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Talking Television Across Cultures: Negotiating Inclusion and Exclusion

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There is still a tendency in many schools to equate multicultural diversity with the need to keep children's sense of origins alive. The multicultural events that arise from this approach such as international food evenings, national costume days, or even the celebration of various religious festivals can often involve immigrant communities in performances of their *difference* rather than promoting real interaction with one another and those from other cultures. This then further *others* them, promoting an essentialist view of culture as unchanging and always impenetrable. The danger is that we do not acknowledge how children themselves prioritize fitting into their current local environments rather than holding an attachment to the past. Connected to this is the need to recognize how the meeting of cultures is a dynamic process of negotiation and change, both for the arriving and the receiving people and communities. This means that we should be focusing on what children already do to facilitate their entry into new places of residence and what resources they use to allow them to communicate and build social relationships with other children. It means that we should become more aware of where the meeting points are, where children have shared experiences, rather than

only on the differences and where their lives are separated. We need to learn more about the processes of change and what resources children draw on in negotiating new identities and new belongings.

Media Globalization: Television Viewing and Social Purpose

Television has long been seen as one of the institutions that can create what Anderson (1983) termed "the imagined community," which promotes a sense of national belonging. Globalizing media have changed this, and although there is still a demand for local media (mainly radio and newspapers), in the main media are increasingly globalized (Morley & Robins, 1995). We no longer all watch the same program at the same time, but with satellite and cable we can select from a range of national, regional, transnational, diasporic, and global broadcasts according to language, religion, culture, and special interests. By using the term *mediascapes* to describe globalizing communications systems, Appadurai (1990) is able to illustrate the cross-flows of imagination and connection that are central to the experience of migration. Migration is no longer unidirectional, and nor are the communication flows that accompany migration. Appadurai rightly stresses how there is now an array of media that we draw on in varying ways at varying times and in various social formations. It is the social contexts of viewing, using, and discussing media that are arguably the strongest force in our media choices. In terms of television, we might choose to watch certain programs with friends, others with siblings, still others with each parent or other adults, and still others

alone. However, there is a tendency for children and young people to choose what they watch according to social needs and contexts (Buckingham, 1996; Gillespie, 1995).

For migrant and refugee children, such choices are more diverse (de Block, 2002). Family viewing might revolve around satellite television from their country or region of origin in their own language, or it might equally center on a national soap opera in their new country of residence. It could also include a program they used to watch before migration that was a global product from the United States or Brazil or a Hindi film (**in full please CHICAM**, 2004). It is now possible for immigrant families to watch only culturally specific broadcasts and ignore national programming. Where schools and classes are culturally mixed and where children have access to a range of television broadcasts, they might watch quite different programs from their friends in the home country. However, there is usually a core of shared programs that each friendship group will watch, talk about, and use in their negotiations of inclusion, exclusion, and identity. Thus their viewing will reflect both their local as well as international interests and connections. It is neither purely nostalgic nor solely concerned with their present location. Rather it demonstrates the complex mix of past allegiances and memory while also acknowledging that those places of origin have changed and that their present and future are not always tied to their places of origin. It is the details of how media, or in this case television programs in particular, become resources for

building and maintaining social relations across and within cultures that I concentrate on here.

Methodology and Study Design

The discussion in this chapter is based on a one-year in-depth study I carried out as a single researcher with a small group of refugee and migrant children and their friends in a primary school in north London. Children from long-standing immigrant communities as well as children who had recently arrived from many parts of the world attended the school. Over 30 languages were represented. I used ethnographic design in the study. Based on participant observations, I kept an extensive field diary of observations, drawings, notes of conversations, and thoughts. I conducted semistructured and unstructured interviews with both individuals and groups, sometimes using an interpreter. During the fieldwork, which continued over 18 months, I "hung out" in the playground, spent time with the children in their neighborhoods, and observed in classrooms, lunchrooms, and corridors. As the fieldwork progressed, I moved to making short animations with the children about aspects of their lives and gave them video cameras to use in their neighborhoods.

Participants

I focused on two friendship groups. Both groups were mixed in their countries of origins, immigration status, and social class. The first was a group of four 8-year-old girls; the second was a group of four 11-year-old boys.

Girls' group

Rhaxma: Somalia, refugee, living with her mother who was at home with younger children and a stepfather who was studying. Had previously lived in Italy. Muslim

Nyota: Democratic Republic of the Congo, asylum-seeker. Both parents had previously been employed in high-status jobs, now not allowed to take employment.

Morwen: Born in London of Welsh and Grenadian parents. Father a bus driver.

Juba: Born in London. Parents from Ghana. Father setting up businesses between the United Kingdom and Ghana. The family aspired to moving out of central London to a more countryside setting.

Boys' group

Samuel: Kenya. Asylum-seeker. Recently converted to Jehovah's Witness Church.

Jima: Ethiopia. Asylum-seeker. Here with his father alone.

Estava and Denis (twins): Portugal. Father in Angola. Had extended family in London. Mother setting up own business and buying a private apartment.

I also followed several children who were on the edges of these central groups. These included children from Turkey (Kurdish), Kosovo, Palestine, Somalia, Bangladesh, and several children born in London both of white English families and of families who had moved to the UK one or two generations before. I interviewed the children, teachers, and parents or guardians several times over the

course of the fieldwork and gradually built a picture of the children's varied and full media lives and the role that media played in building social relationships in their new places of residence.

Study Findings and Insights

TV Talk as Shared Space

It is in the informal spaces of school life that friendships are made and broken, that language is practiced and learned, that shared histories are built, and behavior is modeled and patrolled (Epstein & Steinberg, 1997). Talking about what one has seen on television is one of the main topics on the agenda at these times. TV talk can take many forms, but its function is clearly social. Television programs were frequently referred to during the children's games and general chat. These were rarely full descriptions of programs or episodes, but took the form of gestures, phrases, songs, and key words. It became clear that in order to follow the references and be included in the repartee, the children needed knowledge that required a huge commitment of time and energy on their part.

Although the children were creative in their use of such programs, the possibilities open to them were not infinite. Their social context, their peer and family relations, and the texts themselves all placed boundaries on invention. In fact these boundaries and the children's developing understanding of them are central to TV talk. TV talk allows the children to use programs both to develop

group and individual identities and to negotiate and understand these social contexts and their own place in relation to them.

Learning About Family: A Case of *The Simpsons*

The Simpsons provided endless story lines to be learned in detail, and it provided word plays and jokes. It was possible to act out the scenes and characters without the need for words. It related to everyday scenes with which the children were familiar and could use as references and comparisons with their lives. It provided dialogue and possibilities for verbal mimicry. Above all it was funny and therefore adaptable to a range of purposes and situations.

The Simpsons is about a US nuclear family: father, mother, older son, younger daughter, and baby. They live the good suburban life, and yet this dream is betrayed. Wells (2002) compares the father figure in *The Flintstones* with Homer Simpson. Both are portrayals of white, blue-collar workers. The difference is that whereas one remains in an establishment that appears to promote social aspiration while at the same time confirming the status quo, the other sets out to be a self-conscious critic of this status quo. Homer parodies Fred Flintstone. He is often distant or out of control, more often than not does the wrong thing, but on many occasions manages to muddle through and do the right thing. Jozajtis (2002) describes Homer as an essentially moral man, a good father with human flaws. He carries much of the emotional charge of the program. Meanwhile, Marge, the mother, is the sensible and more intelligent person who holds the family together

and acts as the community's social conscience. But she too has her failures, as when she develops a gambling habit that threatens to undermine the family as a functioning unit. Bart, the son, is the naughty boy and also often the stupid boy. His focus is his friends and his locality. He is frequently in trouble, but this is usually despite himself. His predominant motivation is to please. When he wears his "genius" T-shirt, the ironic humor is clear. Lisa, on the other hand, is declared a genius, but is still the annoying little sister. The baby, Maggie, is the foil over whom many family conflicts are enacted. We feel superior, yet at the same time we sympathize and identify with the family. Despite the cultural specificity, the locations of home, school, local landmarks such as shops, playground, street, and neighbours (both troublesome and friendly) are familiar to most children in varying forms. These are places of danger and of safety.

Several aspects of the program both frame and facilitate TV talk. First, its subject matter is the everyday life and events of one family, which allows the children to discuss both the faults and successes of this family and their own. In many respects it is subversive. The show is peopled by stereotypical characters (and behaviors) that can be matched by people in the children's own lives. For example, Samuel recognized the grandfather in one episode who is so deaf one cannot communicate with him and compared him to his own profoundly deaf grandfather who was visiting from Kenya. Jima, who often watched the show

with his father, often described himself as Bart and his father in terms of his similarity to Homer.

Jima: A young Ethiopean asylum-seeker

One of the boys, Jima (11), who had come with his father from Ethiopia as an asylum-seeker, never mentioned learning the language as the most important factor in making friends when he arrived. He focused on learning how children behaved and particularly what they talked *about*. He said that he became interested in television when he realized to what extent it formed a focus of social relations.

When I asked him why it was important to have a television, his instant reply was that then you had something to talk about with your friends. His priority was clear. Television was not a route to escape, but an important aspect of his social life.

Jima aimed to develop a group of friends, so it was important that his interests and knowledge facilitate this. He developed an interest in wrestling so that he could talk about World Wrestling Federation broadcasts, and his second passion was *The Simpsons* and *South Park*. TV talk about these programs facilitated the sense of group togetherness that he and his friends sought. Second, for Jima in particular, being the expert and being called on to demonstrate this knowledge gave him a status in the group that other activities did not. It gave him access to the group and therefore to friendship and inclusion. He was also adept at using

TV references to promote a connection and sense of togetherness. Often, after initiating a topic, he would sit back and let the discussion flow, only intervening either to keep it on track or to take it in a new direction. All these programs allowed him and his friends to gossip and act out. More than other programs, *The Simpsons* allowed a wide range of discussions about family, friendship, and social conventions. Jima and his group adopted certain episodes to cement and symbolize their friendship and to include or exclude other children who wished to join.

Jima's family life was troubled. He lived alone with his father, who was deeply depressed that they were still, several years after their arrival in the UK, living temporarily from day to day awaiting a final decision on their asylum application, unable to build any permanence into their lives. Just as Jima said that he watched television so that he could make friends, he also said that he learned about family life from shows like *Fresh Prince of Belair* and *The Simpsons.* Bachmair (1990) argues that the subjective experiences and preoccupations that constitute children's personal *themas* and that motivate them individually are acted out and interpreted through their friendships. Television has a symbolic resonance in this interpretative play between the social and the personal. Particular programs carry particular resonance for certain children or friendship groups according to their personal experiences and psychological needs. Certainly for Jima, his favorite programs and how he drew on them in his personal relations reflected his personal

thema of family and belonging. He used TV talk to promote his own social inclusion while also using it to protect his privacy and to survive the difficulties in which he and his father found themselves. Television gave him access to experiences that he felt were lacking in his own family life and helped him find solutions to problems or to come to terms with his difficult circumstances.

Creating Continuities

For many migrant children, programs like *The Simpsons* became a point of continuity. One mother from Somalia related how her children had watched the program in Somalia, then again in Kenya in a refugee camp, and again once they arrived in the UK, each time in a different language. She said that it had traveled with them and given them an instant point of contact. Indeed, this contact did not need spoken language. Others spoke of similar experiences with this and other programs. On a weekend away with the upper school, the whole group watched *The Simpsons* in their separate shared rooms. Half way through the program when they were called to dinner, they all emerged from the chalet rooms buzzing with Simpsons talk. In one of the scenes Homer had shown his buttocks, and many of the children were acting this out. Veton (11), a Kosovar boy who had fairly recently arrived in the UK as a result of the war and was still finding his place in the class, was the most exaggerated and persistent in his gestures, trying to gain the attention of the group. He succeeded, and they all went to dinner together. So

the acting out of a questionable scene allowed Veton to be accepted into the group without the need for language fluency.

The Simpsons combined both a lightness of touch and subversive humor with the raising of serious issues that directly concerned the boys: various family lifestyles, belonging in your neighborhood, negotiating friendships, and learning about social institutions. The boys saw aspects of their lives and their personal options presented in a way that was subversive and funny and therefore possible to talk about. These examples that illustrate some of the ways the children in my study used a particular program could apply to any children, not only to refugees or migrants. But these children's experiences and uses of media are different in several ways. TV talk can overcome some language barriers, thus becoming an early means of making contact. Global media products facilitate an instant shared space through which children can participate in playground humor, narrative, and character. Significant is the focus and energy that these children invested in acquiring their knowledge and how through talking about *The Simpsons,* they negotiated their differences and learned about one another. This was a safe, shared space where they could be the same, but where they could also acknowledge and negotiate some of their differences.

Creating Playground Games That Build Shared Histories

It was Opie and Opie's (1959) study that first brought the drama and hidden histories of the school playground to adults' attention. As Blatchford (1998)

states, this was a romantic vision of creative and situated play and games. The other side of this are studies that have focused on bullying and other bad behavior in the playground. What happens in the playground and how children themselves perceive it has taken on more importance as children's freedom of movement becomes more restricted and they have fewer opportunities for social interaction. There is also a growing realization of the importance of this peer social interaction in the development of social skills, cultural transmission (Grugeon, 1993; Sluckin, 1981), and identity formation. Some studies have focused on specific aspects of identity formation, particularly in relation to gender (Thorne, 1993) and sexuality (Epstein, 1999). Yet there has been remarkably little focus on the role of media in these playground interactions.

Playground games build a shared history, as do shared media memories. Together these can become a powerful bonding force. Often the children referred to programs they had watched when they were younger. This was generally as part of the process of claiming greater maturity than that of younger children, but it also served to reinforce a shared history. In the boys' group, children's (and girls') programs such as *Power Puff Girls, Rug Rats,* and *Teenage Ninja Turtles* were mentioned and ridiculed, although the boys did often watch them. For the girls there was almost hysterical excitement when they remembered watching programs such as *The Tweenies* or *Rosie and Jim*. Similarly, playground games also performed the function of building a group memory on which they could

draw in times of tension. Many of the games had been played so often and many of the television stories had been told so many times over long periods that they formed a resource that the children could draw on for security to overcome current arguments.

Bhaxma and Juba: Playing together

Both in the family and with friends in and out of school, television played a significant role in building autobiographical memories or histories. Television appeared to be able to locate them in time and place almost as family photos or stories can (Kuhn, 1985; Spence & Holland, 1991). Some of the refugee and migrant children mentioned programs that they had watched before they came to the UK. Rhaxma still enjoyed watching an Italian program she had watched as a toddler although she no longer understood much Italian. It provided her with a personal historic reference point. She had no photos from that time, but the television program kept the memory alive. Estava and Denis (from the boys' group, aged 11, from Portugal) often talked about what they watched when they visited Portugal, enjoying the fact that these memories felt unique. However, many children were reluctant to mention these " home" programs in school, preferring to keep them as private histories.

However, the games formed the core of group histories. The children often played them repeatedly over a long period, and the cumulative effect of these shared television-based interactions formed the basis of many friendships. Many games

had set forms that were repeated day after day. One was what I called the Titanic game, although the children made no direct reference to the film. The following is Rhaxma's (an 8-year-old girl from Somalia) again telling me what was happening as we watched others in her class playing on the main climbing structure from the other side of the playground.

1. People are on board
2. The ship started to sink
3. We are outside in a dark place
4. We get trapped
5. We can't open the door
6. Someone, George, comes and opens the door
7. He starts killing people we want to climb up but get stuck on the tires [the play structure is surrounded by tires]
8. We fall down sometimes
9. We climb up and get stuck on the black things in the water
10. George runs after us
11. It ends when we all swim to the surface and the helicopter comes

This was told without hesitation. Although she was not herself playing on this occasion, she identified with the players, using *we* in the description. She had played it often before, and George, acting as the master of ceremonies, played a similar role in several of the games owned by the girls. Several weeks later when I

was making a video animation with the group about their playground games, they talked a lot about this game, drawing the climbing frame and the figures and discussing various occasions when they had played and various versions of the game. It was clearly part of their group repertoire. They took varying roles, which they all understood and which often spilled over into other games. Partly because of the continual nature of the games, but also because of their intimacy, certain games were reserved for certain players, as with George above, and specific locations.

Juba (11) loved witch games both at home and at school, but she was clear that the games she played at home were different and based on other programs. In an individual interview, she talked about how she and her home friends always watched and played *Hocus Pocus* together. (*Hocus Pocus*, 1993, is a film about three witches from Salem who return on Halloween. The girls' games were based on this film). Each took the part of a particular character from the film. They played games based on this program over a long period, but demanded the same players. This game was not transferable to school because not all members of this group attended the same school. The games Juba played at school also continued over a long period. She described another witch theme game based on a another program and another that was based on sisters, but had a heavily school-oriented theme of teachers who needed slaves because they could not do everything themselves. So her relationships with both groups of friends involved either the

close or long-distance sharing of specific TV shows. It depended on location, but also on the playing of games that evolved over time from these TV series that they all knew intimately. Knowledge of specific episodes was the ticket to entry, and if a child failed this test, he or she risked exclusion.

Depending on their home circumstances, children had more or less access to the programs. Several of the children in the study needed to invest much energy at home in negotiating access to television. Sometimes parents regulated their viewing and banned certain shows such as *South Park*, something the children often found it necessary to hide from their friends. For Rhaxma the issue was very much related to her being a girl and a Muslim. She was not allowed to watch and indeed did not wish to watch scenes with any sexual acts, yet she did wish to be able to talk about them at school. Soap operas were often problematic, as were some music videos, but she watched what she could and became adept at filling in the gaps. Often it was knowledge of the genre rather than of a specific title that allowed children to join in television-related games. The hospital drama was often played in a particular part of the playground where the playground furniture served as operating rooms and beds. Several programs would be combined into one game, everyone drawing on his or her separate knowledge of the form to be included in the action. However, some genres were less acceptable than others. Several of the Bengali children said that they talked about the Hindi films they watched at home only among themselves or with one of the classroom assistants

who was also Bengali. This was not only because other children would not have seen the films, but because the form and content would be considered too *other* by the children and they would risk opening themselves to ridicule. It was safer to keep some home viewing private.

Establishing Location and Belonging

Playing media games in the playground helped to build a location where most children could participate. Similarly, the children often used TV talk to make connections in their local neighborhoods outside school. Often when going from place to place together, they would remark on a person or place and immediately cite a television reference about which they could all then laugh, joke, or argue. These incidents served to bring the group together in sometimes alien environments, particularly when they were outside their immediate locality or when they had not seen one another for a few days and needed to reestablish contact. In this extract, Jima, Samuel, and I were walking from Jima's home to Oxford Street in London's West End. This was Jima's backyard. He took us through the British Museum as a short cut. The two boys had not seen each other for a week or so as it was holiday time. They rarely saw each other out of school as Samuel's parents disapproved of the amount of freedom that Jima was allowed. Their social backgrounds and family expectations were different. They had spent almost the entire walk thus far talking about what they had watched on television and the relative merits of *The Simpsons* and *South Park*. Samuel had not been

allowed to watch *South Park*, so after gaining status from pointing out that he had been allowed to watch it (see below), Jima moved the talk back to *The Simpsons*, a topic that they could share. Jima had mentioned the hot dog stand outside the British Museum, the significance of which I did not understand at first. Clearly Samuel did. They recited a hot dog refrain for several minutes, of which the following is an extract.

1. Jima: Hot dogs hot dogs.
2. Samuel: Homer is so, he is so funny.
3. Jima: He goes to the funeral and the hot dog man comes …
4. Samuel: Yeah, "hot dogs hot dogs." And Marge goes, "Why are you following my husband around?" and he goes, "Because he's good value for money." Aha that was so funny. My dad laughed and laughed and laughed when he heard that bit.
5. Interviewer: When he heard "good value for money"?
6. Samuel: Yeah, 'cause there's this hot dog man and they are going to a funeral and there is this hot dog man.
7. Jima: And he always follows.
8. Samuel: And he is always following Homer and then Marge goes, "Why are you following my husband?" and he goes, "'Cause he's great value for money." 'Cause he always

pays for something. There it is Jima [pointing out the hot dog stand]. “Hot Dogs Hot Dogs.” Two pounds? A hot dog for two pounds?

9. Interviewer: Yeah, we’re right by the British Museum you see.

The talk brought them together and created a shared space that they could both enjoy without explanation. They used their environment to trigger other shared memories. The exchange also allowed other, more private topics to be broached. Samuel (line 6) mentioned how his father enjoys the show. It also introduced the question of cost (line 15) and expenses. As asylum-seekers both boys shared the experience of economic hardship, a fact they generally avoided talking about when in the company of their other friends. However, during this afternoon they returned to this topic several times. This exchange also provided Jima with the opportunity to show off his television expertise, to score status points, and to locate himself firmly in his neighborhood.

News Media as a Social Reference

Although I had not anticipated spending much time talking about the news with the children, it was clearly an important part of their media lives. In all my discussions with the children’s parents and guardians, they had said that they considered the news as the most important television program.

Those from other countries gave news as the reason for their decision to have satellite or cable TV. Many wished to watch the news in their own language to

gain greater understanding even when their English was fluent. Some children also stressed the importance of the news for their wider family. Estava and Denis (11) talked about their wish to have satellite television for their grandmother, who was living with them. She spoke no English, so they believed that if she could watch Portuguese news programs she would not feel so isolated. Of course, it was not always possible to watch in their own languages as no Somali or Ethiopian channels are available. Many of the Somalis watched either Italian or Arabic channels. I gained a sense that the national UK TV news was not enough, that there was not enough news from their parts of the world. For example, many watched CNN news as it was seen to be more international. It was almost as if receiving news from beyond the national borders in which they now lived was a necessary part of their identities as migrants, as non-British. In addition, national and Western news is often seen as presenting a point of view that maintains the current world order (Boyd-Barrett, 1997). In seeking other news channels, these families were also seeking different analyses of news events. This was so during the Gulf War (Gillespie, 1995), increased during the events of September 11, 2001, and increased again during the more recent (and current) Afghan and Iraqi wars (Al-Ghebban & Banaji, 2005).

While "connecting" and creating continuities for these families, the news also had other powerful influences, especially on the children. I was struck by how often groups of children would talk to one another about the international news. The

school lunchroom was often where major news items were discussed. I was spending much time in the school at the time of the war in Kosovo (1999) war, and much of the news conversation in the lunchroom was about this topic. Veton (11), a Kosovar boy who had recently come into Year 6, was clearly preoccupied at this time and looked tired and pale. He was up late most nights watching CNN news with his father. One lunchtime, a group of his class were sitting together and one of the girls came and joined them. She cut across all the previous conversation and started talking about the bombing that had begun the previous day. The group rapidly joined in. Veton struggled to participate, but found this difficult because of the general noise in the room and the language. Despite the difficulties he persisted.

All the children were interested. They made connections between what Veton was saying and the reports they had all watched on television. He described talking to his grandparents on the telephone and what they had told his family: many houses in their area had been burned down; they could hear shooting nearby; people had come to their house for shelter. The group conversation moved on, but Veton continued talking to me. He asked me for more details about the shooting down of a helicopter as he had not understood everything on the news. His interpretation was that the Russians were to blame as only they had supported Milosovec in refusing peace talks. At this point Jima came to the table and immediately joined in the conversation, saying that he had been watching the news and agreed with

Veton that the Russians and the Yugoslavs were to blame. He made a connection with what was happening at that time with the new fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia and with what had happened in the past.

Revived Memories and Personal Connections

This was all sophisticated, well-informed talk with deeply personal connections, and I was aware that this rarely, if ever, happened in the classroom. It must have been important for Veton to be able to talk with peers about what was happening, especially as there appeared to be no forum for him to talk elsewhere outside the home. It also allowed him to find connections with the experiences of other refugee children and realize that he was not alone. This was the development of a simple and effective public space where new and old identities and relationships were being formed. This relates directly to the arguments made by Buckingham (1996, 2000) about participation, news, and citizenship, but adds an international dimension.

The news sometimes had direct emotional effects on the children (and on the research). During my fieldwork, two major items of news directly affected the Turkish/Kurdish children. First was the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish leader, in 1999, and second was a major earthquake that followed shortly afterward. On one of my visits to Leyla (11) and Selve's (9) home, the atmosphere was clearly tense. I could not understand why the children kept telling me about men in masks with guns. I assumed it was a film they had been

watching, but I could not understand why in that case their mother was so agitated. Only later, when I reached home and heard the news that Ocalan had been captured did I begin to understand.

The capture of Ocalan spurred intense activity in the Kurdish community in London: Leyla and Selve's father was a part of this. They themselves attended several events. Suddenly they felt threatened both by the capture, which although far away had been so vividly depicted in their living rooms. Ocalan was not captured in Turkey, but in Kenya, so this clearly told them that they were not safe anywhere. The world becomes a small place and one cannot escape danger. The atmosphere was clearly tense at home, but also in their community: there was a police presence at some of the events they attended, and they were suddenly on the outside, unwelcome and unsafe.

Over the next few weeks, this developed for Leyla into a reworking of her memories of Turkey. Previously she had painted life there as a golden age of friendship and freedom, but she now described Turkey to me as a bad and dangerous place. This was confirmed when the earthquake followed so soon after the capture of Ocalan and pictures of destruction were on the screens. She now described it as sad and said that she did not want to return there. She was having a particularly difficult time in school, and this was clearly partly linked to all these events. She must have felt that she had no home, no secure place. Selve too said that she was crying a lot at school, although she clearly did have friends and was

coping better than her sister. Leyla described having nightmares of being chased and captured, but she did not go to her mother for comfort but into her sister's bed. She told me that she did not talk to her mother about what was happening. This kind of situation is described by Richman (1998) in her teacher's manual about working with refugee children. It describes how refugee children often do not wish to add to their parents' worries and so keep their own fears to themselves.

In a later interview, both children confirmed that they now did not wish to return to Turkey and that although they had good memories, Turkey was really a bad place. The complications of living with contradictory emotions about their birth place, to which they still had strong emotional connections even though they no longer lived there, appeared to be brought into sharp focus by news items such as these. Visual images of a place one knows can be more powerful reminders than written or spoken words and rather than creating connections, these can exacerbate feelings of separation, especially in times of crisis when one feels far away and powerless. Dearly held memories come into stark opposition with the media-portrayed realities and must make both those memories and what one has today in one's new life feel insecure. For other children who have moved to the UK as a result of other types of conflicts, news items will also provoke profound memories, emotions, and tensions.

The main and simple point here is that news events reported from and about one's country of origin have direct effects on one's life in the new country. Children who have direct experience of war, trauma, and forced migration are affected by similar events elsewhere, and this will revive memories. Children who experienced migration will often see world events as closely connected to their lives and see themselves not as only part of the local, but in a personal way part of the global. This was not reflected in the everyday life of the formal school, but children needed, and often managed to find, informal spaces where they could share these events.

Direct news events can create feelings of separation and isolation, which can be exacerbated by how refugees and migrants are portrayed by the press of the receiving country. On the other hand, TV talk about world events, sports, and the kinds of diasporic TV described in the sections above allow children to develop a working understanding of the interrelationships between the local and the global. These are opportunities to work through the multiple places of belonging and home that are central to the experience of migration.

Discussion and Implications

Both Brah (1996) and Srebreny (2000) in different ways stress that the experience of migration is one of parting, but also one of new beginnings. Morley (2000) describes how people use media to maintain past connections and to build new social relations and a sense of place in the processes of migration and how this

helps them to develop the skills they need to live in different places with different identities: how they learn to be multi-domestic. In this chapter I focus on how children from varying backgrounds use and talk about television to build and maintain social interaction and contact across cultures. I stress how these children are active agents in the creation of their new lives rather than passive victims (de Block, in press). School is one of the few places where children and young people are in continual contact with peers from other cultures and with other beliefs. It is the most important place where young people can learn about each other and about other lives and beliefs. They need to find how to communicate and socialize with one another, and in order to do this, they draw on resources that are readily available to them. Television and increasingly other media (particularly the Internet and mobile telephones) facilitate such communication.

Global (US) media products such as *The Simpsons* may not fit easily into our idea of a suitable vehicle for cross-cultural communication, yet they form an important basis for much creative play and discussion between children in their social interactions. News events may appear to be more traditionally educational, and I discuss the important role these play in children's lives, both migrant and long settled. Yet they rarely form part of classroom discussions. The informal chats that the children engaged in about the news included revelations about their own lives and knowledge. Yet none of these "activities" is considered part of a multicultural curriculum. Rather than encouraging children to present themselves

and their lives through formal demonstrations of their foreignness, such communications allow children to talk about how they are the same as and different from each other from a basis of shared (media and other) experience. These informal pleasures that in schools form part of playground culture have important educational implications for intercultural communication and multicultural education.

The challenge underlying the discussion here is perhaps one of *place*. If we see our schools as still promulgating a national or local identity and education for incoming children simply in terms of a process of induction into the ways of the receiving country, then we fail to see how all children are already moving beyond this. They lead local lives while still maintaining global connections. How they use media and how I describe their use of television to form social relations and build new multiple identities challenges how we have historically viewed multiculturalism. Schools are rarely seen as international centers of communication, learning, and cultural exchange. This has been reserved for universities, and even there this has been contradictory. Yet there is an increasing need to respond to the global lives of all the children attending our schools and to learn from how they are already negotiating their new status.

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