



HERE AND ELSEWHERE

THOUGHT ADVENTURE 41

This is not only a curriculum topic (at the time of writing), it is also a *topical* topic, and, in my experience in schools in South East London, one that has special significance for the children I have run this session with, many of them being immigrants – or the children of immigrants – themselves.

- ✓ **Equipment and preparation needed:** a whiteboard and pens
- ✓ **Subject links:** Geography, migration, holidays and tourism
- ✓ **Key controversies:** When, if ever, does your national identity change? Can it ever be the case that, *in a way*, one is X-ian and, *in a way*, one is Y-ian? What makes you X-ian?
- ✓ **Key concepts and vocabulary:** migration, immigration, culture, blood, ancestors, DNA
- ✓ **Key Facilitation Skill:** *Anchoring* - this is the technique of asking a simple but central (usually grammatically closed) question that you keep coming back to in order to help keep things focused and to encourage contributors to construct arguments (with premises and a conclusion). In this case, the question may be: 'So would you be Herian or Elsewherian?' Keep coming back to these, or similar questions over and over again, but always remember to 'open it up' if necessary, usually with 'Why?', 'What do you mean by...?', 'Can you say more about that?' or 'Can you give an example?'

SESSION

Begin by saying the following to the class:

“

There are two countries: a country called 'Here' and another called 'Elsewhere' [feel free to rename these]. You are from *Here*. You were born there and have lived there your whole life. This year you are going on your first holiday to *Elsewhere*. In *Elsewhere* they do things differently from how things are done in *Here*.

”

Draw a simple diagram showing two countries and label them 'Here' and 'Elsewhere'. Write 'You are...' above *Here* and draw an arrow pointing to *Here*.

A long holiday

Start question: When you go on holiday are you still Herian or do you become Elsewherian?

What if you went on holiday for...

- a) 6 weeks?
- b) 1 year?
- c) 2 years?
- d) 5 years? And so on...

Nested questions

- ✓ Would you ever become Elsewherian?
- ✓ If so, how long would you need to be in Elsewhere before you became Elsewherian?
- ✓ What is it that makes you X-ian (Herian, Elsewherian, English, Jamaican and so on)?
- ✓ What is national identity?
- ✓ Can national identity change?
- ✓ What is a holiday?
- ✓ When does a holiday stop being a holiday?

WAR, FAMINE, DISEASE, NATURAL DISASTER

“

While you are on holiday in *Elsewhere* something terrible happens back home in *Here*: there's a terrible war in one part, there's no food in another, a virulent disease is ravaging the country and there's been an awful earthquake! This means that you and your family cannot go back to *Here*. You have to stay in *Elsewhere*.

”

Task Question: Are you Herian or Elsewherian?

Main Nested Questions

- ✓ At what point, if at all, would you become Elsewherian?
- ✓ What, if anything, would make you Elsewherian?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: ATLANTIS AND HERE

Two and a half thousand years ago, an ancient Greek philosopher called Plato told a story about a mythical island called 'Atlantis'. The island is known for apparently vanishing into the sea. One of the many suggestions made is that it was a volcanic island that erupted with such violence that the entire island slipped into the sea leaving not a single trace. There has been speculation ever since about where this island may once have been situated.

Imagine that while away from *Here*, the island of *Here*, rather like Atlantis in the account above, disappears into the sea after a huge cataclysmic event.

Task Question: Are you still Herian if 'Here' isn't there anymore?

Try the following variations with this TQ:

- You are part of a diaspora of *Here* that survived.
- You are the only Herian to survive.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: WHEN IN ELSEWHERE...

“

At the beginning, I said that in *Elsewhere* they do things differently to how things are done in *Here*. Here are some of the ways that they do things differently:

”

- ✓ In *Here* they celebrate birthdays but in *Elsewhere* they don't.
- ✓ In *Here* they drive on the left hand side of the road and in *Elsewhere* they drive on the right.
- ✓ Elsewherians speak a different language.
- ✓ Elsewherians eat insects like we eat prawns.
- ✓ In *Here* everyone is educated but in *Elsewhere* only the girls are university educated; the boys are trained only for the workplace.

Start Question: What do you think about these different practices? Do you agree with them?

Nested Questions

- ✓ Should you follow these different practices while in *Elsewhere*?
- ✓ They feel very strange to you now. Will they ever feel normal?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: TURNING THE TABLES

Do: You could have the class imagine that they are from *Elsewhere*: they are Elsewherian, born and bred. Use this 'turning of the tables' to see if it impacts on their views and/or to engender different but related discussions around migration.

Links

- ✓ *TPF website*: In another class? – Thinking about classes, sets and vagueness
- ✓ *Thoughtings*: From Me To You
- ✓ *The Philosophy Shop*: Metaphysics: Identity
- ✓ *The If Machine*: Republic Island
- ✓ *Once Upon an If*: Sindbad and The Pit
- ✓ *The If Odyssey*: The Battle (The Ciconians) and Dinner Guests (The Laestrygonians)