, identification of themes, and the adoption of certain roles in the narrative. In sum, it is the use of narrative in some way in research that marks the research artefact as 'narrative'. To focus on stories or narratives in research is to tap into something fundamental in the lived experiences of human beings. Indeed, as Doecke and Parr (2009) argue: "Narratives in all their diversity and multiplicity make up the fabric of our lives; they are constitutive moments in the formation of our identities and our sense of community affiliation" (p. 66).

Chase (2010) maintains that Narrative Inquiry is different to other forms of qualitative research and proposes five analytic lenses to differentiate it. The first is that:

> Narrative theorists define narrative as a distinct form of discourse: as meaning making through the shaping or ordering of experience, a way of understanding one's own or others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time … a focus on narrated lives. (Chase, 2011, p. 421)

Chase further elaborates that narrative should communicate the story-teller or participant's perspective, with added nuances of emotion and interpretation. In an important way, a narrator is a protagonist in the story they tell. Second, Chase explains that narrative researchers use words to accomplish activities such as providing explanations, information, entertainment or making a complaint. She argues that narrative shapes and describes a reality, through the narrator's voice—narrative includes both the *what* and the *how* of communication—and provides a position for the communication. This is what she calls "the particular". In privileging the particular, she recommends moving away from questions around what is factual, to perceptions of versions of self, reality and experience, so that it is a credible and believable account. Third, Chase maintains that narratives are both enabled and constrained by social forces. For example, actions are best understood in their particular contexts such as local setting, history, culture and social organisation. This lens also allows for the ability to see patterns of similarity and difference in a more critical way. Fourth, the narrative researcher also realises that stories are flexibly delivered and are shaped by the relationship between narrator and audience or listener, in that the same story, told in a different setting to a different audience, may be told very differently and heard very differently. Fifth, narrative researchers view *themselves* as narrators in their quest to find ways to present their understandings of narrative data. Thus they are more likely to use the

first person when presenting their accounts of others' stories or in analysing these narratives, and it is their voice they use to present their story for their particular audience or listener (Chase, 2010, 2011).

Chase (2005) also describes five major approaches for understanding the diversity of Narrative Inquiry, and categorises them according to their use by psychologists, sociologists (who focus on identity work and sociologists who focus on the communication of meaning), anthropologists and Narrative Ethnography, and Autoethnography. The psychologists' approach is one where the focus is on the relationship between an individuals' life stories, the quality of their lives and their sense of personal identity—all of which can be revised and can change over time. Sociologists who use narrative fall under two major groups: those who use it to describe and understand identity in the context of an organisation's culture, such as in a prison, self-help groups and therapy centres; and those sociologists who explore the *hows* and *whats* of narratives of the specific aspects of people's lives, through the communication of meaning in linguistic practices and the relationship between narrator and researcher. Anthropologists have led another approach to Narrative Inquiry, which is more familiarly known as *Narrative Ethnography*, and the long-term involvement in a culture or community. This kind of study is usually limited to an individual or a small number of individuals and the researcher, with the narrative focused on the encounters between them. The last approach is *Autoethnography* where researchers turn the lens on themselves and their interactions and experiences with others. The goal is more to demonstrate or show rather than analyse, thereby highlighting the power in relationships, and representations and orientations inherent in traditional research (Chase, 2005, 2011).

Chase (2011) enunciates and explores these categories in her chapter 'Narrative Inquiry: Still a field in the making' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and describes them as the story and the life, storytelling as lived experience, narrative practices and narrative environments, the researcher, and the story. The story and life are "the relationships between people's life stories and the quality of their life experiences" (Chase, 2011, p. 421). Storytelling as lived experience is an approach to constructing "meaningful selves, identities, and realities" (Chase, 2011, p. 422).

In my study, with an ethnographic position of participant-observer I seek to represent the stories and lived experiences of my Tamil hosts with Rosen's (1985) framework and Chase's five lenses. I also used Narrative Inquiry in the analysis of these stories and thoughts of the many other generous people who agreed to participate in this study.

In the course of my journey as a qualitative researcher, I initially was unable to see why narrative was a sound methodology. I was somewhat sceptical about the whole notion of stories. My view was that they could be interesting and entertaining but were not to be taken too seriously in my daily life, let alone as serious rigorous research. However, upon attempting to write narratively and then reading Andrews et al's (2008) advocacy of critical narrative, I realised that utilising narrative in critical, creative and rigorous ways in research was actually difficult to accomplish. According to Andrews et al. (2008) this is because of the many stories that contribute to and influence one's life, the challenge for the researcher to be open to stories with multiple interpretations, and the competence of the researcher writer to be able to plumb the depth and extent of the stories. As a novice researcher, several years ago, the creation of knowledge through narrative or stories was also something I had not considered before because of my formative education. However, over the course of several years transitioning from a professional in certain clinical fields to a researcher in the field of education, there were changes in my understandings of my identity and knowledge. In short, I moved from the range of positivist assumptions about knowledge that had underpinned my previous professional work in health sciences to a more reflexive sense of myself as a participant inquirer in an interpretive paradigm. This sounds so neat and tidy when encompassed in a single sentence, when in fact the transition could not have been more complex.

In order to summarise these changes in my ways of thinking about knowledge, epistemology and inquiry in this PhD, I draw on the work of Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) who identify and name "four turns" towards narrative or "changes in direction from one way of thinking or being toward another" (p. 7). These turns seemed to speak to some of the changes I was experiencing in my research and indeed my life—the parallels were compelling. Although they describe in theoretical terms paradigm shifts that can take many a lifetime to take effect, in my own case they were encapsulated in less than two decades. My awareness and naming of the change process is only happening now as I finalise and clarify my methodological choices and epistemological foundations. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) maintain that these turns represent philosophical turns from the widely held positivist assumptions about what makes "paradigmatic knowing" (p. 29). These four turns are: (1) a change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject; (2) a move from the use of numbers towards the use of words as data; (3) a change from a focus on the general and universal toward the local and the specific;

and, (4) a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing. The following stories, drawn from some autobiographical writing in my research journals, illustrate my understanding about the four turns that I took in the process of struggling to make sense of my encounters and experiences in my study.

When I look back on it, I can locate my first turn as understanding the "change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject" or as I now understand it, moving away from a controlling to an equal partnership. This happened back at a time when I worked as a community health nurse. It is hard for me to accurately recall this period in my working life, so this is an excerpt from my notes and memory, which I have reconstructed.

> … I began to notice that the power I had as a nurse in a hospital was diminished when I worked with individuals and families in their homes and communities. I could no longer neatly and efficiently deliver medical solutions and bedside care according to hospital standards. I could no longer treat patients in ways that suited me; patients simply would not wait if I had chosen to deal with them according to some pre-determined schedule. This was hard to see and acknowledge in the beginning. I had been part of a medical system for several years that was hierarchical, bureaucratic, and was used to holding people's lives literally in their hands. And, as a naïve nurse I aped the system. At that stage of my career and education I had only the most rudimentary knowledge of sociology and health politics, and it is only now that I understand that perhaps it was to ensure professional power, status and control. It took assertive community members to stand up and express their indignation to jolt me out of my complacency. They reminded me that we were equals working together towards a healthy individual, family or locale. Over time, I accepted and learned that as patients, as fellow humans in this global village they were contributing to my life as much as I was contributing to theirs. It took their standing up to me for me to realise that the power balance had shifted. (Research journal, September 2013).

The other major turns, that is, moving from the use of numbers towards the use of words as data, and a widening acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing, came about through two significant experiences: 1) when I worked in the community as a family therapist/community health nurse; and, 2) when I collected data in my first piece of research. I reconstruct another excerpt from my notes and memory as a story.

> As a family therapist, when I worked with individuals and families, I was privileged to hear intimate details of the lives of people struggling to deal with day to day personal and interpersonal issues. What I became alerted to was that there were different points of view on the same event, by different family members who witnessed or experienced that same event—and they were all possible explanations of what happened. Some years later, when I interviewed people in my first research study for my Master's degree, I began to think of

> words and language as my data, I was astounded at the richness of the revelations and insight that I gained. These experiences led me to appreciate the depth of knowledge to be gained from taking the time to listen and reflect on what an everyday person who has authentic stories to tell, and often from a variety of valuable perspectives, can contribute to knowledge and understanding.

And yet this new-found, apparently enlightened understanding was shaken later, when I worked in an academic faculty as a lecturer a few years ago. This is an excerpt from my notes and memory, which I have reconstructed.

> At the time, because I was new to academia, I was not aware that faculties and schools could be dominated by one way of thinking about knowledge and its construction. In this case, and as I understand it now, the underpinning understandings about knowledge creation, research and teaching methods were strongly positivist in this academic community. I began to realise this when I supervised Honours level students and there were no opportunities to engage with other academics in discussion about research methodology, philosophy, ethics or integrity. It was viewed as unnecessary. Because I had been studying at another university faculty where a range of philosophical positions was held, I was used to these positions being argued publically in seminars and meetings.

The experience was intellectually unsatisfying. I was quietly exasperated by the attitudes I encountered here, and so with some regret I moved on. At the time though, I was not as clear about the reasons why I felt that way or why I moved on, as I am today.

My third turn relates to when I moved from an emphasis on the general and universal toward the local and the specific. Like all of the other turns, this has been a particularly difficult one to negotiate. My early professional life had taught me to rely on facts, to believe in science as something that is beyond question or contestation, and, in my career in the health professions, to value and assert the importance of epidemiology. In short, I believed in the authority of generalisation (Lee & Baskerville, 2003). With more understandings of my biography (and the contexts from which I was coming to this research), it makes sense that I would be strongly persuaded by this way of knowing the world. Indeed, as Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) point out, positivist values and assumptions have been the dominant paradigm in western societies since the beginning of the twentieth century. But it was more recently, through struggling with and attempting to make meaning of my data, that I realised the power of “the particular” (Chase, 2005). My struggle was around my unacknowledged need to distil definitive conclusions and neat trends from the stories I heard. On the basis of these conclusions and trends I had wanted to make predictions, and to produce a model about how the Tamil community was an example of the way *all* ancient communities were dealing with the impact of the English language in modern times. My discomfort was that I could not do

this. Intellectually, it was just not possible to distil the diverse and sometimes acutely contrasting stories into a set of neat conclusions and trends, and from there create a generalised model of 'the way these things happen'.

What I now understand is that my study probably reveals more about what is going on at a specific point of time in a specific place than it does some generalisable knowledge about all Tamils or all inter-cultural research. It can lead to further conversations about the situation and further action if the Tamil community chooses to do so. It is about the particular as much as the general (Chase, 2005, 2010, 2011; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). I now understand that my study will not be making easy generalisations about what is happening within the Tamil community in Chennai, prescribing recommendations on that basis, or even suggesting that the outcomes are happening *everywhere* for *all*, as a matter of *fact*.

My three turns towards Narrative Inquiry have been challenging but ultimately transformative and have lead on to the fourth turn, which is a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing. One of the narratives of this whole research PhD for me has been my journey of learning about and appreciating more fully the value of this kind of inquiry. As a PhD candidate, I feel I am still learning about what it means to be a narrative researcher. Beyond this PhD, I have no doubt I will continue to learn about what it means to be a narrative researcher.

Acknowledging that stories are central to the way I experience the world, and that in a rigorous form they are now central to my study, I have also come to an understanding that narrative research as a practice is diverse and interdisciplinary, and still evolving. I anticipate that through this study I will contribute to further debates and understandings on the nature and practice of Narrative Inquiry. Having now established my methodology, in the next section I will explain my 'position' or 'location' as an intercultural researcher.

Locating Myself as an Intercultural Researcher

My study involved learning about cultures other than my own: the middle-class Tamil community in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India and middle-class Tamils who now live in Melbourne, Australia. Because of my previous work with other cultures I have been mindful of the need to appreciate the complexities and complications that a study of this kind entails. I have also been aware that I needed to ground my approach within a range of socio-cultural literature and to locate myself and my experiences within the study and with respect to this

literature. This section discusses and describes my location. First I start with a discussion of my background, followed by the notion of 'orientalism', the theory of post-colonialism and its application in my study, and thereby my theoretical frame.

Gillian Terzis reviewed two books written by westerners about Asia. Her first paragraph neatly summarises my concerns about my study and my Australian background. Terzis (2013) says:

> Obstacles abound for the Westerner who wants to write about Asia. It's impossible not to talk about the politics of cultural representation. In expressing an estrangement from their surroundings, even the most skilful writers can fall into the trap of fetishising otherness. The roots of such accidental exoticism are often benevolent, but its presence reveals much about how Asia figures in Australia's national imagination. (p. 24)

During my travels in India, and in particular when I was living with my Tamil hosts, I had a sense that I could see my culture and myself much more clearly when contrasted with the Tamil culture. I often wondered about this and to some extent, it troubled me. When I was asked by tourists and international guests, "what is the Australian culture?" and "what does it mean to be an Australian woman?" I replied that I was not quite sure how to answer. My heritage is British, yet living in Melbourne, Australia where there are so many cultures I recognise I am influenced by them, and I am acutely aware of the influence of what I perceive as the globally dominant nation, the United States of America. Furthermore, it was and still is my belief that living in Australia influences my views as an intercultural researcher. For example, one significant influence upon me has been that I am part of the dominant culture in Australia, which is identified as 'white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant'. I have presented a fuller account of my background in Chapter 4.

It was when I read *Orientalism* by Edward Said (1978), his later book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and some of the critiques of this book, that I started to understand this cultural legacy somewhat better. The term 'orientalism' was made famous by Said (1978) according to Marcus (2001), although coined earlier in the late eighteenth century (Irwin, 2006), and as some writers argue (e.g. Bhabba, 1994; Clifford, 1988) was based on the work of Michel Foucault around power and knowledge. *Orientalism* focuses on the period between nineteenth and twentieth centuries, yet it makes wide-ranging claims that stretch back to antiquity. Said argues that the Europeans divided the world into two parts: the East (orient) and the West (occident), and that the West was presumed to be superior to the East. Said criticises this simple division between East and West because of the strong links to

colonialism and hence the discourses within history, literature and cultural studies, and a reinforcing of 'the other'. Said argues that part of the reasons for seeing people from the East as 'the other' and different, is to describe them as lazy, uncivilised and crude, and in opposition to those from the West who are necessarily active, rational, and sophisticated. Moreover, Said contends that this view has been extended to include biological superiority of the Europeans. At the time and since, there have been vast amounts of discussion and critique about Said's arguments. Importantly though, as Varisco (2007) maintains, Said stimulated a debate amongst scholars who study the Middle-East and colonial history, and he has consequently provided a foundation for further scholarly works. Varisco (2007) is emphatic that it is now time for western academics and societies to move beyond 'us and them'. Never the less, the East is still frequently promoted as 'oriental and exotic' to the West, particularly in the tourist industry. This often explains the main justification for westerners travelling as tourists to places such as India, and to partake in pilgrimages and meditation groups in ashrams. In addition, when other westerners study 'the other from the East' the aim, Said (1978) states, is to acquire more information and so control this 'other', rather than to learn about who they are for 'its own sake'.

In my study Said is my main 'post-colonial' theorist, and so provides a foundation to inform my methodological approach. In particular, it is his questions relating to representation which are crucial.

> How does one *represent* other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other")? Do cultural, religious, and racial differences matter more than socio-economic categories, or politicohistorical ones? (Said, 1978, p.325).

I have also valued Said's challenge of conventional anthropology's practice to give up the oriental stereotypes, and the positioning of westerners as 'the outsider' with a privileged 'objective' view. This view that I was an objective outsider resonated with me. It has prompted me to delve into colonial and post-colonial theories and to ask myself 'who's culture am I studying?' At times, I have asked myself 'by enquiring into the cultures of Tamil middle class families 'am I studying my culture as much as theirs?' I am aware of terms such as 'first world', 'third world', 'developing nation', East and West, and non-western, but because of my privileged position in the western world, even though Australia was originally a colony of the British, I had never questioned these terms and their underlying assumptions

of power or their implications of colonialism and European imperialism. I had never considered, for instance, that my own British heritage might have contributed to the misery of African enslavement as my nation continued to benefit economically from the trade (Hazlewood, 2004; Inikori, 1987), which I find abhorrent and recoil from. From my readings about India I knew that the British had been trading with India for centuries through the East India Trading Company from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and finally colonised the country to form the British Raj through the Government of India Act 1858 (UK), again for economic gain through an attitude of power and conquering (Keay, 2011; McEwan, 2009; Thapar, 1966; Walsh, 2011). India became 'the other', the mystical East as a consequence, a mythology that lives on today. Even though it became a nation in its own right in 1948, it has continued to be exploited by the West through tourism and multinational companies using Indians as a form of cheap labour (Nilekani, 2008), and medical experiments in the name of development (Macklin, 2004).

One of my research aims in this study was, in a sense, to recognise some of these past colonial injustices, to recognise some of my past naïve colonial attitudes, and to attempt to move on from them and consider the knowledge offered by post-colonial thinkers. McEwan (2009) posits that this process of recognition, when combined with a desire to make a difference in the future, can involve "creating possibilities for novel epistemological and methodological approaches" (p. 252). This requires close attention to being ethical and reflexive as a researcher, and seeking to understand how today's world has been shaped by colonisation. Therefore I, as a researcher, needed to be cautious not to propagate colonial attitudes of power, exploitation and control, and this is why I represent my work with the Tamil middle-class families in Chennai as co-reciprocators to co-construct meanings, views, or understandings about a phenomenon to develop new knowledge.

In the next section, I further my discussion about locating myself as an intercultural researcher, and discuss the notion of 'insider-outsider' and how it has led me to consider being an 'invited guest' in my fieldwork.

Insider/Outsider and 'Invited Guest'

Intercultural research with respect to the community or cultures that a researcher is investigating also requires that they consider the notions of 'insider' and 'outsider'. However, there are other positions and in this section I explain my understanding of the insider/outsider debate and where I positioned myself.

The terms ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ are not new to cross-cultural or intercultural research. There is a long and varied history in linguistic and anthropological research studies invoking the notion of an insider researcher. It is derived from the terms ‘*emic*’ (inside) and ‘*etic*’ (outside), which according to Headland et al. (1990) were devised by Pike in 1954, and adopted by other disciplines over the following years. In 1998, Banks (1998) put forward a “Typology of crosscultural researchers” that include the following categories: (1) the indigenous-insider; (2) the indigenous outsider; (3) external-insider; and (4) the external-outsider (pp. 7-8). More recently, Kostogriz and Doecke (2007) discuss the notions of ‘strangers’ and ‘us and them’ and argue that:

> … with the spatial restructuring of the world, the politics of Othering has changed, to embrace more local strategies of managing differences in everyday life. [For example] strangers in our local communities are those who, in their very proximity, are already recognized as not belonging to our communal space …Our identities and sense of ‘belonging’ always presuppose a difference between ourselves and those who do not ‘belong,’ who are not ‘us’. (pp. 6-7)

Merriam, Johnson-Bailey et al. (2001) argue that many discussions assume that the researcher may begin their research thinking of themselves as either an insider or an outsider but it is in the actual fieldwork that these boundaries become unclear. They assert that when the researcher is confronted with another’s cultural values, and is faced with exploring issues of access, power and position in relationships, and finding common experiences—that the boundaries between researcher and the culture being studied change. Kusow (2003) on the other hand, states that one’s position can change within the same social group and across geographical locations. It seems then, from the insider/outsider literature, that although there is some agreement on the understanding of insider/outsider positions, the boundaries between these two positions are more blurred and provisional than originally thought. Potentially it is possible to hold multiple insider/outsider positions, even though a researcher may claim to be either one or the other. This leads into my discussion of my own positionality in this research, which was one of ‘invited guest’.

The notion of ‘invited guest’ is not new. Harvey (2003) argues that the insider/outsider duality is limited and that there is an alternative relational position of “guesthood”, which arises out of the participant-observer relationship, and can enhance research outcomes. Harvey discusses guesthood in relation to the protocols within the Maori culture in New Zealand where strangers become guests. He maintains that to become a “guest-researcher is to bow to the power/prestige of hosts and to struggle with one’s own

powerful position" (Harvey, 2003, p.142). Further, Harvey argues that it is also about acknowledging that researchers change what they think they are researching, and they themselves change. He puts forward the notion that with guesthood and the host-guest relationship, a more respectful conversation can occur where the participants or hosts can also have access to the knowledge and outcomes and a right of response. Harvey (2003) concludes: "research-guesthood widens and enriches the communities of those committed to improving understanding" (p.142). Moreover, Breen (2007) maintains "the insider/outsider dichotomy is simplistic, and the distinction is unlikely to adequately capture the role of all researchers. Instead, the role of the researcher is better conceptualised on a continuum, rather than as an either/or dichotomy" (p. 163). Breen takes a more middle position, as have I, as an 'invited guest'.

The notion of invited guest, then, although not a methodological position or an identity that was consciously chosen by me in the first instance, can be seen as the most appropriate language for describing my entry point into these Tamil middle class communities where I felt, at least at the outset, definitely an 'outsider'. Perhaps I remain an outsider, no matter how far my understanding develops the more I return to Chennai, or the more I talk with the diasporic Tamils in my own city of Melbourne. However, the notion of guest hood or being an invited guest as I further explore in Chapter 8 is introduced as the most ethical and pragmatic entry point, and as an ethical 'standpoint' with respect to the ongoing dynamic of inquiring into the Tamil communities.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the first of three Methodology chapters. I have explained how my curiosity in travel led to my research questions, my research approach and position as a researcher, which is built on social constructionist philosophies. I have explained the importance and responsibilities of reflexivity not only as a qualitative researcher but also particularly for intercultural researchers, because it contributes to ethical and transparent conduct and outcomes for the study. My overarching methodological approaches were Ethnography and Narrative Inquiry, which I argue are complementary. Lastly, I discussed my location as an intercultural researcher in a globalising, post-colonial world, and as an 'invited guest' in the insider-outsider debate where I was best able to explore and understand the Tamil communities. Philosophically, through the course of this research I have made the radical and huge move from a positivist to an interpretivist paradigm, as a foundation for experiencing life and the creation of knowledge and

understanding. In this study I am well aware that I am not constructing a theory of social life, but rather an understanding of the myriad of ‘social worlds and structures that operate in circumstances continually under construction (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008, p. 392). In the next Methodology chapter, I explain and justify how I generated and organised my data.

Chapter 6

Pranayam[17]: Generating Narratives

> Researchers are beginning to understand that space and place are combined with time, participants and question[s], all of which are critical components of meaning and thus critical in the quest … [for] knowledge. (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 310)

In Methodology Chapter 5, I discussed my research approach, my ontology and epistemology, and how I positioned myself as an intercultural researcher. In this chapter, I discuss and justify my methods for generating data, and for conducting the interviews in the way I did.

Generating Data

The term 'data' is laden with many meanings and interpretations, which are robustly contested in the literature. As I discussed in the previous chapter, since the start of this PhD journey I have moved from a somewhat positivist point of view which sees data as units of measurement and people as 'subjects' to be observed and studied. I was troubled about this previous view, where people tend to be objectified and treated as being in the service of someone else's research. In this study because of my values and beliefs about knowledge creation, in line with a more humanist philosophical standpoint, I have come to the view that I was not 'collecting data' but 'generating data'. The study sees participants as co-reciprocators with the researcher, so together, the participants and I have been generating data within this study (Davies, 2008).

There were two different types of data that I generated for this intercultural study: one, which informed my critical autobiographical story (and research question three); and two, which answered research questions one and two, relating to the cultures and cultural practices of middle-class Tamil peoples in Chennai and Melbourne. Data I generated to

[17] *Pran* is a Sanskrit word which means vital breath and *ayama* means the regulation of control. *Pranayama* is a type of breathing performed to begin the day to remove waste, and to cleanse the body and mind (Bhalla, 2007). I choose this word in association with this chapter to respect the spoken contributions of my participants.

answer my research questions were from my initial interview questions and subsequent conversations with Tamil women and their families, and are the focus for my discussion in Chapters 9 and 10.

The data that I generated 'in the field' and 'about the field' can be seen as contributing to the most explicitly autoethnographic or critical autobiographical chapter of this thesis in Chapter 8. To a large extent, this slow process had its genesis in relationship building. Liamputtong (2008, 2009, 2010) and Berg and Lune (2012) put forward the notion that all field investigations begin with the problem of *getting in*. In my study *getting in* was not on the basis of "purposeful sampling" with "information-rich cases" as recommended by the texts on research practice (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Like Burgess (2006) and Gobo (2008), I argue that access to my participants was continually gained throughout my study. *Getting in* started with a small beginning in Melbourne, where I discovered that being able to talk to Tamil families was based on gently developing relationships and introductions. And in Chennai, again it was on the basis of relationships and introductions by accepting an offer to stay in another's home, as I describe in Chapter 8. I visited India a number of times before I felt that I could conduct any formal interviews, because each time I came back to visit I learned a little more, got to know people and formed friendships. In Melbourne and Chennai, trust was slowly gained as I entered homes and heard their stories in conversations. I could see that it was important to be culturally sensitive and aware *before* I proceeded with deeper conversations, and to learn about the culture to reduce obvious mistakes and blunders. Importantly through this period I was increasingly cognisant of my own values, beliefs and assumptions as I was being challenged by what I understood to be others' values, beliefs and assumptions (Delva et al., 2010). Also, as Gobo (2008) suggests, I had a combination of *intermediaries*, those who assisted in making contacts and establishing communication, and *guarantors*, those who vouched for me when I was in the field. In summary, *getting in* was more than gaining access to participants in the field; it was an ongoing process that also incorporated developing my *internal access*, so that I was open and comfortable when I was in the field to be able to generate data with my participants.

The literature also explains that generating data rests on what McCall (2006) maintains is "the punctilious writing of field notes, carefully recording all that one did, saw, heard, and experienced out in the field on that day" as central to fieldwork (p. 5). I tend to agree, and yet, outside of my designated interview times, when I was living in people's homes or visiting a family I believed it was impertinent of me to sit with a pen and paper

and/or camera recording everything. Consequently, my field notes were often mere inscriptions or impressions, rather than literal records of all that was said and done (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008). They were my 'translations' into field notes of what I was witnessing.

This was my approach. I kept my notebook, pen, audio recorder and camera in my room or tucked away in a handbag in a quickly accessible area. Following a significant event, moment or episode, I would either unobtrusively retire to write a note or as light-heartedly as I could would exclaim "Oh! I must write that down, that is so interesting. I'll be back in a minute!" And then, again unobtrusively (but with permission) turn on the recorder or write notes or take a photo. Sometimes there were protestations: "why would you be interested in that? It is so small and trivial." Sometimes my hosts were surprised that I could find interesting what they did or said 'everyday'. For example, the following story was an everyday topic for Tamil families, but one that I found fascinating and confronting because not only was it foreign to my way of life, but it also told me much about families in middle-class Tamil homes. To stand and make notes as we talked would not have been in keeping with the revealing conversation that was unfolding, and so this vignette is constructed from notes I made soon after the event.

> I was assisting Saras (pseudonym), the 'maid' of the house, as she cooked. My contribution was mostly by me watching and stirring the pot. We started to converse about Saras' life in simple English, aided by translations from family members nearby. I learned that her eldest daughter was getting married. The tradition was that she would live in her husband's family home after the marriage, and the family of the bride was to 'gift' kitchenware to the new family. Although the dowry system has been outlawed in India, it still continues in other forms such as this. The family that Saras was cooking for explained to me later that this was a huge expense for her, as she was not well paid, and it was causing her to feel concerned that the marriage may not go ahead. It was then agreed by all of us that I would pay for a particular electrical item, as a 'gift' to her, for cooking for me while I was staying with the family. This would be instead of a 'tip'. In turn it would be 'gifted' to the husband's family. When I went away to write down this story, it caused much puzzlement amongst my hosts. I explained that 'gifting' of this nature was uncommon by guests to a host family and, furthermore, gifts given at a wedding were for the new couple not the family. My hosts found this interesting because it was different, but as they explained this behaviour was linked to what is called 'joint' families and the tradition of brides living in the same home as their husband's family. (April, 2012)

In a similar way, I was able to generate data continuously with each visit as I made notes, although making and keeping field notes seemed a haphazard affair, because of the many times I visited India. I am also aware of the complex ethical issues around field notes in

terms of ownership, and keeping them private and confidential (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). During this time I kept a range of 'jottings', end-of-the-day recollections in my journal, scenario stories, photos to jog my memory, and sometimes extensive notes (see Appendix 2). I also made *meta notes* when thoughts and understandings came to me. I was aware that I needed to allow time to record my observations and thoughts while I was in India and after each interview, which I ensured I did.

'Getting in' and generating data in my study required considerable effort from me over several years to engage and maintain my relationships with the Tamil families. Therefore the importance of disengaging or *getting out* from the research site became equally as important as *getting in*, because relationships were central (Berg & Lune, 2012). I had read and heard stories where researchers had left a site and left the communities somewhat bereft (Angrosino, 2007; Berg & Lune, 2012; Hobbs & Wright, 2006; Labaree, 2002; Murchison, 2010), so I was conscious of this and my ethical responsibilities of care. I reflected upon what I should do before 'getting out' of the situation, and this is my reflection from my journal.

> I realise that to some extent I have not left [India]. I can and do easily travel to Chennai and India from Melbourne, because it is affordable and manageable for a visit or a holiday. I can and do easily communicate online and over the telephone. Therefore, for me, disengagement should come about through deciding that the period of generating data was now complete. From this basis, I can also discuss with my participants how I am feeling, which is a little sad, confused and worried about our relationship in the future, now that the data-generating period had ended. This is what I did, and together we discussed and renegotiated the basis of our relationship. In this way I believe we were able to move from a traditional relationship between the researcher and the researched subject, to a relationship based on friendship and with some degree of reciprocity. (April, 2012)

Subsequently, some women and their families I interviewed decided to remain in friendly but not in close contact with me. In addition, two families—one in Chennai and one in Melbourne—renegotiated my relationship with them so I have now become part of their extended family. I have also developed new relationships with Tamil families in Melbourne, because of knowing my participants. These relationships are based on the knowledge that I am continuing to learn about their culture, and that I show some willingness to accept and understand it. They feel free to talk to me about their Tamil cultures and India. They take a special interest in discussing my study, and feel proud that as an outsider I am taking an interest in their cultures. My family and my hosts' families have also joined together to celebrate family occasions together. On my most recent visit to Chennai, where my husband accompanied me, I revisited most of my participants and their families. From my experience

and their accounts, it was a series of delightful reunions as we caught up on family news and discussed my study.

The Interviews

When I set out to interview my participants, I was hoping I could avoid the 'tourist version' responses to my interview questions and discussions. For me as the researcher I wanted to be able to understand and make meaning by being *involved* in the stories and their lives. This is the process I took to gain that understanding.

Classic texts on interviewing in research practice (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002) dictate that interviews are to be conducted according to the study's methodological approach and what the researcher wishes to explore. This literature tends to talk about interview 'types' ranging from low control and non-regulated interviews, such as conversation, to a high level of control and highly-regulated interviews such as questionnaires, where precisely the same questions are asked in precisely the same order, no matter what an interviewee says in response to a question, see Table 1. below.

Table 1. Continuum of control and uniformity of stimulus for different types of interviews - drawn from DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011, p. 139

Conversation	Unstructured interviews	Semi-structured interviews	Structured interviews	Self-administered questionnaires
Control by informant/participant /respondent				
LOW				**HIGH**
Uniformity of stimulus presented to informant/respondent				

However, in my study I used mostly unstructured and semi-structured interviews that incorporated informal conversations. Typically, I had a list of questions to start a conversation, which also guided me (see Appendix 3.). However, I did not always play the role of directing the conversation; sometimes I sought to respond to what I was hearing, and thus asked quite different questions from what I had originally intended to ask.

While I was interviewing in Tamil family homes, I made notes, which also assisted in my observations when I later reflected on the situation. I sketched family-of-origin genealogical maps where I could, to provide context to the stories and interviews. As well, I was guided by Merriam (2009), who draws on the work of Patton (2002), when suggesting questions that could be posed in an interview to stimulate six categories of responses. These categories are: experiences, values, feelings, knowledge, sensory perceptions and

demographic information. The questions I asked were often around the participants' experiences, such as daily routines, to see what the usual daily rituals were for women and families. My questions would also attempt to elicit their opinions, values and beliefs *vis-à-vis* these rituals. For example, what did they think about married women who no longer lived with the husband's family? When was it acceptable and when was it not? My 'feeling' category of questions for example might proceed this way: "How do you feel about a couple entering a 'love marriage' rather than an 'arranged marriage?" I was also curious about my hosts' interpretations of religious practices and traditions. Where did they acquire these? Demographic questions included age, income, education level, and marital status, and I mostly asked them in the course of the conversation rather than formally and separately. Another type of questioning was around sensory perceptions, such as what was seen, heard, touched and smelled. In the same way that I asked questions about feelings, I was careful, and wove them into the conversation. Where possible, I asked such questions indirectly. For instance, I posed a situation or told a story of something I'd heard, and then proceeded to ask what they felt or noticed about that scenario. For example, one woman I interviewed in Chennai, Radha, told me how she lived as 'head' of a joint family. However, she became visibly distressed when she told me about visiting family members from other cities and states in India who did not continue the Tamil traditions, and who gossiped about her because they considered her 'old fashioned'. She threw her hands despairingly in the air, and with sad eyes looked at me and asked rhetorically: "What is to become of our Tamil traditions and the future for our young people, if we do not follow them?" (Radha interview, 9 April 2012).

Ann Oakley's (2003) explanation of interviews had a significant influence on how I interviewed people from another culture. Such interviews require more sensitivity than usual as there is less for an interviewee to rely on in terms of expectations or conventions. In the past, my understanding of interviews was something like this, "interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets (Oakley, 2003, p. 243). In cross-cultural domestic settings such as where I was conducting interviews, it was not possible to insist on private interviews that had clear starting and finishing points; it was not appropriate to control how long interviews lasted, which particular questions were asked, or how the interview was recorded. The interviews I conducted in this study were with several family members present and if they were not in the same room together were often within 'ear-shot'. This troubled me initially before I had read Ann Oakley's work, because of my previous knowledge and

understandings about interviews. Ann Oakley's (2003) approach to interviewing, a feminist poststructuralist position, was one that I used to reframe what I had done with some disquiet so that I actually felt more justified in what I had done intuitively. Oakley argues that when exploring another's views and understandings, the interview is best when the interviewer and interviewee are equal or in a non-hierarchical relationship, and where the researcher is prepared to invest something of themselves into the interview. Oakley also questions the notion of 'rapport' using the conventional approach to interviewing, where interviewees are treated humanely by being friendly and warm, but the researcher is detached enough to prevent unwarranted involvement, as the basic principle, after all, is to search and inquire. Oakley also challenges the traditional view that questions from *interviewees* are to be avoided in case any answers from the researcher "contaminate" the data. As Oakley (2003) maintains, such 'theory' does not fit with an ethical practice that seeks to respect the interviewee's agency and identity. In her view, the role of the researcher needs to move "from being a data-collecting instrument for researchers to being a data-collecting instrument for those whose lives are being researched" (p. 253).

Thus, upon entering the homes of the women and families I interviewed, I was not there to subjugate, objectify, measure, and interrogate, with myself as the researcher being 'in control' of the situation. I was there as *their* guest, in *their* homes, as I have discussed earlier. Not only did I have to conduct myself in ways that respected their hospitality, I also needed to reveal myself to them. I too was a woman with a family. I too had fears and concerns about family life and the changes happening in society. I was not neutral in this sense. I also discovered that although I may have planned for a predefined interviewing time and place, often I was invited to stay on and eat with the family. The family wanted to know about me, my family and the study, what I thought of India and other many curious questions about me. Furthermore the conversation in the interview was often discussed by other family members, who also gave me their views and opinions. The woman whom I had just interviewed often then explored her views further with the rest of the family over dinner. This left me wondering what to do, and asking questions around what to include in the interview, and at what point did the interview begin and end? My conclusion was similar to that of Ann Oakley (2003) in that there is no such thing as a perfect interview. The interviews in this intercultural study although they had the basic tenets with researcher and participant, guiding questions, and a recorder, were more complex, which I now discuss.

Participants in the Study

In this study, my interviews were conducted over two sites, Melbourne, Australia and Chennai, India. I began in Melbourne because I was introduced to some Tamil people in the organisation where I was working at the time. They in turn gave me names of women who, through their community connections, had indicated that they would like to be interviewed and contribute to my study. They were very proud of their *Tamilness* and their culture. I also discovered that a close working colleague, Aadinath (pseudonym), was originally from Chennai and a Tamil, and we struck up an instant connection. Aadinath had been living in Melbourne for some years, first as a student and then when he gained employment he was able to obtain the necessary visa to continue living and working in Australia. Later he married a young woman from India, as a 'love match', who was not from his community or city, and they had a family. I also discovered that many young people from India who were studying in Australia were choosing their own marriage partners contrary to family expectations. Usually parents chose the marriage partners for their children, known as 'arranged marriages'. The results of these 'love matches', in some cases, caused family upheavals and rifts through non-acceptance of new family members. In other cases, new family members were alienated in a range of ways (Supriya Singh, 2011). Aadinath and I had many a conversation about this situation and the challenges in his family as everyone adjusted. Over time, Aadinath has proven to be a wonderful friend and we have talked at length about the history of India and south India, culture, economics, religion and politics. I was able to gain valuable insights from him and suggestions for further reading and questions for my interviews. I was also welcomed into his family and I was able to meet his extended family in Chennai when I visited.

Table 2. provides the locations, pseudonyms and a short description of the participants in this study.

Table 2. List of participants

Melbourne, Australia		Chennai, India	
Pseudonym		**Pseudonym**	
Aadinath	colleague and friend	Agni	professional, teaches Tamil, married with a family.
Elisai	stay at home mother	Ammu	wife of Kaushal, tutor, stay at home mother.
Leena	stay at home mother	Balajee Ardavan	husband of Saraswati lawyer.
Riya	stay at home mother, works part-time	Daksha	IT professional, daughter of Maya.
Vallika	post graduate student from Chennai	Gaja	'uncle' in Ardavan family, IT professional, devout Hindu.
		Gajendra Ardavan	son of Saraswati and Balajee, previous student in Penelope's class.
		Kala	wife of Mayur, Carnatic singer, stay at home mother.
		Kaushal	husband of Ammu, owns a training company.
		Maya	retired professional, mother of Daksha, and grandmother of Meenakshi.
		Mayur	husband of Kala, semi-retired professional.
		Meenakshi	early teenager, daughter of Daksha and grand-daughter of Maya.
		Parvati Ardavan	daughter of Saraswati and Balajee, married, post-graduate student.
		Radha	medical doctor, widower, matriarch of her family,devout Hindu.
		Saraswati Ardavan	wife of Balajee, mother, medical doctor.

The women and their families I interviewed in Melbourne were from Tamil families who originally came from Chennai, India. In total I interviewed four women and their families. Vallika was in her late twenties, a student at a university, and had lived in Melbourne for two years. She was engaged to be married. As she explained to me, it was a 'love match' and not an 'arranged engagement', but was approved by the families because the bride and groom had known each other since they were children. Vallika was going to marry in two years. The other three women, Elisai, Leena and Riya, were all married with children. Elisai and Leena were in their early to mid-thirties, and Riya was in her late thirties. These women had accompanied their husbands, who had come to Melbourne to work, and had lived in Melbourne for between two to five years. Their marriages were 'arranged' by their families before migrating to Australia. Riya told me the story of what it was like for her when she first came to Melbourne. This is her story, as recounted by me, but some of the minor details have been changed to preserve privacy.

> I was married in Chennai with about one thousand guests. It was a Brahman wedding because my husband and I are from that community. Our parents were very happy about this joining of families, as my husband is a successful businessperson and I am a graduate who can speak English. Although, even if I couldn't speak English we would have still got married. Our astrology was well matched and we liked each other when we met. In the first few years of our marriage we had our first child and then lived in Malaysia for two years because my husband had a transfer through his international company, and we were very happy. The organisation then decided that my husband should work in Australia, and so we all moved to Melbourne and I had my second child. But I was miserable. Utterly miserable. My English was not as good as I thought either, and a lot of the time I couldn't understand what people in Australia were saying, although we all spoke English. It sounded as if they spoke too fast and mumbled, didn't open their mouths to say the words, and their accent was harsh and guttural. My language is soft and quietly spoken. Eventually I did come to understand their English accents, but then I had another problem. I didn't understand their everyday expressions and slang. I hated living here. I was an outsider and I was lonely. I missed all the wonderful street life in my home town, my family members visiting and my mother helping me with the small children. I often expressed my anger and unhappiness at my husband. I demanded to go home a lot, but it was impossible. We could only afford to visit our families in Chennai about once every two years, because it was expensive to travel with the whole family, and this only helped a bit. I was like this for the first three years of living in Melbourne, until my children started going to kindergarten and school. My children came home from school happy and excited, and loved living here. They talked about the friends they made, and declared that they were 'Aussies' whenever I said that we would return to Chennai and India as soon as they were older. I found what they said very confronting, and this angered me more. My children were happy, my husband was happy and I was not. "What to do?" One day I realised that I couldn't go on living like this. Miserable. I decided that I

> needed to change my ways and thinking. I prayed to God. Overnight, it seemed, I accepted that we were going to live here and that there were many benefits for my children and my family. I stopped my tantrums and negative thinking. I then discovered at my local temple, when I started to talk to other Tamil women, that there were others like me. We gradually formed a group and we now have picnics and fun together. We also celebrate all the important Tamil occasions and religious festivals with our families. We laugh at each other, and cry with each other. This has been my saviour. I also found a job. It is not equivalent to my qualifications that I earned in India, but it has taken me in a new direction and my work colleagues and customers love and appreciate me. I come from a musical family and I have made sure that my children have all learned to play and perform on the classical south Indian instruments and I sing. We participate in a Carnatic music organisation where I can meet other musicians and perform together. I am now truly blessed. It is still hard living away from my family in India and I miss many things about the life there and being able to talk in Tamil every day. One of the things we did when we bought a house was to live near a main road, so I could hear 'life' out there. That helped too. (Riya interview, Melbourne, September, 2011)

The other women had similar stories of adjustment, but Riya's was the most poignant for me. I felt upset and saddened by her emotional pain and distress as she told me her story. I reflected to her that I thought that she was brave, courageous and resilient for what she had experienced and done. She said, "I made up my mind and just did it … I did it for my family ... I am stronger because of it". It left me wondering about and feeling admiration for all those who face migration, particularly when it is not their choice, for whatever the reason, as they deal with this major turn in their life.

As I briefly explained in the Introduction chapter, what seems to be a pattern of selecting *women* rather than *men* to interview in short was about access. I was able to enter people's homes as a woman meeting other women. I met all of these women and families in their homes in Melbourne through introductions. I realised when I spoke to my work colleagues from Chennai that I could not meet families and, in particular, women in a public space. It was not 'done'. Tamil women do not have a tradition of meeting in coffee or tea shops, cafes or restaurants on their own. A family member or her husband usually accompanies her. The only safe and respectful place was the family home, if they wanted privacy. This turned out to be serendipitous, because it contributed to my learning about intercultural research, and what it truly meant to be an invited guest in a research scenario. This was my reflection about the situation.

> To do my interviews and generate data in Melbourne was not what I first thought from reading the textbooks about interviews. In my study, I would have to go into the home of a stranger who was also from another culture. Paradoxically this was

> in my hometown and I was not going to be on familiar ground. This study put me as a researcher in a vulnerable position, not only in India, where I expected to be vulnerable, but here in Australia too. I was slightly aghast. I couldn't assume that because my participants were living here that they would be "Aussies" or would be tolerant of my ways. I was entering into their domain. It was at this point that I, as an intercultural researcher with responsibilities, had much to learn and I needed to consult and understand what was required of me as a guest, first. (Research journal, July, 2010)

My Tamil colleagues and friends at work were very gracious and we discussed how I, as a woman, needed to enter their homes. They provided very careful and traditional advice, so that I was prepared for any eventuality. Firstly, I needed to be dressed modestly where, at the very least, I needed to have my shoulders and legs covered. I was to remove my shoes at the front door and leave them outside, because they are considered to be 'dirty', particularly if there is a prayer room in the house. Also it is the general custom and 'everyone does it'. They explained that I would be *asked* to sit, and not to assume that it was all right to do so otherwise. I would also be offered some tea or water as is the custom, and it was best to accept the hospitality, even if I did not drink it. I was not to enter the kitchen unless I was given permission. For some families, they explained, the kitchen is a clean area and depending on religious customs, a stranger may upset this sacredness. It was polite of me to enquire after their family in India and their children, and also to view their prayer room, but again only if invited and if I was not upsetting the sacred area. Bringing a small gift of tea, chocolates or biscuits was acceptable. Also, I should not be surprised if I was invited to eat with the family after the interview. I should accept. This is good manners. Also, it would be important that I share with the family my own family background, why I am interested in India, why I am doing this study, and any other personal information that westerners generally do not share on first meetings. However, they explained that I would probably not be probed in this personal way, on account of these families having lived in Australia for some time, and they knew of the etiquette and taboo in asking these personal questions. Lastly, I should not be surprised if the woman interviewee may elect to have her children and other family members nearby during the interview. This too was the custom. This was invaluable advice, and not the kind of knowledge one might find in methodological literature about conducting interviews with Tamil peoples in their own homes.

Following their advice, I had uneventful interviews and was treated courteously and respectfully. I enjoyed delicious curries, tangy snacks and spicy tea or *chai*, and was treated to stories and conversations I had never had before. However, I was surprised a few times as

I was not expecting certain things to happen, because of my own (lack of) cultural knowledge and what was considered 'correct' behaviour in Australian social situations. For example, this is a vignette about an interview I had very early on.

> I interviewed Leena in her home, and her husband agreed to look after their child while we talked. I assumed he was playing with the child at the back of the house, until I asked her a pertinent question about herself: how long she had been married and how long she had been living in Australia? This was greeted with a long pause. As I waited for Leena to answer. I was imagining that she was calculating the dates and time. Then a voice from the other room said quite clearly, "Isn't it five years now?" I was slightly taken aback, and quickly attempted to not look surprised, although I was. Leena and her husband then had a conversation, respectfully I thought, in English, about how many years they had lived here, the age of their daughter when they had been married and so on. (August, 2010)

My reflection about that event was as follows:

> This was a lesson for me. Although this probably may not happen in my culture and in my family, and in many a research interview, I accepted that this was so here. The experience prompted me to think about some of the textbook-versus-practice issues. It also raised questions about who owned the information, me as a researcher, my hosts as the interviewees or whether this was actually a joint effort. Did it matter if Leena's husband contributed? Where were the boundaries? How was I to understand the knowledge that we were building?

My interviews in Melbourne went smoothly and I learned about being a guest in the home of a person from India. It also alerted me to issues of multiculturalism in Australia and how Australians engage with people from other cultures. I shuddered when I thought about previous incarnations of multicultural strategies where *integration* and *assimilation* into the Australian culture was the dominant underpinning approach (see Chapter 4).

Interviewing women and families in Chennai was a different experience to interviewing in Melbourne, but there were common elements, perhaps because my interviews were conducted in family homes. I had travelled to Chennai several times before I decided the time was 'right' to conduct my interviews, which was in 2012, for three weeks. As I have explained earlier, I needed to establish relationships and trust before I could comfortably interview women and their families in their homes. Also, there were practical and theoretical reasons why I could only have one 'data collecting' period in India. Practically, I was only funded to travel to India once for a period of three weeks to 'collect data'. And, due to the need to interview people through connections, and relationships, it was difficult to increase the number of people and families I could interview in this period. Furthermore, as I listened

to my interviewees, I began to hear some themes emerging, which were repeated, and so I could see that more interviews may have elicited similar themes.

The women I interviewed in Chennai were from Tamil families and lived in Chennai, India. In total I interviewed six women: Saraswati, Parvati, Agni, Kala, Ammu, and Radha (pseudonyms). Saraswati and Parvati were mother and daughter. Saraswati was in her mid-fifties, a well-respected medical doctor and a practising Hindu; her daughter Parvati, was in her late twenties and married, had no children, and was completing post-graduate study. Radha was in her late fifties, and had brought up two sons on her own with the help of her extended family and servants when her husband had died suddenly. At that time she was only in her early thirties. However, she continued to work as a medical doctor who treated women and families and was very proud of her achievements and independence, and refused to remarry. Radha was very proud to be a Tamil and headed up a "joint family" home. Her two adult sons lived with their wives in the house, each on separate floors. One son had a daughter, Niva, who was about three years old. Radha took a great interest in tutoring and training the little girl in the Tamil traditions, as demonstrated in this short vignette about how Niva greeted and farewelled me.

> I had visited Radha's home a few times, when I was visiting with another friend, and so I was welcomed. Niva, the little girl was somewhat shy about seeing me and would peep out behind furniture and stare at me. I imagine this was out of curiosity because I looked and dressed a little differently to other women she had probably seen. Niva also watched closely. I had asked Radha if she would have time for me to interview her and she agreed. I came at a time when she could prepare a meal and we would be able to sit in her room and talk quietly. In retrospect, it was the only interview where other family members had not listened in and contributed. When I arrived at the door, Niva came over and touched my feet, ever so briefly, in acknowledgement and respect that I was an older person. I then proceeded to meet and interview Radha, and later we sat at her meal table and we laughed and giggled while we talked about a recent incident. Niva watched at a distance. When it came time for me to prepare to leave, Radha left the room to find something. Niva then quietly came up to me, took my hand and led me into their *puja* (prayer) room. Carefully, she went to a side table where there was a silver tray, the size of a dinner plate. On it was a round, intricately carved with flower motifs, silver *Sindoor dani* (Sindoor container), about two centimetres in diameter with a sealed lid. Beside it was a small banana. She then gingerly lifted off the lid and I could see that it contained a red or vermilion powder called *Sindooram* . Niva then turned to me with the tray in her tiny hands and held it up to me. I was uncertain about what was happening at first, what was I expected to do? She gestured with one hand towards her head, as the tray wobbled in the other. Then I suddenly remembered what the ritual was. I gently placed my middle finger into the red powder and drew a straight line from the middle of my forehead, as if there was a centre parting in my hair, to halfway

> across my scalp. Niva smiled deeply and gestured again. I took the banana. I then blessed her gently with my hands on her head. This little girl had taught me how to welcome elders into the house and had blessed me, as a woman, in the traditional Tamil way as I left. I couldn't help but feel touched by this simple ceremony and that Niva had carefully learned at an early age what these rituals were by observation and no doubt heartfelt encouragement from her grandmother, all from living in the same house. (Research Journal, April, 2012)

Agni was in her late forties, and married with one grown up son who was living and working in the United States of America. She had a PhD in Tamil literature, was a devout Brahman, lived in a *joint* family home, and looked after her elderly parents. She also had a small school where she taught Tamil to children. A close relative told me the following story about Agni which I was able to discuss with her later during our interview. This is a brief recreation of that story.

> Agni had come from a very traditional Brahman family. Her parents were very strict. Agni had grown up with another traditional Brahman family who lived next door. As befalls 'star crossed lovers', Agni *fell in love* with one of the sons and asked her parents that they be married. For her parents this was unthinkable, even though they knew the family well and were from the same community. I was puzzled at this point. What was later explained to me, was that for the parents, 'love' marriages were not acceptable and only an arranged marriage that was 'managed and blessed' by them would be suitable. This put a considerable strain on the parent and daughter relationship, and so Agni moved away to another major city and she married the man of her choosing. When I spoke to her about this, she told me that her PhD was certainly about Tamil literature, but it was also about Tamil women in literature and the role of women in society. For Agni to marry the man of her choosing was also to express her view about women in society and their freedoms. She was also challenging Brahman principles and the notion of honouring the family. It was a difficult time for her in the beginning of her marriage when she was severed from her family. However with the birth of her son, family rifts began to be healed.

When I heard this story I was upset at first. But, upon meeting Agni and experiencing her quiet determination, I could see that she was willing to forego the safety and familiarity of tradition and marry for *love*, not only because of her feelings, but because she believed in feminist principles where she was willing to challenge society in her own way.

Kala was in her late fifties and had been a stay at home wife and mother, although she had a university degree. She expressed her devotion to God through her music and particularly her singing. Kala was a well-known Carnatic vocalist and often sang in the annual Carnatic season festival held in Chennai. In our interview, together in her home, she sang for me. I can hardly express how I felt. I sat in awe and privilege as I listened to this melodious voice. Because she was singing in Tamil, I could not understand her words and yet

I could still appreciate the love for her God conveyed through the rich, vocal tones and facial expressions. As I sat afterwards, struck by the significance of what I had just witnessed, enjoying the peace it brought, Kala quietly asked me if I would like to eat dinner with her and her husband. She proceeded to serve me as her special guest. This was a national, well-known singer, serving me a meal, not at all caught up with any pretensions of her own importance. Later, when I heard and met other Carnatic performers at a Carnatic music season, again I was struck by their humility and willingness to share their special gifts.

Ammu was in her early sixties, of Brahman caste, and married to a man who was not only younger than herself, which is unusual in India, but to a man who was a *Dalit* or what was previously known as an 'Untouchable'. Both Ammu and her husband Kaushal were strong and courageous people. They had emigrated to Chennai from the lower region of Tamil Nadu. Kaushal had overcome many of life's challenges including teaching himself to speak and write in English. He obtained his PhD in India, and established his own successful business in career training. Ammu had a Masters Degree in Education and tutored students at her home. They told me that they had overcome their caste backgrounds and wanted their family to live a modern and middle-class lifestyle. They did not keep a particularly devotional home with a room or space for prayers, proclaiming that they were secular. Ammu, however, quietly sustained some of the rituals such as *Arti* (the lighting of the first lamp in the mornings), praying to photographs of their elders and keeping a 'clean' home.

My last hosts were Maya and Daksha, mother and daughter. Maya was in her early sixties and Daksha was in her early forties. They both lived in Maya's home with Daksha's daughter Meenakshi, who was a teenager and a school student. Maya's husband had died recently and Daksha was divorced. Being a Brahman home, cleanliness was very important along with the observance of daily rituals and prayers. Maya, a small woman in stature, was strong and feisty, and very independent. There was a 'no-nonsense' approach to her but she had a wonderful sense of humour.

In all these homes, the Tamil language was used for family ease of communication and intimacy, and between friends. English was also spoken, but mostly when outside the house to indicate status, and with foreigners such as myself.

I met with these people in their homes, partly as this was the simplest way to 'gain entry' to my participants, but also so that I could observe and participate in their lives, and so be able to discuss with them the impact of an outside language on their community's

language and culture. Interviewing them and sharing social occasions with them in their homes, I was able to engage with them and their customs and to some extent with their language, although I could only speak the simplest of words and expressions to show my respect for their culture. In all of these interactions, it was important for me to feel that I have honoured the research relationships I was developing with the Tamil peoples in Chennai and those Tamils who now live in Melbourne (Luttrell, 2010a). In order to emphasise my sense that interviewing these people in an intercultural situation could not and should not follow traditional methodological approaches, where the researcher remains a mystery and the researched are objects to be studied and used to produce data, I have taken quite a personalised approach to the introduction of my research participants. In doing this, I have wanted to foreground the sense in which this study has required personal involvement on my part as a researcher, where I have come to know my participants and they to know me (Oakley, 2003).

Summary

In this second Methodology chapter, I have discussed the data generation methods I used in this study, which included preparation to research in another culture, and interviews in people's homes. In total, I interviewed four families from Chennai in Melbourne who were immigrants, and six families in Chennai, who were from different Tamil communities. I have explained how my decision to focus mostly on interactions with Tamil women was because of the need for trust, and how this was easier to develop through connecting with women in the first instance, although this often led to conversations with other family members. Rather than measuring and comparing characteristics presented by people and events, I was able to engage with them and their customs and to some extent with their language, although I could only speak the simplest of words and expressions to show my respect for their culture. I have sought to honour the research relationships I have with the Tamil peoples in Chennai and those Tamils who now live in Melbourne (Luttrell, 2010a). Lastly, interviewing in an intercultural situation and generating data cannot follow traditional methodological approaches where the researcher remains a mystery and the researched are objects to be studied and used to produce data. It required personal involvement on my part as a researcher.

In the next Methodology Chapter 7, I explain and justify my decision with respect to analysing and interpreting 'my data' to make sense of and understand both the words that were articulated and the experiences, understandings and values that were expressed.

Chapter 7

Bhakti[18]: Ethics, Managing and Interpreting the Narratives

> To Generalise is to be an Idiot. To particularise is the Alone Distinction of Merit. General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess. (Blake & Keynes, 1966, Marginal notes to 'The discourses' of Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1798)

In this last Methodology chapter I build on the previous two chapters and discuss the ethical considerations when generating data, how I managed and organised my data, and lastly, how I analysed and interpreted the data. I begin with the ethical dilemmas I grappled with as an intercultural researcher.

Ethical Considerations When Generating Data

Ethnographic narrative research is inherently about humans and the relationship between the researcher and the reciprocators; it reflects, using narrative, on the narratives of lived lives. In my study, because ethnographic narrative research methods have been used, almost every aspect of my study is affected and mediated by ethical considerations. As Josselson (2007) and O'Reilly (2009) maintain, generating and obtaining data involves ethical considerations and an implicit and an explicit ethical contract. The explicit contract is one where the usual consent forms are signed, and the role and the responsibilities of the researcher and the researched are made clear. The implicit contract is not so straightforward. It is where the encounter and the relationship between the researcher and the researched are difficult to foresee and make clear. Yet it is the implicit relationship where trust and rapport are built, and where the data is generated and organised. The implicit contract reflects the researchers' ability to be "empathetic, nonjudgmental, concerned, tolerant, and emotionally responsive" (Josselson, 2007, p. 539), and so forge a relationship with their participants characterised by openness and candidness.

[18] *Bhakti* is a Sanskrit word derived from the verb root *bhaj*, the meanings of which include "to share in", "to belong to", and "to worship" (Werner, 1993). I choose this word in association with this chapter to indicate the ethical aspects of generating data with people.

Harvey (2003) and Liamputtong (2010) maintain that in the past many researchers have profited from studying another culture and have also diminished these cultures through labelling them, for example, as ‘savage’, ‘superstitious’ or ‘primitive’, and they have often acted irresponsibly by making mockery (intentional or not) of their hosts and participants on return from ‘the field’. Harvey further argues that the hegemony of some western academics with colonial attitudes who have not taken responsibility for these attitudes has done damage to the very culture that they have studied. Therefore understanding what was involved in intercultural ethics was of paramount importance to me, as a researcher.

My initial understanding of ethics was that it was simply gaining informed consent, and then disguising names and places in publications. I have since come to understand through my research and my reading of the literature that “there is simply no good general set of rules or guidelines that would ensure moral behaviour in working with narrations about other people’s lives” (Josselson, 2007, p538). Ethics is much more comprehensive than I originally thought and I came to realise that ethics should guide my research behaviour and actions for the participants, the participants’ families and their communities. Ethics should also guide me as a researcher and my membership of a research community (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011). The goals of ethics should be about protecting participants, assisting researchers to do ethical research, ensuring trust, enhancing integrity, complying with professional expectations, and providing researchers with the means to respond to unexpected ethical developments (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Lahman et al., 2011).

The first mention of ethical consent is understood to have been in the medical and health care professions, beginning with the Nuremburg Code in 1947 and the Helsinki Declaration signed by the World Medical Association in 1964 (Lahman et al., 2011; Marzano, 2012). The notion of ‘informed consent’ in these situations was intended to ensure that patients were honestly and transparently informed about medical or health procedures that they were about to undergo. Informed consent since then has migrated across to research in the sciences and social sciences. However, despite the existence of ethical standards, there are still regular reports of unethical research and breaches of ethics. These include: sabotage of research projects (Maher, 2010); injecting syphilis into humans (Freimutha et al., 2001); testing of cosmetics with animals without proper care and pain management (Sandøe & Christiansen, 2008; Singer, 1990); the use of thalidomide in pregnancy to reduce nausea (Guardian, 2012; Lenz, Pfeiffer, & Kosenow, 1962); and, the shifting of medical experiments

to developing countries where there is a reduced threat of litigation by poorly educated participants (Lahman et al., 2011; Macklin, 2004).

The underpinning values of ethical behaviour relate to autonomy and privacy, but they are by no means the norm across the world or in many cultures (Marzano, 2012). Indeed, in India although researchers are required to seek ethics approval, ethics committees do not always take up their roles and responsibilities. Ethical discussions are not prevalent amongst research communities and education about ethics in research for the general public is poor (Kadam & Karandikar, 2012; Riessman, 2005). The following statement about ethics in research can be found on the Indian Institute of Technology Madras web site.

> The present medical and research scene in India is rather chaotic and irregular and therefore vulnerable to unethical practices. With globalization and shift of research focus from the developed countries to developing countries, the protection of vulnerable populations in countries like India is of utmost importance and urgency. The apex medical and research bodies at best have played a passive role till recently on ethical issues by not making a strong enough stand in public and not being persuasive enough to motivate all institutions to establish ethics committees. There has been no concerted move to either educate the public on ethical issues confronting medical practice and research or importantly, to incorporate bioethics as a subject in the medical, nursing, paramedical and biotechnology courses. (Indian Institute of Technology Madras, 2013).

It was not surprising then that my request for participants in India to sign an ethics consent form was met with uncertainty. This following is an excerpt from my journal notes as I reflected on this reaction.

> In India, when I asked the participants to sign a consent form, my request was met with curiosity and from some participants the question, ‘Surely this is not necessary?’ I was told that in India ‘privacy’, as a value, is not important because people conduct their affairs openly and often through friends and relatives. However, because these women were giving their information to me for publication I explained to the participants why it was important in this case. I explained that in Australia when we did research it was essential and participants were expected to sign a consent form, not merely provide verbal consent. I would not be able to conduct or publish my results without it. I further explained that I believed it was a way that they had power. For example, they knew that the information was safe with me, the information and their name was not going be divulged and where they were quoted a pseudonym would be used, the information they gave was protected by the university, and they could withdraw their participation at any time. They have rights as participants. They did eventually sign the consent forms, benignly and I suspect to please me. On the other hand, the participants in Australia were mostly middle-class, educated women, who could read and write and speak English well. They had worked hard

> to overcome cultural difference in Australia and attain their roles and careers, thus they were assertive and confident. They were familiar with the western notions of individualism and privacy, and so when consent was explained, it was readily given in writing. (Journal notes, April 2012)

This experience was related to that of Riessman (2005) who did research work in Kerala, a nearby state in the south of India. However, the people I met with were not suspicious or worried about the form. As I suggested earlier, they appeared willing to sign the form because they trusted me and did it to please me, although stating that it was not necessary. In terms of privacy, there were many similarities with Riessman's research, in that often family members sat nearby, despite me asking if we could talk quietly away from others, as politely as I could so as not to cause offence. These family members, as in Riessman's experience, were listening intently as we spoke, and would sometimes call out their ideas from another room and sometimes correct the interviewee. If this occurred, I would note the contribution and then request that they sign the consent form as well if it was a significant addition. I was worried about the 'messiness' of this; this was not a straight forward situation, as conceived in traditional ethics forms. But on reflection I suggest that this dilemma is part of intercultural research (Lahman et al., 2011; Liamputtong, 2010, 2008). It will happen when a researcher who comes from one culture, in this case western values, morals and assumptions, and works and researches in an 'other' culture with different values, morals and assumptions. There are no clear-cut solutions in such cases.

Informed consent has its detractors and supporters. Its detractors (Patricia Adler & Adler, 2002; Lincoln & Tierney, 2004; Marzano, 2012) decry that there are ethics committees who insist on tedious administrative processes where every interview situation is to be predicted and solutions to mitigate any ethical problems are to be authorised beforehand. In qualitative research, as the study unfolds and information emerges, there is a form of inductive logic, they argue, so obtaining consent early for specific questions can be fraught. The questions can and often do change and evolve (Shaw, 2008, p 404). Also, publication of findings and analysis can have 'unfortunate' outcomes for the participants because despite using pseudonyms, if they are from a specific community or culture, they can sometimes be identified (Marzano, 2012). Liamputtong (2010) argues strongly that participants in intercultural studies should not be identified, to protect their reputation and integrity, particularly in small communities where often they are well known to each other, but where individual members may not be aware of all the intimate views of others within the community. This intimate knowledge could potentially damage ongoing relationships.

Josselson (2007) and Davies (2008) provide practical advice about how to avoid this situation. They relate the possibility of researchers accidentally reinserting real names instead of the pseudonyms they intended to use. With this caution in mind, I kept my code book separate to my transcripts and journal notes, and I organised my notes and journal in such a way that only I could reconstruct who my participants were. But central to all research is trust, and particularly in the researcher-researched relationship.

Trust is at the core of gathering or generating data in any cross-cultural situation. People who are interviewed need to trust the motive of the researcher, and believe that the research will make a positive difference to people who are being studied (Liamputtong, 2010). In my case, I was conscious that trust needed to be built over time as part of relationship building, particularly within the Tamil communities in India, where relationships are central to society. Trust was also required in preparing for the demanding task of interviewing and listening (Andrews, 2007). Thus, I felt it was important for me to dedicate time to acquaint myself with the customs and expectations of people living in India before I did any interviewing. It took time to understand and accept offers of hospitality in forms with which I was not familiar, and to learn suitable ways of responding and behaving. I needed to learn a little of the language to show the appropriate respect. I had to be mindful of safety, and I needed to reduce the possibility of making cultural and other mistakes due to ignorance of the environment—even to the point of accepting an 'uncle' to accompany me when visiting people for the first time (see Chapter 8 for further discussion of this incident).The time taken to develop trust with the Tamil community in India was about three years. It was a slow process, but as a consequence I was able to build rapport quickly with my participants in Melbourne. And in India, because I visited several times, I slowly was able to build trust, as I became a kind of extended family to my hosts. At the point when I wanted to interview and hold conversations, the connections and introductions flowed relatively easily from these relationships.

In time and as I went into the field, as I explained earlier, I came to realise that ethics in a research study is more than informed consent or procedural ethics (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004), it is about ethical behaviour on the part of the researcher and trust in relationships. Denzin, Lincoln et al. (2008) promote a "collaborative social science research model" that emphasises "personal accountability, caring, the value of individual expressiveness, the capacity for empathy, and the sharing of emotionality" (p. 43). The term 'relational ethics' is used by Ellis (2007) and Etherington (2007) to denote an ethic of care, where the researcher

nurtures the relationships of the participants involved, not merely to expedite the research, and gain acceptance and trust, but because “one should care about the welfare and dignity of all people” (Liamputtong, 2010, p 42). Lahman et al. (2011) develop this view and argue that “culturally responsive relational reflexive ethics” (p. 1400) are applicable to all researchers and all research. When “culturally responsive relational reflexive ethics” is applied, participants are sensitively accommodated, the relationship between the researcher and the researched is one based on trust, with mutual respect, dignity and connectedness, and where the researcher seeks to do good. Lahman et al. (2011) further maintain that as researchers we are immersed in our own culture and we cannot be separate from it; it is something inferred through “traditions, rituals, ways of life and customs” (p. 1401). As a researcher then, I have been mindful that I too have ‘ethnicity’, which I brought into the interviews and the whole research enterprise. In Australia, I was part of the majority-ethnic population, and in India I was in the extreme minority. I had to accept that in India some people would look at me as a ‘white woman’ and attach certain assumptions and prejudices. In my attempts to become an ‘invited guest’ (as discussed in Chapter 5) I could understand that, perhaps for some, I may be seen as a *gori* which can also be a derogative term for white people. Therefore, it was important that I built relationships based on trust. There is also the notion of reflexivity in ethics, which builds on trust.

Lahman et al. (2011) and Josselson (2007) argue that reflexivity is inherent in an ethical standpoint for research, such that self-analysis and political awareness are required before, during and after an experience. They promote the use of a researcher journal to reflect on what is happening, and to “notice the reactions to a research situation and adapt in a responsive, ethical and moral way, where the participant’s dignity, safety, privacy and autonomy are respected” (Lahman et al., 2011, p. 1403). Furthermore, as a reflexive ethical researcher, I critically reviewed my role and actions so as to enhance the trustworthiness of the study and the knowledge creation.

Ethics is also about paying attention to possible power imbalances, and working towards keeping power in balance. Hogan (1988), as cited by Connelly and Clandinin (1990), maintains that “empowering relationships develop over time and it takes time for participants to recognize the value that the relationship holds. Empowering relationships involves feelings of ‘connectedness’ that are developed in situations of equality, caring and mutual purpose and intention” (p. 4). To that end, the issue of power imbalance was addressed by keeping my writing transparent, so that my findings and the process of understanding were clear and

understood. However, as Marzano (2012) points out, there are "zones of ambiguity" (p. 453), because life is not straightforward but full of ethical dilemmas that no magic formula of informed consent or ethics of care will be able to resolve, all of the time. However, although I know there is no one single solution, Lassiter (2005) proposes a code of ethics for ethnographic researchers, which neatly sums up for me my ethical approach to my practice.

> (1) Our primary responsibility is to the community consultants with whom we work.
> (2) We shall maintain academic integrity by creating faithful representations.
> (3) We shall establish good rapport with the community so that future collaborative studies can be undertaken. This project is not just about our book.
> (4) All project participants should be aware of the study's products. Materials are only archived with the participants' consent. Participants have rights to have copies of their own interviews.
> (5) We shall willingly and openly communicate intentions, plans, goals, and collaborative processes of the project.
> (6) We shall remain open to our consultants' experiences and perspectives, even when their views are different from ours.
> (7) We have a responsibility to the community, our respective disciplines, and our future audience to fulfil our commitment to finish what we have started (p. 83).

These guidelines are similar to those of the American Anthropological Association (2012), the American Sociological Association (1999) and the British Sociological Association (2002). I have been faithful to these guidelines in my study as they have provided clear information for my conduct and attitudes.

Lastly, in this discussion about ethics, I believe that I have an obligation towards Monash University, as the supporter of my PhD research. I have complied with the ethical requirements and have gained permission from the *Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee* (MUHREC) for research project CF10/00578 – 2010000281, from March 2010 until March 2015 (see Appendix 1).

In summary, I understand that intercultural studies are to be done carefully and responsibly, so as to avoid the mistakes of the past and to provide care to the culture and people being studied. This section has discussed some of the ethical considerations that I was mindful of when gathering and generating data in an 'other' culture. The next section discusses how I managed and organised that data.

How I Managed and Organised my Data

In this study I learned various ways to manage my data, which I have categorised in two ways: (1) logistical or physical, and (2) a system for organising the data. My logistical or

physical method involved keeping all my notes and memos in paper diaries, and notes made on a tablet device, which was synchronised with my computer at Monash University. Initially, my method for record keeping was a little haphazard as I learned about the various ways of keeping notes and memos, and as the world and I moved from paper-based records to digital during the time I was studying. All my data, including notes, transcripts and photographs, were stored in a specific designated folder on my computer, which was connected to a synchronised back-up system at the university. Physical artefacts were stored in special boxes and labelled, and kept in my home-office for ease of retrieval and because there was little storage space in the Monash University office. I familiarised myself with Monash University's well-documented approach to data management planning including a checklist (Monash University, 2013) and the general concepts of data management and planning overall (Donnelly, 2012). Furthermore, my digitised documents all had version control in that all files were labelled—according to a short name followed by a date. If I worked on the document the version was updated at the time of commencing the work. In this way I had ready access to all my past writing and I knew when I had written it. Furthermore, I used a bibliographic software package, *Thomas Reuters, Endnote 7*, to record, store and retrieve my readings and references, which was backed up and synchronised with Monash University's storage system.

My system for organising my data and transcripts was with a software program, *QSR International Pty Ltd, NVivo Version 10*. It assists in the organisation, but not the interpretation of the collected data. I learned NVivo over a series of training workshops with *QSR International Pty Ltd*, a privately owned qualitative research software company in Melbourne, Australia; training provided at Monash University; and months of practice. I initially considered using the traditional approach of hand written notes and cards, arranged to form categories and some sort of picture like a jigsaw puzzle. However, I decided to use a software program because of the convenience of not having to use all possible surfaces to hold and display notes at my office and home. Furthermore, it offered various ways to explore the data that could not possibly be done manually. I drew on the work of Bazeley (2007b), Bazeley and Jackson (2013) and Richards (2005) who have pioneered the digital management of qualitative data in Australia. Using NVivo, I was able to manage my data and my ideas, scrutinise the data, visualise the data as a mind map, and report on the data. I believe that I obtained a more complete set of data for analytical coding and interpretation than would have been possible had I worked with my data manually.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Chang (2008), Savin-Baden and Major (2013), and Berg and Lune (2012) maintain that "analysis is the careful, detailed and systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" (p. 349). Furthermore, like Yin (2008), as a researcher I worked towards ensuring that my analysis was of the highest quality. To attain this I drew on Yin's four principles: (1) attend to all the data and leave no loose ends; (2) consider all possible interpretations; (3) address the main issues of the study; and (4) draw upon my prior expertise and knowledge.

The process that I used for data analysis was one where the work was divided into phases: characterising, cutting, coding, categorising, converting, and creating (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Although this appears to be a sequential approach, my experience was an iterative one, as if I was moving in and out of my data. On the one hand, I would get in close to my data as I coded, and then on the other hand I would stand back to see the bigger picture as the segments or concepts emerged (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Because I was also including my own journal texts as data, according to Chang (2008) it meant "shifting my attention back and forth between self and others" (p 125), so that my data could transform into culturally meaningful explanations. My aim was to explore and plumb all my data to answer my research questions and uncover new insights and meanings, through comparison, and identify recurrent themes and patterns.

In practice, following each audio-taped interview, I transcribed the audio-tapes and then entered the entire transcript into NVivo, coded according to concepts, categories, themes and sub-themes (see Appendix 4.) Themes and categories emerged by using keyword analysis (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) and I was guided by the number of times my participants mentioned a point or an idea, I examined and analysed the text to identify its uniqueness, credibility, consistency, and any discrepancies and patterns between concepts. Particularly, I used this process to: (1) search for recurring topics, themes and patterns; (2) identify cultural themes; (3) identify exceptional occurrences; (4) analyse inclusions and omissions; (5) connect the present with the past; (6) analyse relationships between self and others; (7) compare myself with other cases; (8) contextualise broadly; (9) compare with social science constructs and ideas; and, (10) attempt to connect with and frame existing theories (Chang, 2008). I then settled on names for the categories so that they were congruent with my purpose statement and research questions, and so that they were conceptually congruent, in that the themes and categories were at the same level of abstraction (Merriam,

2009). I also included a simple grouping where the categories were divided into interview sites, that is, Chennai and Melbourne.

During this phase, I moved into axial coding (Liamputtong, 2005a; Merriam, 2009; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), and so asked questions of the data: What, if any, are the connections between the themes and location/sites of the participants? Can I move themes into other categories to form a different picture? Do the themes and categories change after each interview? Are the names of my themes and categories apt or not? How can I compare and contrast my pieces of text so that I arrive at a new or different theme? I discovered that asking these types of questions assisted me to recognise whether the themes and categories answered the research questions (Bazeley, 2007a, 2007b; Liamputtong, 2005b; Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, although this process involved using a computer, I made additional notes to myself where I had questions and comments, which I too coded. Finally, I was able to refine and use selective coding (Liamputtong, 2005a) to form my categories, so that each was an exclusive category and could "stand alone". Following Merriam's (2009) guidance, I was able to reduce all of the categories into three categories, which aided my ability to write the narrative. This signalled for me that the analysis phase was now moving towards the interpretation phase, as significant themes emerged based on the categories. At this point, I was able to 'create' and visualise the data with mind maps (see Appendix 5), which assisted in my understanding and interpretation of the data (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Analytic Lenses Used to Interpret the Data

The interpretation and meaning making phase was difficult and complex. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), interpretation of data is both a *process* or an unravelling, and a *product* of a recording, where logic and intuition play a part to translate and explain the patterns of concepts and categories. Furthermore, as a participant observer researcher and ethnographer, I was not just a biographer and interpreter of other people's lives, but also an auto-biographer concerned with my own identity work, my active participation and my authorship, which I needed to reflect in my interpretations and understandings of my data. According to Richards (2005) there are three characteristics for an outcome of the interpretation phase: it should offer more than the participants can report; it should account for the data; and it should be usable.

In practice, my process was one where I identified the major categories of the themes, which I provisionally labelled as 'findings'. These were: (1) the effects of the English language on the Tamils I interviewed; (2) Tamil traditions and how they were practised or not; and (3) the changing family structure. For each of the categories I identified relevant quotes from the transcripts. I copied these on to large pieces of paper and wrote down ideas and thoughts that would explain what they meant (see Appendix 6). I drew on the strategies of Savin-Baden and Major (2013) to assist in my interpretation and meaning making. Firstly, I noticed any *signals* of meaning, such as how the Tamils I met categorised themselves in relation to their religion and traditions, who they identified with, and who they were different from in regard to the topic area. I 'listened' and looked for subtexts or hidden meanings and identified examples of metonymy such as 'Tamilians', 'blackies', 'Madrasi's' and 'orthodox' as a way of describing how other Indians viewed Tamils.

I also drew on theory, such as post-colonial, culture and identity theories, and ethnographic principles where I strived to avoid bias and imposing my own beliefs about what was going on in the Tamil culture, and instead 'listened to what my data was telling me'. Furthermore, I checked with participants and key informants about patterns and understandings that were emerging. I took the view that as an outsider to (or guest of) the Tamil community, my interpretation may be different to theirs as insiders, and this form of cross-checking helped me in my struggle with the contradictions and similarities, and shared understandings I was revealing in the data.

Narrative Inquiry methodology provided me with the space to go beyond the search for one overarching narrative. I was able to examine what each participant was telling me and attempt to understand each of their accounts as particular reflections of what they saw happening around them. I was able to re-story their accounts. As I discussed in the Methodology Chapter 5, Chase identified five interconnected, analytic lenses used in Narrative Inquiry (Chase, 2005, pp. 657-658). The first lens focused on the narrative as a vehicle for the uniqueness of human actions, the second on the narrator's voice and the verbal action and choices made by the narrator. The third lens focused on the ways in which the narrative was constrained by social circumstances, whereas the fourth lens treated narratives as socially situated, interactive performances between the researcher and the participant. The final lens focused on researchers as narrators as seen in autoethnographic research. In this study, the lenses I used were Chase's first, second and fourth. That is, the various ways in which participants told their narratives and described their thoughts and feelings; the ways in

which those narratives were constrained and influenced by me the researcher and the social mores of the culture; and my narrative as a researcher.

I also looked for metaphors in the transcripts because I was aware that often the words we use are reflections and expressions of the world around us. The literature speaks of metaphor as an expression "of the unfamiliar (and at times the abstract) in terms of the familiar" (Kornprobst, Pouliot, Shah, & Zaiotti, 2008, p. 4). Thus through metaphor it is possible to "graft together different fields of meaning" (Kornprobst et al., 2008, p. 4), and so describe the different theoretical perspectives, such as those that describe, constitute, criticise and transform reality (p.5). Kornprobst et al. (2008) propose that through the language of metaphors a way of signifying the processes of globalisation can be understood. They proposed an analytical framework based on metaphors, where "mirror stands for reflection" (p. 9) and relates to the making sense of reality or describing of it. "Magician. At the heart of magic is transformation" (p. 9), and the construction of reality. And, "[m]utiny … rebel[lion] against existing order" (p. 11) and to the unmasking of what is referred to as reality. The editors maintain that this framework is a theoretical triangle, one that is flexible and malleable, where each corner affects and engages with the other. This framework I transferred into the research context I was in, which is a globalised one, as a way of making sense of and interpreting the stories of my participants through metaphor. In the discussion chapters (8, 9 and 10) I attempted to act as a 'Mirror', reflecting on to the reader their stories and views, even as I attempted to make sense of their reality. It also involved something of the role of a 'Magician', where I used language work to reconstruct their stories of what they had experienced or what they believed. Finally, it involved a dimension of the 'Mutineer', as I sorted through and teased out the various discourses the participants gave me in my efforts to present a kind of truth or reality that is faithful to the storyteller.

I also used writing itself as a strategy to uncover and reveal the meanings within. It was through writing that I reflected upon and made sense of what I had learned throughout my study. Like Richardson and St Pierre (2005), I "used writing as a method of data analysis by using writing to think" (p.970) and I wrote continually throughout my study, including notes to myself when I read and when I had meetings with people, and reflected on ideas. See Appendix 7 as an example of the table I constructed, as suggested by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, pp. 219-220), to gather my thoughts and link together my analyses, conclusions and recommendations. I also used writing when I wanted to learn, interpret and understand my data and experiences. It involved the making of meaning beyond the data and within a social

context (Chang, 2008). I wrote from a position of 'I', in the first person, where I took responsibility for my multiple perspectives and voices and my interpretation of events and data that invariably changed over time (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I also maintained a reflexive stance and so took responsibility for the influences from my past, my education and my work (Coffey, 1999), and importantly my values and assumptions that changed as I grew and transformed throughout the several years of this study.

Lastly, as I discussed my thoughts and ideas about my understandings of the data with my participants and interested others, I began to realise that there was "no single interpretive truth" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 35) and there were multiple ways of evaluating the data and multiple interpretations. I was relieved when I came to this understanding, because it meant that my construction of knowledge was at least as good as any other theoretically grounded researchers might bring to the data. On the other hand, my fear was that my construction could be diminished or lost in a multitude of interpretations. I reflected with Denzin and Lincoln (2008) who maintain that we are in a new age of "messy, uncertain, multi-voiced texts, cultural criticism, and new experimental works [which] will become more common" and the field will be defined by "tensions, contradictions, and hesitations" (p. 35). Thus, in conclusion, it is my interpretation of the data, to meet the requirements of this examinable artefact arrived at through diligence and commitment, and with respect for the Tamil community, which is significant in this case. However, I believe that in research practice, transparency and negotiation with participants over ownership of the data and its representation are vital to its interpretation. Shared truths and shared values are stated explicitly, not just assumed. I now move on to last section of this chapter, which is the issue of 'trustworthiness' of the data and the ability to generalise or not.

Issues of Validity and Trustworthiness of the Data

Validity and trustworthiness of the data and thus the creation of knowledge are of no less importance when working with Narrative Inquiry or Ethnography than they are in so-called scientific methods of research. However, they tend to be examined in different ways. I am conscious that many debates about validity, reliability and the trustworthiness of the data have preceded this study. I will briefly discuss these debates, and later discuss how I applied the notions and assumptions of validity and authenticity of my data, and so ensured trustworthiness and transferability to other studies.

Validity is and has been a strongly argued concept in the pursuit of knowledge, and for some researchers it is essential. Some researchers claim that it has been overlooked in qualitative research along with the rejection of 'positivism'. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) argue that quantitative research gains its validity through statistical measures of reliability and so researchers who hold a positivist philosophy claim that this makes for truth. However, Silverman (2000) posits that "quantitative researchers have no 'golden key' to validity" (p. 176) and contends that in research procedures all should be transparent and demonstrable, to ensure that the methods used are reliable and conclusions valid. He goes on to state that the researcher needs to convince readers that his or her 'findings' are based on a critical investigation of all the data and not on a select few 'examples' chosen merely because they prove a point. On the other hand, Flick (2002) maintains that qualitative research can achieve validity in the research process by guaranteeing the degree of authenticity in the interview, the correctness of what was said, and the sincerity of the representation in the transcription. He further claims, citing Lincoln and Guba (1985), that since the 1980s the values of trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability are central to validity and reliability of qualitative research. Richards (2005) shifts the debate from validity and reliability, and uses notions of setting standards instead. She claims that it is important to establish that the data are well founded and sound, and that the methods chosen to collect the data are reliable. This way, the reader can see that the selected methods are consistent to produce a trustworthy outcome. Richards (2005) further contends that an audit trail of records, logs and note taking should be kept as a form of accountability. Lastly, the research process needs to have sufficient evidence to support any statements or explanations.

Merriam (2009) puts forward that validity should be "assessed in terms of something other than reality itself", and uses Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion of "credibility" and asks "are the findings credible given the data presented?" (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). She maintains that there will be several constructions and interpretations of the phenomenon in the same way that there are invariably different accounts or understandings of a situation. Therefore, given this, validity is about "presenting a holistic interpretation of what is happening" (p. 215). She offers another strategy for validity which is the adequate engagement in data collection, in that the researcher becomes saturated with the data and so notices where the same things are said repeatedly and where no information surfaces. Also, Merriam suggests that the researcher needs to purposefully look for variations and different ways of understanding the data, so that other interpretations or explanations can be made. This has

been termed “negative or discrepant case analysis” whereby failure to find this increases the confidence of the main explanation. She further maintains that it is the researcher’s ability to be reflexive, and so explain and clarify their biases, dispositions, assumptions, experiences, worldview and theoretical positions, that will have a significant influence on the research findings and conclusions.

In sum, the literature agrees that some discourses for discussing notions of validity and credibility are important in the discussion of whether data can be trusted in qualitative research, and many argue for the value of trustworthiness of the data, its conclusions and interpretations in evaluating the integrity of the research. In the case of my study, because I am creating knowledge with and through narrative philosophies, I have drawn on the work of Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) to argue that the knowledge I am creating is truthful and dependable. They maintain there are four assumptions that underpin the narrative philosophy and make knowledge trustworthy: *discourse*, *relationship*, the *local and the particular*, and *understanding*. These concepts are valued over concepts like reliability, objectivity, generalisability and validity, which are familiar in the positivist paradigm of knowing. I will discuss each of these assumptions in turn.

Both an understanding and an appreciation of ‘discourse’ are essential in qualitative and Narrative Inquiry. When working with humans and gathering and generating data through conversation and words, it is important to be grappling with thick descriptions, competing arguments, stories with substantiation or examples, transparency of communication, vividness of cultural metaphors and coherence of the story. ‘Relationship’ and connectedness between the researcher and the researched, are based on ethics, trust and rapport, and involve “caring, curiosity, interest, passion, and change” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 29) which are central to the grounding of the data in reality, rather than objectivity and abstractions. The ‘local and the particular’ are critical to narrative based methodologies such as I am using because, unlike positivist assumptions, the aim is not to account for or discover universal laws. It is to explain complexity, gain insights, and information about “human culture and personal interaction” (p.30). Lastly, I am more interested in gaining an ‘understanding’ about a particular human situation, rather than in controlling and predicting social and cultural phenomena. I am interested in the variety of ways in which one can know about culture, social communities and cultural practices.

There is another aspect to trustworthiness, *authenticity*, which Gonzalez (2003) contends in a post-colonial era is essential for ethnographic researchers who tell stories. She

asks researchers to consider authenticity as a form of ethics, and defines authenticity as having four aspects: *accountability, context, truthfulness and community*. By 'accountability' she means taking responsibility for telling *my* story, explaining how I came to know it and making explicit the journey that I undertook to be able to tell it. 'Context' refers to the ability to describe the environment of my story telling faithfully. For example, what were the politics, the social and economic circumstances at the time? What was happening in the lives of my participants? What else was vital to their story? To my story? 'Truthfulness' relates to the ability of the researcher to be able to speak courageously and openly about what was happening on and below the surface. Her final aspect, 'community', alludes to the attempts of the researcher to advocate for and facilitate the development of a sense of connectedness with the participants, and indeed with the readers of the narrative and so build a new community united by a desire for new knowledge. All of these have been important in my research practices.

Generalisations from this study to other groups and programs were not a goal or an intention of this study. I have addressed the issue of transferability, by way of thick, rich descriptions and detailed information about context and background, so that knowledge could be assessed for its 'applicability' to other contexts instead.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter is the last of the Methodology chapters, in which I have presented a range of debates about ethics and ethical considerations when generating and analysing data. I have argued that these issues are particularly pertinent for intercultural researchers. Ethics are certainly more than fulfilling procedural requirements set by an ethics committee. They have layers and levels that permeate into and are central to trusting relationships. I managed and organised my data, both logistically and systematically, and importantly I kept all my data secure on university servers. I analysed and interpreted the data using several different processes which made for slow and complex work, but all the while I was considering my research questions as guides as I interpreted the data. (I have also summarised my notes on my overall approach to considering the management of my data, from generating the data, to storage, analysis and interpretation, in Appendix 8.) The topic of trustworthiness of the data was essential to this study, where validity and authenticity are complementary. Rather than seeking generalisability in this study, the kind of "General Knowledges" that William Blake derided, I have instead sought to generate particular and grounded knowledge that can be assessed for its transferability and applicability to other contexts.

DISCUSSION

Chapter 8

Puja[19]: Global Citizen as Researcher

> Writing-stories are not about people and cultures "out there"—ethnographic subjects (or objects)—they are about ourselves, our work spaces, disciplines, friends, and families. (Richardson, 2000, p. 932)

These next three Chapters, 8, 9 and 10, are presented as a series of narratives of my encountering of the Tamil peoples in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia. Over the course of these three chapters the narrative accounts are to understand. They describe my process of learning about these peoples, and insights into the life and cultures of middle class professional Tamil people and cultures in different geographical places in the world. These narratives seek to make more explicit *my* perspective as an intercultural researcher learning about these peoples. As the researcher and narrator, I show myself to be germane and central to the study. In order to *represent* the importance of this I embed a strong reflexive dimension to all of these narratives.

Thus, I present in Chapter 8 an account of how I encountered certain people in middle-class Chennai, how I began to learn about various Tamil cultural practices and, over time, how I had a sense of encountering and engaging with notions of middle-class Tamil cultures. Through this writing, I communicate my experience of beginning to *participate* in the cultural practices and daily lives of these people. Through taking this approach, I tell a particular story of particular Tamil people I came to know and I make observations and comment on what was happening around us over a four year period in the first years of the twenty-first century. Chapter 8 includes autoethnographic reflexive narratives of how I was 'invited' into a particular Tamil family, what it means to be an 'invited guest', my experiences of participating in daily life, and what I learned through these experiences. In Chapter 9, I present a narrative account of the interviews and conversations that I had with

[19] A *Puja* is a prayer ritual performed by Hindus. *Pujas* can be performed daily or for special events (Bhalla, 2007; Leslie, 1991; Lochtefeld, 2001b, pp. 529-530). I choose this word in association with this chapter to indicate contemplation by me, the researcher.

several Tamil people in Chennai and Melbourne, in the course of my learning about these people and the middle-class Tamil cultures they were a part of. I focus on what I have identified as three major narratives. First, the impact of the English language on the cultural practices of members of the Tamil community. Second, in Chapter 10 I present my participants' views and analysis of the extent to which Tamil traditions were being observed as in the past (or not) and, third, the ways in which Tamil family structure was changing in recent times.

Encountering An-other Culture

The concept of learning about an-other culture to a large degree was unfamiliar to me prior to this study. As I explain earlier, this was because of certain aspects of my biography, and my naïveté and shallowness due, in part, to Australia's history and geographical isolation. It was also because, in my life, I had felt I had little or no reason to learn how to adapt to another culture in my own country. I was always the insider. My place in Australian society is a privileged one and affords me power as I have referred to earlier in the Methodology Chapter 5 and in Chapter 4. Consequently, prior to commencing this study, I believed unquestioningly that all I had to do to learn about another culture was observe, listen and reflect. It was a view similar to how one travels as a tourist. It is the view of one who is outside a culture comfortably gazing at that other culture and thinking she understands. However, later, when I was narrating my story to my PhD supervisor about how I had been made an extended family member when I first travelled to Chennai, India, our conversation prompted an insight and a realisation about this thinking.

The realisation came about when that conversation with my PhD supervisor moved to consider the various ways of seeing and experiencing my stories. We arrived at an idea that one way of making meaning of my narrative and learning as a researcher was to see through the eyes of an 'invited guest' (Harvey, 2003; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2007). It was later when I mulled over this that I realised I had not seen myself in that way. I blithely believed that I was still the tourist, gazing and gawking, and had not acknowledged fully the point that I had encountered and connected with another culture. I came to appreciate that learning about another culture would be incomplete if approached as a tourist, and this tourist view could limit any knowledge claims I might make as a researcher. Besides, it could possibly expose me to acting unethically, because often it seems to me there is an assumption that middle class western tourists in developing countries are not responsible for their actions with 'here today, gone tomorrow' attitudes (Parr, 2012; Quezada, 2004; Spivak, 1990). Therefore, being

an ‘invited guest’ to learn and research about another culture includes a much more expansive and inclusive role for a researcher.

The ‘Invited Guest’

The journey of how I became an ‘invited guest’ started with a simple invitation and has continued since the Aadavan family (pseudonym) in Chennai and I became acquainted. It was through this family and what I learned from them as an invited guest, that I was well prepared for this study as an intercultural researcher. I was consequently able to meet with my ‘co-reciprocators’ (Davies, 2008), as discussed in the Methodology, Chapter 6, with some understanding of the cultures, and so explore with them their Tamil cultures and the changing world around us all.

My first visits to India were, in fact, as a tourist. I had organised a tour from Australia and received an invitation to visit from Balajee and Saraswati, husband and wife of the Aadavan family in Chennai, and parents of a student, Gajendra (pseudonym), who was in one of the language classes that I taught in Australia. It was an invitation to visit them when my husband and I were in Chennai. However, when we arrived they not only welcomed us into their home but also invited us to stay with them. My husband and I had already booked accommodation in the city because according to our cultural values, you did not invite yourself to stay with strangers. For them, the thought of us staying in a hotel was unthinkable. We should stay with them. It became apparent that this was so because I was the teacher of their son. Also, my husband and I took a special interest in Gajendra when he was so far away from home, and we had made an effort to meet his parents on this trip. Thus, they told us that they considered us protectors of their son and so a part of the extended family. We were asked to change our hotel arrangements and stay with them for several days. We then experienced hospitality referred to as *‘Guest is God’*. This is part of traditional Hindu customs and code of conduct, the act of *Atithi Devo Bhava*, which when translated from Sanskrit into English means ‘the guest is equivalent to God’, because as guests we brought blessings into their home (Bhalla, 2007; Shanthi, 2012).

We were treated kindly and generously, with warmth and affection. We had never experienced anything like it from people we barely knew. The family was very excited about us visiting and staying with them. And they were very excited that we were returning for their son’s wedding in a few months’ time, and we were too. I now present a vignette of what I believe was one of the most important moments in my encountering Tamil culture on the

day that we were invited to stay with the family. The story is drawn from entries in my journal at the time and later research notes and reflections. I tell the story of how I began to realise fully what was involved in encountering and stepping into an-other culture, that is the middle class Tamil culture, as a guest.

> When I first visited India, I did so as a tourist. I was seduced by the advertising and was attracted to the ancient history, richness and differences of culture the country and people offered. I visited all the major sights and enjoyed the tour guides' stories and information. Looking back, it seems I saw and heard what India wanted me to know as a tourist. Even the disturbing images of poverty and squalor I could escape from each night in the comfort of my safe hotel.
>
> When I travelled to Chennai, I met with the parents of one of my past students because we were going to his wedding later in the year. They invited my husband and me to stay in their home. They explained to us that we were like an extended family in Australia because of our generosity towards their son, and we would be honouring them. I accepted quickly and enthusiastically, and (as it seems to me now) I gave no thought to what I was embarking on. I persuaded my husband too. We gave up our hotel room to our tour guide who was also our driver for the southern part of our India tour (another story in itself). And so, we were driven into a dusty compound of grey, three-storey blocks of apartments which were showing signs of wear from the constant high humidity and rain that lashes the city.
>
> We clambered up old, concrete stairs, with family members lugging our heavy bags. We came to a landing, where we were greeted by Deepa (pseudonym) , the grandmother, speaking in Tamil. *Vaṇakkam!* [Welcome!] she said, as she raised her hands in prayer and salutation to us, and the door was opened into a small, shadowy apartment with smooth, cool floors, furnished with dark, heavy wood, and fans whirring at high speed. We were kindly asked to remove our shoes, and as I did so the mother, and now my dear friend, pinned jasmine in my hair and gestured to us both to sit as we were offered glasses of cool water. At that moment, I quietly gasped in amazement as the ramification of a small act of kindness towards their son in a strange land became apparent. This invitation was an extraordinary privilege.

On reflection, I suppose I was caught up in the moment, flattered and excited about the invitation. There was also an intuitive sense that standing back and not accepting the invitation may be hurtful. (I learned later that standing back and not being involved in my hosts' lives, would be contrary to how the Tamil community lived, contrary to some fundamental sense of their culture. Consistent with so much that is written about Tamil culture, this middle class Tamil family placed a premium on relationships and inclusiveness.) But what was more important was the realisation that we had unknowingly encountered and connected with another's cultural space—one we knew little about. I had come as a tourist, and so had little or no idea about the language and what was being said around us. I did not

know what was expected of us, and I was not in control of the situation. I had unknowingly agreed to be part of the Aadavan's extended family, through an unspoken agreement, and I was their guest. Even though I had stayed with another Tamil family, the Chari family (pseudonym), in Malaysia for several months many years ago, I was very young at the time and did not fully appreciate that opportunity. This time, I was a mature person, I was the teacher of their son, and I was mindful that I had social and cross-cultural responsibilities.

Later, when I embarked on my PhD study, I began to appreciate how fortunate this introduction had been for me. It meant as a guest and an extended family member, I could continue to learn how to join with them in their culture, and a crucial part of my experience as a global citizen and my work as an intercultural researcher. It also meant that I felt I had been introduced into the Tamil society and so was able to meet people outside of the tourist domain. The introduction similarly signalled that I could meet with my participants in their homes and their environment, and so be in a familiar setting for them and be able to discuss the effects of outside and inside influences on their community's language and cultures. Therefore, rather than measuring and comparing characteristics presented by people and events, as much traditional anthropological research is wont to do (Davies, 2008; Marcus, 2001; Said, 1978), I would be able to encounter and engage with Tamil people, their customs, and to some extent with their language.

Part of my journey of connecting with and joining in Tamil culture was by reading widely and participating in the Aadavan's family daily life in Chennai. I had much to learn about cultural sensitivity, and respect for an-other's culture/s. I wanted to be interculturally competent *before* I met with my participants. I proceeded to read about the history of India and the Tamils, the Tamil culture and Hindu religion, and discussed my questions and misunderstandings with Tamil friends in Melbourne. When I visited Chennai, I listened and observed, and asked questions when I sensed it was appropriate. Hence, my participation in the daily life of the Aadavan family was in accordance with my values and ontology, and as Deardorff illustrates in her *Process Model of Intercultural Competence* (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 33) (see the discussion in Chapter 2).

Likewise, I saw the opportunity to connect and join with my Tamil friends in the daily life of another culture as a special and rare privilege. It would be an experience which could provide me with the opportunity to learn and grapple with the subtle nuances of another culture. Importantly though, by participating in their daily life it provided an opportunity to reflect and be reflexive about my own background, history, and culture. And so I began to be

more open and receptive to what I saw and heard, rather than rushing to judgement and perhaps criticism. The next section describes some of my early experiences of daily life in the Aadavna family and what I learned when I encountered and connected with what I gradually began to put into perspective as aspects of middle class Tamil cultures.

Participating in Daily Life

Participating in the daily life of my Tamil hosts, the Aadavan family, meant learning different ways of dressing, how to conduct myself in certain situations, and ordinary day-to-day behaviour. From my experience, being a guest in a Tamil / Indian household means accepting that there are different ways of living, and mine is not necessarily the correct or best way, but appreciating that all the different ways have been adapted to suit local conditions.

In the beginning, learning to eat using my fingers rather than using cutlery was quite challenging, as there were physical manoeuvres that had to be mastered. Identifying many of the different South Indian dishes and foods and in time learning how to prepare and cook them, was a delight, but somewhat outside my very traditional and limited understanding of a 'curry'. When staying with the Aadavan family in their home, I washed myself with buckets of water instead of showering (which I came to experience as a pleasure and not a bother). I tried to identify and follow the local dress code for women so that I would be more culturally 'acceptable' amongst local people. The following story from my journal describes how I dressed when living in Chennai[20].

> I pulled my hair off my face into a small bun at the nape of my neck—as most South Indian women do, but mostly because it is hot and steamy and it is the coolest way to wear long hair. I also made a point of wearing a *'salwar kameez'*. The *salwar* are loose pyjama-like trousers, with wide loose legs. The *kameez* is a long shirt or tunic. The side seams are left open below the waist-line, which gives the wearer greater freedom of movement. The dress is similar to wearing shirt and pants in the West. From the last century, women in southern India have also adopted this dress, complementing the *sari* which is the traditional dress of India and particularly women from Tamil Nadu. Although I can wear a sari, the *salwar kameez* felt more comfortable and is worn by modern middle class Indian women in the south—so in many ways is more fitting for a westerner. At the Aadavan family home, my friend Saraswati (the mother of the student I taught) placed bangles on both my wrists, as is typical of South Indian women, marked my forehead with the *pottu* [Tamil for red dot] in red sindoor paste, and decorated my hair with sweet white jasmine.

[20] I have added information from Tarlo (1996) and Hancock (1999).

> I also wore a ‘nightie’ at home in private. These are colourful long kaftans that cover the shoulders and the tops of arms with short sleeves, fall to the ground, and are made of pure cotton. Women wear them at home, over underwear as a ‘house-dress’, so they can keep cool with modesty and comfort in the heat while they work and play.

When with others, I greeted people with *Vaṇakkam!* [Welcome!] with my hands pressed together across my chest. I took care never cross my legs or point the bottom of my feet at anyone—as the sole is considered the most polluted part of the body. I always removed my shoes at the door when I entered the house of a Tamil friend or acquaintance, and I walked barefoot indoors (Bhalla, 2007; Tarlo, 1996; Vera-Sanso, 1993). The more that I was able to identify what I needed to do, the more I was able to make small gestures of what I saw as cultural assimilation, and the more I noticed that local Tamil people seemed a little more relaxed around me. I was learning to comply with cultural norms. On reflection, this ease seemed to have led to some cultural and social barriers slipping because sometimes the local people would speak to me in Tamil. For example, the following scenario happened on several occasions. My friends would be talking amongst themselves and would notice that I was not participating in the conversation. Balajee would address me, *“Ningal, Pen, idhai patri enna ninaikireergal?*” [What do you think about this, Pen?]. I would respond with a blank, confused face, which would be met with great mirth by everyone, and apologies for not speaking in English. However, I perceived these moments as a compliment. I saw them as evidence that I was successfully ‘fitting in’, and that my hosts were attempting to include me. However, there were many challenges and learning experiences which I now narrate.

Personal space and privacy are viewed differently in each culture. In my experience of western culture, such things are valued highly. When I lived with the Aadavan family I had a room for sleeping but for the rest of the time, except for bathing which was always private, I shared my personal space with the whole family, and often in close personal contact. Extended family members would often join the Aadavan family for meals at all hours, with no requirement to give notice. All other activities were done in public in full view or atleast in hearing distance of someone in the family. There were no spaces for what I would consider private conversations or private matters. Cleaning one’s teeth was done before meals not afterwards and often in public in the shared wash-basin in the open sitting area. The associated noises of gurgling and spitting were part of the ritual. I found this different understanding of personal and private space confronting and wearying. I was not

used to having so many people around me much of the time or participating by virture of my proximity in so many conversations and activities throughout the day.

There were other aspects of daily life that I needed to adjust to as well which related to personal hygiene and how much skin one is allowed to expose, particularly for women. For example, when using the toilet, often no 'toilet paper' was supplied. This was not because my hosts were thoughtless, but because washing with water after using the toilet is considered cleaner than using toilet paper. After some time, with the use of the small water-hose attachment in the toilet room and buckets of water in other households, I too began to agree that perhaps we westerners had this wrong in a climate that is hot and sticky. In a hot climate wearing fewer pieces of clothing from my perspective would be cooler. However, the expectation was that I had to dress modestly rather than to feel cool. Dressing in India and particularly in the south, is modest for both men and women. Women are expected not to expose their shoulders or ankles in public, but midriffs seem to be allowed when wearing a sari. Most Tamil women wear what is called a 'nightie' (as I described earlier) while indoors or around the perimeter of their house or apartment. In time, I saw a certain wisdom in being covered during the day. There was little or no bodily exposure to the sun, and so I imagine, in their case less darkening of the skin, and in my case my skin was protected. And paradoxically, I felt cool.

The washing of clothes was done with a washing machine or by hand with a local *dhobi* (washer person), once or twice a week. Usually, when I travel, I bring only a few clothes and wash them frequently, particularly because of the heat and excess perspiration. I consulted my friends about this and said I would be happy washing my clothes rather than using the washing machine. I also suggested that I could use a local *dhobi*. At first my hosts were embarrassed that I would be washing my own clothes as a guest, until I used the reasoning that I was part of the family and this is what I did at home. They agreed. The grandmother who lived next door, brought me a small packet of detergent. I then washed my clothes in buckets, and hung them in a bathroom and on her washing line within a verandah. This grandmother spoke no English but used an international code for communicating her approval: 'thumbs up' and a large grin. Perhaps I had passed a test? Perhaps we were together 'negotiating' my entry into the culture of her home, as a two-way process? Or, perhaps such a process requires gracious relinquishing and reciprocation on both sides.

The way time is talked about and expressed in Chennai was also different to my usual experience. I sensed that it is about a way of living and 'being' in the present, and accepting

what is, *as* it is—delays, distractions and excursions included. In one of several instances of playful self-satirising of local Tamil culture by my Tamil friends and acquaintances, the family I stayed with shared with me what they saw as a standing joke: IST or Indian Standard Time, they often quipped, really means 'Indian Stretchable Time'. And yet there was a certain truth to this. I remember an occasion when my husband and I were rushing to catch a plane and our hosts were very keen for us to purchase special sweets at the local specialty sweet shop, on the way. Fortunately we realised in time that the 'local' shop was several kilometres away in another direction, and were able to politely decline the offer. It was just as well. Driving in Chennai, like all Indian cities is an exciting if not excruciatingly slow ride as you drive around cars, trucks, cyclists, families on motor-scooters, children playing, poultry, camels, goats, dogs and even elephants—all on the road. As a taxi driver said to me once in Chennai, again illustrating the preparedness of good-humoured self-satire of one's culture: "you need three things as a driver: good horn, good brake and good luck!" Thus time and travel, for the most part, were imagined differently to my western experiences, and so making arrangements with my participants and family members often took long conversations and sometimes several phone calls to organise. And a graciousness that it may not even happen at all, because of a notion of cultural politeness and an inability to say 'no', which I explain below.

Communication with my new Tamil friends was mostly in English. However, they sometimes introduced phrases and expressions translated from their local language directly into English. And, even though I thought I was speaking in plain English, I sometimes introduced *my* local vernacular to explain myself, as well. Between us we were sometimes at a loss as to what either of us meant, but on both sides we stumbled along and mostly were able to work out any misunderstandings and miscommunications. However, there was an aspect to the local practices of communicating that was quite unfamiliar to me. I learned that it was impolite to be direct or say 'no', because my friends did not wish to disappoint me or prefer not to tell me directly that something was not possible. I have come to understand that this is related to hierarchies and showing respect. Therefore, I had to understand what was really meant by the word 'yes', because for many direct questions I asked, such as "Are we leaving at 9am?" I would invariably receive a 'yes' answer. This was particularly confusing for me and annoying, I have to confess, when I would ready myself to leave at nine in the morning, only to find that no one else was ready. I came to understand that 'yes' meant an acknowledgement of my question, particularly if there was a characteristic head gesture or

head ‘wobble’ side-to-side to accompany it. I discovered in my communication with many of the families I was staying with that it was easier and more polite for them to acknowledge my direct questions with a ‘yes’, via such a head wobble, than to say ‘no’. I often followed up with more specific questions such as, “Do you think the car will be available then?” or “Who else will join us at that time?” and if I received a continued ‘yes’ answer, then possibly I needed to accept that it was not going to happen. In other words, it became apparent to me that this was a way that my middle class Tamil friends could say ‘no’ in order not to offend me. Storti (1990, 1994, 2007) writes about such communication protocols when advising westerners who intend to work in India, which helped me clarify these situations. Over time, I was able to read these situations better and negotiate a little less directly, without causing *or taking offence*.

Daily life in the Aadavan household included daily *pooja* [prayers] and religious rituals, and an annual pilgrimage. These are, in fact, central to the way of life for many Tamil families in Chennai. I live in a secular family and community in Australia, and so to have my day punctuated with prayer and ritual was quite unfamiliar to me. However, this provided a peaceful rhythm and ambience, and I found myself willingly joining in. The tinkling bell and the burning of incense at the beginning of most prayers and the quiet musical tone of their voices were mesmerising. I too slowed down my day and could experience the world around me in a more subtle form. For these moments, it seemed to me, I was able to ‘be’ more in the present. This was such a contrast to my usual western life in Melbourne, Australia, which is punctuated with appointments and meetings, and expectations of plans and dates.

On one memorable occasion, I was invited to join the Aadavan family on a pilgrimage to visit sacred temples in the lower part of Tamil Nadu for several days. Travelling with only one middle class family, with a driver and comfortable car for only a few of us, I can hardly say was the typical Tamil pilgrimage. Usually it is in a large bus with many families travelling together. I had never been on a pilgrimage and knew very little about the temples before I visited in Thanjavur, Kumbakonam and Chidambaram. It was a wondrous experience. How fortunate was I as an outsider to participate in such a special time, and see ancient archaeological sites and temples, thousands of years old, with local people who were prepared to share the experience with me. I observed and joined in with the Aadavans as best I could in the temples and in public. I was able to ask many questions about what was going on, but this of course was in English. I suspect it was probably very tiresome at times for them because it required a translation of some deeply held understandings and

traditions. As much as it was interesting and enjoyable to be experiencing an-other culture, ‘other’ events, and ‘other’ understandings in every moment, by the end of the six days, I was exhausted. Importantly these experiences provided me with important insights into what it can feel like to be in the minority encountering a dominant culture.

Through all of this, I was travelling on my own with the Aadavan family and knew none of the Tamil language. For example, at times the family joked and talked playfully amongst themselves in Tamil. Even though a part of me knew it was easier for them to relax when using their first language and that they did not mean to cause offence, I felt isolated, cut off and uncomfortable. Even though the family were kind, thoughtful and inclusive, I felt excluded through language. This was a totally new experience for me, and a discomforting one. It brought to light disturbing questions for me about the notion of ‘inclusiveness’ and how dominant groups can unintentionally discriminate on the basis of language.

At the end of the pilgrimage I reflected that, at times, there was a tension between the western and Eastern ‘pilgrims’. I so very much did not want to disappoint or be a ‘bad guest’ according to my western and personal understanding of the term. My concern was that being accepted into their family was perhaps not proceeding along simple and straightforward lines. Looking back, I realise that these periods of discomfort were part of the journey, and provided opportunities to discuss difference and to reflect on some possibilities of how to negotiate going forward. Also, for me I needed to accept that some discomfort is inevitable in all relationship building and probably more so in cross-cultural relationships. I explore this in the following vignettes.

On another visit to India, when I had recently begun my PhD study, I again stayed with the Aadavan family in Chennai. I had set up meetings with academics in an English department at the Madras University, and had planned to visit libraries, bookshops and English language teachers. I was travelling without my husband, which proved to be a revealing experience because I was treated as the female *unaccompanied* guest—as is the tradition in some families and communities. My understanding was that I would do what I normally did when visiting professionals in other countries. I would organise the meetings and make my way there. As I came to understand, this situation was completely outside my hosts’ experience or understanding, and I almost stumbled into causing serious cultural and personal offence to my hosts, as this narrative explains.

The ‘uncle’ or ‘head of the family’ (Gaja) had taken leave from work to assist me. I thought this was an unnecessary kindness. I explained to Gaja that I was sure I would be confident to find my own way. However, he and the family insisted. The conversation went something like this:

> Penelope: I am an independent, professional woman, I have travelled a lot. I will take a taxi for the day.
>
> Balajee: This is how it is done here. Gaja will accompany you. It is our duty. Please accept this.
>
> Grudgingly, I agreed.

The uncle, Gaja, proceeded to assist me throughout my journey to take buses and taxis to the various meetings and, to my surprise and horror, he not only accompanied me, but introduced himself to the local professors, sat in on my meetings and contributed. At the end of the first day, I felt both put out and annoyed. By the end of the second day I was angry, and no doubt communicating this to the uncle through my disgruntled body language. When I arrived home, my friends were there and I could tell them how I was feeling, in the politest possible way. They explained to me what was meant by this.

> Saraswati: We are responsible for you, your husband is not with you.
>
> Balajee: We are worried that you might be cheated or led astray in a taxi or on a bus. You cannot speak Tamil. If something happened to you we would be very unhappy and feel responsible for not caring for you properly.
>
> Saraswati: Gaja is making sure that the professors are proper. He is looking after you because your husband cannot be here. You are part of our family, and he makes sure you are safe and respected.

I was completely taken aback. I felt badly about my poor attitude towards this man who had given up his week of work to look after me. I explained to them how difficult it was for me to be treated like this, even though it was well meaning. Then, I conceived the idea that I would refer to him as ‘my bodyguard’ like the Elephant God *Ganesha*. From this moment forward, I was able to accept him and what he was doing and was able to be both grateful and gracious. My friends thought it a good idea and the nickname stuck. The uncle also enjoyed his special name and new status. Later, I rang my husband and said that the next time I was going to India he was going to come with me and be introduced to all the key professors, so that they could see that I was indeed married and respectable. I was also going

to learn some basic Tamil so that I could make my own way around, but learning Tamil is another tale.

In any study, reading about other researchers' experiences is useful and enlightening. Vera-Sanso (1993) wrote about her experiences when she first went to do research in the slums of Madras (Chennai), and discussed how she and her husband were perceived as British, married people. Vera-Sanso's husband was viewed as "displaying a generous and tolerant spirit to a rather demanding wife" (1993, p. 166). In contrast, twenty years later, what I understood from this was, in a patriarchal society, the uncle was providing me with an 'introduction', establishing that I was part of this family, in the absence of a 'generous and tolerant' husband back in Australia. And perhaps on their part "… it [was] taken as just another, though amusing, variation on human behaviour that abounds in India, where other castes, other religions, other tribes and, now, other nationalities have different ways of doing things" (p. 165).

Language and Culture

The previous vignettes have illustrated some of the more demonstrable challenges of encountering and connecting with another culture. However, as my story about communication illustrated, language is central to any culture or community and understanding its nuances as an outsider and a guest is important. Therefore, I took it upon myself to at least attempt to learn some of the etiquette phrases and greetings, and know the meaning of some basic words. This is the story, taken from my journal, of a significant experience in my attempt to learn some Tamil language.

> The grandmother and I sat together with my simple Tamil-English book and pointed at every object in the room. She graciously, and with much hilarity, corrected all my pronunciations. It was a pleasurable experience, sitting quietly in the afternoons, like a child, learning the basics of a language with a grandmotherly figure. The old lady felt useful, and we had made a special connection. I was able to utter a few words to my friends when they arrived home at nights, and take all the teasing as they heard the stories about my mispronunciations and hence wrong meanings. However, they were pleased with my efforts and retold, with me protesting in embarrassment, my mispronunciations with great hilarity to other members of the family. It was all good fun!

I am still unable to conduct a conversation in Tamil. The English language has many sounds that are made at the back of the throat, whereas in Tamil, many sounds are made with the tongue and lips and are unfamiliar to native English speakers (Asher & Annamalai,

2002). However, I can understand the most rudimentary of words and phrases, and I am able to distinguish Tamil words. I can even hear when someone is speaking in any of the languages from the south, such as Malayalam, Kannada or Telugu, and also Hindi, which gives me some clue to people's origins. Learning any language requires practice and immersion, and I have not stayed long enough for either. This in many ways parallels the deep learning required to understand any culture. For as long as I do not speak Tamil I will always be an outsider and to some extent probably not fluent with either the language or the culture. However, despite this inability, I have still learned much as a person and as a researcher.

Experiential Learning

Learning to encounter and connect with middle class Tamil cultures, by participating in the daily life of the Aadavan family, was in some sense like 'learning on the job' or experiential learning. To a large degree, the insights and understandings that I have gained have been generated by a particular skill I developed over many visits. It required that I pay attention to not only what was going on around me, but to what was going on inside me, physically and emotionally. There were times when, although nothing was said, I felt a bodily discomfort or a feeling of being ill-at-ease. I came to trust these bodily sensations as guides and signals. Wenger's (1998) observation that I referred to in Chapter 3, offers a way of understanding: "We know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive" (p. 153).

In situations when I experienced bodily discomfort, I stopped whatever I was doing, looked around, and observed what others were doing and changed my behaviour accordingly, and as quickly as possible. I usually checked my companions' faces for signs of tension or, if they were looking away uncomfortably at how they were sitting or standing and whether they looked awkward or not. Depending on the situation, I would ask as 'indirectly' as I could if I had caused offence such as, "I think I've done something you might not like". Sometimes I would receive a signal of acknowledgement such as a bobbing head, and without any further discussion, I worked out that this was a sign that it was too embarrassing or uncomfortable for my host to discuss and I should not pursue the topic. Sometimes, I would have a response that was more of a protestation, "Oh no! It is not like that!" followed by an explanation of what *my hosts* experienced or perceived the situation to be. Where appropriate, I would raise

the situation again amongst my friends and discuss it with them to understand and do something differently next time.

There was one particular example I want to illustrate here. I was not used to sitting with my legs open (although covered) as a woman in western culture. I usually cross one leg over the other. When I sat at a family gathering and crossed my legs, I began to experience bodily discomfort and saw looks of strain across my companions' faces. This behaviour had been seen as offensive because the sole of my foot had pointed to another person—and worse, an elder. I quickly learned not to do this when I understood what this meant. However, even with these learning experiences I did not always pay attention or put into place what I saw as a way of managing the situation, as sometimes too much else was happening around me and events flowed on. I would reflect on it later, be politely told by my hosts what I had done or the situation would arise again which gave me another opportunity to explore what it meant.

Experiential learning opportunities also came through my researcher and co-reciprocator interviews or informal conversations. For example, I was challenged about my understandings of my culture, albeit innocently and with curiosity, by one of my participants. It was during an interview with Riya in Melbourne, Australia, early in my study. Riya asked me why I was doing this research and why I was interested in Tamils. This was my reply:

> I live in Australia, where we have no culture or history; everyone is a migrant. We are all strangers; it is not cohesive. When I look at your culture, I'm curious, why are you the way you are? The Tamil culture is thousands of years old, and mine (as a westerner) does not have those strong ways. I do not have a sense of who I am. The person I am today is a result of families coming from England, I'm partly British, Jewish, Irish, a mixture of different backgrounds. I do not know who I am [said with an upward inflection at the end to signal a question]. I'm such a mixture. I'm curious about people like you who know who you are and know where you come from. I want to tell other people about the Tamil way of life. You have ancient lineage and heritage, and there are ways that you preserve it and keep it going.

When I read this again, and reflected on what I had said, I was surprised and somewhat embarrassed by my comment that "we have no culture". This was in part a comment about not knowing one's culture from the inside. Yet, it is a familiar cry, as Gray and Agllias (2010) observe about how Australians view their culture, "they do not find it as easy to articulate what Australian culture is. Is it backyards and barbies, utes and mates, a vegemite sandwich, a "gidday mate" greeting, "fair dinkum," or giving everyone "a fair go"?

(p. 155). And as I reflected further, I asked myself, ‘Was I thinking about myself and was I unsure about my Australian culture at the time?’ Perhaps I was comparing the ‘white man’s’ history of Australia to Tamil culture/s? If so, I had not acknowledged the thousands of years of Indigenous culture in Australia. Perhaps I was thinking only of the last two hundred years. Two hundred years of British culture overlayed with migration, and of those mostly from Europe, and ‘white’. Until I commenced this study, I had not questioned my cultures or my place in them.

I had an opportunity to discuss the question of knowing one’s own culture with Riya again. (It was in the last few months of this study, as I shared my findings with her about what I had explored and come to understand.) My thinking this time was that because I live in Melbourne which is teeming with multiple cultures, we as a population are learning to move beyond the delights of a range of multicultural cuisines and shopping areas. However, as a nation we have yet to explore and fully understand diversity and inclusiveness in our daily work practices, friendship groups and neighbourhoods (Wise, 2009; Wise & Velayutham, 2009). For most of us, we are tied to our histories, influenced by the media, and have much to learn about the benefits of migration and multiculturalism, before moving beyond the fears of religions other than Christianity, strange languages, and ‘others’ taking over our jobs (Henry & Kurzak, 2013; Ivison, 2010; Markus et al., 2009; Spickard, 2013).

One of the ‘outcomes’ of my research mediated encounters with my Tamil friends and research participants is that I now take into account more fully my English background and aspects of my identity. I acknowledge that I speak English with an Australian accent, and I am less rigid about my inherited customs. I like to think that I embrace friends and colleagues from other cultures. I am much more open to exploring my ontology and epistemological views. Furthermore, I am no longer stuck in an East-West bind with a colonial opinion, ingrained with power and domination. I feel I can acknowledge that my direct cultural heritage in Australia may only be a few generations old, but that I too come from rich histories and traditions, with family ties that reach far back in the United Kingdom. My grandparents, who migrated here over one hundred years ago were as keen to instil British customs and values into their children and grandchildren as any other migrant. I understand that I am a creation of this inherited “multi-culture” (Markus et al., 2009) where I have been shaped and influenced by complex and dynamic Australian socio-cultural environments. Because of migration and transcultural flows, this multi-culture includes not only European cultures but also cultures from Asia and those from the Indian sub-continent.

In sum, my sense of identity has been affected by opening myself to the different realities that the Tamil families presented, and my world has been challenged in the knowledge that worlds exist outside the comfort of what is familiar to me (Andrews, 2007).

I thanked Riya for providing me with an opportunity to explore those cultures and what I believe culture is for me. Riya was a little taken aback at the time, then smiled happily and told me that she too was grappling with this kind of issue. Our researcher-participant relationship shifted, as self-revelations opened up a new relationship, one of friendship. It was these types of conversations over the course of the study that inspired me to reflect and be more reflexive, and so enrich my approach as an intercultural researcher.

From participating in daily life, and being a guest in an-other culture, I conclude that as an outsider, guest and/or researcher, it is important to respect the rules, assumptions and expectations of one's hosts. Therefore, it behoves me to be flexible, adaptable and resourceful and find out what these unspoken practices are, and where possible to do this in advance and without questioning when they are imposed. Even if some local practices make little sense to me at first encounter, I have found that the process of encountering requires a degree of patience and acceptance of differences, and this must be done courteously. I am, after all, an invited guest in the environment and space of my hosts.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has told many stories, starting with my first encounter with middle class Tamil cultures by accepting an invitation to stay in the Aadavan family's home, and then, over time, beginning to understand the responsibilities of being an invited guest and participating in the daily life of an-other's cultures. The stories have ranged from the funny and embarrassing to those of confusion and frustration. There are many more stories, of course, that remain untold. The stories have sketched out the process of my learning about another culture or cultures, and also the process of my learning and growing as a person and as a researcher. Opening myself to these experiences prepared me well as an intercultural researcher for further learning and growth. As an outsider to middle class Tamil cultures, I agree with Black (2010) who says:

> Many of the acts that constitute personal experience are thus acquisitions of exterior knowledge, so that a sense of one's identity as (for example) "Indian" might stem not only from the lived practices of everyday life but also from the kind of Indian history one has studied or from the kind of Indian literature one has read. An individual immersed in a secular-nationalist history of India might

> understand being Indian very differently from an individual steeped in ideologies of Hindutva. (p. 37)

The process of encountering and connecting with another culture or cultures as an intercultural researcher requires openness to difference and a reflexive standpoint. Understanding another culture cannot be done solely through observation, listening and reading as a tourist or even as a traditional anthropological or ethnographic researcher. It is about more than clothes and food, as important as these are. It is a slow journey of building relationships and gaining trust so that everyone feels safe to explore and comment on what is going on around them in an equal and fair way. Being an invited guest afforded me an entrée into understandings not possible either as an insider or an outsider. It enabled me to connect with other cultures, enough that I was still able to step back and reflect, and yet immerse myself enough to get some of the insider's views, glimpses and snapshots. I will never be an insider, but I can be a curious outsider who wishes to understand, and as Merriam et al. (2001) comments:

> What an insider 'sees' and 'understands' will be different from, but as valid as what an outsider understands … The views of both insider and outsider must be accepted as legitimate attempts to understand the nature of culture. We would argue that drawing from contemporary perspectives on insider/outsider status, that in the course of a study, not only will the researcher experience moments of being both insider and outsider, but that these positions are relative to the cultural values and norms of both the researcher and the participants. (p. 416)

As a global citizen, learner and researcher, my own background and cultures *do* mediate the way in which I learn about and understand the experiences and cultures of the middle class Tamil communities I mixed with. Crucially, this learning involves being open to the possibilities for dialogue and engagement with others along the way, in a spirit of exchange, mutual engagement and reciprocity. The next two chapters present and narrate my participants' observations about: 1) the impact of the English language on the cultural practices of members of the Tamil community; 2) the extent to which Tamil traditions were being observed as in the past (or not); and, 3) the ways in which Tamil family structure has been changing in recent times.

Chapter 9

Mantra[21]: Narratives from the Field

> Every life story is unique …Life stories, whatever their form, can only be understood in light of their social, cultural, and historical context. (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, p. 127)

In the previous chapter I described how I first visited India as a tourist, prepared myself and then continued to engage with the Tamils in Chennai, India and Melbourne, Australia. In the next two chapters, I narrate and explore the conversations that I had with my participants. In presenting these narratives, reflexively, I want to draw attention once more to one of the continuing challenges I experienced in presenting the stories of others in this thesis.

> Collecting and analyzing data in a cross-cultural study has an underpinning question: how is it possible to understand the other when the other's values are not one's own? (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 41).

The question has stayed with me, prominent in my consciousness in the writing of these chapters, as I was attempting to understand and interpret what my participants had discussed with me as a researcher who lived in one culture and was attempting to understand another. However, as I explained in the previous chapter, through carefully preparing myself as an intercultural researcher and outsider, I believe I was able to bridge some of the gaps of difference and so explore values for a more shared understanding. In the next two chapters, I present and analyse those stories gleaned from my interviews and informal conversations, mindful of the challenge of representing values that are not "one's own". I begin this chapter in Melbourne, Australia, many thousands of kilometres from Chennai, India, when I was speaking in English with Tamil women (who seemed more comfortable to speak with me than did Tamil men) about their perceptions of Tamil life, culture and identity back in India,

[21] A *Mantra* is a Sanskrit word, meaning an instrument of thought which aids concentration when meditating. It is also believed to endow a variety of powers. When recited or sung *mantras* convey a significant meaning and effect, for protection and strength (Bhalla, 2007). I choose this word in association with this chapter to respect the voices of my participants.

and in Australia. I met these women in their homes, surrounded by their families and reminders of their daily life.

My World is Changing—Narratives from the Field

I sat in rooms in suburban homes in the outer, south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne with several women who had immigrated with their families from Chennai. We talked about their daily lives and practices as Tamils. I noticed from several visits to Chennai that usually women only discuss their families and their work with 'strangers'; my topics were not usually what one discussed with familiars. And yet with this Australian researcher, in this space so far distant from their cultural homeland they seemed willing to discuss these matters with me.

Actually, the situation was similar to Chennai. I recall Agni, whom I interviewed in Chennai, telling me how excited she was that I was taking an interest in what she clearly understood as *her* Tamil culture. Significantly, she always referred to culture in the singular, such as in one of her opening comments: "I love the Tamil culture and literature very much, and this is an opportunity to spread the Tamil culture through you" (Agni interview, 4 April 2012). In a follow-up conversation, she clarified her sense of 'the' Tamil culture as primarily identified in and expressed through language and the arts. She wanted outsiders to know how Tamils lived and what was happening in Tamil Nadu. So often in my conversations with Agni, as with other interviewees, she explained to me her sense that Tamil practices, families and society had always been changing and that they were continuing to change. So often, too, she would urge me to understand that particularly in the last decade this change had become quicker and more disturbing. Tamil culture and Tamil society were in a state of "transition and transformation". What it was transforming into was never made clear, despite my efforts to elicit an answer to this question.

In the Methodology Chapter 6, I provided brief backgrounds of the women I interviewed. The pseudonyms for the women in Melbourne were Elisai, Leena, Riya and Vallika. Those in Chennai were: Agni, Ammu, Kala, Parvati, Radha, and Saraswati. As explained earlier, these women were more comfortable and willing to sit down and speak with me, and yet I was pleased when their husbands' voices, stories and beliefs entered into the conversation as they sought to contribute, from a space one level removed from the seated interviewer and interviewees. The husbands of the women I interviewed in Chennai, who contributed to the conversations were Balajee, Kaushal and Mayur.

Much of this narrative was created from my interviews with women in their family home settings (in Chennai). I have attempted to write with reflexivity but to say this is not to wave away any ethical questions associated with undertaking a Narrative Inquiry into others' culture. I realise that I have entered into the struggle that many qualitative researchers experience that is, using my language and my writing to represent a sense of the truth (or truths) and at the same time wishing to allow "the 'voices' of [my] participants / co-reciprocators to be heard" (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 416). As Cunningham and Fitzgerald (1996) observe:

> When it comes to truth, there is either no truth, many truths, or truth for a particular culture. In other words, if truth is possible, it is relative. … All claims to Truth are seen as arbitrary acts of power that include and exclude individuals and groups. (pp. 49-50)

Furthermore, because I interviewed these women in English, and Tamil is their mother tongue, they often spoke in 'Indian English', which I have discussed in Chapter 3. Thus I have attempted to faithfully reproduce their stories and views, paying careful attention to the context in which they were speaking to me and being mindful of the potential slippages of meaning involved in moving fluidly between different languages. Furthermore, rather than try to construct an overall story that represents all of the thousands of different stories that they communicated to me and the experiences I had in those interviews, I have selected particular stories and organised them into themes. This narrative, then, is an attempt to illustrate and interpret what amounted to over forty hours of interview data and many thousands of words in my research journals from over the four years of the study.

I sensed the participants wanted to tell me their stories because of their pride in the Tamil culture (again, always expressed as a singular noun) and the changes that they saw happening around them. I also intuited a sense of their powerlessness about what they were experiencing, and that perhaps I could be their voice—as if I might somehow halt or slow down the process of change. Vallika, speaking to me in Melbourne, clearly expressed some hope that I might help in this way: "You are an outsider, a 'white' westerner, who speaks in English, so you are taken more seriously" (Vallika interview, 5 November 2011). It was interesting to reflect on this as a kind of post-colonial view, from a young person reflecting local attitudes thousands of kilometres from her homeland. Alternatively, perhaps she is all too conscious of her potential as a young person to use *her* voice, through mine, to influence her world and to retain some sense of connections to a culture she sees slipping away from

her. As Drèze and Sen (2013) remark, India is reinventing itself post-independence and "the important task is not so much to find a 'new India', but to contribute to making one" (p. 16).

This chapter discusses the first of the three major narratives that the women and their families raised in the conversations with me: the impact of the English language on the cultural practices of members of the Tamil community.

The English Language and the Tamil Community

When I listened to each woman talk to me with some concern about the influence of the English language on Tamil cultures in Chennai, and Melbourne, it was with the knowledge that they were speaking English. This is a language which not only enabled communication with me, as a researcher, but as they repeatedly told me their mastery of it had 'endowed' them with status and self-confidence to participate in such conversations. Radha, still living in Chennai, stated this view in a conversation with me, early in my research.

> The English language gives women self-confidence. In India, if you can talk English you are one step ahead. Status and self-esteem. It is a feeling amongst Indians. Attractive as brides. If they can talk in English, they are more attractive. I have noticed. Getting employment and getting day-to-day things done. I talk Tamil to lower [castes or classes] and English to higher [castes or classes]. Good mix, mmm. (Radha interview, 9 April, 2012)

Each of the participants had learned English for different reasons. One woman said that her mother had a dream that her daughter should learn English. Another said that her father had insisted that all of his children learn English. He was not sure why, but he felt that it would be an important language in the future. Others learned English because their fathers moved around India in 'government jobs', and the participants were sent to English medium schools in each state, to save them having to learn a new language at school for every move. In India there are possibly thousands of languages, because each state was formerly a country or kingdom in its own right prior to English colonisation, and so each state has a dominant language or languages. And yet for other women, because of various reasons but particularly because they came from families that had the resources to do so, they attended private Christian schools where instruction was largely in English. In addition, most of the women I interviewed went to private and privileged colleges and universities where English was again the preferred higher-education language. Lastly, all of these women came from the higher castes in India. They considered themselves to be modern and were proudly middle class and, like so many other aspirational middle class women in Chennai, had no hesitation in stating

that being able to speak English was an indicator of that status (Chandra & Mittra, 2003; Jodhka & Prakash, 2011).

I want to now tease out some of the statements and views of how the Tamils believe that the English language is affecting their identity in a range of contexts and situations, in a different hemisphere. My discussion of their views explores the usage of English in middle class Tamil's daily lives, and the effects of the English language on their sense of their identity.

The English language in Chennai has been a language of power and authority for some time in India, as I have discussed in Chapter 2. Husband and wife, Kaushal and Ammu, told me that their knowledge of history was that The East India Company was established in Madras (Chennai) over three hundred years ago. Hence, the English language at the time was important for trade and commerce, and it gained status from then on. So that today if one can speak, read and write in English in Chennai, it gives you status. Kaushal went further: "Tamil [language] is being associated with poor people" (Kaushal interview, 3 April, 2012). So many of my participants reiterated the view that the English language gives women status and self-confidence, and yet Vallika presented a different complicating perspective that penetrated beyond the familiar discourse of connecting English with aspirational middle class worldviews of some Tamils.

> In the towns and villages [of Tamil Nadu], there is a dislike of the [English] language even though they respect it as an outsider. Some [villagers] even refuse to learn English. [They] see it as a necessity, [but] … don't like it because they know it's not 'theirs'. (Vallika interview, 5 November, 2011)

But even this interpretation of Vallika's point needs to acknowledge that access to education generally and learning English particularly is often restricted in the rural towns of Tamil Nadu because of a lack of resources and infrastructure. Furthermore, most of India is still agrarian, where approximately seventy percent of the country is rural and Tamil Nadu has large tracts of farming land (Census of India 2011, 2011; The Hindu, 2011). Therefore, there is a need for all family members to work on the farm, especially during seasonal times, such as harvesting when there is a high demand for labour. Thus, a need to speak English on these rural farms and in their local villages is probably not required. Although Vallika was not willing to pursue the point this far, in the rural areas villagers see no need to speak English, and so would have an understandable disdain for an unnecessary language which is "not theirs". Besides, one's local dialect and the local Tamil would invariably take

precedence for everyday communication. Additionally, although India has welcomed transnational organisations they are often located in urban areas, and it is only the well-educated and those who can speak English who can gain employment with them (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, those in the older generation who remember the colonisation by the British, would have a reluctance to learn a conqueror's tongue (Clark, 2013; Graddol, 2010). Moreover, lastly, according to Clark (2013) , English is perceived by some as inhibiting native and local languages, and so because of this criticism it is not used.

For the middle class participants I spoke with, their pride in their command of English was mixed with a kind of nostalgia for a past that was being lost. Agni, for instance, had strongly felt but complicated views about the role of Tamil language and culture in her own life and the future of Tamil language and culture. Typical of many Tamil people I interviewed in Chennai and Melbourne, she pointedly used the word "preserve" to describe a culture (singular) that was in danger of being lost.

> Penelope: What are Tamil families doing to connect with their cultural identity?
>
> Agni: Difficult to answer. Sadly not preserving the Tamil language. English emphasised instead. Tamil is not seen as an international language.
>
> Penelope: Do you say your prayers in Tamil or English?
>
> Agni: Tamil. I learned English in School as a second language. I wrote my PhD in Tamil, about women in the Tamil literature.
>
> Penelope: Has the English language affected you then?
>
> Agni: No. I teach Tamil and run a shop where people speak mostly Tamil. I only use English when outsiders come in as a communication language.
>
> Penelope: Do you believe that the Tamil language will die out?
>
> Agni: Yes, but in the next few generations. Tamil will become a vernacular language with little reading and writing. Tamils will do the rituals and religious events without understanding the meaning as a consequence. Tamil dressing, toe rings becoming fashionable, but youngsters not wearing sari, but jeans. Bollywood movies and cable TV influencing. (Agni interview, 4 April 2012)

In her more extended final response, Agni begins to tease out her understandings of the connections between language, culture, cultural practices and their connections with identity. Her tone is one of deep pessimism here. She is not just quickly responding in the affirmative to my provocative question that the Tamil language might "die out", but rather bemoaning her sense that rituals and events will be enacted "without meaning". While

several socio-cultural theorists (Bhatt, 2010; Canagarajah, 1999, 2007; Kachru, 1982; Pennycook, 2010a, 2010b) argue that some of these changes are the likely outcome of transcultural flows, migration and globalisation, they express a perhaps greater concern that these shifts in culture and practices will result in an unthinking rehearsal of cultural or linguistic practices "without meaning". Riya, who I also discussed this topic with, amongst others, disagreed (see interview later in this section).

What comes through in many and varied ways in the voices of these participants is that language and identity are intrinsically interconnected and have a significant mediating influence on individuals' sense of belonging (Clark, 2013; Croucher, 2014). Vallika and I discussed how she understood her somewhat elusive identity through speaking Tamil, English and "Tenglish".

> Vallika: I am unable to define myself in English. The Tamil language gives me my identity. My sense of identity comes through my language. Tamil is my inner core, the circle around it is an English identity. I am comfortable with both.
>
> Penelope: Does speaking in English make a difference or change you?
>
> Vallika: Sometimes. [pause] I'm not so aware of this.
>
> Penelope: So, it's not merely a tool for communication?
>
> Vallika: Tenglish, yes! I speak Tamil to all my relatives and close friends and Tamilians. But I want to speak in English to demonstrate my abilities. Even though I am requested to speak in Tamil at times. I speak Tamil to others that can speak Tamil, it's about connection. Gradually English creeps in though. English gives status and advantage—that's why I am able to be here [studying in Melbourne]. English provides global citizenship. Arundhati Roy's books convey Indianess although written in English.
>
> Penelope: Would you teach English to your children?
>
> Vallika: Yes. But not like my parents. Tamil first, to read and write in it, and English second. (Vallika interview, 5 November, 2011)

Vallika, it seems, wishes to connect with other Tamils through speaking the Tamil language and she sees it as part of her inner most identification with being a Tamil. However, paradoxically, she reveals that speaking English has given her an advantage so that she can study in any English speaking country. Vallika also refers to the author Arundhati Roy[22] and the author's ability to convey 'Indianness' or an Indian view of the world through the English

[22] Arundhati Roy is an Indian author and political activist who is best known for her novel *The God of Small Things*, which won the 1998 Man Booker Prize for Fiction.

language. By referring to Arundhati Roy, Vallika was exploring, even as we spoke, how she might 'be' with the two languages and their inherent identities, particularly when she referred to Tamil as "my inner core" and English as "the circle around it".

The research literature I have cited above repeatedly suggests that India is attempting to explore its identity through its literature. I am also thinking of widely read authors such as Viswanathan (2008), who wrote *The toss of a lemon*, a story about change over several generations for a Brahman family and community, in Tamil Nadu. The author conveys in English the subtleties and meanings for that culture and the pain of change. I think also of other literature such as Choudhury's (2010), *India: A traveler's literary companion.* This anthology features various authors from across India who are famous for writing in their local languages. Although, many have written their stories in English, others are translations and express the vastness of the literature of India. Each author represents their language and culture, imaginations, myths and beliefs, and their view of history and time. And lastly, there is the world famous *Jaipur Literature Festival*, held annually in the northern state of Rajasthan, where literature is discussed, and where the global and Indian languages are represented and debated. As one of the Directors, Namita Gokhale, stated the festival provides "a strand of readings and conversations on the survival of languages, which examines India's rich and varied linguistic diversity, and the challenges these endangered tongues are contending with" (Gokhale & Dalrymple, 2015). As an Australian, I am struck by Dasgupta's (2011) contrasting view. Dasgupta asserts that for a great majority of Australian writers, the longing for European culture is admired and privileged, and Asia will be seen and remain as the mysterious 'other'.

Vallika had more to say about the English language and its influence on her communication and thinking.

> Thinking in English, writing, thinking and talking. [pause] It is analysis and logic. Western logic creeps into your thinking. Tamil/Indian way is not the same way. Socrates is sequential. Tamil/Indian way of thinking is gestalt. [pause] Storytelling and parables. Western philosophy is 'this *or* that', India is 'this *and* that'. Father explains things in Tamil, emotions and feelings. [pause] I use English when I use thought and think in that logical way. When I speak in Tamil, certain words would not be used. Tamil language is more emotional rather than logical. Tamil has many words for emotional objects, for example, there are many words for the moon. (Vallika interview, 5 November, 2011)

Vallika seems to be thinking out loud here about a number of dimensions of this topic, but her revelation that she associates Tamil with "emotions and feelings" and that she

“use[s] English … to think in that logical way” is fascinating. Annamalai (2007) maintains that proponents of Tamil in the mid-twentieth century were differentiating Tamil from English and European achievements that had discourses in science and social progress. They wanted a “language that is prose in its texture and poetry” (pp. 64-65) with the use of metaphor and proverbs. Thus, he argues, a shift came about, where the formal Tamil literature hybridised with the informal popular culture as expressed in film and Tamil fiction, and the mixing of Tamil and English in the vernacular. This, Annamalai points out, is a conundrum for the writer who has been schooled in formal Tamil, and is now writing fiction in a modern world, superimposing the new over the old. Vallika provided an example of how this bifurcation played out for her when she spoke at a conference.

> When I went back to India for a conference and presented in Tamil, it felt strange. The papers are written in both logics. I use storytelling to connect and relate. In India, stories are not read they are told orally to children. Storytelling is a parable, with a moral. Movies with parables. Thinking in Tamil and English is selective. On my own, with pain, I speak in English. In Tamil, it is my language of comfort and connection. (5 November 2011, interview)

Vallika’s reflection here might represent a generation of middle-class people in India, now. Those who are explicitly exploring their identity in relation to language and more complex experiences of culture. This is no doubt mediated by the fact that English is increasingly the dominant language in India, and assumed to be the global *lingua franca*. However, perhaps at the same time she experiences a tension or a betrayal of the Tamil language and culture as the effects of globalisation and westernisation percolate across India. For example, as her sister Durthi observed, “English exposes young people to western values. Even names for children [are] shifting from [what used to be] God names to [now] film star names” (28 March, 2012, interview). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) report that many studies of language and identity in linguistic anthropology suggest that claims for ethnic identity through language emerges when one ethnic group is in contact with other ethnic groups. Moreover, this sensitivity and heightened awareness occur even more often when the people concerned have experienced subordination and oppression under colonial rule, nationalism or global capitalism at some time in their past or in their current situation (p. 371). In this case, Indian and Tamil cultures are in direct contact with their neighbouring states, through trade, tourism and broadcast media, and also have a history of colonial rule. All of these should be seen as potentially complicating factors in this complex topic.

On the other hand, in the extended quote I present below, Radha is convinced of the importance of the Tamil language, its place in society, and how it has been a dominant force in her life. She has been able to read Tamil literature, and she appreciates that it has shaped how she sees herself. Radha bemoans that Tamil is not being valued and taught to the same extent as English now because of what she sees as the ethical values integral to Tamil that are less visible or even absent in 'other' cultures.

> The Tamil language has given me. [pause] It has given me so many things and studied [sic], that have shaped me. Tamil language has gone a long way. [Speaks quietly to herself in Tamil] I know so much from Tamil. The *Sangams*[23] I know, I can interpret things and er … read any book in Tamil. I like Tamil, to be frank. I read novels, everything. I know very well Tamil, writing, everything. Being in a profession I have taken up English. Being a Tamilian means Tamil language. Learning Tamil language means I can read Tamil scripts and literatures, and all moral sides. Everything in Tamil. Those people who study Tamil love more moral and cultural, you know, the ancient Tamil scripts guide me. Tamil has got its own original. Being in Tamil has helped a lot, I'm telling you, in structuring your character. Moral values, how you should be wearing kumkum[24]. Everything in Tamil. Tamil culture it's there. So it becomes a living in Tamil. A way of life. Each state and culture in India is different. Each follows their own. This is the Tamil way. And also Indian, south Indian and Tamilian. India unites you. Then you have diversity. There is a difference between the north and south but we accept. We accept. If a north Indian comes to our house we accept. We do not say we will not cook for them. We are flexible. We don't say we are Tamilian and we don't cook for you. We still cook for them. Whatever you eat we cook for you. We accept. To be frank. Tamilians are more accepting worldwide. We don't say bad things about other Hindus or Muslims. No such thing. Only politicians are making it like that. (Radha interview, 9 April 2012)

In order to fully understand this long excerpt, I need to provide some important context. Radha is a woman in her early sixties and has been a widow for many years. She told me she did not want to remarry because she enjoys the independence and her role as the matriarch of the family. She explained in an informal conversation over a meal following my interview with her that she did not want to go back to being a subordinate within a patriarchal family. Radha still works as a medical doctor for families. She has a private practice and follows what she describes as western styles of medical practice. Radha's observation that there is a "Tamil way of life", and her obvious nostalgia for this, is based on perceptions that have been shaped since she was born, at about the time India gained independence. Radha

[23] *Sangams* are from the Sangam period of Tamil literature, which spans several hundred years BC and several hundred years AD. They are written as poetry by a range of authors on topics such as love, war, politics, relationships, and are considered to be guiding principles for secular life. One of the most famous is Thiruvalluvar, who wrote on ethics (Zvelebil, 1974, 1992).
[24] A red powder used for social and religious markings on the body.

has lived all her life in Chennai (formerly Madras). She grew up in an era when the Tamil language was valued because it represented a stand against the Hindi language from the north when Hindi was proposed as the national language for India. Radha told me she was aware of the tensions between the various Dravidian movement political parties at the time too, which included the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) parties (Economic and Political Weekly, 1989; Fuller & Narasimhan, 2014; N. Ram, 1979). Radha learned English to complete her medical studies and feels a strong imperative to maintain it as a professional. However, Radha is a proud Tamilian, and in the above excerpt, I can see that being able to read the Tamil literature and the Sangam literature is important and has given her comfort and guidance. She also wishes this same guidance for others.

Radha refers to cooking and cooking for people from the north of India. I understand this not so much as a literal translation of cooking but the notion of Tamil hospitality. Agni, also in Chennai, said something very similar: "It's hard to think what is Tamil culture; I just take things for granted. Giving food is very important, honouring the guest" (Agni interview, 4 April 2012). In every house I entered, even if for the briefest of times, I was offered at least a glass of water, sometimes a small cup of milky, spicy tea also known as *chai tea*, and more often a small meal of traditional food such as idlies[25] or dosa[26] with Sambhar[27]. As I explained in Chapter 7, offering food to a guest is part of a traditional Hindu custom and code of conduct, the act of *Atithi Devo Bhava*, which when translated from Sanskrit into English means 'The guest is equivalent to God' (Bhalla, 2007). This act of hospitality is important to all Hindus, and for Tamils (at least in the way that Radha sees the world). When referring to people from the north, Radha is acknowledging the historical and geographical divide between the north and south, which I discuss further in the next section. Notwithstanding this sense of separation and difference that Radha seems to want to point out, she asserts that Tamilians are welcoming of others and that it is the politicians who create problems between the different religions in India and in Tamil Nadu. Thus, for Radha, even though she can speak English, and it is important professionally, it is her Tamil language and identity that have guided her and provided meaning in her life. However, English and its influence on the

[25] Idlies are a steamed type of rice cake made from fermented rice batter and black lentils.
[26] Dosa is a crepe made from fermented rice batter and black lentils.
[27] Sambhar is a lentil based vegetable stew.

Tamil cultures in the diaspora communities is another challenge, particularly where English is the dominant language, such as in Australia.

Riya, who lives in Melbourne, Australia, works part-time and is a wife and mother to two adolescent boys. Riya speaks with her natal family and some friends who still live in Chennai several times a week, either on the phone or using a video conference service on the internet. This is a typical communication approach used by most immigrants in Australia, particularly given distance and transportation time for visits, and the ease of access to telecommunication and internet technologies (Voigt-Graf, 2005). Riya also told me about how she communicates with her family.

> Penelope: How much of a percentage would you speak in English and Tamil in a day?
>
> Riya: It would be about equal ... about 50 per cent each. When I want to say something to my children normally I speak in Tamil. When I am angry and want to make a point I speak in English! I speak in English and Tamil to my children, but Tamil most of the time, I encourage them, so that they don't forget the language. My oldest son he speaks really good Tamil. The youngest one is OK, only 60-65 per cent, but when my parents are here and they speak to him in Tamil most of the time, his Tamil will improve. They will bring modern words and expressions ... Yes.
>
> Penelope: Do you watch Tamil movies?
>
> Riya: Yes! DVDs? Not through satellite. We planned on satellite but would charge us $40 for one channel in Tamil.
>
> Penelope: When you go shopping, is there a Tamil shop you go to?
>
> Riya: Yes... Groceries and spices ... we can speak Tamil there.
>
> Penelope: When Tamil is combined in English, like Tenglish? Do you do that too?
>
> Riya: Yes. [smiles broadly and chuckles.] Lot of times!
>
> Penelope: Do you do that here or on phone to your family in India.
>
> Riya: All the time, everyone does it... We don't speak pure Tamil. We can't speak like that ... we've got so used to mixing this and that ...we only speak Tenglish!
>
> Penelope: Is that because you don't have the Tamil word and so you use an English word?
>
> Riya: For some of the words, English words are more popular, some of the words we have to rack our brains to think of the Tamil words ...English comes much more naturally.

Penelope: Do you think English would ever take over Tamil?

Riya: Vocabulary, not grammar. Yes, [we] hear more English words.

Penelope: In terms of speaking and writing, Tamil might be using the grammar the syntax, but more and more English words are coming in?

Riya: No that cannot happen overnight. In your own country you've got particular ways of describing something, even in English it just wouldn't work, it would have to be in Tamil.

Penelope: English wouldn't take over completely?

Riya: No! (Riya interview, 3 December, 2010)

Riya specifies where and when she speaks Tamil and where and when she speaks English and is confident about when she uses each language. She also refers to the code mixing of the Tamil and the English languages, called *Tenglish* or *Tamglish*, which is spoken in Chennai and amongst the diaspora. The phenomenon is well documented in newspapers and the literature, and is also spoken in Malaysia and Canada. Kanthimathi (2009) goes so far as to say that "the mixing of languages is so common that the concept of a 'pure' language is slowly becoming obsolete" (p. 105). *The Times, Chennai edition*, quoted a Tamil language teacher in a school as saying:

> Even adults would be dumb-struck if you ask them if they know the Tamil word for pen, pencil, table or chair. With everybody using English words in everyday language, few remember or have ever taken the trouble to learn the Tamil word for something like 'bus'. And it would sound rather odd if you called out in class or the office, "*Andha naarkaali konduvaa* [Bring that chair]!" (Vasundara 2010, p. 2)

It is a truism now to say that English is gaining increasing importance in Tamil cultural practices in Chennai. Most people living in Chennai, particularly young people, speak their own version of English whether or not it is acknowledged as Tenglish. Kanthimathi (2009) also claims in his study that English words are inserted according to Tamil syntax, not English syntax. Moreover, he suggests that it is the use of nouns that are predominantly being used, because Tamil grammar could be combined with Tamil nouns to create verbs and new linguistic grammar. The concern, also raised by Riya, Radha and Agni earlier, is that fewer people are learning the Tamil language and so in the future will be unable to read the Tamil literature. If this is the case, then the loss of a language would be the direct result of the ubiquitous presence of the English language, which for many Tamils is

synonymous with the inculcation of westernisation and western values (Krishnaswamy & Burde, 1998; Kurzon, 2008; J. Mukherjee, 2010; Sedlatschek, 2009).

Riya was adamant that English will never become the dominant language, unlike Agri's view earlier in this section. But perhaps an outcome she and Agri had not considered in the future is an Indian-English dialect or creole such as *Tamglish*. Bhatt (2010), Canagarajah (1999, 2007), Kachru (1982) and Pennycook (2010b) point to many cases in the past century where the creation of hybrid languages, such as Tenglish or Tamglish in Chennai, is understood to be not just the result of a globalised world but perhaps even arguably a positive outcome of globalisation. Another outcome of the influence of the English language is that it has empowered women in new ways.

We heard from Radha, earlier in this chapter, how historically, in Chennai, many women learned English because it made them 'attractive' as brides—but not just any brides. English, it would seem, gives them added status in the marriage stakes. It provides an entrée for them into the middle class, and means that they have more opportunities to apply for jobs in the transnational companies being established in Chennai, as I explained in Chapter 4. This narrative of English providing social mobility to otherwise socially 'stuck' individuals needs to be interpreted in the knowledge that only those who already have privileged access to the resources and quality of education required to learn English are able to benefit. It is with this awareness that I come to the narratives of husband and wife Kaushal and Ammu about this issue.

They own a business in the training industry in Chennai, and as part of that business they conduct workshops for people who are applying to work in the transnational companies. Kaushal takes up the narrative of English providing social mobility.

> English has emancipated Tamil women. A lot of ladies are now independent economically. They have become teachers, work in administration, and as bank employees. Today if you look at it, sixty percent of the IT workforce are ladies. That is what this [English] language has done.
>
> Previously the fathers let their daughters to [sic] go to college, because they don't know what to do with them except for getting them married. They think that once they finish their school education they can get them married. They go to school not for employment purpose but just to study. But not now. Things have changed. The male child no longer looks after them [the parents]. So they think both childs [sic] can look after them. This happened over the last fifteen to twenty years I'd say. (Kaushal interview, 3 April 2012)

I discussed this view (without revealing its source) with Balajee, who works as a lawyer in the government services in Chennai, and is very familiar with government policy and legal matters, and the history of Tamil Nadu and the Tamils. He "agree[d] one hundred percent". (Balajee interview, 6 April 2012)

One should not ignore the fact that it is the two *men* who make this observation. Interestingly, in all the interviews I conducted with female participants alone, I did not hear this view expressed, except perhaps for Radha, who made a similar comment but in an indirect and general way (see her earlier statement quoted on page 172). Perhaps the women saw such developments as a natural phenomenon. The views of these men are certainly supported in the literature, where Maslaka and Singhalb (2008), Shweta Singh and Hoge (2010) and Larsen (2011) maintain that the effects of globalisation in India are bringing changes to the traditional role of women as homemakers. But rather than ascribing some particular power to the English language, they speak about rising middle class values more broadly influencing families so that parents support their daughters' aspirations for an education and a career, which in turn contributes to women's improving self-image. Thus, the earlier views that only a basic education was required to acquire a good husband are gradually disappearing. Moreover, ironically, the rising costs of living means that a woman's "earning potential" is increasingly seen as an advantage in the marriage market (Maslaka & Singhalb, 2008, p. 482). Additionally, acquiring an education also means that women can contribute to the process of nation-building and development. Educated women too can add to family decision-making and social change, in particular, the management of fertility and birth control, to reduce childbearing and increased population, and so enhance the lives of their children to survive and thrive (Drèze & Sen, 2013, pp. 107-109).

When I put it to Riya that perhaps she might have been considered more 'attractive' as a bride because she could speak English, her reaction was fascinating to me.

> Penelope: Do you think that if you hadn't spoken English, your husband's family would have chosen you for a bride?
>
> Riya: Yes, they would have chosen me, even if I didn't speak English. My husband's family comes from a village and cannot speak English, but my family were brought up in bigger cities, so we had better exposure to English, so no, it's not important.
>
> Penelope: But what about your husband who travels internationally? Would he want a bride who could speak English? Was it important for him?

> Riya: A basic knowledge of English would have been enough. The important thing was the religion, the caste and the family – a good family. (Riya interview, 6 September 2011)

This perspective adds another level of complexity to an already complicated narrative. Riya is from a Brahman family, and like most castes or communities, the importance of marrying within the caste or community and continuing the traditions is paramount. However, this is even more so within Brahman communities (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2013, 2014). For Riya, English was not the concern at all.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, my participants observed that the influence of English on a whole range of Tamil cultural practices is complex and multifaceted. For some, learning English imbues status and power, and there is some evidence to suggest that this is the case. And yet, as the excerpts of the interviews in this chapter have shown, language can be seen as having both a particular and distinctive mediating impact on social practices and identity, and yet it is also in many cases indistinguishable from an array of other globalising factors. For some participants, through learning and speaking English, the necessity to learn the Tamil language and to engage with the Tamil literature and one's cultural identity and knowledge of the world is diminished. This in turn raises the issue of the future of the Tamil language and its place in Tamil society. Speaking both English and Tamil could reflect a general exploration of identity for the middle class and aspiring middle class, and those affected by globalisation. For women, the ability to learn and speak English may indicate their improved educational status and so not only their attractiveness as brides but their ability to be able to join the ranks of the professionally well paid. Importantly, with improved education and confidence, women can also contribute to nation building. In the next chapter, I present how my participants saw changes happening to their Tamil traditions and family structures.

Chapter 10

Tapas[28]: Narratives—People of a Time and Place

> Conservatism respects memory, tradition, ritual and values we have inherited, over and above enthusiasm for the future and indulgence in the present. (Pearson, 2014)

The previous chapter discussed one of the three major narratives the women raised in their conversations with me, which was the correlation between the English language and the identities of middle-class Tamil people and communities. In this chapter, I narrate my participants' views that Tamil traditions are not being observed as they were in the past; and that the Tamil family structure is changing.

Speaking of Tamil Traditions …

There is no doubt that Tamil traditions and rituals and their place in society were deeply valued by all of my participants. In interviewing my participants living in Chennai, India, and Melbourne, Australia, I wanted to understand their perceptions of Tamil traditions in their lives. The people I interviewed in Chennai present their perceptions of and attititudes towards what they see is happening in India, whereas the interviewees in Melbourne present voices from the diaspora or the Non-Resident Indian or NRIs, as they are referred to in India. This section has two parts to reflect perceptions and attitudes of Tamils living first in Chennai and then in Melbourne.

Before I commence my discussions of Tamil traditions, I will explain and then tease out a perception that the Tamils from Chennai and Tamil Nadu are seen as 'orthodox' by many across India. I became interested in this perception on hearing that Tamil traditional narratives are considered 'orthodox'. I asked Riya (now a resident in Melbourne) about this

[28] *Tapas* is a Sanskrit word which means deep meditation and an experience of inner peace that is superior to the pleasures of worldly possessions (Bhalla, 2007). I choose this word in association with this chapter to acknowledge the truths of my participants.

comment, which stimulated me to reflect on what she had said, and probe the literature to enhance my understanding.

> Penelope: Some people [in India] say that Tamils are more orthodox?
>
> Riya: Yes.
>
> Penelope: What does that mean?
>
> Riya: Observing the traditions and certain rules. For example, the way girls dress up. Not open to the dating thing. North India, they take it easy. Girls can dress wear shorts, and short dresses, expose their shoulders. (Riya interview, 6 September, 2011)

Aiyangar (1923) claims that the Tamil country from approximately the fourth century AD was seen as "the seat of orthodox Hinduism" (pp. 102-110) due largely to the influence of the Brahman caste, who are regarded as having "the power of sacred knowledge" (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2014, location 3774) such that only this caste is capable of performing certain key religious tasks, thus forming a class of religious literati serving as priests in temples and homes (Chandra & Mittra, 2003, p. 255). Since then Chennai has been home to the largest population of Brahmans in India, particularly in Mylapore, T. Nagar, and the older suburbs. Furthermore, historically this caste, because of its avowed values of cleanliness, purity and vegetarianism, have strongly influenced the Tamils, or at least middle class Tamils, and so Tamils to a large degree have been seen as orthodox by outsiders. However, the emergence of the 'Self-respect Movement' and the 'Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam' (DMK) in the middle of the twentieth century signalled a new period in Indian cultural history in which the Brahman caste appeared to have less overt political power in society, while nevertheless continuing to influence religious and traditional practices (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2014; N. Ram, 1979; Veluppillai, 2011).

The other aspect to understanding Riya's comments about 'orthodox' traditions, an aspect that is particularly pertinent to my discussion of traditions in contemporary India, is the view that there is a 'north-south divide' in the country. This division can be explained in part by the geography of the country, with the 'Western Ghats' mountain range roughly separating the lower part of the subcontinent from the north. Just as important, though, are the events of history, events which are (significantly) not referred to by Riya in her 'explanation' here. Throughout the centuries there have been wars and rivalry across the subcontinent, and notably between the Moghul empires in the north, and kingdoms such as the Pandyas, Vijayanagaras and the Sultanates in the south (Keay, 2011). Madras (Chennai)

was the first British outpost, and as such was considered a modern city then. Muthiah (2011) claims that many have forgotten the contribution Madras (Chennai) has made to the development of 'modern India'. For others, this view that there is a 'north-south divide' is what some have termed the 'Indo-Aryan migration' theories. Some archaeologists, histologists, linguists, and philologists maintain that there was an Aryan migration from the north which meant that the indigenous and tribal peoples were pushed to the south. There has been much debate, and the topic continues to be hotly contested in the literature, where positions on this issue are probably influenced by socio-political or ideological arguments resulting in political agitation, including the Dravidian Movement and Self-Respect Movement, that I have referred to earlier in this chapter (Bryant & Patton, 2005). Ramaswamy (2011, p. 33) states that there was to some extent and still is a perception by the Tamils from the south that the northern kingdoms and states were seeking to dominate India. This was exacerbated during the time when Hindi was proposed as the national language in the middle of the twentieth century, following the coming into being of the Indian Republic (which I discussed in Chapter 2). Furthermore, as Durthi also told me (28 March, 2012), many people from the north of India refer to Tamils as *Madrasis*. It is a derogatory term drawn from when historically Tamils were used as indentured workers when the slave trade ended in the mid-nineteenth century. Tamils are also nicknamed 'blackies' because the colour of their skin is usually considered to be darker than those peoples from the north (Younger, 2011, pp. 157-159).

Another explanation for the purported north-south divide and the perception that Tamil traditions are orthodox is grounded in understandings of difference and the role of language in these understandings. For example, in Bail's (2011) autobiographical account of when she first arrived in Chennai having lived in Mumbai for her early life, she exclaims, "It wasn't just the North-South difference, though this was a source of a big handicap in the beginning—[but] my lack of Tamil [that made the difference]" (p. 40). This suggests that it is not just a matter of historical variations in social and religious practices or politics, but the different families of languages that are at the roots of this discord. For example, the northern languages are derived from the Indo-European languages and the Dravidian languages of the south (Aiyangar, 1923; Keay, 2011; Maharatna, 2013; Pandian, 2007). Interestingly, because Riya is originally from the south of India, she appears to see herself as different from the 'northerners'. She speaks of herself as proudly Dravidian and so through this lens she sees value in a particular, and in fact a highly *situated*, understanding of 'the' Tamil way of life

(Keay, 2011; K. A. N. Sastri, 2009; Thapar, 1966; Wood, 2007). Thus, the examples of dress and behaviour that Riya refers to in the earlier quote are spoken of as part of a seemingly essentialist Tamil tradition or culture, one which does not consider notions of 'difference' between perceptions of culture. This is the same kind of perception that gives rise to notions of orthodoxy. The upshot of this is that certain 'Tamil' traditions and cultures, derived from historical events and identified to the present day by differences in language, show significant differences between the north and the south. Tamils from the south are perceived by some as orthodox because of persistent Brahmanical influences (despite some challenging of these hegemonies), but there is also a historical 'north-side divide' or simply a dynamic play of 'difference' that influences perceptions of India inside and outside of the country. In my journey to understand Tamils and Tamil cultures, I came to understand that such differences play a huge part in how traditions are identified, interpreted and practised—and the extent to which individuals or groups speak, in an oft repeated narrative, of a singular form of ancient Tamil culture being lost or forgotten in the rush to moderism.

I now continue with my participants in Chennai and Melbourne to understand their perceptions of Tamil traditions in their lives

Chennai, India.

The participants I interviewed shared with me what the Tamil traditions meant in their lives. Mayur and Kala, who are aged between sixty and seventy years, said that they had seen many changes in their time. When prompted, they identified and described to me a number of what they saw as important Tamil traditions. These included, the historic Pongal festival which is widely celebrated in January to observe the new harvest. However, according to Mayur and Kala, the Tamil New Year on 14 April is not acknowledged as it once was by Tamils in the south, and the western New Year (1 January) is increasingly being celebrated in preference. They pointed to the resilience of a 'traditional' Tamil married woman's dress (as I have described in Chapter 8). They also wanted me to know that most Tamils are Hindu, and so their diet is strictly vegetarian. In addition, they proudly told me that the Tamils are world famous for their Carnatic music and Bharanathyam dancing. However, they bemoaned their sense that Tamil poetry, literature and crafts, which they saw as central to Tamil cultures were being practised less. Indeed much research literature also speaks about these as central to notions of Tamil culture (see A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, 2004; Bhalla, 2007; Dubois & Beauchamp, 2002; Hancock, 1999; Leslie, 1991; Sadarangani, 2005; Shanthi, 2012; Wood, 1995). Mayur then told me in a matter-of-fact tone of voice:

> They [the traditions, participating in cultural festivals and the reading of Tamil literature] are not practised so much now. Everyone is too busy. Working. Not so important. Everyone wants to be modern". (Mayur and Kala interview, 28 March, 2012).

I was not sure at the time about how to interpret their emotions. Mayur and Kala held their faces still when he spoke. My first thought was not to ask any more questions about this, but then they proceeded to explain that Kala is a devout Hindu and spends several hours a day in prayer and meditation, and she sings daily to her family and personal deity. Indeed, she is well-known amongst a small community of traditional artists, as a classical Carnatic vocalist; she sings in the Chennai Carnatic music festivals[29]. I then found myself as a private audience, when Kala sang a devotional song accompanied by a harmonium musical instrument and an electronic 'Shruti box' which provided the drone. It was a special and moving experience.

On a separate occasion, I met Kala's elderly mother, who lived in the city of Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, and was the official attendant for her local temple. She was staying with Kala and Mayur briefly on her way home from a pilgrimage to Varanasi or Benares (a significant temple town on the side of the Ganges River in the north of India). This gave me a small insight into this family and the importance of how they lived their lives through daily and calendric Hindu practices and pilgrimages. As I write this and reflect, I have some understanding of why they would have told me with a 'still face' that their traditions were not being followed as before. There are good grounds for me to speculate that the feeling underneath was one of intense sadness and regret, and yet out of a sense of politeness, perhaps, their tone remained matter of fact.

Radha, however, was not so restrained as she explained the benefits for her of the "Tamil way" and her suspicion or even disregard for others who do not share her views—"these people" who are "losing their way".

> The Tamil way gives you morals and guidance. You cannot be corrupted. These people are losing their way, going away from being a Tamil. More susceptible to being corrupted by the western ways. [pause] In the Tamil family you can be guided, and given strength. Everyday we are exposed. [pause] Family gives support and you develop your personality. (Radha interview, 9 April 2012)

[29] These are held in the annual music season, Chennai, in the month of *Margazhi* (December/January) which is considered sacred. It is also revered amongst the Brahmans, the wealthy and well educated (Carnatic Corner, 2006; Sriram, 2011).

Most of the Tamil people I interviewed told me that they had a daily routine of spiritual practices, which they regarded as part of their Tamil way of life. For the purposes of this study, I have reconstructed from a number of very similar narratives conveyed to me by my interviewees, a sketch of the typical daily routine of a middle-class Tamil (Hindu) woman. I also draw on the literature to clarify and explain some of the terms that the participants used (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, 2004; Bhalla, 2007; Dubois & Beauchamp, 2002; Hancock, 1999; Leslie, 1991; Nagarajan, 2007; Sadarangani, 2005; Shanthi, 2012). I do this not to reinforce some earlier essentialist sense of what it means to be the female head of a middle class Tamil family, but rather to affirm the multiple narratives that had a certain sameness to them amongst the people I was getting to know in this part of India at this point in time.

> The female head of the family rises from bed before sunrise. She lights an oil lamp singing various incantations; she prays and bows to the family deity and to photos of family elders who have died (which are garlanded with flowers). All this is by way of a kind of prelude to her bathing and dressing for the day. Later in the family *pooja* (prayer) room or prayer area in the house, she typically recites personal prayers or sings a song to a family deity and where possible recites from the Tamil scriptures, followed by a period of meditations. Where possible, she draws a *Kolam* outside the front door of the house and/or at the door of the *pooja* room in the morning. Only after all these observances and rituals are completed is she ready to make breakfast for the family. Her work is likely to be either in the family home performing daily chores or perhaps a particular form of paid work, but only work that would be considered respectful to a Hindu woman. In the evening, on her return from that work, she offer prayers to the family shrine followed by a light meal and short prayers to the family deity, before finally retiring to bed.

The women that I discussed this with appeared to live their lives through daily ritual practices. They explained to me that this was part of who they were, and it was unthinkable to *not* live this way. It was fundamental to what they understood to be their female Tamil identity, and gave them inner personal strength. Radha reaffirmed this, once again alluding to ‘the’ Tamil way, and in this instance implicitly challenging those who might discriminate between orthodox or non-orthodox Tamil ways. “It is just the Tamil way,” she says:

> The Tamil way is one of values and ethics, it guides one in life. I am proud to be a Tamil woman. The traditions. Honouring family, obedience to parents, doing my daily pooja. I live in a joint family. I can teach Tamil ways to my grand-daughter. Some people say orthodox, but it is just the Tamil way. (Radha interview, 9 April 2012)

While my participants included both males and females, the majority were female, as I noted earlier, because of the greater ease a western female outsider has in gaining access to their stories and time. Because I learned so much about the lives of some of these women, I want to spend a little time delving into their gendered sense of Tamil identity and culture.

According to Hancock (1999), Hindu rituals, including domestic rituals, are "discrete phases within more extensive cycles" (p. 119). The daily practices contribute towards markers within the Hindu "calendric and life cycle transitions" (p. 119) and rites of purification also known as *Samskaras*. How these rituals are practiced and performed are subject to interpretation amongst Hindu women. As Hancock (1999) notes in her study "women of all ages consistently define themselves as women through their domestic activity and relations … grounded, in turn, in notions of Hindu propriety" (p. 75). In 2012, in my study, some twelve years later than Hancock, my observation was that for most of the women I met and interviewed, their religious practices and their female Tamil identity were still intrinsically connected to their sense of Hindu propriety.

And yet, for these Tamil women, this fusing of identity and religious practices leads to complications in their identities in a constantly globalising world. Living in a still strongly patriarchal society, which is embedded in the Hindu philosophy and religious structures and rituals they enact, these women (and many men) could face ethical dilemmas and identity questions. On the one hand, it led some of them to decry the problems of women in contemporary India, due to such practices such as discrimination on account of their gender, high rates of illiteracy and the problems associated with widowhood. Yet, to varying extents there is the limiting expectations held for women within their religion, such that they should be domesticated, peaceful, modest and chaste, and uphold high levels of spiritual devotion, often beyond what is expected of men. To challenge this could mean social ostracism which, for many women whether they were middle class or in economically more vulnerable positions, is at the very least a very risky prospect (Amutha & Rajkumar, 2007; Ramaswamy, 2011, p. 34). The increased prominence and wider acceptance of outspoken authors and activists, such as Arundhati Roy, Rita Banerji[30] and Dr. C.S. Laksmi[31], who show respect for certain traditions and enduring cultures and yet present a different world of possibilities, is an

[30] Rita Banerji is an author, photographer and gender activist from India. Well known for her book *Sex and Power: Defining History, Shaping Societies*, in 2008. She is the founder of *The 50 Million Missing Campaign*, to raise awareness about the ongoing female gendercide in India.
[31] C. S. Lakshmi, is a Tamil feminist writer and independent researcher in women's studies. For her contributions to Tamil literature, she received the 2008 *Iyal Virudhu* (Lifetime Achievement Award) awarded by the Canada based Tamil Literary Garden.

interesting phenomenon in this context. These figures continue to challenge the inherited roles of women within cultural institutions, and the other sides of globalisation known as 'alter globalisation', as I discussed in Chapter 3 (Eriksen, 2014; Pleyers, 2010). These authors representing the 'Mirrors, Magicians and Mutineers' that Kornprobst et al. (2008) refer to (as discussed in Chapter 7), are attempting to redefine and challenge the forces of globalisation and the traditional roles of women in contemporary Indian society. Arundhati Roy's (2014) book *Capitalism: A ghost story*, tells a story of India which causes her to despair about the future of Indian democracy. She argues, for example, that one hundred of India's richest people own one-quarter of India's gross domestic product. Rather than reiterating the platitudes and the benefits of democracy and the rising middle class, she confronts the reader with stories and observations of the poor and powerless in contemporary India. These stories tell of people, the majority being women, who are subjected to discrimination, inequality, and exploitation. One cannot but be disturbed by such revelations and insights into Indian history and contemporary Indian culture and politics. I mention my reading of these activists' writings here in the midst of my discussion of the perceptions of these Tamil people I was interviewing, to help explain the complex process of meaning making I was undertaking as I listened to their stories—and as I write here in this discussion chapter. For so many of the women I spoke to, the narrative was not that some deeply entrenched traditions and practices might have contributed to the present problems. The problem was that people no longer observe Tamil practices or follow the Tamil way 'as they did in previous generations'.

I also conversed with Saraswati and Balajee, and their daughter Parvati, who made similar comments to those of Mayur and Kala earlier in this section. Saraswati is a qualified medical specialist, who in the course of her busy life still performs her daily rituals and ensures that the house is clean, and meals are strictly vegetarian. However, in modern India she can afford domestic labour to do the cleaning and cooking.

> Saraswati: Both parents are working and so many of the traditions are not being followed, such as the ceremonies performed on pregnant women, for example relaxing the spine before childbirth. But we have what is known in English as 'baby shower', one month before the birth of the baby instead.
>
> Parvati: Women pass the culture on at home. They teach the children for the next generation. Men participate in the Vedic ceremonies, which women are not allowed. But many follow the rituals as habits, but don't understand what's behind them. The purpose has been lost. (Saraswati, Balajee, and Parvati interview, 6 April 2012).

In our conversation together, Saraswati and Balajee, and Parvati also suggested that storytelling and the teaching of the traditions were being done in modern ways.

> Saraswati: The Tamil literature is known as the *Sangams* and the *Vedas*. You need to know Tamil language to read them and understand them. Reading the great epics such as Mahabharata, Bhagadvita, and Ramayana. We read these stories to children from maybe two years old. They maybe don't understand, but we read them, the words go into their ears. The stories are like parables with morals and guidance. Movies are replacing the storytelling.
>
> Balajee: Now they are on the TV and on the channels, the cartoon channel telling the stories and epics. Stories at the child's level and interactive. 'Soapies' are now on the TV about the *Ramanaya*, called the '*Hunuman'*. But no one is there to tell them anymore. The family not together.
>
> Saraswati: The famous one was the *Mahabharata* in Tamil, a series which originally ran from the 1980s until 1990. Even the Indians abroad can see on the Tamil channels and buy the CDs for their kids. Cable TV broadcasts all of the Tamil cultures. They show it worldwide. (Saraswati, Balajee, and Parvati interview, 6 April 2012).

There seems to be several explanations for why the traditions (which in the case of Tamils are closely linked to the Hindu religion) are apparently not being valued and consequently practised as in the past. One explanation, as I have discussed in Chapter 4, is that more middle class women are participating in the labour force in Chennai. Consequently, many women are not as available in the contemporary middle class Indian home to model and teach the Tamil customs. A second explanation is that as the state of Tamil Nadu, and the city of Chennai particularly, grows wealthier, the secularisation of these urban located places is likely to increase. Norris and Inglehart (2011) claim that "religion has not disappeared from [India], nor does it seem likely to do so" (p. 4). However, they argue, secularisation, which is "a systematic erosion of religious practices, values, and beliefs" is more prevalent amongst the most prosperous social sectors. It is the vulnerable populations, who face "personal survival-threatening risks" who are more likely to be religious (pp. 4-5). Thus the rising middle class in Chennai, who are increasingly better-off, are less likely to participate in daily rituals and traditions. A third explanation is closely linked to improvements in education for the middle class Tamils. Drèze and Sen (2013) point out that Tamil Nadu has one of the highest rates of children under eleven years of age who can read, write and subtract, and that generally the education system produces well trained experts (p. 127). Fuller and Narasimhan (2007) identify this as a particular characteristic of an increasing well-off middle class in Chennai. Furthermore, it is well known that educating a population

contributes to a nation's economy and social well-being (Behrman & Stacey, 1997; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011, 2013). And in India's case education has had a marked impact in reducing mortality rates and improving the health and wellbeing of Indian children (Drèze & Sen, 2013). The trend seems to be that the middle class of India is looking to new knowledge and new cultural practices because of improved education and greater access to globalising and western knowledge, as I have discussed in Chapter 4. Fourthly, with widespread and increasing access to television and global broadcast channels, middle class Tamils are expanding their knowledge and horizons beyond the Tamil language and literature. This suggests that although Tamil 'traditions' have provided substantial guidance in the past, they are increasingly seen as just one of a number of factors that influence the emergence of new cultural practices in the twenty first century. This is indeed how it appeared to Kaushal. Taking a philosophical viewpoint he stated: "Cultural reformation will take place, and bound to happen" (Kaushal interview, 3 April, 2012).

In summary, in Chennai, the participants observed that the traditions were not being practiced as they had been in the past for many different reasons. It was important for the majority of the participants to maintain their daily spiritual practices, which they see as fundamental to their Tamil identity. However, traditional notions of Tamil identity and their connections with historical Tamil traditions are extremely complicated, as significant authors and activists have observed in their writings about the challenges to traditional roles in the home and the workplace, such as women increasingly joining the labour force. While many participants were not particularly keen to talk about other factors that might be prompting social and cultural change in the twenty-first century, other than cultural amnesia or willful rejection of tradition, some were prepared to discuss factors such as better education, increased wealth in society (albeit inequitably distributed), and global and western knowledge gradually permeating into society.

The next section presents how Tamil participants in Melbourne understand and, to varying extents, maintain their traditional cultural practices and, what Radha in Chennai referred to as "the Tamil way".

Melbourne, Australia: The Diaspora.

In Melbourne, the participants told me that maintaining their Tamil traditions was difficult. These were the various ways that they attempted to manage. Leena explained how she and her husband were "settling in" and were attempting to "preserve our Tamil language

and traditions" through their daughter. Leena is the wife of a professional, who recently migrated from Chennai to work in Melbourne. She and her husband hold higher-education degrees and both are fluent in speaking, writing and reading English. Given these factors, it was no surprise to me that as a family, they have indeed settled into Melbourne relatively easily, which is consistent with the literature. "Education and vocation are the two primary factors that positively affect transition" (Segal, Elliott, & Mayadas, 2010, p. 10). They talked to me with some pride of being able to read and understand explanations in English about aspects of Melbourne that previously were alien to them. For example, they were able to put their daughter into a child care organization, even though this notion is not familiar to them and not the usual practice for families in Chennai. Also, they were willing and capable of pursuing their study of English, to the point where they felt they were now learning the cultural nuances of how English is spoken in Australia, building on their existing knowledge of their 'own' language and their experience of working across linguistic boundaries. Leena told me about teaching Tamil and the traditions to her daughter.

> English is another language, it doesn't necessarily impact us. I teach the traditions in Tamil. I explain everything to my daughter, and teach her how to do everything. She often speaks back in English though. She goes to the Tamil class, she can read and write in Tamil, and songs. We want her to know Tamil, it's an old language, its important. She speaks English at school. There is another classmate who speaks Tamil, but she is Malayalam[32]. I wish her to marry a Tamil man, but it's not easy living here. I prefer an arranged marriage for her. (Leena interview, 14 September, 2011)

Leena and her family live in a new housing estate which is affordable for many middle class young professionals. Hence, the area had attracted a variety of immigrant groups, including third-generation migrants from European countries and those who would identify as 'white', British descent Australians. Leena told me that she spoke Tamil at home, and that she was able to speak Tamil when she shopped at local Tamil stores, at her daughter's Tamil school and at the temple. However, she appreciated that because English is the national language in Australia, the rest of her communication needed to be in English. In this context, Leena seems able to maintain her ongoing commitment to teaching her daughter Tamil and many of its traditional practices, as she and her family evolve a new hybrid cultural identity. This comes through more strongly than any 'either / or thinking', such as Esser (2006) proposes, where the dominant role of the national language (in this case

[32] This is a referral to people who live in the southern state of Kerala in India, and speak the Malayalam language, which is one of the Dravidian languages in the south of India.

English) works to completely efface or override traditional practices or beliefs. For Leena and her family, the process of transition into Australian social and cultural life is an interesting case study of an evolving hybrid cultural identity.

Elisai is married and is currently looking after their daughter at home. Elisai and her husband migrated here as professionals, and have what is known as Permanent Residency (PR)[33] in Australia. I asked Elisai about her experience of being a Tamil woman living in Melbourne and what it was like for her as a woman living in Australia and her responsibilities to carry on traditions.

> Penelope: What makes you a Tamil person?
>
> Elisai: It is a way of life. I have responsibility of the housework, poojas, rituals, prayers, respect for elders, vegetarianism. Special ways you do things as a Tamil. I learned from my parents.
>
> Penelope: If you didn't follow the Tamil way of life, what would happen?
>
> Elisai: It would stress me out, I wouldn't be doing my job correctly. I never miss my *poojas*, this makes me feel like a Tamil. Cooking Tamil food everyday and speaking the language.
>
> Penelope: Is it difficult being a Tamil woman in Australia?
>
> Elisai: No. My friends are Tamil and we help each other. I've got workplace Australian friends. Locals are friendly, but they don't get involved. I feel like an outsider. My daughter says 'I'm an Australian, because I'm born here'. I don't like it so much. Just because she's born here doesn't mean she's an Australian. We don't have citizenship, only PR. In the future some time, because of the children I will become. (Elisai interview, 18 August 2010)

Elisai, similarly to the other participants showed moments when she had no doubt that she was a Tamil—she could feel this because she continued to maintain her daily cultural practices, rituals and customs, and through continuing to speak the Tamil language. And yet she is also struggling with her evolving cultural identity in her new country, Australia. This can be observed through her troubled concerns about her daughter's statement "I'm an Australian". The child sees herself as an Australian first and foremost and not as a Tamil. I asked Elisai what she taught her daughter.

> Penelope: Do you teach your daughter Tamil?

[33] Permanent residency is the name given to a non-citizen who is the holder of a permanent visa. A permanent resident can live, work and study without restriction in Australia (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013)

> Elisai: I started teaching my daughter Tamil, just the letters. She knows the letters now. I have books from India. I just taught her one. It is a bit hard to write it. It is good for her to learn to read and write.
>
> Elisai: My other friend and her daughter is 5 years old. They live in [name of suburb removed to protect privacy] there is a Tamil group to teach Tamil to kids. So she is going to the Tamil classes once a week. A group of kids. And now she can read and write Tamil words. A Tamil school on the weekends. She suggested I take my daughter there. Every Saturday, 1½ hours, teach national anthem in Tamil and songs and devotional *Slokams*. She is going there, and I will take my daughter when she is four or five years old, which is next year.
>
> I just started teaching her, she is interested in learning Tamil. She asks me what the words are in Tamil. What we call in Tamil and in English. She knows the difference and keeps asking. She's very interested in learning Tamil. She knows like we are different and keeps telling me 'we are from India'. She knows she comes from a different country. We went back to India earlier this year, this is her first visit like after she grew up, so now she knows the difference. Even now, she likes talking about her grandmother and grandfather, and her cousins. She's alone here and misses them. She wants them all here to play with her. She had a very good time. (Elisai interview, 18 August 2010)

Elisai sees that it is very important to maintain the Tamil customs and teach her daughter Tamil. She has learned from talking to her Tamil friend, that by attending Tamil school her daughter will not only learn Tamil but will learn other aspects of the culture like the key cultural stories and songs. As I have discussed in Chapter 3, language and culture/s are intricately entwined. Thus for Elisai, participating in the local Tamil school offers the exciting prospect of connecting (perhaps reconnecting) her to the local Tamil community in Melbourne and her Tamil language. Some literature strongly indicates that Elisai's child will easily learn to speak English in an English speaking environment and invariably, although gradually, assimilate into the host culture (Esser, 2006; Kim, Ehrich, & Ficorilli, 2012). And yet here, as with Leena, I had the strong sense that mothers, daughters and families were involved in a process of cultural transition where multiple identities were intertwining and continuing to influence each other, producing complex transcultural identities, rather than being *either* Tamil *or* Australian.

At some moments in our interview, Elisai spoke almost on behalf of her daughter and herself, of their desire to return to India and be amongst family, so as not to be "different". Kibria (2002) refers to their frequently expressed "desire to return to India" as "homeland trips" (p. 297). On such trips, families typically visit their ancestral home for short periods of time to visit family and friends, participate in tourist excursions, and discover or rediscover "the cultural aspects and other elements of [their] ancestral society" (p. 297). Ruting's (2012)

study identified that connecting with the language was very important and contributes to one's sense of belonging to one's homeland (p.29). However, this literature suggests that the the longer one stays away from the homeland, the subtle nuances of a mother-tongue that change over time can be lost, and so rather than feeling connected when visiting, a sense of being different in one's 'home' and an outsider to one's native or ancestral home can occur. For the *children* of Indian migrants, in decades past, connections with the home language appeared to be not nearly as important, as it is the visit in itself that provides a connection with the ancestral culture. However, with telecommunications and internet video-conference accessible in most homes, this phenomenon is reducing. Another explanation for Elisai to express a desire to be near her family, could simply be from the loneliness that all immigrants feel at different times (Kibria, 2002; Liu, 2007; Segal et al., 2010).

I also asked Riya, who now lives in Melbourne, why it was important for her to keep Tamil traditions.

> Penelope: When I was here the last time we talked about some of the traditions of the Tamils, and I was curious about why it is important for Tamils to keep the traditions.
>
> Riya: We carry on our identity.
>
> Penelope: Your identity? Not many people would understand that. What do you mean?
>
> Riya: We have our language and customs and the way we lead our lives. The way of our life is lost if we don't follow those things. That's the way we have been brought up. That's the way we have been conditioned to think.
>
> Penelope: Does that make you a Tamil? Or do you have to be born in Tamil Nadu? Speak the language?
>
> Riya: It's the thinking. It is in your genes. Yes.
>
> Penelope: If you were in India, would you be doing more or less of carrying the culture?
>
> Riya: It would be less in India.
>
> Penelope: Here in Australia you do more of it?
>
> Riya: Yes. Because, in India, society does half of the job for us. But not here. It takes extra effort. Harder. In India, it's part of the way of life.
>
> Penelope: So how do you know that you are a Tamil?
>
> Riya: I haven't thought about it, it's just in my mind, I just am.

Penelope: Do you have a sense of pride about that?

Riya: I take it for granted. When I think about Tamil customs, language and leaders I feel proud. But, normally I just take it for granted.

Penelope: To be a Tamil, what does it mean?

Riya: You live your life as a Tamil person.

(Riya interview, 6 September, 2011)

Riya, like many other participants cannot separate her Tamil identity from the traditions and practices, rituals, and customs she enacts and the Tamil language she speaks in her daily life. In some ways these conversations with Elisai, Leena and Riya are similar to Daniel's (1984) study where he was exploring the Tamil word "*ur*" [meaning home] and its links to Tamil identity (p. 67). On reflection, the underlying meaning of my questions to Elisai, Leena and Riya could also be about their *ur*. That is, they consider their 'home' or identity to be living the life of a Tamil and carrying out the daily practices of a Tamil (Hindu) woman, even when living in a foreign land.

In summary, the Tamil participants in Melbourne conveyed different narratives of attempting to maintain Tamil traditions as immigrants—for some, like Riya, it was a matter of preserving a culture in a foreign land that seemed determined to eradicate that culture; for others like Leena and Elisai, it was more a matter of working in local communities (as family members and as professionals) in Australia that still spoke Tamil and still enacted cultural and educational practices to develop a new sense of self in which their Tamil identity remained important. In all cases, they appeared to be very conscious of the challenges of enacting this identity work in their new home. Huntington (2004) proposes a particular category for these Indian immigrants in Australia. He refers to this category as "*ampersands*", that is neither Tamil nor Australian, but a sense of Tamil *and* Australian. Due to improved communication, transportation and better educational experiences, these people enjoy the benefits of "dual allegiance, dual nationality, and dual citizenship [and can become] … transnational communities cutting across the boundaries between countries" (Huntington, 2004, p. 220). On the other hand, there is no denying that they are also caught between the nostalgia of home and a desire to be recognised as a "first class citizen" (Sanjukta Dasgupta, 2011, p. 6). Their efforts to manage the identity work of connecting with and exploring Tamil traditions, even while learning to participate more actively in Australian cultural life, have

particular consequences for their understandings and experiences of family and family life, which I discuss in the next section.

The Traditional Tamil Family is Transforming

The many times that I lived with Tamil families in Chennai, I came to understand the numerous ways in which the family appeared to be central to their 'Tamil ways'. For a range of reasons, which I have explored in Chapter 4, there are powerful cultural narratives in India which speak to the importance of family. At their most passionate, there is a sense that without family you are nothing because "a deep sense of social connectedness permeates human life for most Indian people" (Salgado, 2006, p. 108). For many Indian people in twenty first century India, the crude fact of the matter is that family still determines your place in society and importantly your caste and status, as discussed in Chapter 2. As I described in Chapter 4, the traditional family is known as the 'joint family' and has been revered for centuries. While the middle class women and families I interviewed had mixed views about the particulars of families, they all observed and stated that the structure of the traditional family was changing. However, they also maintained that traditionally women tended to drive the commitment to Tamil customs in the home, and suggested that perhaps changes in the Tamil families and their attitude to their Tamil identity was because more middle class women were working. However, as I have argued in previous sections, it is somewhat more complex than this. These next few interviews add other insights.

When I interviewed Agni in Chennai and asked her about the structure of the family, she said:

> Today's Tamil culture is changing. It's not recent. The joint family has gone. This is the main reason. As a child I had to adjust to my aunts in the extended family, but you can also move easily within and without of the family. Family values, religious rituals and routines, are handed down from generation to generation through the joint family. This is what preserves the culture. Elders tell the stories from the epics—*Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*—which provide human values and morality and guidance. Parents are working and giving their children money instead of love and guidance. Women's responsibilities are increasing with outside and inside work and child rearing, when they are married. (Agni interview, 4 April, 2012)

Agni reflects the views of many people that I met while in Chennai, however, as I discussed in Chapter 4, the joint family has been changing and evolving for well over a century.

Kaushal and Ammu, whom I interviewed in Chennai, because of their work in training people to work in transnational companies in India, were privileged to be told family stories either in the training programs or during consultations and counseling sessions. Such stories, gave them insights into changes across Indian society from people well beyond their close social circles. They shared with me their ideas and explanations about men, women, work and changes to the family structure in contemporary India.

> Kaushal: Men hold onto the traditional values but women have learned other things. Women are mobile now because of learning English. Children are more influenced by western values because the parents are not there to guide. Women are not to blame. They are caught up in the changes too. Lack of social supports in Tamil society. Women are only just getting maternity leave, about three months. But not all. This is change in society, it is happening naturally. We can't stop it.
>
> Ammu: Women are now expected to work in two places, home and the office. And so it has impacted a lot on marriage and family relationships. Not all men assist around the home and so the burden of housework is on the woman. This eventually affects the children. Positive side is that the English has provided emancipation for women, but it will take time and there will be a loss of identity and family transition. There is no time for catharsis and healing and recovering from the changes.
>
> Women feel oppressed with tradition, but with English they are freed and mobile. They can go out in the night. They can speak up. When I was a child, about 50 years ago, I had to be accompanied and couldn't go out after 6pm. I had no other choices. I couldn't talk back. No way. Especially the daughters. Sons only had a little bit more freedom. Today women (middle class) can plan their families, they can delay children for several years. The parents and families have less say. No quality of time in families, or between husband and wife. (Kaushal and Ammu interview, 3 April 2012)

Balajee too because of his work in the government, as a lawyer working with families, gave his observations, which added to the picture.

> Balajee: On the outside women look like a modern woman but on the inside she is a Tamil woman. Tamil people are like others from India, but follow Hinduism more traditionally. But because of changes in society divorce rate is up to 8.4%. This is the highest it's ever been. Change in property laws so that the wife has 50% share. We're in transition. We're not used to this. Tamils are reserved, conservative people.
>
> Women are working and demanding their rights. They may not contribute as much as the male does, but still they have a right to these financial matters. Then the legal enforcers came and the property rights. A new act is going to come in 2012, whatever the property of the husband and wife, the wife is going to have a share in it. Women are going to be in the forefront, no more a battle. Not only in

> families where the woman works, but in all families. Now the problem starts. In India we are not used to your western civilisation. We are having our own values … there is a clash of ideas. We are in transition. And the transition is taking a toll of its own. For example, the man works at night and the woman works during the day. The children see strangers coming and going. They are lost. (Parvati & Balajee Interview, 6 April 2012)

Agni, Kaushal, Ammu, and Balajee provide insights into the changes in the family, changes that are more noticeable in this last decade. On the surface, it looks like women have increased financial freedom and so are bringing about changes in the family. However, for many middle class women,

> … [t]here are not enough employment opportunities for them, nor are their wages high enough to cover child care costs and other expenses. Less educated women are usually employed in poorly organized sectors and are not paid well. (B. Ram, 2012, p. 35)

Moreover, as I argued in Chapter 4, there is little overall change for women's rights generally, and as I have maintained in an earlier section of this chapter, for as long as women's identity is strongly linked to traditional religious practices, their ability to initiate or support change in society is somewhat reduced. Furthermore, by most accounts in the literature, India is still fundamentally a patriarchal society, where men have traditionally identified with and worked outside the family home, and women have provided domestic stability and, inculcation into the Tamil way of life. Thus, those women who *are* working and have husbands who will (through role expectations) attempt to provide the same domestic tasks, are facing significant tensions and challenges on multiple fronts. Family structures are necessarily under stress as a consequence. Working Indian women have less time, and no doubt less energy, to practise daily rituals, teach their children, and provide the expected cultural and traditional roles to the same extent as in the past (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008a, 2013; Lahoti & Swaminathan, 2013; Larsen, 2011; Leslie, 1991; Madhavi & Vimla, 2011; Valk & Srinivasan, 2011).

Although these changes are happening in the family, there is probably very little due directly to the deliberate, confronting or emancipatory behaviour by women as their Tamil identity to a large extent dictates otherwise. It is more to do with the traditional family or 'joint' family gradually changing over the last one hundred years, as I explained in Chapter 4. And, changes to India's economic policies, changes in property rights laws, the rising middle class, improved access to education for girls and women, and improved contraception leading to reduced fertility rates (B. Ram, 2012).

Conclusion

The participants tended to feel that Tamil culture and their experience of it was in a state of transition and transformation. This was having diverse impacts on their understanding of Tamil (and in some cases their internalised) culture, and it was prompting them to engage in new identity work as they struggled to engage with the different understandings and experiences. It appears that individual Tamils and Tamil communities are invariably challenging the deeply held view of traditional culture as something that is static, that can be hermetically preserved in a new time and a new land.

None of the Tamil people I talked to or interacted with ever used the term globalisation in our conversations or interactions. I do not recall anyone ever speaking of the future, except in terms of a perceived loss of 'the' traditional Tamil culture and an inference that somehow women's changing roles were part of the mix of this new hybrid culture. The participants variously appreciated that the introduction of English language into the Tamil community and professional life had imbued status and power and that it continued to be a major influence on the identity of the middle class Tamils. In Melbourne, the admittedly middle-class Tamil people I met worked determinedly to stay connected with their Tamil language and language practices; individuals still performed their daily rituals, and the children attended Tamil schools—all this was in the process of transitioning into Australian social and cultural life, and an evolving cultural identity. Lastly, the traditional family or 'joint' family has been changing significantly over the last one hundred years. Nevertheless very little of this shift can be attributed to women, just because they participate in the labour force, but is due more to external forces such as globalisation, education, the media, and the economy.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 11

Arati[34]: Conclusion

> Hybridity need not be the problem. It could be the solution. Hybrids do more than embody mixtures between groups. Hybrids reveal boundaries between groups to be false. And this is vital, for creativity comes from intermingling, from rejecting the lifelessness of purity. (Hamid, 2014, p. xvii)

As my PhD journey draws to a close, I reflect on what I have learned as a researcher and global citizen. My reflections shift between the large scale globalising movements that have so substantially influenced the ways in which Tamils in and from Chennai understand themselves and their culture, and the nuances of the Tamil participants' lives and practices that I have come to know and understand a little more through this research over five years. I think about how these middle-class Tamil people speak about the tensions between what they have experienced as radical and sometimes discomforting change, and yet their strong attachment is to a sense of culture that sometimes sounds like it is an icon of the past. I reflect, too, on my sense of internal change, of movement, of growth, of sometimes discomforting challenges, and yet a strong awareness of being in a place that is different from where I was when I began this research.

I have a snapshot memory of my bookcase before I began. It reflects my teaching and research work in a previous time, personal hobbies and interests I used to enjoy, and books about British and European literature and science. That bookcase presents an Anglophone perspective of the world. All of that shifted from a chance meeting in 2010. I draw on my journal notes to recount the meeting.

> I remember quite clearly the day I met the Tamil writer and poet Meena Kandasamy (2006) at Anna University, Chennai, in 2010. I was commencing my

[34] *Aarati* is from the Sanskrit word *Aratrika*, and is a ritual that removes *Ratri*, darkness. *Aarati* also refers to the devotional song that is sung during the ritual. It is performed at the end of prayers in a spirit of humility and gratitude, where the faithful become immersed in God's divine form. The ritual represents the five elements: space, wind, fire, water and earth. (Lochtefeld, 2001a, p. 51). I choose this word in association with this chapter to indicate that it is the end of my thesis, and to present this thesis and study as a means to 'remove *Ratri* darkness' and so offer 'new light' on the topic.

> PhD and she was completing hers. I had been given her name as a person to meet, someone who may give me some insights into the current situation for Tamil people and families. I later discovered that she was also an activist for women's rights and an abolitionist of the caste system. I met her in an almost bare office, bright with strong sunlight that heated simple wooden furniture. Meena spoke fast, in English strongly accented by Tamil. I struggled to hear all her words above the whirring fans and the cacophony of noisy street life blaring through open windows. Although she was a person aged in her mid-twenties, I sensed her power and passion. Towards the end of our conversation she asked me what I knew of the Tamils and their history. I reeled off some names of historians and a brief synopsis of the Tamil history, hoping to impress her. It was at that point I was given crucial and sage advice. Meena looked at me directly and said firmly, "You need to read our epics and stories, and our literature. That is how you will know about us. You will not learn about the Tamils in reference books." I was a little taken aback by her forthrightness. My companion tugged at me and indicated that the taxi was waiting. The timing was such that it was impossible to respond with a question and tease out further what Meena meant. I graciously thanked her and left.

I cannot express my full appreciation for that conversation and the privilege of meeting Meena. I took away from that meeting a sense of challenge. I wanted to read all the Tamil literature I could. I wanted to learn more about Tamil stories. And I wanted to learn from experiencing Tamil cultures by living and learning with Tamils. I look at that same bookcase today and see titles and authors from across the subcontinent. They include Tamil and Indian historical and literary novels, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics translated into English; comic books written for children to teach them about these epics, *Panchatantra* moral stories for children; poetry by the venerated poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar; books on the Hindu religion; an anthology of books about the Tamils edited by K.S. Ramaswami Sastri; several volumes about the temples of south India and Tamil Nadu; some reference books that examine India's economic history and current prospects, and others that compare India with China as a rising world economy. Much of my collection comprises English translations of books originally written in languages from across India including Tamil. That bookcase, is in some small way, a reflection of my identity (Crewe & Maruna, 2006; Hopper, 2007), my sense of language, my engaging with 'others' and 'the intercultural'(Nederveen, 2010; Rao & Walton, 2004) and my appreciation of how my reading has contributed to the sense of transformation I feel at the end of this journey (Luttrell, 2010b).

My selection of the quote by Hamid for the epigraph of this chapter is also a reflection of what I now understand and what I am *becoming* (Lawler, 2008) as a result of my work on this research. I am an Anglophile by birth, but I recognise that my identity is also hybridised, and it continues to change in dynamic ways as the context in which I live and

research continues to change. The country I grew up in as a child, once culturally hamstrung by the 'White Australia Policy', is becoming 'another' country, a transformation that can partly be conveyed through terms like 'multicultural' and 'multilingual'. I feel a strong connection to Australia's evolving multicultural identity (Markus et al., 2009; Soutphommasane, 2012; Wise & Velayutham, 2009).

When I consider my transformation in regard to other aspects of myself, I reflect that I initially believed in the importance of preserving ancient cultures, such as the Tamil cultures, for reasons such as antiquity and an almost sentimental notion of 'purity'. I have moved to a realisation that in a globalised world, increasingly, many of us have limited opportunities to encounter an 'other' culture. In our own country, cultures shift and change from within and without, because of forces that we might describe as globalisation, and old boundaries that separated us as humans are almost constantly re-drawn and re-imagined, partly as a consequence of globalising forces (Eriksen, 2014). These cultural flows, this intermingling of cultural practices, and this crossing of borders and blurring of borders, all help to create a space for creativity and for the creation of new knowledge and even new cultures. As Hamid (2014) observes, if we are open to such flows "we will be more free to invent ourselves" (p. xi). And so in this study where I have explored the Tamil community's grappling with the effects of globalisation, and my journey as an intercultural researcher in a globalised world, involved in getting to know the other—that is, middle class Tamil communities—I have been consciously straying across 'boundaries'. This has sometimes prompted truly inspiring experiences, but it has also created complexities and challenges for myself and for the Tamils who so generously extended their hospitality to me. Through their generosity and hospitality, I have had an opportunity to learn and write about lives and cultures other than my own, and I feel I have 're-invented' myself and created new knowledge along the way.

In this final chapter, I present a summarised account of my explorations of myself as an ethical, reflexive intercultural researcher. In this study I have not attempted to replicate past ethnographic studies methodologically, but chosen to take a lived approach to the inquiry (Clandinin, 2007) as an 'invited guest'. All the while I explored my perceptions of a gap in research knowledge about the effects of globalisation on middle-class Tamil families in India and Australia during a five year period in the first few years of the twenty-first century. Thus this thesis represents a textualised, theoretically rigorous narrative using a Narrative Inquiry methodology (Chase, 2010; Clandinin & Caine, 2013; Clandinin & Rosiek,

2007). My involvement in the everyday lives of Tamil families in Chennai and Melbourne was a personal privilege and it turned out to be a privilege as a researcher too, as I was able to learn about and become sensitised to so many Tamil cultures, traditions and practices. I also was considered an 'extended family member' and 'friend' which allowed me access into Tamil family homes as a woman connecting with other women and their families.

I have explained in Chapter 5 how the journey to settling on particular research questions was a meandering and dynamic one, as my research continually responded to what I was learning about Tamils and Tamil cultural practices, and as I, too, was changing. Eventually, I fixed upon the following research questions, which I present as a pair and then a following question:

The first question:

(1) In a globalising world, to what extent do middle class Tamil communities in Chennai (India) and Melbourne (Australia) maintain connections with what they see as their traditional culture/s and cultural practices?

(2) How do they experience the tensions between connecting with their cultural 'roots' and responding to cultural change in this globalising world?

And then,

(3) As an international traveller, learner and researcher, how does my own background and culture mediate the way in which I learn about and seek to understand the experiences and cultures of the Tamil community?

Rather than seeing these three questions as necessarily separate, that is the first two exploring the middle-class Tamil culture and the other my researcher story, my understanding and experience is such that these questions are deeply interconnected in many ways. However, for the sake of representation and ease of understanding for the reader, in this thesis I have provisionally separated my responses to these questions in the shape of two narratives. One narrative responds to the first two questions and presents the voices of my participants as they convey to me their impressions of the world changing around them. This is presented in Chapters 8 and 9. The other narrative is my story as a researcher presented in Chapter 7. In this concluding chapter, I summarise these narratives, and focus on how I understand Narrative Inquiry, and Ethnography and story; and I weave together multiple stories—stories of Tamil history, of my own history, of my experiences and relationships with my participants. This storying approach reflects my work in this study and my own journey of this thesis, and my own journey of transformation.

The telling of stories in this thesis, although a mosaic in many ways, was influenced by the analytical framework based on metaphors, such as “Mirror”, “Magician” and “Mutineer” as proposed by Kornprobst et al. (2008), and discussed in Chapter 7. I held a “mirror” up to myself and my participants as we lived through and shared experiences, reflecting their stories and views on to the reader. There were times when I felt like a “mutineer”, challenging the deeply held view that many of my Tamil participants voiced of their traditional culture being something that can be hermetically sealed and preserved in times of change. This critical stance of mutineer stands in tension with my philosophical desire to be an advocate of the Tamil participants’ rights to *their* truth or reality, and to be utterly faithful to the storyteller. And at other times, as “magician” I conjured new interpretations and new narratives from those my participants had experienced and/or what they believed.

I now proceed to those narratives, where I present the key ideas and conclusions that emerged from my analysis of interviews and conversations with middle-class Tamil families, followed by my story as a researcher. In the last two sections, I provide provisional recommendations from and final reflections on this study.

Middle-class Tamils

I was invited into the homes of middle-class Tamil families in Chennai, India, and Melbourne, Australia, and I had the privilege of being able to ask specific questions and have conversations on topics that are not necessarily discussed with people outside their community, much less a foreign woman. My representation of these conversations is mediated by my awareness that they were speaking English or ‘Indian English’ with me. One of the key themes that emerged from these conversations was how they perceived the influence of the English language on Tamil language and cultures. But first I will present a brief summary of the history of the English language in India, to put their stories into context.

Historically the English language spoken in India is a legacy of British colonisation, and was necessary for trade and commerce, particularly in Chennai (formerly Madras) at the time of the East India Company and the British Raj. Since then, English has become a significant global language in the twenty-first century and contributes to globalising processes. In short, English has been spoken in Chennai for several hundred years, once as a legacy of British imperialism, and now as part of a global valuing of English as a/the dominant language.

My participants in Chennai observed that the English language has influenced and does influence a range of Tamil language practices and also a range of related cultural practices. Learning English, they claimed, brings status and power into the Tamil community and professional life, and there is some evidence to suggest that this is the case. In so many ways the English language continues to be a major influence on the identity of the middle-class Tamils with whom I spoke.

The Tamil language and its place in Tamil society seem to be affected by the use of both English and Tamil, which could reflect a widespread tendency to explore identity amongst middle-class and aspiring middle-class Tamils, as they are impacted upon by the cultural flows of globalisation. For women, it is enabling further education and creating opportunities to join the well paid professional class and perhaps it is, in the traditional sense, helping their 'attractiveness' as brides. With the improved confidence that speaking English appears to bring, women and the more vulnerable amongst Tamil peoples are making a significant contribution to new notions of nation building.

Some of my participants observed that the Tamil language was no longer as important as English. A consequence of this seems to be that it impedes Tamil people's ability to engage with Tamil literature and to participate in a range of cultural practices, and thereby understand an important part of their history and cultural identity. In this case, language can be seen as having both a particular and distinctive mediating impact on social practices and identity, and yet it is also in many cases indistinguishable from an array of other globalising factors. This in turn is affecting how the Tamil traditions of the past are being observed.

The people I interviewed about their Tamil traditions in Chennai, presented their perceptions and attititudes of what they saw as happening in Tamil Nadu and India. Agni, whom I interviewed in Chennai, was very excited that I was taking an interest in the Tamils and their cultures and traditions. She wanted outsiders to know how Tamils lived and what was happening in Tamil Nadu. Agni wanted me to understand that, particularly in the last decade, cultural change had hastened and become more disturbing. She and several other of my participants maintained that Tamil culture and Tamil society were in a state of "transition and transformation". For them this transformation was associated with a loss of 'the' traditional Tamil culture, with an inference that somehow women's changing roles were part of the mix. Interestingly, none of the Tamil people I talked to or interacted with ever used the term 'globalisation' in our conversations or interactions.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Tamil traditions and rituals and their place in society were deeply valued by all of my participants. This corresponds with the view that Tamils from Chennai and across Tamil Nadu are seen as 'orthodox' and 'different' by many people across India. This, in part, has been because of the historical and current influences of the Brahman community, the notion of difference between the north and south of India and inherent language differences. Yet, from the literature, it appears that individual Tamils and Tamil communities are beginning to challenge the deeply held view of traditional cultures as being static, that can be hermetically preserved in a new time and a new land—in a context of globalisation. This challenge was having diverse impacts on their understanding of Tamil (and in some cases their internalized) cultures, and it was prompting them to engage in new identity work as they struggled to engage with the different understandings and experiences.

In Melbourne, the middle class diasporic Tamil families I met were transitioning into Australian social and cultural life, and in the process were struggling with evolving cultural identities. They appeared to be working determinedly to stay connected with their Tamil language and language practices, such that individuals still performed their daily rituals, and the children attended Tamil schools. They continue to promote the use, and teaching of, the Tamil language, although this use and teaching sits in tension with their valuing or perhaps even privileging the use of English in professional settings. There are several observations that may be made about this situation. The literature would suggest that 'Tenglish' is a legitimate universal language in today's globalised world, although it is unclear whether those using it feel any need for academia to acknowledge it as valid. However, my experiences of the mixing of these languages among diverse Tamil social groups aligns with Kanthimathi's (2009) observation that "the mixing of languages is so common that the concept of a 'pure' language is slowly becoming obsolete" (p. 105). Moriarty (2011) says of this phenomenon: "As a result of the changes in global flows, linguistic diversity has become more visible, [and so] societies are more tolerant of linguistic creativity" (p. 446), although again I am not so sure whether 'tolerance' seems to be the most appropriate word. Similarly, I am not sure that tolerance would be the best word to describe people's responses to changes in the traditional Tamil family structure.

The many times that I visited and lived with Tamil families in Chennai, I came to understand the numerous ways in which the family appeared to be central to their 'Tamil ways'. For a range of reasons there are powerful cultural narratives in India which speak to the importance of family. Even for many Indian people in twenty-first century India, the fact

of the matter is that one's family still determines your place in society and, importantly, your caste or community and status. The traditional family, also known as the 'joint family', holds significant historical importance in traditional Tamil societies. However, the literature also suggests that the traditional family or 'joint' family has been changing significantly over the last one hundred years. The middle-class Tamil families I interviewed had mixed views about the particulars of families, but they all observed and stated that the structure of the traditional 'joint' family was changing. My participants maintained that traditionally it has been women who maintain Tamil customs in the home, while men maintained the Tamil customs outside of the home such as at the temple and significant ceremonies. But now with more middle-class women working they suggested this was perhaps causing changes within Tamil families and consequent changes in attitude towards their Tamil identity. However, my research has suggested that the situation is more complex than this, and these changes in identity may be due as much to external forces such as globalisation, education, the media, and the economy as by internal decisions of 'modern' Tamil women, for instance, electing to join the workforce.

I now move on to summarising my story as researcher.

My Story, as Researcher and Global Citizen

The concept of learning about another culture, to a large degree, was unfamiliar to me prior to this study. My relatively privileged place in Australian society has afforded me particular opportunities and it has formed many of my attitudes in some ways. Prior to commencing this study, I believed that all I had to do to learn about another culture was observe, listen and reflect. It was only later when I was critically reflecting on how I had been invited into the home of a Tamil family while visiting India, and had been made an extended family member, that this notion was challenged. My journey and essential understandings as an intercultural researcher began from this significant encounter, as I moved from observer to 'invited guest'. I came to realise that I could not stand back and take a traditional ethnographer position in this study with middle-class Tamils. As an invited guest I came to see that this was an entrée into understandings not possible either as an insider or an outsider. Over time I also began to understand and take on more of the ethical responsibilities of being an invited guest, encountering and participating in the daily life of an-other's cultures; recognising and respecting some of that culture as 'other' and yet also realizing connections with my own emerging identity which helped me to feel a strong connection and a sense of a common humanity that binds us together.

I also realised as an intercultural researcher that I needed to be open to the possibilities for dialogue and engagement with others along the way, in a spirit of exchange, mutual engagement and reciprocity. I needed to learn patience, to appreciate that learning about Tamil cultures and cultural practices, and engaging with notions of middle-class Tamil cultures in Chennai, is necessarily a slow and complicated process over time. My connections with Chennai and Tamil cultures were continually developed and renewed with every new story and piece of literature (non-fiction and fiction) that I read. Yet I was visiting India and these families only once or twice a year, which made this slow process of learning more explicit. Thus, through carefully preparing myself as an intercultural researcher and outsider, I believe I was able to re-frame some of the cultural disconnections between self and other that I found in my research. I began to see difference as an invitation to dialogue, to explore our different and shared values, and to work toward more of a shared understanding.

I concluded that as an intercultural researcher, living and working in a globalised world, this study required of me to be open to difference and to take a reflexive standpoint—for transparency and ethical integrity. I could not merely 'paint a picture' of middle-class Tamil culture, from which I was always outside the frame, always absent. To continue this painting metaphor for a moment, I came to see myself as necessarily situated within the representation that was the painting. Consequently, I have attempted to write with reflexivity, self-consciously using my awareness of language and the process of writing to faithfully represent the multiple truths and the multiple voices of my participants.

I came to understand that engaging with an-other culture should be an unhurried journey of building relationships and gaining trust, so that everyone can feel safe to explore and comment on what was going on around them in an equal and fair way. This has been key to my research practice. Furthermore I have had to take full responsibility for the fact that my own background and cultures *were* unavoidably mediating the way in which I learned about and understood the experiences and cultures of the middle-class Tamil communities I mixed with.

Lastly, as an intercultural researcher, and as I write this concluding chapter, I am aware that Narrative Inquiry exploration continues, as demonstrated by the work of Trahar and Ming in their recent book *Using Narrative Inquiry for Educational Research in the Asia Pacific* (2015). In their book they state that there is a perception that Narrative Inquiry is sometimes seen as 'simple', demanding less of a researcher and perhaps not considered sufficiently rigorous, particularly amongst researchers in the Asia Pacific region. However,

Trahar and Ming show that Narrative Inquiry is 'difficult' and complex, and this is illustrated by the different methods and debates amongst Narrative Inquiry researchers. Their volume contributes to these deliberations and, in so doing, demonstrates the creative and rigorous ways that Narrative Inquiry is contributing to research practice and knowledge creation. I anticipate that this thesis, too, will contribute to the further explorations into and debates about Narrative Inquiry.

These last two sections briefly summarised and divided the conclusions of my study into 'the researched' and 'the researcher'. While there is a sense in which they can be seen as separate narratives, I have also shown how the narratives are interrelated. The stories epitomise an exploration of a particular time and place with a select group of participants. But, to distil and make predications, claims and generalisations from these 'findings' would not be in keeping with the 'particular' explorations of this study.

Provisional Recommendations

I now offer provisional recommendations based on the analysis and conclusions of this study that will speak to different sets of readers, that is, for: ethnographic/intercultural researchers and others exploring broad principles of globalisation particularly those seeking better understandings of how to work and understand each other, and Australian multicultural policy-makers.

For ethnographic/intercultural researchers and interested others, who are considered 'outsiders' by the people in the cultures they are researching, one could consider:

- *The concept of 'invited guest'.*
  This position can enhance the process of encountering and engaging with 'an-other' culture and cultures. By taking this position, the researcher's position is constantly under scrutiny and subject to re-evaluation. It has the potential to be a more responsible role where the researcher is obliged to tread lightly and is reminded whose place he or she is 'stepping into' whether it be thousands of kilometres from home or the neighbourhood next door.
- *Intercultural research requires time.*
  Intercultural research relies on relationships of trust and ethical integrity. To build these relationships takes time. It is a slow journey, as in all relationships that are valuable. Even renegotiating the researcher-researched relationship to bring it to an end requires sensitivity, respect and time in order to achieve some sense of closure.

- *Openness and curiosity to dialogue with engagement and reciprocity.*
  Dialogue and conversation are enhanced when the researcher remains open to new ideas and different ways of seeing and being in the world—even if they are not initially understood. Also helpful when the researcher steps into unknown territory are the willingness, courage and sensitivity to explore topics that may be considered unusual to discuss outside of conventional research situations.
- *A reflexive standpoint, and ethical integrity.*
  Intercultural research is not one sided, it is a two-way process. Reflexivity in this two-way process affords a position where the researcher can be aware that their family of origin and cultural background/s, standard of education, status in their society, and current attitudes and values, all influence the study. They affect the topic of the study, relationships with participants, interpretations of the data, and outcomes. Being reflexive brings an awareness and mindfulness of these aspects, which is consistent with interpretive philosophies of epistemology.

For Australian multicultural policy makers.

- *In Australia, notions of multiculturalism and cultural diversity are deserving of advocacy but also critical scrutiny, so that they do not become meaningless slogans that ignore the need for careful, sensitive and mutually respectful relationship building.*
  In the past, advocacy for multiculturalism has sometimes been limited to an appreciation of different languages and other cultural practices such as food, dress, dance and music. Going forward, important aspects that enrich a culture, such as different family structures, religions, gender relations, lifestyles and political opinion, should be a focus for research (Markus et al., 2009, p. 96). Other recommendations for nationally supported research includes studies that explore different ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, and different approaches to problem solving in work places, organisations and in the community.

Final Reflections …

The concepts of culture and globalisation have been central to this study. The literature leaves no doubt that the global flows of people, practices and policies that characterise globalisation are contributing to a sense of living in a fast changing world. Indeed, the very debates about globalisation and culture are themselves constantly shifting

and changing. Kornprobst et al. (2008) argue that where once there seemed to be many decontextualised debates about the nature of globalisation, discussions in the literature are moving towards more situated discussions about globalisation "revolv[ing] around how much transformation is taking place, what exactly becomes transformed, and how transformation is to be explained" (p. 10). This PhD is one such situated and grounded study that focuses on the particularity and complications of these transformations. This study of middle class Tamils and Tamil cultures in Chennai and Melbourne shows that they are living this concept of 'transformation' and they are asking 'what does it mean?' for them. I, too, am asking those questions as my PhD journey is now coming to an end.

In writing this thesis, in the process of learning so much more about Tamil culture and cultural practices, I have stumbled upon and learned a new set of discourses—many of them having emerged from my decision to employ Narrative Inquiry methodologies with their alternative ways of thinking and being, rather than more traditional ethnographic methods. Often I felt as if I had 'nothing to say' as I looked at my notes and wondered how I could transform them into nuanced text. I wondered how I could represent my experiences and understandings as an inter-cultural researcher. I wondered about the notion of 'verisimilitude' (Denzin, 1997) as I sought to represent the voices and experiences of my participants in this thesis. I wondered if I would be able to deliver a convincing narrative that conveyed a truth or truths. I 'worried' about my own rather privileged position as a white middle-class western researcher entering another culture, and whether my attempt to present an alternative approach to building knowledge about middle-class Tamil cultures and practices would end up appearing as if I was representing my "alterity [as merely] an act of discursive domination" (Black, 2010, p. 19).

Now, however, I am conscious that although my study has come to an end, this ending also heralds a new beginning. It opens up opportunities for other researchers to build on and dialogue with this study. And it opens up possibilities for me to continue learning and transforming myself as a researcher and as a person. My metaphoric bookcase, visibly and palpably, will continue to represent that change. My actual bookcase no longer stands testament to a past, culturally limited view of the world, and a reliance on the English language. The bookcase has been transformed into a 'world library' crammed with colourful titles and difficult to pronounce authors that represent my movement from singular notions of culture to pluralist notions of cultures, better aligning with the globalised world I inhabit.

This PhD thesis has been an illustration of what is possible as well as what is problematic in an intercultural encounter to understand and forge relationships with an ‘other’, and to better understand the relationship between self and other. Although there were difficulties and complications, there is little doubt that intercultural relationships require patient, intercultural work, and a willingness and commitment to engender an environment of inclusiveness and reciprocity where understanding and sensitivity are the keys. I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to learn what I have from the many conversations I enjoyed with my host family in Chennai and with other participants, and from the many and varied experiences we shared. Through them I have come to know deeply that “individuals have commonalities that cut across different countries, religions and languages—and differences that divide [even] those who share a common country, religion and language” (Hamid, 2014, p. 124).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Research Approval from MUHREC

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**25 March 2010**	
Project Number:	**CF10/00578 - 2010000281**	
Project Title:	**Impact of English on middle-class Tamil women in Chennai, India, and Melbourne, Australia**	
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Jill Brown**	
Approved:	**From: 25 March 2010**	**To: 25 March 2015**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

[redacted]

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Appendix 2: Journal Notes - Excerpts

25 March 2012

Arrival in Chennai: Notes and reflection combined into a story

As soon as I enter the 'outer' section of the Chennai airport I know I've arrived. Most Indian cities welcome foreigners with odours of dust, cooking smoke, bodies, animals and their excretions, and the pungent but ever present fetid scent of the *Asafoetida* condiment and other distinct spices like chillies, coriander, *fenugreek*, and onions.

I have a mischievous pleasure in watching other foreigners' faces, when they first confront the 'inner' section of the airport. Shocked into astonishment with eyes and mouths wide open, when they are greeted or is it 'assaulted' by people thronging at all the airport openings, a deep sea of dark faces amidst brightly coloured clothing, clamouring in loud voices, whilst armed airport security forces mingle amongst the newly arrived and exhausted passengers.

These early scenes and smells, although confronting at first, become part of the background to everyday life in Chennai. I don't notice them after a while, I only notice their absence when the aircraft closes its doors when I leave.

Even when I return home, and catch the occasional whiff of smoke and dust these memories flood back, forever captured as a remnant of times with friends in Chennai. A hint of longing to return arises, a catch in my throat, and a sharp sadness for the richness of street-life that India offers in contrast to my quiet, suburban street, where the air is distilled, neighbours are only seen when leaving home in cars or weeding front lawns, and the few sounds are the caroling of magpies with the low hum of traffic in the distance.

Excerpts from my notes

My assertions of a modern Tamil family. 28/3/12.

- Individual thought & decisions.
- Collective responses of by a Hindu, Brahmin girl with traditions
- Sacrifice / gesture of love & affection
- Takes on the husband's values.

Caste & Community

Overlapping

- Tamilness
- caste

In · Hinduism – British notion

– Indianness

"Muhruga" God

God worship within a community

- How do you feel as a Tamil?
- How do you know you a Tamil?

28/3/12

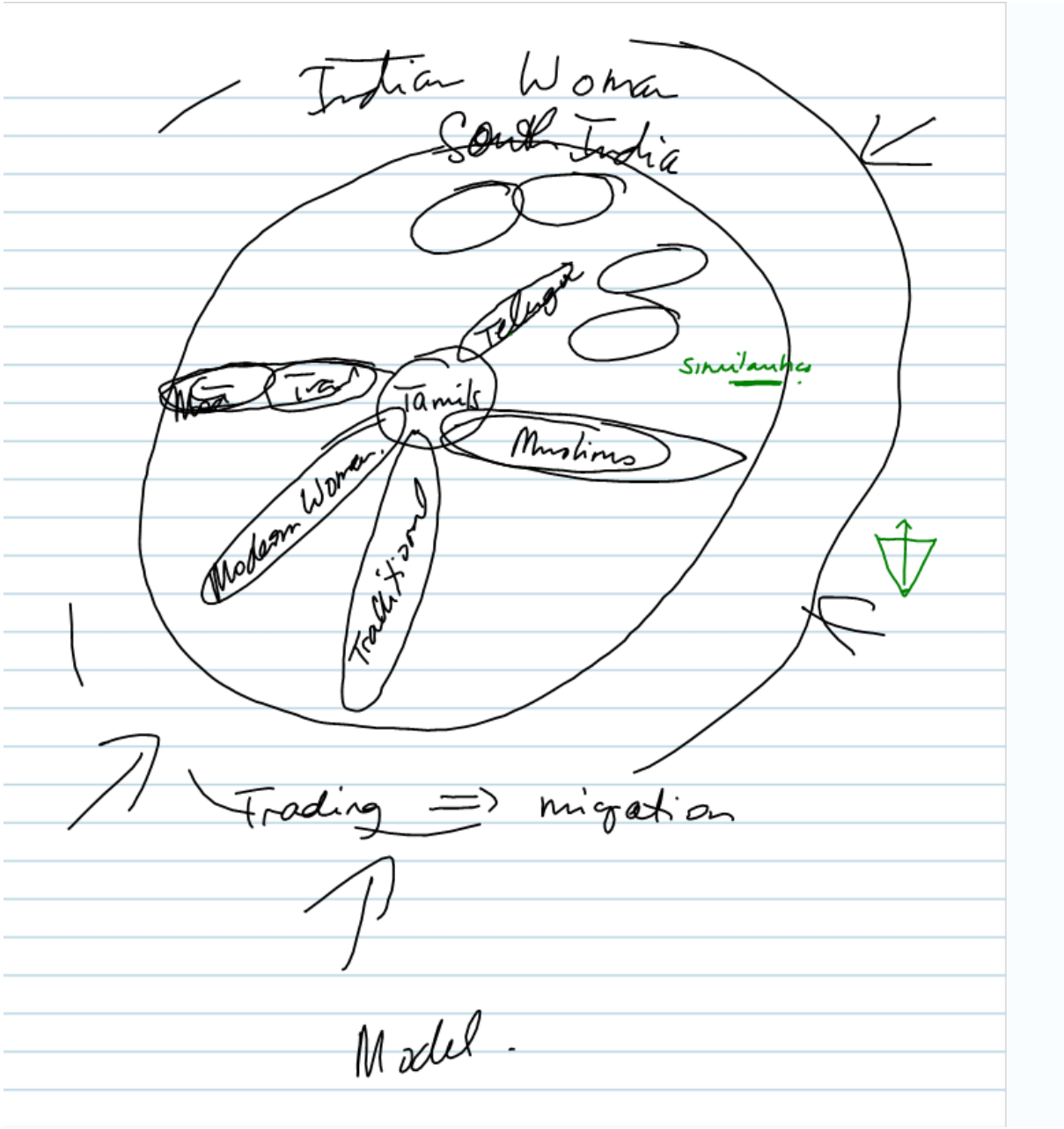
Hindusim
Division of Labour / Varanas
1. Rules — Chatrias
2. Merchants —
3. Brahmins — spiritual work. — knowledge of Sanskrit
4. Manual labourers — Non Brahmins

Muslims

Ayodhya — Muslim & Hindu tension.

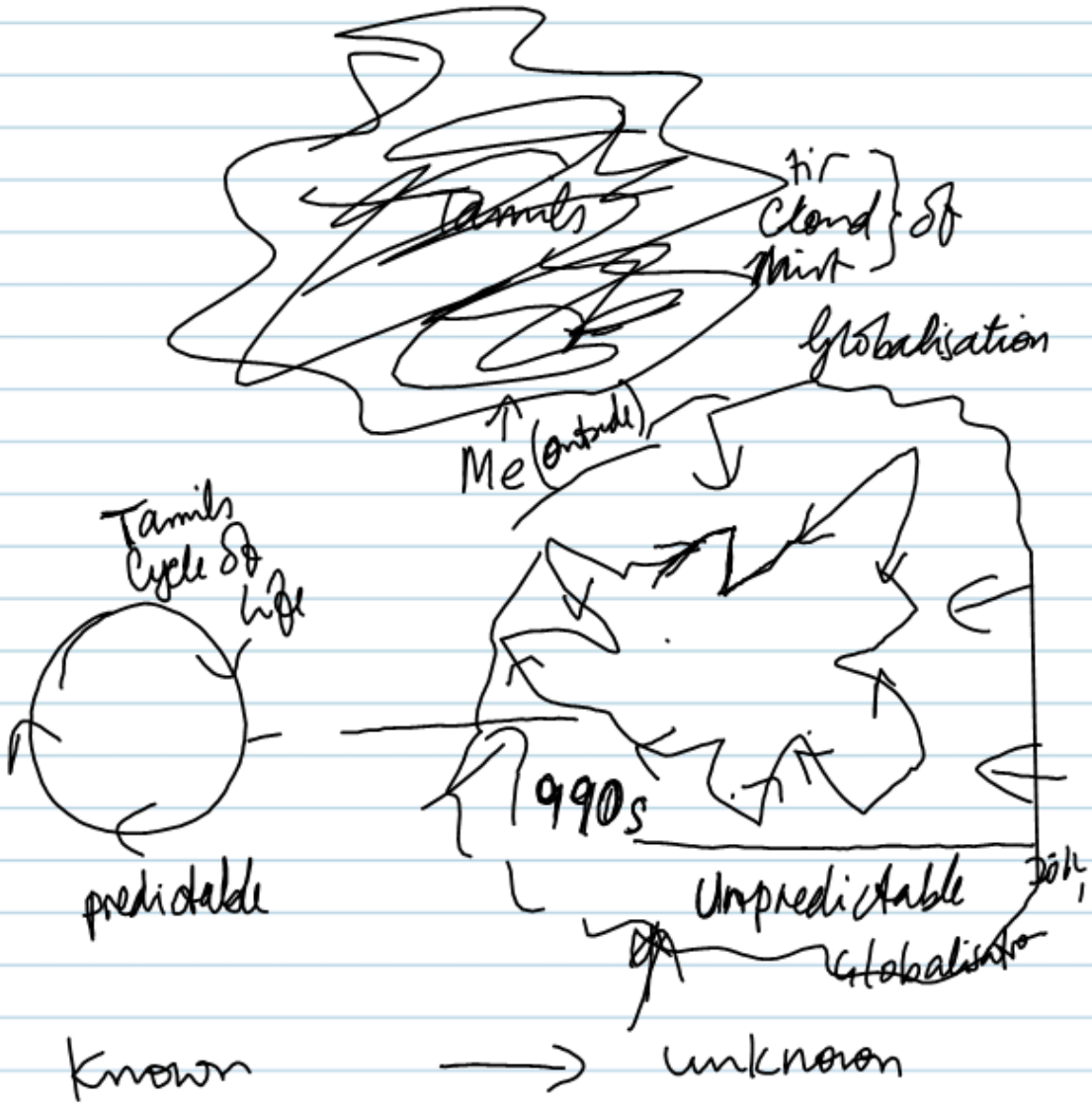
Ceremonies in Sanskrit
↳ translated into Tamil

- "Pongal — Tamil — exclusive festival
- Tamil New Year 13/4/12
- December 15 — Jan 15
  Margazhi (Tamil Month)
  30 days / full month
  Lord Shiva, Vishnuites = V
  &
  Shivites = on forehead


Indian Woman
South India
Telugu
Tamils
Muslims
Modern Woman
Traditional
Trading ⟹ migration
Model.

"Unspoken invader"

Unspoken guest



Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Individuals

Prior to the interview

- Explain consent form. Ask participants to read, and if happy sign the consent form.

The researcher will:

- Introduce myself, and explain the purpose of the interview and thank the participant for coming.
- Ask participant to introduce her/him self and say a little about her/him self, for example, where and when did they learn English?
- I will then lead the discussion with questions that are as a direct result of any earlier interview/s. Questions will seek to:
  - clarify earlier statements;
  - extend a thread of conversation or a topic; and,
  - introduce a new topic or line of questioning, if relevant to the overall research direction.

Sample questions:

- In the last interview you talked about the language you spoke at home. Could you tell me more about the languages you speak at home and which language you speak to which family member?
- How do you keep the Tamil culture in your home?
- How has the use of the English language impacted your family?

Approach during the interview

- It is intended that as the participant begins to discuss the topics and needs no assistance from the researcher to probe or encourage the discussion, the researcher will say nothing in order to allow the participant to talk freely and frankly.
- I will monitor the mood of the discussion. If the participant wishes to continue talking and the content is relevant, I won't interrupt. Occasionally I may intervene if the discussion is off topic.
- I will make notes and also monitor the recording device.

Interview prompt questions

Learning to Speak English:

- When and where did you learn to speak English?
- How did you learn?
- Do you think it was taught properly to women? Is it taught differently to men?

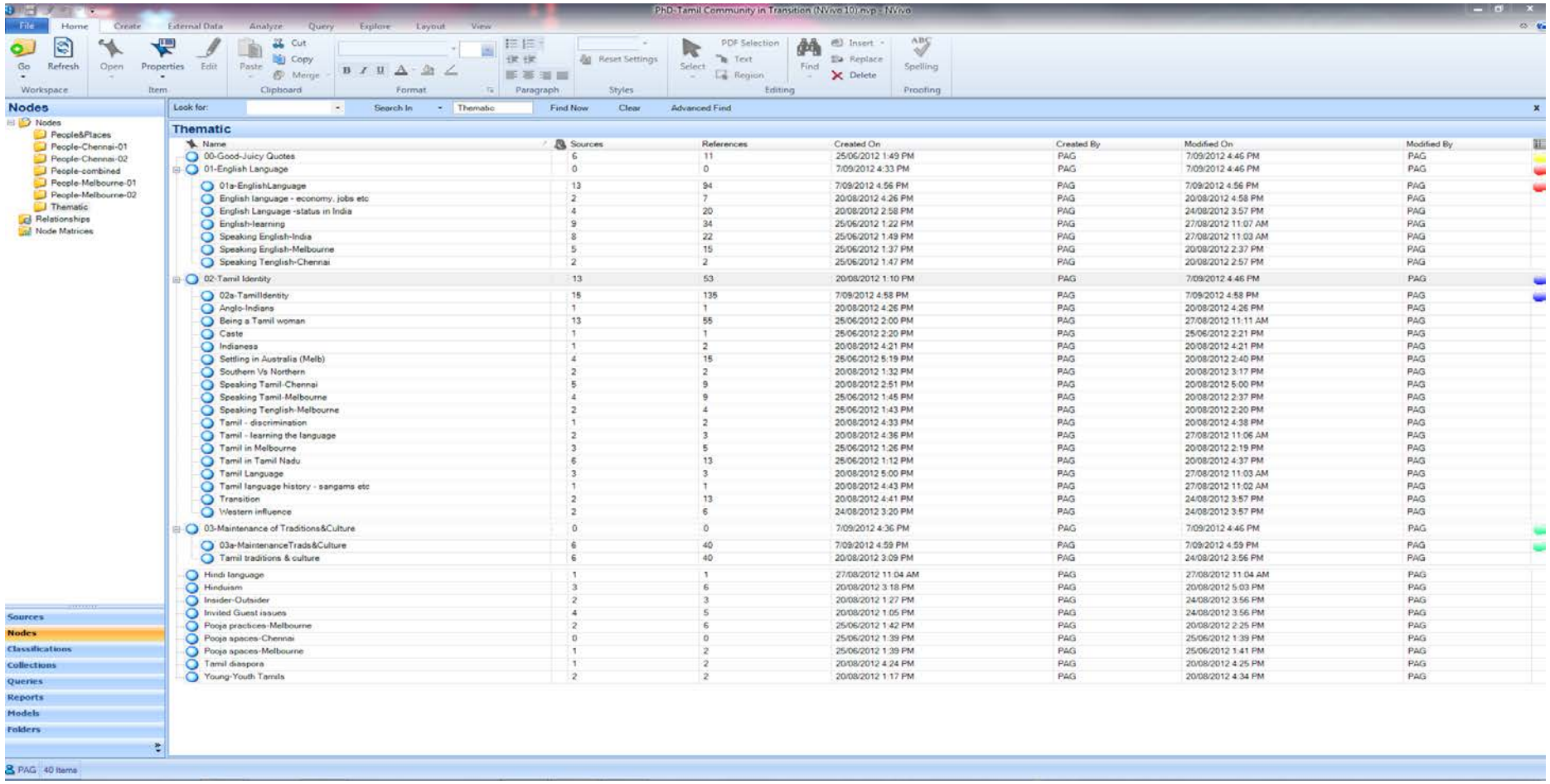
Speaking settings:

- When / what settings do you speak/write English and when do you speak/write in your own language?
- Is it important to speak English in your country, if so/if not discuss?
- It is well known that English combined with Tamil is often called 'Tenglish', what do you think about this?
- Do you think it is important for your children to speak English?
- Do you speak to your children in English at home, in public or both? Or not at all in English?

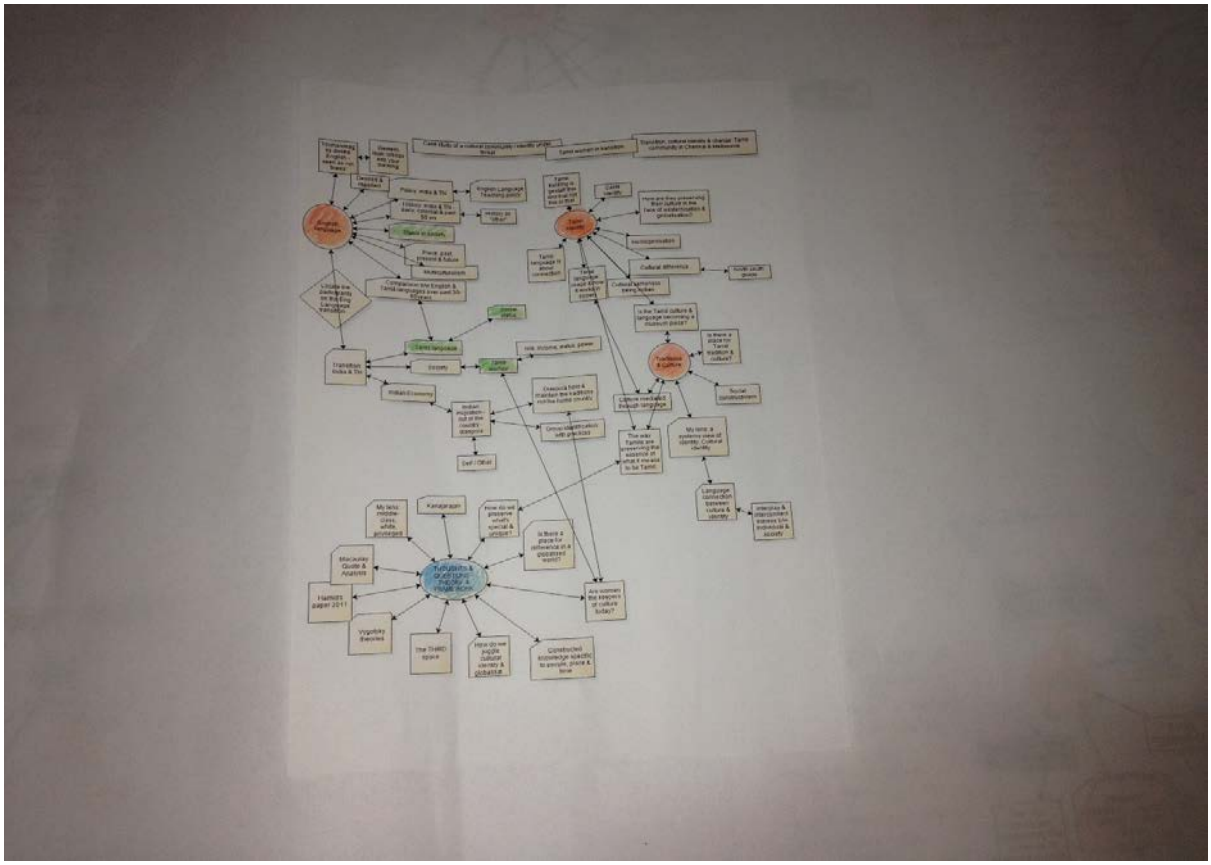
Further discussion with these types of questions:

- How does the Tamil community maintain their culture and language?
- What uses are made of English?
- What is the impact of English on the Tamil society and culture?
- What are the domains of use for each language?
- How is the impact of English perceived by women within these communities?

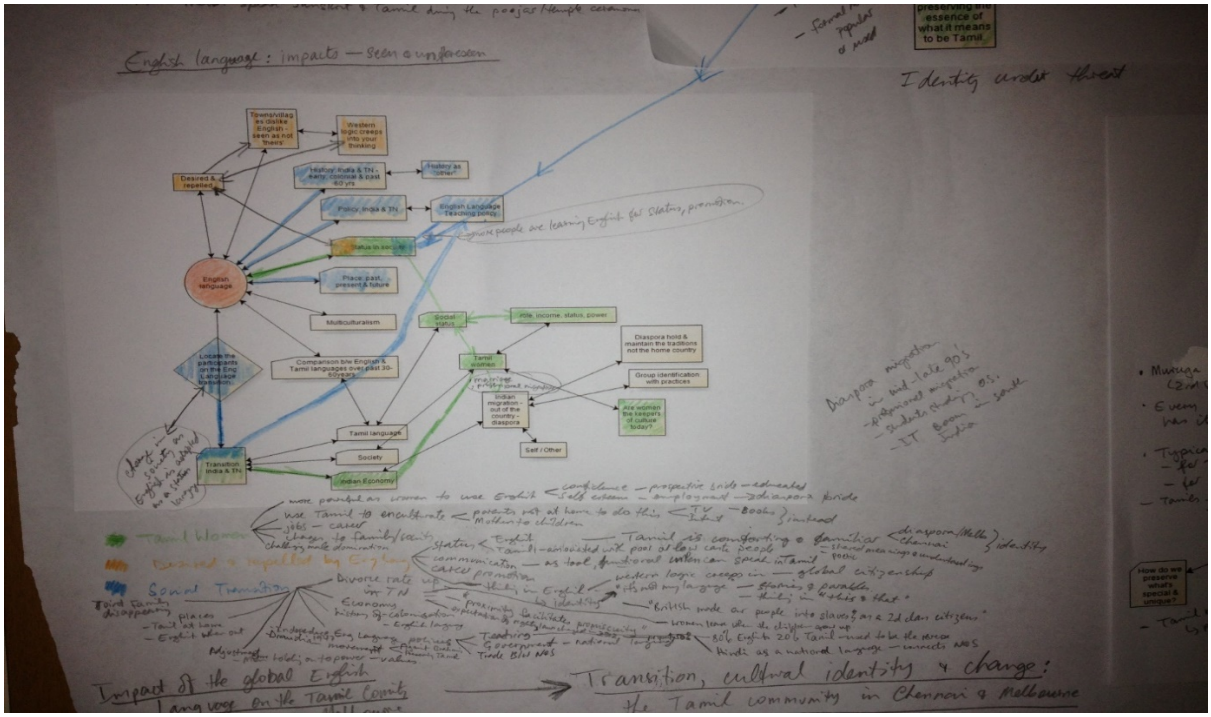
Appendix 4: Snapshot of NVivo 10 Software—Concepts, Categories, Themes and Sub-themes



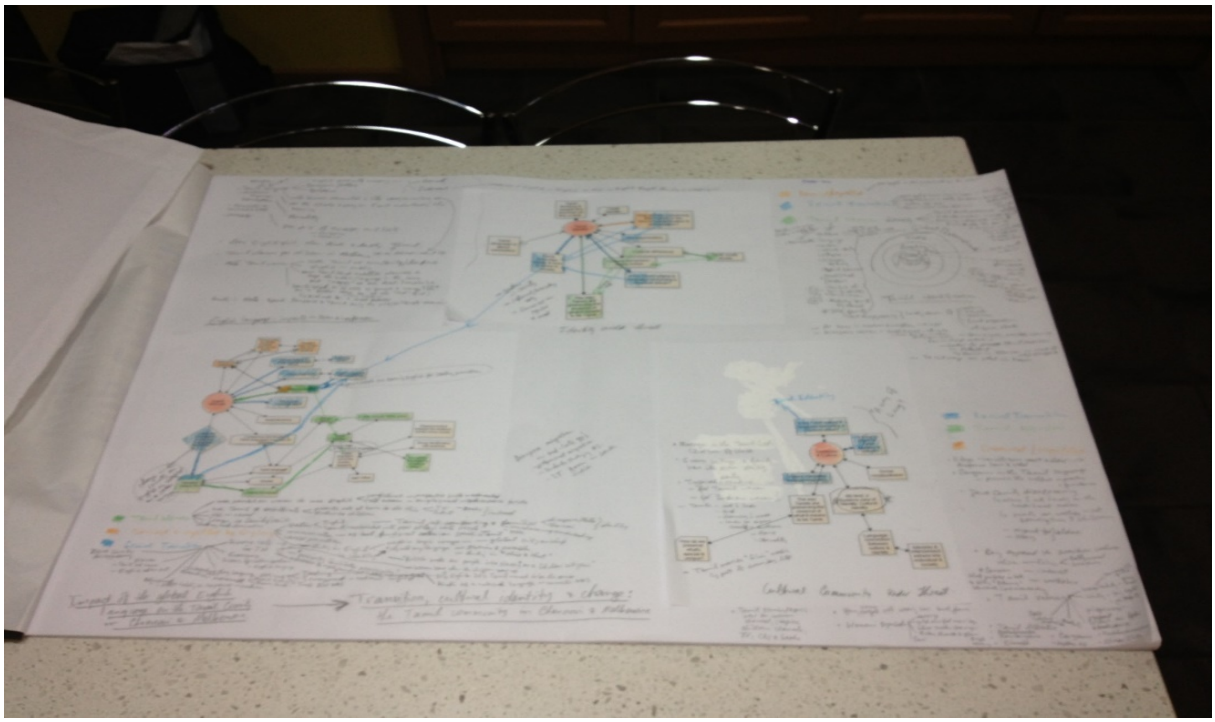
Appendix 5: Photos of Mind Maps Used to Explore the Data



Early stage mind map: Major themes emerging



Early stage mind map: Exploring English language theme



Later stage mind map: Further exploration of themes and connection of ideas

Appendix 6: Notes: Example of Theorising the Data, Starting with Ideas

re to have like a circle, how much of a %
l in a day. It would be about equal ... about
something to my children normally I speak
l want to make a point I speak in English!
il to my children, but Tamil most of the time,
don't forget the language. My oldest son he
youngest one is OK, only 60-65, but when
peak to him in Tamil most of the time, his
bring modern words and expressions ... Yes.
Yes! DVDs? Not through satellite. We
charge us $40 for one channel in Tamil.
a Tamil shop you go to? Yes... Groceries
il there.

born a lived in Chennai as a small child.

value
Important to maintain Tamil language in Melb.
in host country

— Watch Tamil films
— Shop in Tamil speaking shops

is combined in English, like Tenglish? Do
nes... Do you do that here or on phone to
ryone does it... We don't speak pure
we've got so used to mixing this and that
because you don't have the Tamil word
For some of the words, English words are
we have to rack our brains to think of the
ch more naturally ... Do you think English
? Vocabulary, not grammar ... Yes, hear
peaking and writing, Tamil might be
more and more English words? No
own country you've got particular ways
English it just wouldn't work, would have
take over completely ... No!

— See Vallika in Daily Life.
— " in Identity

Prayers, intimacy in relationships,
describing traditional garments, cuisine.

l way gives you morals and guidance.
ople are losing their way, going away
ble to being corrupted by the western
can be guided, and given strength.
ly gives support and you develop your

- Sangams, Tamil Literature.
- Interesting that she sees corruption as big Western?

Why? / Why not?

Why is this happening? How else can this be explained?

Typical Tamil given names are all based on the names of Gods & goddesses. Slow move to secularising & for providing E. names to fit into Western society.

- English exposes young people to western values, even
s shifting from God names to film star names (p.26).

Using English means thinking in English which implies a different logic & her view is that Tamil is inclusive and more emotional, storytelling logic. Tamil has morals values within the stories.

Tamil is comfort & a way of connecting it self & other Tamils

king in English, writing, thinking and talking –
ern logic creeps into your thinking. Tamil/Indian
. Socrates – sequential. Tamil/Indian way of
y telling / parables. Western philosophy is 'this or
nat'. Father explains things in Tamil – emotions and
nen I use thought and think in that logical way.
ain words would not be used. Tamil language is
nan logical. Tamil has many words for emotional
e moon. When she went back to India for a
d in Tamil – it felt strange. The papers are written
torytelling to connect and relate. In India, stories are
ally to children. Storytelling as a parable – with a
ables. Thinking in Tamil and English is selective.
I speak in English it's all in Tamil. Language of

sh is another language, it doesn't necessarily impact
in Tamil. I explain everything to my daughter, and
rything. She often speaks back in English though.
lass, she can read and write in Tamil, and songs. We
l, it's an old language, its important. She speaks
e is another classmate who speaks Tamil, but she is
o marry a Tamil man, but it's not easy living here. I
iage for her.

Influence of E.L. stronger b/c of living in an E. dominated world & education – I've heard other migrant families say this when speaking to their children in their mother tongue.

Desire by migrants to maintain the culture, language in their host country.

to find a suitable match.

keep it/maintain it

Appendix 7: Linking 'Findings' to Recommendations: Thinking Process

Acknowledgement: Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. Los Angeles: SAGE (p. 219-220).

Step 1: Consider the Research questions

(1) In a globalising world, to what extent do middle class Tamil communities in Chennai (India) and Melbourne (Australia) maintain connections with what they see as their traditional culture/s and cultural practices?

(2) How do they experience the tensions between connecting with their cultural 'roots' and responding to cultural change in this globalising world?

And,

(3) As an international traveller, learner and researcher, how does my own background and culture mediate the way in which I learn about and seek to understand the experiences and cultures of the Tamil community?

The first two questions are about exploring the Tamil peoples, and understanding how they are being affected by globalisation during a specific period of time. The third question is about understanding and learning from my journey as an intercultural researcher, and so being able to contribute knowledge in this area. These questions are interconnected in many ways, as my thesis demonstrates.

Step 2: What are the logical connections (argument) between Findings, Interpretations, Conclusions and Recommendations?

Findings (I found)	**Interpretations (I understood)**	**Conclusions (I conclude/assert or what I know to be true is)**	**Recommendations (Future actions/capable of implementation)**
The researcher to be deeply involved in the study	Take responsibility for: • how I encountered people in middle class Chennai • how I learned about various Tamil cultural practices and my sense of encountering • engaging with notions of middle class Tamil culture/s.	• requires openness to difference and a reflexive standpoint – for transparency and ethical integrity • slow journey of building relationships and gaining trust so that everyone feels safe to explore and comment on what is going on around them in an equal and fair way. • an invited guest afforded me an entrée into understandings not possible either as an insider or an outsider.	When undertaking inquiry into the process of encountering and engaging with 'an-other' culture and cultures, and the notions of culture. Ethnographic intercultural researchers (outsiders) to consider the notions of: • be involved with and consider the concept of 'invited guest' for the very peoples and cultures they are exploring, inquiring into and learning about. • bring an openness and curiousity in dialogue in a spirit of

		• my own background and cultures *do* mediate the way in which I learn about and understand the experiences and cultures of the middle class Tamil communities I mixed with. • open to the possibilities for dialogue and engagement with others along the way, in a spirit of exchange, mutual engagement and reciprocity.	exchange, mutual engagement and reciprocity. • reflexive standpoint, and ethical integrity—particularly to be aware of one's own background and cultures and how it mediates and affects the participants and outcomes of the study.

Findings (I found)	**Interpretations (I understood)**	**Conclusions (I conclude/assert or what I know to be true is)**	**Recommendations (Future actions/capable of implementation)**
1) the English language does impact the cultural practices of	My participants observed that the influence of English on a whole	• For some, learning English imbues status and power, and	• The Tamil language to be encouraged as a primary language/mother tongue

members of the Tamil middle class community.	range of Tamil cultural practices is complex and many faceted: • Power & status • Historical influence but also part of the globalising process • Not learning Tamil language so reduced ability to engage with Tamil literature and hence practices • Affects Tamil identity through language • Empowers women: able to join professionally well paid, and contributes to nation building	there is some evidence to suggest that this is the case. • language can be seen as having both a particular and distinctive mediating impact on social practices and identity, and yet it is also in many cases indistinguishable from an array of other globalising factors. • through learning and speaking English the necessity to learn the Tamil language, and to engage with the Tamil literature and one's cultural identity and knowledge of the world is diminished. • the future of the Tamil language and its place in Tamil society. Speaking both English and Tamil	language (?) in schools in Chennai. To preserve and maintain an aspect of cultural identity and connection with Tamil Literature. • English language is not a replacement for the Tamil language. • English language to be seen as a global lingua franca in today's world – which may change in the future.

		could reflect a general exploration of identity for the middle-class and aspiring middle-class, and those affected by globalisation. • For women, the ability to learn and speak English may indicate their improved educational status and so not only their attractiveness as brides but their ability to be able to join the ranks of the professionally well paid. • Importantly, with improved education and confidence, women can also contribute to nation building.	

Findings (I found)	Interpretations (I understood)	Conclusions (I conclude/assert or what I know to be true is)	Recommendations (Future actions/capable of implementation)
2) Tamil traditions were being observed as in the past (or not)	The participants tended to feel that Tamil culture and their experience of it was in a state of transition and transformation: • Engage with Tamil identity work • Tamil culture, is it static? • None of the Tamil people I talked to or interacted with ever used the term globalisation in our conversations or interactions. • I do not recall anyone ever speaking of the future, except in terms of a perceived loss of 'the' traditional Tamil culture and an inference that somehow women's	• diverse impacts on their understanding of Tamil (and in some cases their internalized) culture, and it was prompting them to engage in new identity work as they struggled to engage with the different understandings and experiences. • It appears that individual Tamils and Tamil communities are invariably challenging the deeply held view of traditional culture as something that is static, that can be hermetically preserved in a new time and a new land – in a context of globalisation.	• Tamils in Chennai and Melbourne encouraged to maintain their cultural practices, whether they be religious, the arts, crafts, and readings and writings of Tamil Literature. • 'Education processes' in schools, higher education and for the general public in Chennai, about the effects on the Tamil cultures of: globalisation and an increasingly hybridized world.

	changing roles were part of the mix of this new hybrid culture. • In Melbourne, the admittedly middle class Tamil people I met worked determinedly to stay connected with their Tamil language and language practices; individuals still performed their daily rituals, and the children attended Tamil schools.	• The participants variously appreciated that the introduction of English into the Tamil community and professional life had imbued status and power and that it continued to be a major influence on the identity of the middle-class Tamils. • Tamils in Melbourne although practicing their daily rituals as part of their identity – they and their families are in a process of transitioning into Australian social and cultural life, and an evolving cultural identity.	

Findings (I found)	Interpretations (I understood)	Conclusions (I conclude/assert or what I know to be true is)	Recommendations (Future actions/capable of implementation)
3) the ways in which Tamil family structure was changing in recent times.	• the traditional family or 'joint' family has been changing significantly over the last one hundred years.	• very little of this shift can be attributed to women, just because they participate in the labour force, but is due more to external forces such as globalisation, education, the media, and the economy	'Education processes' in schools, higher education and for the general public in Chennai about new family structures, adequate social policy and support.

Appendix 8: Notes: Data Management Process

1. Generate the data

- Set up interviews
- Ethics consent forms - signed
- Record interviews as audio files
- Make notes during and after the interview

2. Storage of the data

- Audio files
- Transcripts in Word
- Ethics consent forms – confidential storage

3. Analysis

- Read transcripts and listen to the recordings
- Code themes and subthemes using NVivo software
- Select out any key quotes
- Collapse themes into major themes/categories
- Compile mind maps of themes and categories
- Identify early 'findings' with quotes to support them

4. Interpretation and Meaning Making

- Group 'findings' and quotes onto A3 and A4 pieces of paper.
- Brainstorm each quote for ideas – What/why are they saying this? What are all the different ways of understanding this quote?
- Read the literature to find theories and authors to explain and provide evidence.
- Write to learn more.
- What are the overall arguments, ideas emerging?

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