

Knowledge, Religious Understanding and Education in a multi-faith society.

An exploration of the relationship between secular school and faith community in the development of a child's identity and values in a local and global context.

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Abstract

This research was initiated by a concern for the effect that the secular education system might be having on the young people of one particular faith minority (Muslim), and a suggestion that Muslims and other faith minorities (including Christian) face similar educational problems, and share key understandings concerning their approach to education that differs distinctly from the secular.

Through a series of interviews with members of a wide variety of faith groups, as well as interviews with teachers and advisors working within the state education system, the research explores the relationships between education, identity, values and culture, with a search for a common voice across the faith groups interviewed. The research sets out to examine the understandings of faith educators with regard to the nature of knowledge, and how that compares with the secular perspectives that underpin the current approach to education in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

The research looks to the education system as a whole, and examines the relationship between primary, secondary, and tertiary forms of education, and the basic principles that link the three together. It looks to the nature of religious education, and whether it is compatible with faith group understandings of what religious education should involve.

The research was conducted with a particular concentration on the interactive relationship between researcher and researched, reflexively examining key issues for learners as seen reflected in the research process, such as the difficulty of achieving any shared understanding, and the problems that arise from being educated in an paradigm very different from the world-view of the learner.

Finally, the research looks to the possibility of education in the future being able to draw on classical religious traditions of education for pragmatic answers to some of today's key problems.



**As Allah Wills
In the Name of Allah,
The Merciful, The Compassionate**

**Praise be to Allah, master of the Universe
And prayer and peace upon the Prince of Messengers, Muhammad, our lord paramount
And upon all his people prayer and peace together for ever until the judgment day.**

**And afterwards may the legends of the men of old be lessons to the people of our time,
so that a man may see those things which befell others beside himself:
then he will honour and consider carefully the words and adventures of past peoples,
and will reprove himself.**

**Also glory be to him who preserved the tales of the first dwellers
to be a guide for the purposes of the last !**

(The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night – trans. Mardrus & Mathers)

For Lesley

My wife, without whom none of this would have been possible.

It is so difficult to find the beginning.
Or, better: it is difficult to begin at the beginning.
And not try to go further back.
(Wittgenstein on Certainty)

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Religious Understanding
and Education
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Introductory Preface

'How long is a thesis?' I asked, and the response seemed to suggest that it was somewhat similar to that of a piece of string, nothing too exact, but probably between the length of an equation and about a hundred and twenty thousand words. So I assumed that it was expected to take as much space as the thesis content needed to express itself, and that is the approach that I decided to take. Begin at the beginning, go where it leads to, and stop at the end. But the beginning was hard to find, led around the world and seemed endless. Then, when the end did come, looking back, it appeared to be almost as long as it was wide, yet it did end up within the original parameters, so that is what you are reading.

This thesis falls into three sections: Section One (Chapters One to Five) examines the research context and methodology; Section Two (Chapters Six to Nine) presents the interview data; Section Three (Chapters Ten to Fourteen) looks at the data in terms of analysis, reconstruction and development towards a conclusion. Although there are 'layers' that are written across and throughout the thesis, the bulk of the content was written in a linear way, one chapter following another in the traditional manner. In its attempts to expose underlying problems of research presentation, however, the thesis developed certain stylistic idiosyncrasies as a best attempt to find a means of expression.

One such idiosyncrasy is my predilection for the frequent use of long quotations, as opposed to the alternative of abstracting and rephrasing, but I always feel that authors have usually worked long and hard to polish the expression of their ideas, and any paraphrase is likely to be more clumsy. But manipulating the interplay of other people's words to create a narrative is a technique I am familiar with from other contexts, and in the stressful time of thesis writing I retreated to the familiar, a stylistic comfort blanket, using pastiche to illustrate my arguments and carry the threads of my ideas.

The concern for style springs from a concern for the nature of the research as written text. As Usher and Edwards explain, *"Research, then, is necessarily embodied in the production and reading of a written text but the significant thing is that not any text will do. In the main, a particular kind of text, the academic text, is required. ... Academic research texts are ostensibly about 'reality' but the reality in which they themselves are situated, from which they are produced and through which they can be read, falls out of view through decontextualisation.*

They can thus deny their own particular 'strategies and devices' to which only those 'party to the necessary moves' have access. ... This implies that the research text is not simply a faithful representation of a reality outside the text. ... In arguing for the adequacy of representations, researchers do not simply appeal to something 'outside' the text but do adequacy-guaranteeing things within and through the writing. The 'truth' of research is an outcome of textual strategies rather than the extent to which the text faithfully represents 'reality'." (Usher and Edwards 1994 p150) The recognition of 'strategies and devices' would seem to be an integral part of writing a text honestly. "Most significantly, the text constructed from narrative realism does not draw attention to itself as a text. As Woolgar (1991:28) points out it is a text whose status is that of 'a neutral medium for conveying pre-existing facts about the world ... [its] neutrality exempts it from consideration as a species of social/cultural activity'. The text operates at a different meta-level to that which it is about, it does not apparently create the 'about' because it is not supposed to be productive. Thus narrative realism can function as a textual strategy where the 'problem' of reflexivity appears to have been banished. ... The academic texts of research are therefore 'writerly' texts which yet point away from their 'writerliness'. Through narrative realism they direct attention away from themselves as texts to that which they purport to be about. ... The textual strategies of writing have as their most important effect that writing can conceal its own being as writing." (Usher and Edwards 1994 p150-151)

Despite the inherent flaws in the traditional narrative realism of research texts, however, much of this thesis utilises just such a form of narrative. Discussion of a 'real' world, for all its philosophical challenges remains a useful way to avoid a retreat into solipsism. This 'academic text', then, is one voice largely used throughout this thesis, intellectual, impersonal, and emotionally detached. But there are other voices to be heard, one in particular, a theatrical aside, the voice of the author who must be acknowledged; and once reflexivity is introduced, research is set in a very different context. "At its simplest, reflexivity claims that since the activity of the knower always influences what is known, nothing can be known except through those activities. The question that then follows from this inevitable reflexivity is that if research, the making of knowledge-claims, is dependent upon the activity of the researcher, can such knowledge ever be truthful representation – in other words, are we as researchers researching the world, or ourselves as makers of knowledge-claims? Can research ever be anything more than a subtle form of writing the self? ... The significance of reflexivity in research has a number of dimensions. In doing research there is always a reflexive

understanding potentially present – ‘in our action is our knowing’ (Lather 1991a: xv). If this reflexive understanding is to be a resource rather than a source of bias we have to subject ourselves as researchers to critical self-scrutiny; in other words, we have to be reflexive. Furthermore, since reflexivity is not purely ‘personal’ there are implications for ‘being reflexive’ – it is not merely a matter of being ‘upfront’ about one’s personal values and standpoint.” (Usher and Edwards 1994 p148-149)

I’m not sure whether this voice functions well in terms of self-critique. It sometimes seems more like a diary in that it is written in the instant, but it is not a diary or even a commentary; perhaps the best term remains an ‘aside’. It is not entirely a natural voice, still scripted, yet it acts as a release for a whole side of my understanding that isn’t there when I write another way. There are emotions. I do try to hold a critical mirror to myself but I fear I still suffer from an excess of arrogance that hinders attempts at self-critique. I do admit that the style (like the font) could be seen as somewhat less than subtle, but.

The research explores the possibility of a ‘Faith Voice’ drawn from the data, and the relationship between a group voice and individual identity. But the complexities of identity demand many more than one or two voices to express the range of human experience. The life shaping experiences are not always, or even often, intellectual. As a reminder of the way that ‘real life’ can impose itself, occasional illustrations of a biographical form accompany the text. If identity is constructed from past narratives, they must in some way be available for any research that claims to be reflexive. Ultimately, the relationship between researcher and reader comes down to a matter of trust, and too often the most avowedly reflexive research leaves the reader with no ‘feeling’ for, or ‘familiarity’ with, the author. The reader has not been given the appropriate data to determine whether the relationship should be one of trust in the author. In the way that identity depends on now fictional past narratives, this biography is fiction based on fact, that can illustrate an author.

With postmodernism there is a playfulness that has come into research, a ‘ludic’ quality, that can make expressions seem flippant. But changes of thought may have a weight of effect that can make flippancy seem like naïve bravado. *“The collapse of old ways of belief and the coming into being of a new worldview threaten all existing constructions of reality and all power structures attached to them – and a lot of people aren’t going to like it. We must understand ... that it is one of the most psychologically and politically threatening events in all of human*

history. ... The collapse of a belief system can be like the end of the world. It can bring down not only the powerful, but whole systems of social roles and the concepts of personal identity that go with them." (Anderson 1990 p26-27) As Walter Truett Anderson says, 'Welcome to the Postmodern World'. Such times seem appropriate to reassess the meanings and relationships of Knowledge, Religious Understanding and Education in a multi-faith society.

Chapter One

Another Time Another Place

Until the Muslim community first asked me to help, I hadn't really thought about education very much. Of course, I had learned a few things over the years, but that had very little to do with schooling. So I started to have discussions with some of the community about educational matters, and applied myself to the study of the subject. But for Muslims, to talk of education is to discuss Islam itself, and as I quickly gained the sobriquet of education expert, public lectures to bigger gatherings soon followed. Then my local mosque thought it would be a good idea for me to represent them at inter faith meetings. So I did, and I found that when I spoke of my perception of Muslim concerns about the education system, other faith adherents seemed to find their own problems reflected clearly in the Muslim mirror. That was many years ago, but those several strands are still with me today, Islam, personal faith, shared perceptions across faith groups, knowledge, understanding, and education. This research is not just a topic picked at random, it is inextricably intertwined with my life over many years. So with that in mind, here at the start, I wish to make it absolutely clear to the reader that this research has been carried out in full awareness that the researcher has and has always had opinions. They will no doubt seep into my objectivity.

Back in Glasgow, he found a local mosque in the Yellow Pages, and as it was Ramadhan, thought he should pay it a visit. The experiences of previous years had made him more than a little apprehensive of the likely response, however, and in the event it was much as he expected. A lot of staring, whispering and nudging, but during his years of travel he had developed the technique of entering mosques rapidly and getting straight about his instantly recognisable ritual business, and so pre-empting those who might have felt strongly enough to challenge the propriety of his presence. Nonetheless, as ever, many found it disturbing. But once the prayers were over, the curious could feel free to gather round, and after a short grilling by those with some kind of communal status, the questions started to flood in. What he found most interesting, however, was a thread of conversation which quickly dominated the proceedings and which he had never experienced on his travels. Along with the usual shock and disbelief voiced by the crowd that a westerner would choose to be a Muslim over the perceived western freedom to spend one's life in pubs, discos, and between the sheets of an endless string of willing and licentious sexual partners, there was a clear chorus of desperation strong enough to burst through the usual tendency in the South Asian community to describe their world in terms of rose-tinted perfection. The variations on a theme of "Why/how/where/when did you become a Muslim?" quickly turned to "You have to help us! We are losing our children! They go to school, and by the time they have been there a few years they want nothing to do with us or our Islam!" And so began twenty years of his trying to do something about it.

Illustration No.1

Reasons for public interest

“The socialization of the student as a moral being has been a core concern of mass education since its rise in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is no period or place in which education is conceived to be a narrowly technical enterprise, involving knowledge and competence in language or mathematics independent of broader socialization into the moral order.” (Cummings et al., 1988, p.12)

The educational pendulum has swung a long way since Thomas Arnold stopped the teaching of science at Rugby on the grounds that *“Physical science alone can never make a man educated; even the formal sciences, valuable as they are with respect to the discipline of reasoning power, cannot instruct judgement; it is only moral and religious knowledge which can accomplish this”*. Very few (though some, I’m sure) would hope for such extreme measures nowadays, but many would agree wholeheartedly with his sentiments, and the extent to which religion and values are now minimalised in the curriculum is being challenged from many quarters.

“Periodically, critics assert a weakening in the moral fabric of their societies. Through the 1960s, this pessimism tended to be dismissed, at least by national opinion leaders and prominent intellectuals, as the reaction of out-of-phase moralists who were being displaced by the progressive changes associated with the transition to post-industrial society. But over the past decade the tide of opinion has shifted. Gallup polls in the US indicate that parents are as concerned that schools help students to develop standards of right and wrong as to teach them to speak, think, write and count.” (Cummings et al., 1988, p.3)

In Britain, the last few decades have brought about enormous change in social and work patterns in the community, affecting parent-child relationships, and profoundly altering the balance between professional secular education and the home educational environment usually accredited with primary responsibility for moral and value system education. Much as many might wish otherwise, it is not possible for educationists to distance themselves from the society that surrounds them. Like everyone else, they are well aware of the rapid social and cultural changes that are their context, and are searching for ways that the system can adapt to, cope with, and contribute to change, and with a subject of such importance to so

many, set in a rapidly changing situation, a wide variety of opinions can be heard as to the best way to proceed. But do the opinions of ancient faith groups have anything relevant to contribute to the debate in this thoroughly modern/postmodern world? Why would anyone be interested in a Muslim's view of our education system, eyes that see our paradigms as 'other'?

The UK education system in the context of its society faces the problems that come with cultural change, and in the quest for answers inevitably other systems will be looked to for examples of how the system might be adapted and improved. But learning from 'others' involves two processes, 'them' trying to express what they think in terms they think 'we' might understand, and 'us' trying to express an understanding of what 'they' have been saying to us. The latter is now part of the discipline of Comparative Education.

Comparative Education

Sir Michael Sadler in his 'How Far Can We Learn Anything of Practical Value from the Study of Foreign Systems of Education?' published in 1900, said: *"We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties and of battles long ago. ... But is it not likely that if we have endeavoured, in a sympathetic spirit, to understand the real working of a foreign system of education, we shall in turn find ourselves better able to enter into the spirit and tradition of our own national education, more sensitive to its unwritten ideals, quicker to catch the signs which mark its growing or fading influence, readier to mark the dangers which threaten it and the subtle workings of hurtful change? The practical value of studying in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and understand our own."*

(quoted in Hans 1967 p3)

What he said may still hold true, but nowadays, when the borders between cultures and even nation states themselves are becoming ever more permeable and fluid, isolation is not an option. *"It is more truthful to suggest that cultural borrowing, in some form or other, is the inevitable outcome and justification of a comparative approach. Thus in the end, the point of the exercise is to augment our understandings of our own cultural context by comparing it with*

others. This is the unique contribution which the comparative study of education can make. In the process of refining understandings through comparisons, a beginning is made with analysis, logic and other elements of rationality. But further refinement emerges through words like insight, feeling, intuition, again the product of making comparisons.” (Nicholas 1983 p5)

“Recognizable authorities have emerged, having produced a series of standard works, beginning perhaps with Kandel (1933, 1954) and continuing with Hans (1949), Lauwerys (1948 annually to 1970), Mallinson (1957), King (1958, 1962), Grant (1964), Holmes (1965), Armytage (1967, 1968, 1969a and b), and Price (1977). Some have had direct influences upon national, even international bodies – Kandel on the Spens Report; Lauwerys with UNESCO. The writings of English authors have been augmented heavily by contributors from abroad, like Bereday (1964), Eckstein and Noah (1969), Ulich (1967), and Husen (1967, 1979). Not unnaturally, these authorities have not always agreed amongst themselves, which is hardly remarkable, for a variety of approaches, schisms, even cries of heresy have often characterized academic work in most disciplines.” (Nicholas 1983 p2)

Of course, education systems can be viewed and categorised in a variety of ways: *“One useful way to categorize goals is in terms of seven aspects of human development on which a society’s instructional institutions may focus. The goals are those of (1) producing good people (social/ moral education), (2) preparing skilled communicators (basic education in reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculating), (3) developing well-informed people who understand the physical and social universe (liberal or general education), (4) promoting individuals’ physical and mental health (health and safety education), (5) developing faithful supporters of the society (citizenship, civic, or political education), (6) producing efficient workers (Vocational education), and (7) equipping individuals to realize their self-selected destinies (self-fulfillment education). In one way or another, ever society intends to provide for all seven types. However, societies can differ on the specific objectives they choose to promote within each of these types. They also can differ in regard to which agencies are held responsible for which kinds of goals. In most nations, the principal agencies are the family, the neighborhood, the church, the formal school, community groups, apprenticeship programs, and such mass-communication media as television, radio, and the press.” (Thomas 1990 p26)*

As well as goals, systems can also be compared in terms of function or mechanism: *“Schools perform four basic functions in society. First, they are the major agencies used by society to transmit the knowledge, traditions, values and norms necessary for its continuation. Here education is a stabilizing force designed, in one version of things, to guard against the ephemeral, and in another, to sustain the status quo. Second it is argued that all contemporary societies are stratified on grounds, and for reason of merit, variously defined. Education functions as the main agent of socio-economic selection. Children are ascribed to particular niches in social-status hierarchies, according to their success in acquiring specified educational credentials. An extension of this idea is the claim that the existing elites define what counts as education – knowledge, culture, behaviour”* (Nicholas 1983 p205-206)

Whatever our concerns with regard to the education debate, aims or practicalities, *“The purpose of studying non-Western educational traditions is both to help us understand the common principles that underlie all educational undertakings and to understand the different means that human beings have devised to accomplish these principles. Such understanding is, of course, valuable in its own right, but it may also have profound effects on the way in which we view diversity and difference writ large, and as it impacts our own personal and professional lives”*. (Reagan 1996 p10)

Education as a changing process

Education has clearly always been a changing process, but where should we look to see how change occurs: *“The first question about the characteristics of education can be broken down into three subsidiary ones: Who gets it? What happens to them during it? Where do they go to after it? These enquiries about inputs, processes and outputs subsume a whole range of issues, many of which have often been discussed independently. They embrace problems about educational opportunity, selection and discrimination, about the management and transmission of knowledge and values, and about social placement, stratification, and mobility. At the same time they raise the two most general problems of all, namely those about the effects of society upon education and about the consequences of education for society. ... Thus the fundamental question here is why does education have the particular inputs, processes and outputs which characterize it at any given time? The basic answer to it is held to be very simple. Education has the characteristics it does because of the goals pursued by those who control it. The second question asks why these particular inputs, processes and outputs change over time? The basic*

answer given here is equally simple. Change occurs because new educational goals are pursued by those who have the power to modify previous practices.” (Archer 1979 p1-2) These answers are deceptive in their simplicity, as change is rarely simple. There are forces that fight against change, not only those that benefit from the status quo. Change requires invention, imagination and self-examination.

And those looking for change would do well to remember that ‘Changing an education system is like moving a graveyard - a great deal of work with very little help from the incumbents.’

“Mankind has always had a tendency to regard the present state of affairs as permanent – not only permanent but evidently self-justified, and indeed ‘natural’. Even revolutionaries about to establish a new system have relied on a sense of permanence – in heaven, in the rational process, or in ‘natural laws’ of some kind that could be invoked to regulate and perhaps ‘predict’. ... the assumption that the future is foreseeable, plannable, and contrivable by means of formal education systems managed by the State – if not owned by the State. Indeed, states have behaved as though they also owned the young people being educated, and their careers, as though they were a commodity called ‘manpower’. Despite truly humanitarian consideration motivating many educational developments, scholastic provision has usually been construed as something decided upon in the long term, and managed consistently from the top downwards. ... It is this central assumption which is now fundamentally challenged, for technological, political and educational reasons. The central challenge for today is that we must work towards ‘Education for Uncertainty (King 1979a) – and most of all in everything that pertains to young adults (a newly recognised ‘problem’ constituency in three senses: socially, economically and politically) (King, Moor and Mundy 1974, 1975).” (King in Burns & Welch 1992 p386-387)

It is not enough that theories exploring educational change look only to ideals, as future change requires a certain pragmatism for fruition. *“There is nothing more pointless than the debates which have now lasted for centuries about the ideal nature of education. The only function they serve is in helping individuals and groups to clarify their educational goals, to recognize the implication of their chosen aims, and sometimes to get others to share them. They remain sterile unless and until they are harnessed to an understanding of the processes by which present education can be changed to conform to the ideal.” (Archer 1979 p4) Our education system is not a blank sheet on which new ideas can be written. It came out of something.*

“Educational systems, rarities before the eighteenth century, emerged within complex social structures and cultures and this context conditioned the conception and conduct of action of those seeking education development. Among other things the social distribution of resources and values and the patterning of vested interests in the existing form of education were crucially important factors. Once a given form of education exists it exerts an influence on future educational change. Alternative education plans are, to some extent, reactions to it (they represent desires to change inputs, transform processes, or alter the end products); attempts to change it are affected by it (by the degree to which it monopolizes education skills and resources); and change is change of it (which means dismantling, transforming, or in some way grappling with it).” (Archer 1979 p3) Our education system has a history, and change cannot be considered without taking that history into account.

He had never thought of himself as a teacher, though he had given the occasional University lecture on theatre related topics. It was a long time since he had done anything even remotely academic, and even longer since he was last in a school classroom, so his first soundings of the education system came as a bit of a culture shock. He expected that someone with no direct participatory involvement with education might find it hard to gain access to the system in any way, and indeed the defences erected against the meddlings of the casually interested amateur can on occasions seem impenetrable. But it didn't take too long for him to realise that the way to get in was to give the impression that he might have something useful to offer if he was invited in, and it worked. So he did bits of this and that, a bit of consultation on Islam related classroom material preparation for the local region, a few conversations about exam modules, some in-service teacher training, multicultural and anti-racist stuff, school/muslim relations, and staff development work related to the Islamic section of 5-14 RME. The link was tenuous, however, in the light of political restructuring, and there was no doubt that a tenuous link was just simply not enough to keep on top of the waves of change that were breaking over the education business. It seemed that each time he visited an educational establishment of any kind, there was another stack of relevant documents and publications that he didn't even know had been published. He had to look for another approach.

Illustration No.2

History of Education

“From one point of view the history of education is the history of mankind; but the landscape being so broad and so deep and in places so obscure, it is very doubtful whether this particular point of vantage really helps the would-be observer. But a time comes in the history of a people when it embodies its educational ideals ... The schools and colleges of an age, in so far as they are alive, are closely related to some phase or phases of the life of that age. They are

part effect, part cause of that life – a fact which becomes more evident when education is studied, not as a thing apart or in the void, but as it is connected with the nations' life, in a word, as history." (Adamson in Gordon and Szreter 1989 p39)

History might be expected of its nature to take a long-term and wide view of what is such an intrinsic part of the human experience, but this is not always the case "*One of the most limiting aspects of the history of education has been the assumption that everything of importance could be embraced in an account of the emergence of the state system of schools. From this point of view, inordinate importance is attached to the steps whereby government participation in education was secured in the nineteenth century. In the period before 1800 it is supposed that 'the educational system was simple in form' (Musgrave, 1970, p22), or even that the idea of general education cannot be traced back beyond the last quarter of the eighteenth century (Wardle, 1971a, p1). ... One of the main factors in breaking down this artificial barrier has been the appreciation that the modern school is only one aspect of the educational mechanism, and that schools themselves can only be properly understood if they are studied as part of the more general framework of education. This broader outlook involves reference to all means employed by the community for the socialization of the younger generation. For historical purposes it has more utility than the narrower definitions of education favoured by contemporary philosophers of education. ... Schools thereby may be seen as having many different functional roles, and they can take their place alongside the family, the church and other social institutions in determining the educational experiences of each successive generation.*" (Webster in Gordon and Szreter 1989 p178-180)

To look for a broader perspective is not to detract from the importance of what happened to education in the nineteenth century, however, as it profoundly affected the way that the education system functions today. "*The educational system is seen as a factor of great importance in constituting the mechanism which, in the course of the nineteenth century, took the place of churches as the dominant instrument of hegemony (Gramsci) or ideological state apparatus (Althusser) serving to promote conformity to the needs of civil society. This position has promoted the view that the school systems evolved in the last century should be regarded as imprisoning the mind of the proletariat (Gramsci, 1965; Broccoli, 1972; Althusser, 1973, 1976; levitas, 1974; Gluckmann, 1975).*" (Webster in Gordon and Szreter 1989 p182)

The importance of a broad view is that it opens up alternative ways of seeing and understanding, breaking free of the status quo and its immediate antecedents. *“In short, when we speak of the history of educational thought and practice, what we have actually meant in the past has been the history of Western educational thought and practice, and the effect of our meaning has been, in essence, to delegitimize the many alternatives found elsewhere in the world. In other words, it is discourse itself – the way that one talks, thinks about, and conceptualises educational thought and practice – that is at issue. As Stephen Ball noted in a discussion of the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, ‘discourse is a central concept in Foucault’s analytical framework. Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations”* (Reagan 1996 p2)

Changes of theory / perception

Go back a few centuries, and there would seem to be little to recognise in the field of education theory. *“The shapelessness of medieval education bothers most people. Philippe Aries tells us that hardly any systematic progress toward anything was possible in the medieval curriculum, burdened as it was by little sense of sequence or of the difficulty of this or that text ... Medieval education appears to be essentially without structure and, implicitly, without ideology. A similar kind of structurelessness terrifies contemporary conservative critics ... Other critics on the left, such as Ivan Illich, wishing to escape from the hegemony of modern education have argued for an education without goals: an abolition of school bureaucracies, compulsory education, and fixed curricula, all to be replaced by, networks of learning resources among which the student can pick and choose without institutional coercion.”* (Olsen 1995 pxvi) What is self-evident, however, is that western educationists trace their heritage right through that medieval shapelessness back to the shared root of Plato.

“The humanist oeuvre may start with Plato and move on to Erasmus but it has a variety of local and national expressions, including for instance, John Locke in England. The rationalist-encyclopaedic view has more diverse sources including also those of Ancient Greece. The philosophy of Rene Descartes may have underwritten rationalism but its educational application can be explored more fully in influential educational thinkers such as John Amos Comenius, who predated Descartes. Naturalist views have universal expression in the ideas of Jean-

Jacques Rousseau but many later proposals are specific to particular countries and cultures. ... The history of western educational thought since the late eighteenth century can be seen as an attempt to make sense of Plato, from whom both humanism and rationalism derived, and the naturalism of Rousseau. Writers as diverse as Immanuel Kant and John Dewey took this starting point (Bowen, 1981: 210-18; Dewey, 1961). The confrontation is still central to all western education.” (McLean 1990 p22-23)

American theorists naturally followed on from the traditions of their European forebears, but did develop in their own directions. *“Central was the idea that through education society is restructured and developed and that educational aims are materialistic, concepts associated with the ideas of Herbert Spencer and the influence of Darwinist views of social progress. The key development in the American formulations was the philosophy of pragmatism summarized in a key sentence of William James, ‘the truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events’ (Cremin, 1962:109). In its popular summary, knowledge is for its use rather than for its own sake. With this conceptualisation it was possible to break away from the formalist and external view of worthwhile knowledge of the European humanist-rationalist tradition. ... Knowledge was viewed pragmatically. Existing knowledge was treated promiscuously. It was drawn upon where necessary to help to solve problems. But the learners sought solutions by starting from the problems and not from the acquisition of bodies of pre-packaged knowledge. A curriculum could not predetermine what knowledge was needed. Nothing had the right of inclusion or exclusion.” (McLean 1990 p40)*

America may have taken European tradition in a distinctive direction, but European colonising armies opened up the world to western ideas, it simultaneously laid itself open to the import of foreign perceptions. *“ Non-European epistemologies, from a western perspective, appear like distorted mirror images. Equivalences of humanism, rationalism and naturalism appear in other cultures. Confucian, Hindu, Islamic and, indeed, African traditions start from a moral concept of education. ... However through a purely moral-aesthetic view of education, East Asian societies seem to be able to solve the problems of morality-rationality dichotomy and ... have been able to sustain a contemporary culture that all have a moral obligation to learn and all knowledge, however foreign, is worth acquiring. So the major conceptual leap was achieved that western civilization has never made – that it is the act of learning that counts*

rather than the worth of what is to be learned. In effect, Herbert Spencer's question – What knowledge is of most worth? – becomes redundant.” (McLean 1990 p42-44)

“At the present time students of educational theory, perhaps the majority of them, ignore ends and devote their attention exclusively to processes. Psycho-analysis, the writings of Freud and Jung, ‘intelligence-tests’ and similar psychological material, from which much guidance in method may be extracted, fill their thoughts and their books; but they are silent as to the ultimate ends to which method itself is merely auxiliary. ... What may without offence be called the unhistorical study of education seems to have its origin in the belief that education is, or may be made, a science, using that word in its commonly accepted meaning. Hence the disregard of ‘ends’, with which natural science has nothing to do. ... The difficulty in accepting this idea of educational theory is that in practice we find ourselves compelled to attempt a synthesis of principles derived from many branches of enquiry. Ethics, aesthetics, logic, psychology, and other divisions of philosophy, political theory, all have their bearing upon education, to say nothing of biology, physiology and the results of trial and error through the centuries. A body of doctrine so composite is not what is commonly understood by the term ‘science’. The exponents of ‘education as a science’ can only retain the phrase by ignoring the synthetic character of educational theory.” (Adamson in Gordon and Szreter 1989 p42-43)

If the usual empirical certainties of science seem not to apply to the world of education, how is change within the system to be justified? *“The notion of legitimation has altered from a concern with the specific processes whereby educational knowledge becomes legitimate, including changes in the hierarchy of educational knowledge, to a wider concern with the dialectical relationship between the legitimation of educational knowledge and the legitimacy of the modern state. Conceptions of knowledge and culture are both argued to have changed, leading to a new formulation of educational change.” (Welch in (Burns & Welch 1992 p35-6)*
“The legitimations and forms of educational knowledge stand in reciprocal relationship to the society in which the educational knowledge is located; such legitimations reflect certain major characteristics of the society and the educational knowledge creates nationally differentiated, and in certain circumstances, subnationally differentiated, reality-definitions among educands.” (Cowen 1975:283) As populations take on a whole new international mobility, it would seem that problems of cross-cultural educational understanding are no longer an exotic rarity, but part of the cultural complexity to be expected within the nation-state itself.

European Education

“Dante reflects the educational journey undertaken in the patristic and medieval literature ... when he takes his bachelor’s level orals from Peter, James, and John. The apostles ask him three basic questions: what is faith? what is hope? and what is love? ... When the discourse turns to talk about love for the creation, Dante asserts that the whole creation inspires in him a measured love: (I love the leaves wherewith all of the garden of the Eternal Gardener is enleaved to the degree that He has placed good within them.) ... For Dante the sciences from physics to metaphysics reveal the creation as the garden of God, and the verbal arts reflect its reality.” (Olsen 1995 pxiii-xiv) But Dante’s journey towards knowing was transformed in following centuries, as Europe reappraised and redefined knowledge.

“Many of the assumptions regarding what education should be, and thus what constitutes worthwhile knowledge in the European tradition, are derived from the Renaissance, and can be traced through the eighteenth-century Age of Reason, and to nineteenth-century notions of the liberally educated gentleman. A summary of the propositions underpinning this tradition might go as follows: - Objective knowledge exists which should be pursued for its own sake; the search for wisdom, truth and beauty is the highest form of human activity. – Some forms of knowledge are much more worth while to pursue than others, because they form the foundations for eventual enlightenment. Such knowledge is essentially propositional ... often rational, and invariably referred to in terms of the mental discipline of a subject ... It may be that in origin medieval European universities should be seen as vocational foundations for the study of theology, medicine or law. . Undoubtedly, however, they developed this new rationale of dispassionate esotericism. But it was deemed proper that the pursuit of highly theoretical knowledge, for its own sake, was nevertheless, properly translatable into, and cashable for, vocational, economic, status, and power rewards. ... Finally, the university in Europe was and is a key institution in that its existence and purpose was explained in the above terms. As such it was the major agent of generating and replicating the kinds of knowledge above. Further, through its examining role its influence upon the school system below it was and is enormous.”
(Nicholas 1983 p9-11)

Perhaps more than anything, it was this way of knowing and understanding that gave Europe its distinctive identity for centuries - that and the Christian context in which it was set. In the

early days of the aggregation of European states into a community, the coming together was looked on primarily in terms of a common market. Barr makes the point that *“No mention is made of education in the 1957 Treaty of Rome out of which came the European Economic Community. Nevertheless, the European dimension in education is today an important consideration. The main thrust is, of course, economic. The intention is to create a Europe capable of satisfying markets both internally and in the wider world; and education systems that sustain that objective.”* (Barr in Kirk & Glaister 1992 p28-30) Legislation since 1957, of course, has accepted a much broader remit than the purely economic, but the initiating and driving force behind the formation of the European community was undeniably the market.

A way of knowing is difficult to contain within the confines of a market, and integration brings with it problems in different areas. *“Scotland has, in common with some other areas, a particular factor which will be significant in its coming to terms with Europe. That is the matter of national identity or, in the parlance of the EC, given our peculiar constitutional position, regional identity. ... 'Regionalism' developed in the 1960s as a term used to describe internal problems of nation states and it usually related to under-development, but like the idea of Europe itself, regionalism developed ... It is a powerful mix of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, historical, geographical and economical factors set in the context of centralised government, and giving rise to problems of social and political identity.”* (Barr in Kirk & Glaister 1992 p33) With its new Parliament, Scotland as a nation, not just its youth, is searching for its identity in a fast changing world.

It would seem self evident that the Scottish identity of the future is defined by those who are young Scots today, yet *“Young people today in general subscribe to a set of cultural expectations rather different than those promoted by the school. For many young people school is regarded as irrelevant. Schools, for their part, often suggest this arises from 'disadvantage, primarily in homes, communities and individual circumstances ..., factors 'out there', factors which schools can 'do very little about.' Of course there is ample evidence that schools speak a form of language that presents some children with a significant obstacle to learning. As McBeath has shown, for many learners attitudinal change is powerfully influenced by the context in which learning and teaching takes place rather than by the content of the teaching. For many pupils school is a demoralising experience of failure and, since schools are essentially reconstructions and reinforcements of an already unjust society, it would seem unlikely that we*

will progress towards a Europe in which respect for the individual and mutual understanding are characteristics of behaviour unless careful consideration is given to the nature of the relationship between young people and their school experience.” (Barr in Kirk & Glaister 1992 p34-35)

Scottish Education

“It used to be noted that visitors to Scotland without a taste for metaphysics were liable to be nonplussed by the questions publicly debated, because of the tendency for arguments about mundane matters to develop into arguments about first principles and for ordinary problems about material things to turn into rarefied problems of the relations of matter to mind.

Commenting caustically on this situation, Dr. Johnson remarked that Scotland was the only country in the civilised world in which the advance of learning and the diffusion of culture had not been accompanied by a corresponding advance in the material quality of life, while William Cobbett, putting the same thing from a rather different point of view, spoke of the Scots of his time as having the absurd idea that the way to improve the condition of the working man was not to give him ‘bacon’ with a small ‘b’, but ‘Bacon’ with a big ‘b’. ... The facts as thus stated, were not disputed by the Scots, many of whom, indeed, had a certain sympathy with these criticisms; but generation after generation, a core of Scottish orthodoxy composed of persons of the most varied status and points of view, nevertheless held to the opinion that their country had got its priorities right. The opposing course was considered by them to be a distortion of human nature which, though perhaps making things easier in the short-run, would be in the long-run disastrous to the quality of life.” (Davie 1986 pi)

As Withington says, “It is tempting to begin the story of Scottish education with the Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century, for that was a time of intended new beginnings, with many declarations of policy and of new, preferred practice. ... But there were of course schools in Scotland before then: ... A town of importance, such as Stirling in 1557, not only had its grammar school (then rivalling, in the classical languages, standards that its former pupils would find when they went to Glasgow University) but also schools for ‘bairns’, of both sexes, six years old and less, who were taught to ‘reid and write and lay compt.’” (Withington 1997 p6)

In 1560 the Protestant reformers in Scotland were weak in numbers and social standing, and they felt obliged to produce a manifesto of their aims and policies, *"In a remarkable document called the Book of Discipline, as well as outlining vital areas of theology and religious practice in which they wanted to see changes introduced, they spelled out the duties and responsibilities which, as a citizen, the individual owed to the state - or, more correctly, to that alliance of church and state which they called the 'godly commonwealth' - and also the responsibilities which the community, local and national, should bear towards individual citizens. ... For three centuries the Book of Discipline was to remain a constant reference point in Scotland in all matters of social policy, particularly in the provision of poor relief and schooling."* (Withington 1997 p7) and during that time, *"In contrast with an age when institutional religion has a beleaguered quality and seems isolated from the mainstream of modern life, the Church was then the very framework of society."* (Andrew Bain 1989 p6-7)

By the early years of the seventeenth century, in the majority of Lowland parishes there was schooling of some kind. *"And not any schooling would do: parish after parish, even in remote parts of the country, strained to have Latin grammar taught in its school, as a matter of status and self-respect."* (Withington 1997 p11) Yet in the early decades of the seventeenth century the state suddenly became very active in the matter of school provision in Scotland. Yet *"If local agencies were, so generally as we have surmised, already and effectively at work, then why these bursts of activity? ... The terminology of the 1616 intervention by the privy council reveals all: ... 'that the vulgar Inglische tongue be universallie plantit and the Irishe language, whilk is one of the cheif and principall caussis of the continewance of barbaritie and incivilitie amongis the inhabitants of the Isles and Heylandis, may be abolisheit and removit; and quhairas thair is no meane more powerful to further this his Majesties princelie regaird and purpois than the establisheing of scooles in the particular parrocheis of this kingdome"* (Withington 1997 p12-13) It was an attempt to break the hold of the Gaelic language and culture, highlighting the political nature of education.

One part of the 1616 text proved to be of wide importance across the whole of Scotland however, as it allocated the responsibility for school provision not just on parents, but on all parishioners. *"the provision of schooling was quite specifically to be made a community function, something to be supported by all, ... whether or not they were likely to receive some personal or family benefit from the service."* (Withington 1997 p14) By the start of the

eighteenth century, before the parliamentary union with England in 1707, a range of questions were being asked about the content and styles of teaching to be found in the public schools of Scotland. *“the question was consistently raised as to whether a curriculum restricted to reading, writing, a little arithmetic and Latin was any longer fitted to the educational needs of the country”* (Withington 1997 p 27) A new emphasis was placed on two things, *“firstly, that what the children learned should be useful, fitting them for the particular occupations which were to be chosen for them; secondly, that that learning should be attractive and agreeable.”* (Withington 1997 p28)

In 1818, in response to a Government enquiry into the education of the poor, education in Scotland was so socially cohesive that *“the parish ministers who made the returns were generally unable to distinguish schools for the poor from others (and objected to the implication that they should or could do so).”* (Withington 1997 p37) Yet in the 1820s and 1830s the leaders of the Church of Scotland made much of the need for parliamentary grants to extend and improve schooling. *“In truth, however, ... there was schooling aplenty. What the spokesmen for the Church were keen to argue was that secure moral and religious training could only be had in the public schools, that is schools which were directly, and legally, under the supervision of the national church.”* (Withington 1997 p39) Nonetheless, by the late 1860s the Presbyterian churches were all finding the support of their schools a severe drain on resources, *“just when they were all anxious about the apparent decline in membership and attachment to them among the adult population. Compulsory schooling in a new national system, providing a firm but modest instruction in (Presbyterian) Christian values to the next generation, seemed an appealing prospect.”* (Withington 1997 p58)

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, huge changes had taken place, and certainly some of the effects can be seen as not particularly beneficial. *“By 1878 only 669 schools out of a total of 3011, and after 1914 only 343 Out Of 3371, remained outside school board management: in 1918 the remaining church schools were incorporated into the national system. ... The 1872 Act not only marked a striking change in educational administration, it introduced something close to a new culture of schooling. Looking back in 1920, one writer recalled that ‘after the Education Act Of 1872, under the direction of cast-iron codes, the annual inspection developed into an organized series of terrors... Any flaw was visited by the most terrible of punishments - a loss of grant. ... The iron rule of the inspectors, mirrored in the painstaking*

efforts of teachers to meet their every requirement, too often transferred a dull and humourless rigidity to the classroom. The SED, with its codes and circulars, under the direction of successive and domineering permanent secretaries, took an astonishingly tight control over Scottish schooling. ... And in the cities there appeared very large schools, perhaps to accommodate 800 or even 1000, another enormous change since 1872 in the school experience of pupils; generally, they were now confined in separate classrooms with those of the same age, imprisoned (as it sometimes seemed) in gaunt, dark barracks, and frequently restrained there by military-style discipline.” (Withington 1997 p63-66)

Which brings us to the present day, and any number educational questions to be evaluated in the light of our history. *“The consequences of a return to the operation of 'market forces', attempts to enhance parental choice among different forms of schooling, improving opportunities to return to education after a break, however long, and removing rigid barriers between secondary schools and further and higher education, arguments for the particular long-term values in moral training in infant and nursery schools (and demands for places in them for all), debates over pupil 'disillusion' with schooling, over compulsion to attend and truancy, these 'live' questions and many, many more are all uncannily reminiscent of those being hotly pursued in Scottish education a century and more ago. But there seems to be remarkably little awareness of this.” (Withington 1997 p78-79)* Surely educationists of all people should know the need to look to the lessons of history if we are not to repeat old mistakes. We need to review problems with a cohesive view of the whole education system, whereas it has been the practice to review secondary schooling in stages *“The result has been a secondary system which struggles with the principles of 'continuity' and 'profession' but which has become more centralist in its structures across the country than at any time since comprehensivisation. ... a seemingly inexorable trend towards uniformity” (Boyd in Clark and Munn 1997 p53)*

“As we look forward to the millennium, there are still challenges to be faced in Scottish secondary schools. A new paradigm may be required to take account of issues such as 'multiple intelligences' (Gardner 1993), 'emotional intelligence' (Goleman 1996), 'accelerated learning' (Jensen 1994) and the impact of information technology on learning and teaching. If raising achievement is the aim, then a structure which sticks rigidly to age-stage divisions, which relies solely on 'subjects' as the building blocks and which still seeks to categorise pupils by present (cognitive) attainment may need to undergo a more radical revision than has taken

place since the War.” (Boyd in Clark and Munn 1997 p55) In the search for solutions, we may need to look to other traditions, but “Scottish experience has a lot to offer other places. Learning to negotiate and learning ways of relating political processes to individual identities are problems which Scottish education has had to cope with for some time, and are common problems now faced by policy-making throughout the new Europe.” (Paterson in Clark and Munn 1997 p153)

Local and Global contexts

Throughout history, our education system may have drawn upon knowledge from around the globe, but *“Education is an intimate activity. The unique disposition of each student confronts the personal style of each teacher. Concordance comes from shared, long-established values about the desirable traits of individuals, society and knowledge which education should foster. From this standpoint, the proposition of a global challenge seems to be hyperbole. ... The larger world of politics and economy has only recently intruded in the ancient activity of education. Mass state systems, in their loosest definition, are little more than 400 years old. Politicians and managers of educational institutions urge an unnatural uniformity in processes of learning and teaching which have a primeval diversity. Political demands change. Allegiances to new or reformed nation states was the prime aim in much of the early history of public education. Goals of social justice prevailed only from the mid-twentieth century. New economic and cultural issues have emerged since the early 1980s. It is understandable that changed national priorities are treated with scepticism by educators or are ignored in the hope that they will blow away.” (McLean 1990 p1)*

One aspect of politics that is almost a ‘sine qua non’, however, is national selfishness. Selflessness is a human virtue that is rarely reflected in national government, where the interests of the nation-state always comes first. But even this requires a new way of seeing. *“They cannot turn a blind eye to the rest of the world. At a time when they are advancing towards the heights of knowledge and power, how can they fail to feel some anxiety and even anguish over those vast, sombre areas of the planet which constitute the geography of ignorance – like the continuing geography of hunger and of premature mortality? Not only is it desirable to prevent economic, intellectual and civic disparities from becoming more acute, in the radically changing modern world, and to see a certain level of welfare, education and democracy become accessible to all peoples; it is something which we can no longer regard*

merely as a matter of philanthropy, charity, benevolence or loftiness of spirit." (Edgar Faure, Learning to be 1972 pxxi)

"For in our time, education is an enterprise of universal dimensions, huge and far-reaching, implicit in which are aims which have universal application. And these aims may be translated into the same explicit terms as certain of the great ideals typical of mankind today. ... We see these universally valid aims in scientific humanism; in the development of reason; in creativity; in the spirit of social responsibility; in the search for balance among the various intellectual, ethical, emotional and physical components of personality and in a positive perception of mankind's historic fate." (Learning to be 1972 p158)

Chapter Two

Current local context of Education

“On the face of things, education is generally very popular. Millions of parents go to great lengths to arrange pre-school activities for their children as preparation for their enrolment at the primary level. Given the chance, students press in increasing numbers to continue on a full-time basis after the completion of the secondary stage. Almost certainly the most important single explanation for this popularity is that people recognize that close correlation between the quantity of successfully completed schooling and placement in a given niche in the socio-economic, prestige, and status hierarchies.” (Nicholas 1983 p13)

Education is now also being considered as something that is not a process restricted to the early years of life. *“There has recently been international recognition that the model of full-time compulsory education prior to adulthood, and little thereafter, has several disadvantages. This has led to pressures for the provision not only of adult education but continuing education, known elsewhere as ‘permanent’, ‘life-long’, or ‘recurring’ education. Two main reasons are given. First, to ensure that the knowledge acquired at school, which after a time becomes redundant, can be updated. ...Second, to provide another chance for those whose ability and motivation develops late.” (Nicholas 1983 p43)* Solutions are being sought to the problems of school teaching that is immediately redundant, and students developing motivation only after learning is no longer compulsory.

He was schooled in two great languages, the arts and the sciences, but as was the way at school, he was expected to specialise in one. He was good at the science side of things, being particularly fond of geometry (or perhaps he just liked it because he could get %100 in the exams), so on the science side he stayed. He wasn't so fond of the arts, not so comfortable with languages, and even the thought of having to write an essay was enough to bring on an acute attack of writer's block. It took half a lifetime for him to learn to enjoy his own words dancing back at him off the paper, until finally learning how to have enough confidence in his words to feel that he didn't always have to make light of whatever it was he had to say. As for the science, it turned into a joke. It was nice to have a feel for the geometry and algebra, but he never again used a quadratic equation from the day that he left school. And as for the rest, the universe was in a steady state, the planets were sucked out of the sun by a passing something or other, and in all manner of absolute nonsense he passed exams with flying colours. All that learning for nearly instant obsolescence.

Illustration No. 3

“In Scotland, secondary schooling begins after seven years of primary education. The move from one sector to the other is characterised by change - in terms of the structure of the curriculum (5 'areas' become 15+ subjects); the pattern of learning and teaching (one teacher with flexibility to plan the shape of the day to 15+ teachers who see the pupils for between one and four hours per week); the status of the pupils (from responsible, increasingly independent learners to 'juniors' with little voice in the system. It has often been argued that the primary school is a child-centred, caring place while the secondary is a subject centered 'examination factory', and while this is untrue as a generalisation of either sector, it does bring into sharp relief the differences in ethos between the two. ... These differences are not new or surprising to most people in education in Scotland, and, indeed, lie at the heart of the 5-14 Development Programme's drive for progression and continuity.” (Boyd in Clark and Munn 1997 p55) The intrinsic dichotomy between these two approaches to education can be seen echoing through both the theoretical and the practical aspects of our education system.

Theory

Educationists have not always felt the need to use a curriculum as we would recognise it. But in our current system, it could almost be seen as a root structure. *“The topic of curriculum encapsulates most educational issues. Mundane sounding but still significant concerns, like school structures, the use of space and time, and the provision of materials, resources and furnishings, are involved. So are ... teaching styles, theories of learning, modes of assessment or evaluation, classroom discipline ... However, the curriculum includes additional contingent and quite critical matters such as forms of interpersonal relationships, scales of moral and ethical values, types of interpersonal relationships – and, inevitably, even more fundamental issues – such as those of educational purpose, principle and function – are also involved in it.”* (Nicholas 1983 p103) The curriculum is the encapsulation of our education system in words (plus, of course, a few important numbers). Once in place, educational problems are dealt with by referral to the curriculum, and current systems of evaluation and assessment are inherently intertwined with it. But *“The final problem is probably the most important, for in a sense it overrides all the others. This has to do with questions of politics, control and power. It has already been demonstrated that even one curriculum problem can raise questions to which there are several possible answers which are contradictory and irreconcilable. In this situation, which is applicable to many countries, the curriculum has to be seen as a political matter.”* (Nicholas 1983 p105-106) and political systems, through their human participants, show a

great concern for survival, growth and replication. *“We may begin by pointing out that for its continuation, capitalism, like communism, requires that a set of clear norms, or a code of conventional mental wisdom, be produced; and that this should then be recognized and closely observed by citizens.”* (Nicholas 1983 p117-118)

But as the political language of education tends more and more towards education for employment, *“Educationists and employers lack clear shared meaning of the achievement of students-turned-employees. Agreed attainment targets are reduced to imprecise epithets such as clever, wise, loyal and resourceful. Yet educational debate, across cultures and time, centres on such descriptors rather than on more specific cognitive and affective capacities. ... Educational cultures have developed in ways that give greater weight to some of these qualities than others. Occupations, in response to global changes in production, give more stress to certain qualities than others at particular times. The contemporary movement is towards expecting all employees (and thus all students) to have communicative competencies in language, number and spatial representation and to be able to think logically and systematically. This emphasis on ‘cleverness’ is universal and difficult for any student, parent or teacher to neglect.”* (McLean 1990 p172-173)

At the same time as debate has centred on broadening the curriculum in the UK, education has been rendered more prescriptive. Scotland may be different from England, but with the same political executive until recently, it inherits certain fundamental similarities. *“It seemed to us that the Education Reform Act’s model of the National Curriculum favoured a strongly classified subject curriculum – that is, a reassertion of the collection code. The subsequent detailed specification of official programmes of study for the core and other foundation subjects also seemed to herald a strengthening of ‘framing’ in Bernstein’s terms, especially in view of his statement that ‘where framing is strong, then the acquirer has little control over the selection, organization and pacing of the transmission’ (Bernstein, 1977, p179)”* (Hughes 1996 p54) So, the possibilities for an education tailored to an individual child actually recede. *“Where the teaching of a theme relies on a permeation model, any distinctive features are likely to become casualties at classroom level of the strong classification and strong framing associated with conventional academic subjects, which are now being reinforced by the demands of the subject-based National Curriculum.”* (Hughes 1996 p 56)

Yet the problem for any view of education that focuses on the curricular expression of a state education system is that *“Education systems are assumed to have a unity. The major problem with this approach is that education always has had a longitudinal dimension. It covers growth from infancy to adulthood. It moves from the family to the nation and the world over time. It shifts from being intimate to being public. It can be very different things at different stages”* (McLean 1990 p96) Whatever the power relationships in the system, teachers have to find a way to satisfy not just the intellectual, but the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of those they teach, if they are to be seen not just as children but as developing young fellow humans.

“There is a strong sense in which both teachers and pupils see effective teaching and learning as ‘transactional’ processes (Bruner, 1987; see also Vygotsky, 1987). To a large extent their views of learning conform to a model proposed by Bruner and Haste (1987), which describes learning as a complex ‘interweaving’ of ‘language, interaction and cognition’. The main contention of this view is that learners learn through a process of first being exposed to new knowledge, and then attempting to make sense of the new knowledge in terms of their existing knowledge. ... If we accept (as the transactional model requires) that learning is dependent on effective communication and cooperation between teachers and pupils, it follows that a necessary condition for effective learning to take place is the creation of circumstances that facilitate effective communication and co-operation. Furthermore, it can be argued that the appropriate forms of interaction that this view of learning considers necessary, are dependent on the quality of the individual’s self-image: his or her sense of self-worth, and the belief in one’s ability to take on and contribute to the resolution of problems. This requires an emotionally supportive environment, in which the learner feels valued and respected by the significant others (i.e. teachers and fellow pupils) with whom he or she is expected to interact in the learning process.” (Hughes 1996 p 96-97)

Practice

The implementation of the education system also depends on relationships between a number of groups. *“Three wider groups are the centre of attention. First are those who form a superstructure of decision-making about the content of education and its transmission – inspectors, academics, teacher trainers and educational researchers. Secondly, there are the teachers of various levels whose power, authority and status are now problematic ... Thirdly*

there are the consumers – students, parents, employers and a hazier and shifting conception of a community constituency. ... The superstructure of educational knowledge is not easily defined nor is the power or, indeed, the expertise of the various groups of people involved in its construction despite considerable analysis in the sociology of knowledge. ... Claims to expertise of various groups depend for their credibility not only on the general social standing of the group but also on how their segment of the overall process of teaching and learning is valued.”

(McLean 1990 p90)

Groups involved can be in a position to wield considerable political, economic, and social power, but then the power relationships are made much more complicated by sub-division, occasionally in a somewhat idiosyncratic way. *“Although the teaching force in each of our countries is a unified occupational group, it is in each case highly diversified and stratified. The first obvious instance of this is in the primary or secondary school teacher labels ... The differences here are intensified by the fact that such teachers used to be trained in separate institutions, and the structures and content of their courses still remain different. Broadly speaking, more stress is laid on subject content in the preparation of secondary teachers, and more on ‘pedagogies’, ‘methods’ and educational studies, particularly that of child psychology, in the preparation of primary teacher. There are clearly two very different models of teacher implicit in these differences of priority.”* (Nicholas 1983 p47) It is hard to see how such different teaching models could function in the same system, but not only that, pupil progress is quantified, and they are graded from best to worst. It is hardly surprising that some pupils might feel confused when wondering as to what it is towards which they are progressing.

The structures of power at the top of the system transpose down into a structure of power within a classroom. *“Rules have to be established to govern behaviour and mechanisms devised for dealing with misbehaviours and transgressions. Most time is taken up in teaching-learning groups, and whether the location is a workshop, studio, a gymnasium, a laboratory or, more typically, a classroom, such groups are socially curious. This is because they comprise one teacher and anything between 15 and 35 children. Social psychologists, beginning as long ago as Waller (1932, Part 3) have drawn attention to the uniqueness, even artificiality of these groups. ... What can be done is ultimately limited by the fact that there is a pupil-teacher ratio. ... It is also worth stressing what is involved in being a pupil, and being a teacher ... So far as children are concerned, because they are required to be at school, they are conscripts not*

informed volunteers. Further, so far as schools are concerned, they are juveniles, not only by law, but by chronological and development age ... and thus, inevitably, in some sense inferior. ... It follows that schools, equally inevitably, confer certain things upon teachers. Anyone who agrees to be hired to teach in a school has, necessarily, at least two roles consigned upon them – that of being ‘in’ authority; and that of being ‘an’ authority (Peters 1966). It is true, of course, that children in some schools do not necessarily recognize or admit, or even tolerate the validity of this process; and by their uncooperative, even defiant behaviours reject the teachers’ right to authority and the rites by which they seek to exercise it.” (Nicholas 1983 p14)

It does seem astonishing that up to so recently the laws of this country permitted “*an action by a teacher on a child which, if perpetrated on another adult, would constitute a criminal act – certainly that of assault, and conceivable that of grievous bodily harm.*” (Nicholas 1983 p37), but particularly in Scotland, there has been a strong tradition of teaching discipline through physical punishment erring on the side of brutality. Hopefully that is one tradition for which the country will no longer feel the need. Perhaps the best that can be said about it is that it might not have been as damaging to the thrashed children’s education as a tender heart might imagine.

“The amount of education received, measured by the beginning age of universal participation and the length of school days, hardly seems to affect student achievement. The ways in which children and young people are selected for different kinds of lower and upper secondary schooling do not seem to have any major impact on the achievement of minimum standards. Germany and Japan do not expect their children to start school at an early age. German children do not attend schools in afternoons and are rigidly stratified into different forms of secondary education at the age of 10 while France has universal provision of 3 year olds and, like most countries, common schooling to the age of 15 or 16. These differences seem to have little impact on relative student attainments. ... whether systems are controlled nationally, regionally or locally also has little effect on achievements. Centralization may prevail in Japan and France while regional or local school systems are the norm in Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and the USA. It is difficult to identify any outcomes of school achievement which derive from these differences. ... The crucial element is motivation of students which can bridge the gulf between aims and achievements. Yet motivation is a mystery when viewed comparatively. It may have many wide cultural sources. Possibilities of individual economic

success, patriotic commitment to collective goals, ingrained cultural beliefs in the worth of individuals and the shame of failing to conform to the general norm can all play a part. Popular motivation can rise and fall in different countries in ways that are amenable neither to understanding nor to control.” (McLean 1990 p174)

Politics

“Crisis is often used to describe the state of education, and other social institutions in recent years. Rarely used in the medical sense of a turning point, implying a short term state, it has become, rather, a way of describing an ongoing situation. The sense of suspense is maintained at one level of discourse, to urge haste in adopting new solutions. ... Crisis is also seen to exist in other social institutions as well, suggesting that solving the educational aspects will contribute to wider change, especially in the economy. ... Through the almost exclusive linkage of education and the economy, mediated through limited notions of development, the economically useful aspects of education have been reified as the only legitimate social function which it serves. It is only a short step, therefore to the third level of discourse which considers education as a commodity, subject to the same forces as other commodities ... when education becomes a service which is exchanged like other commodities, the change from a normative to an instrumental basis for considering the various elements of education delegitimizes or at least places a lower value on other discourses, including the pedagogical, ethical and cultural. It is here, rather than in the debates about quantity and quality, that the true educational, political and socio-cultural crisis lies, posing problems for the very concept of the state especially where there is still a surface allegiance to a social-democratic ideology (Camilleri 1986)” (Burns in Burns & Welch 1992 p3&4)

Politics, for all its good points, is not unfamiliar with the amoral manipulation of power, and is set in a world where, like a game of poker, all is not always exactly as it seems. *“By shifting the public’s attention to the problems of education, the real sources of the current crises are left unanalysed. That is, the crisis of the political economy of capitalism is exported from the economy to the state. The state then in turn exports the crisis downward onto the school. Thus whenever there is severe unemployment, a disintegration of traditional patterns of authority, and so on, the blame is placed upon students’ lack of skill, on their attitudes, on their ‘functional illiteracy’.” (Apple in Burns & Welch 1992 p61)* It is a common enough process to pass blame

downwards, but in the context of education it does place a spotlight on the question of 'who is education for'.

In many countries education is becoming a burden on its participants, who are driven to perform at increasingly high levels, as much through fear of failure as by the excitement of anticipated reward. The weight is increased by the unwillingness of civic authorities and popular opinion to expand resources for public education while expecting, perversely, better measurable returns. ... The challenge to education comes from a global economy that makes work more complex and more mercurial. ... It is libertarian in that it expects no obedience or even loyalty beyond the market place. So why is it associated with the education of Mr. Gradgrind? ... The problem is not in the story but in its telling. Politicians and employers have narrated a parable of imminent doom. Vast improvements in educational achievements are necessary to compete in a world economy which has no hiding places for the under-equipped. Much is correct in that account. But the supporting evidence is often spurious and the suggested strategies too limited. There are many ways to compete and even more strategies to prepare young people to be effective workers. Education is about much more than narrow or uniform vocational preparation and, ironically, the economy requires that this be the case. The best citizens, the most fulfilled persons and the most imaginative, resourceful students make the most effective workers in currently successful economies. The crucial element in the equation is motivation. (McLean; Educational Traditions piv)

As the essential control over education can now be seen as political, it must be expected that educational theory and practice are always subordinate to prevailing political ideologies. If politics is focusing on a market economy ideology, then education will be seen in the same terms. *"The 1988 Education Reform Act brought into play a new 'economy' of power, 'that is to say, procedures which allowed the effect of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted and 'individualized' throughout the entire social body' (Rabinow 1986: 61). This economy is invested in, 'runs through', four essential circuits within the education system, the four message systems of education: curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and organization (Ball 1990b: 122)." (Ball 1994 p1)*

But just as no political stance will apply to all of a population, any unified education system will have its disadvantaged and its detractors. *"The existing form of education induces strains*

which arise from the incompatibility between it and the operations of other institutional spheres, yet education itself is only directly affected by its subordinator. Because of this, attempts to overcome strains and remove obstacles will be directed towards the single institution with which education is integrated for it is this which is the source of obstruction. The ownership group has moulded education to serve its operations alone, and only by interacting with its members can the definition of instruction be changed.” (Archer 1979 p70-73) Discontent with the education system now becomes discontent with Government. “Thus the assertive group succeeds in bringing about replacement not through the supplies it provides itself but by use of its political authority to mobilize the necessary resources. It has gained educational control, not on the old basis of monopoly ownership of facilities but by virtue of its legislative power. Control ceases to be entrepreneurial and becomes managerial, for although education remains subordinate, it is dependent upon resources owned and supplied by the State, not by a dominant group. The capacity to define instruction becomes firmly linked to political position, and, what is completely novel, can be lost with the declining political fortunes of a group. Thus the emergence of national State education is the result of a group attempting to complete a restrictive strategy, but the control it gains over it is of a different and weaker kind than that previously enjoyed by dominant ownership groups. (Archer 1979 p150)

Disadvantaged minorities, rather than seeking a local solution are forced to look for change in the entire national system. *“Education is irresistibly dragged into the political arena, for all competing groups are threatened if one alone begins to make headway with central government. Thus profound educational conflict produces a strain towards state intervention as a means to protect or advance the various networks, not the integration of education to the polity as an end in itself.” (Archer 1979 p163) For any political executive, the best education system is one which does not disturb their political power.*

As a state education system is formed it unifies and standardises, and like a snowball rolling down a hill, builds momentum and grows ever larger until all before it is pressed to it and bound within it. *“The administrative framework is gradually elaborated, its controls are accepted and its standardizing influence becomes felt, as the independent networks seek central financial support and legal recognition. As educational competition reaches deadlock and passes into political interaction, central administrative agencies become more specifically educational. They are slowly dissociated from other bodies, charity Commissions, the Church,*

Poor Law agencies, etc., as a direct product of the ongoing educational conflict. ... Partly, of course, the demand for increased state intervention simply expands the educational work of government to a point at which its volume, complexity and above all, range, cannot be accommodated by traditional agencies.” (Archer 1979 p175)

With the advent of state education, change can no longer come from within the body of the system, but only at its head. Change requires political influence “*When private ownership largely gave way to public funding, educational control increasingly resided in the capacity to influence public spending.*” (Archer 1979 p227), and political influence is linked with influence in areas of mass public communication, public relations, advertising and the media. To bring about political change it is necessary to shout loud and long, and in sufficient numbers to suggest support from a critical proportion of the voting public.

The possibility of obtaining substantial changes through negotiation opens up at exactly the same time that the chances of successful competition are drastically reduced. In the past competition introduced sweeping educational changes in many countries whereas negotiation only produced the minor modification, acceptable to dominant ownership groups. With the advent of State systems this is no longer the case; the conditions for successful competition become vastly more stringent whilst the scope of changes which can be negotiated increases enormously. These two factors will be considered in turn to account for negotiation now prevailing as the most important process of educational change. (Archer 1979 p236-237) It takes a powerful group to carry any weight in negotiations with government, however, such are the vast implications of any change in education policy.

Changing policy will also be constrained by the paradigms and preconceptions of policy advisors and researchers. “*Both traditional policy researchers and those who use the newer postpositivist approaches’ assume that a social problem, for which a policy solution is needed, is like a disease. While there may be, in their view, a priori conditions (like poverty or dysfunctional families) that can be said to be the ‘cause’ of the disease (the social problem), at some point the disease requires either a real (the conventional approach) or a symbolic (the postpositivist approach) treatment, i.e. a policy solution. In a crucial sense, the emergence of the disease (social problem) is seen as natural’ and ‘real’ (an empirical given), much like the natural emergence of the symptoms of a disease. While these policy researchers may think that in the*

best of all possible worlds society would not produce such problems, they see nothing unnatural or socially constructed about what comes to be labeled or identified as a social problem. ... Given this traditional policy studies problematic, policy studies typically encompass one or more of four areas: (i) descriptions of social problems; (ii) discussions of competing policy solutions; (iii) considerations of general implementation problems; and (iv) evaluations of particular policy implementations.” (Scheurich 1997 p95) It is, of course, questionable whether problem descriptions, solution proposals, consideration of implementation and evaluation of the same, are ever really likely to get to the heart of the matter.

The difficulty is in even finding principles on which we can agree. Griffiths suggests social justice as a basis. *“The first principle is that there is no one right answer. Establishing social justice is less about particular outcomes than about processes, including processes which may overturn themselves. A socially just state of affairs is one characterized by a continual checking and adjusting. It is not a static perfect system: utopia is not to be found. Gandhi is supposed to have said that 'Equality is not the end, it is the way.' The same applies to social justice. ... The second principle is that each individual is valuable and recognized as an important valued part of the community as a whole. On the other hand, there is a recognition that no individual exists apart from her community or, more accurately, communities, since she certainly belongs to more than one. Thus, the good of a community inevitably has implications for the good of the individual. Likewise, the good of the individual has implications for the good of her communities. ... The third principle is that just as we create ourselves in and against community, we create ourselves in and against sections of that community, as persons with gender, social class, race, sexuality and disabilities. This principle draws attention to the importance of structural injustice, but in keeping with the second principle, also remains with individuals. Social justice is concerned both with individual empowerment and also with structural injustices; that is, with questions of power and resources available to individuals and to particular communities or sectors of those communities.” (Griffiths 1998 p12-13) But it would not be too difficult to find those who would object to the principles of social justice in any culture from the Ancient Greeks to the modern day.*

Education and Culture

Any consideration of fundamental principles must be set in a context of global history and culture, which is itself a step too far for many. *“When we discover that there are several*

cultures instead of just one and consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with destruction by our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just 'others', that we ourselves are an 'other' amongst others." (Ricoeur, History and Truth in Reagan 1996)

Over recent years, knowledge and culture have been politicised in academia. They can no longer be treated as either monolithic or neutral. *"Knowledge and culture tended now to be seen as arenas of contest, with classes, gender groupings or ethnic groups vying for control, and with different aspects of knowledge and culture as having more or less power and status, and as being connected to the distribution of power in society in particular ways. The notion of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1971) or 'cultural power' (Livingston 1987) has been another means used to express this relationship. One's differential access to cultural capital, or particular varieties of knowledge, had much to do with one's ultimate location in the power/status hierarchy in society, it was argued"* (Welch in Burns & Welch 1992 p61-62)

Yet culture has proved difficult to bring within the reductionist fold. *"Since the idea of Culture is so protean, eluding exact definition, any attempt to measure it is fated to be regarded as a singularly dubious enterprise ... it is as well to ask whether there is any hope of its being successful. ... Many would say none at all. According to their reckoning, Culture can only be appraised, never quantified. Culture, says Whitehead, means 'activity of thought and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling'. Culture, says Ortega y Gasset, means 'the system of vital ideas which each possesses'. Culture, says Malraux, 'is the heritage of the quality of the world'. As such, it is not to be reduced to any rule of thumb."* (Richmond 1963 p1)

To try to define something as shape-shiftingly complex as culture can never do it justice. It can be no more than intellectual play, though none the less worth for that. In a world of ludic postmodernism all intellectuality is play. That doesn't make it any less serious. We learn to learn through play.

"Culture, according to Ortega y Gasset, 'is the system of ideas by which the age lives. These ideas, which I have called "vital", meaning ideas by which an age conducts its life, are no more nor less than the repertory of our active convictions as to the nature of the world and our fellow creatures, convictions as to the hierarchy of the value of things." (Richmond 1963 p9) Such definitions are beautiful, but hard to pin down in a globalised multicultural people. The old

walls seem to be breaking down. *“It might appear from all this that the situation facing us is abnormal in that there is no longer any received body of opinion which lays down the basic requirements for Culture. As with the moral code, the old absolutes are gone: one pays one’s money and makes one’s choice. (Richmond 1963 p11) If the situation is such, perhaps it is abnormal, or perhaps it is just that it feels that way. Perhaps every generation feels that same challenge to its certainties in its own way.*

For all the lack of absolutes, every child is born into a context. *“One of the principal purposes of education is to help young people make sense of their society to understand why it is the way it is, and to reconstruct from where have come those values and norms which underpin the expectations and patterns of behaviour which are part of their everyday life. If young people are to be able to understand who they are, if they are to make sense of the context and communities in which they live, they must have an opportunity, to understand the cultural soil from which they have sprung.” (Harrison in Clark and Munn 1997 p159) We may be mobile creatures but we have roots. An understanding and acceptance, and if necessary escape from, our roots is an essential aspect of the development of self-identity.*

Education and Identity

“Erikson indicates that identity development has two complementing facts: (1) a developmental stage in the life of the individual, (2) a period in history (i.e. of the wider culture). There is thus a complementarity of what he calls ‘history’ and ‘life-history’” (Cajendra et al., 1982, p. 48) He particularly refers as example to the crucial time of the development of a psychosocial identity during adolescence. “It is clear, then, that many important components of one’s identity tend to be resolved around this time. If one is not able, because of societal or personal reasons, to resolve these in a positive way, then ‘identity confusion’ may result. This is uncertainty about the role one is playing in the scheme of life. The resolution of this turning point or ‘identity crisis’ may be conscious and deliberate ... On the other hand, much of the resolution of this crisis involves emotional issues that may be relatively hidden beneath the surface of conscious awareness. ... For some ... adolescents ... because of the structure of society and the pressures of the dominant culture, they are denied the necessities with which to build an adequate ‘life-history’ to combat their surrounding milieu.” (Cajendra et al., 1982, p. 49)

This 'life-history' building process takes place throughout a lifetime, not just in adolescence. In fact, *"Some sociologists argue that the way modern societies are organized actually exacerbates the problems and pains suffered by adolescence. Others go further, however, and charge that particular types of society generate this period of turmoil, and that the problems are symptoms, individually suffered, of a deeper malaise within them."* (Nicholas 1983 p62-63) All humans need to shape themselves in terms of what they know. In their surroundings they find role models, and in their history heroes.

"Hauser found that a second environmental constraint was in terms of 'heroes' i.e. positive figures whom the ... subjects were interested in emulating. ... Erikson argued that the individual belonging to an oppressed and exploited minority, and who is aware of the dominant cultural ideals but prevented from emulating them, is likely to fuse the negative images held up to him by the dominant majority with his own previously developed identity (Erikson, 1955, p.155)." (Cajendra et al., 1982, p. 51) With cultures fragmenting, it could be said that the state is no more than an aggregate of minorities. If this is the case, then new mechanisms will need to be found if the education system is to satisfy the individual identity needs of pupils.

Life in a multiracial and multifaith society *"affects not only the attitudes and behaviour of minority group members toward the standard set by the dominant society, but also the responses to themselves and their groups. The way one looks upon himself is a product of his social experience with others. The nature of that experience profoundly influences the basic ego structure which is the central core of the self.... One's concept of the self is initially influenced by certain basic characteristics such as one's age, sex, colour, caste and in some cases, religion. These 'ascribed' characteristics impose upon the person's choice of others with whom he interacts and thus influence his answers to the questions: Who am I? What am I like as a person? Thus the answers to these questions come not in isolation from the society as a whole, but to a great extent in relation to the individual's position in the social structure. 'Position' and 'structure' as used here are important variables in that they are the phenomena to be examined when the 'self-concept' is being investigated. Social structure exists before the person is born and constitutes the milieu into which he or she is thrust. This social structure consists of individuals with certain beliefs, ideas and knowledge and thus each person has to see others as objects which must be taken into account in his or her conduct. ... In a complex society, 'objects' or significant others might be numerous and indeed present the child with conflicting*

values. This comes to the fore very much when the child starts school where the teacher's qualities conflict with those of the parents.” (Cajendra et al., 1982, pp. 52-53)

When the language of school conflicts with the language of home, a child will face an identity conflict. An extreme example can be seen in Hans' description of 'natives' attending colonial schools. *“Before entering school the pupils have acquired a proficiency in their mother tongue, have built up a vocabulary covering most of the objects of sense-impressions and their daily activities. At school they have to superimpose on this basis a language of ideas and abstract relations expressed entirely in a foreign medium. Their minds become split into two water-tight compartments – one for ordinary things and actions expressed in their mother tongue, and another for things connected with school subjects and the world of ideas expressed in a foreign language. As a result they are unable to speak of their home affairs in the school language and about learned subjects in their mother tongue. The so-called ‘Babu mind,’ so often ridiculed by some colonial administrators, is a direct result of this division of linguistic spheres and has nothing to do with the innate inferiority or superiority of the native mind. (Hans 1967 p41-42)*

Cajendra describes two aspects of identity. *“Cognitive identity is composed of both cultural identity and personal identity ... Ethnic minorities, of course, have both personal and cultural identity. Indeed, the problem for ethnic group members is to have, within a global identity, an adequate balance of personal and cultural identity, combined with positive evaluation of those aspects of identity, in combination again with a degree of mastery over environment, and self actualisation.” (Cajendra et al., 1982, pp. 56-57)* But with a global identity set in a global context, a cultural identity set in a multicultural society, and an environment that is probably impossible to master, the education system might need a different approach if its users are to achieve self-actualisation.

The general economic and political context underlying apparently arbitrary and arcane criteria of educational success needs to be explored. ... The difficulty in understanding comes from paradoxical movements in the contemporary world. Economic and technological convergence is accompanied by political, social and cultural centrifugalism. The boundaries of the previously monolithic state are being pushed back. Personal and community values are more diverse. The rationality of a high technology economy is narrowly instrumental. Whole-life meaning is elusive for most or its participants. Education has always been concerned with more than narrowly

occupational aims. But the cultural and personal implications of a global economy are less satisfactorily defined. (McLean 1990 p2) If educational control resides in the capacity to influence public spending, how much influence might we expect from multinational economic concerns, and what might be their educational values?

Education and Values

"Values education is possibly the most fundamental concern of society, yet much of the task of values education is carried out by the institutions of the family, the community and the Church, which are relatively insulated from the affects of public policy." (Cummings et al., 1988, p.165)

Cummings, Gopinathan and Tomodo, identify two strands which must be separately identified in discussion, "values clarification and values instruction". *"Proponents of values instruction believe that the responsibility for identifying appropriate values lies with the schools, the adult community and/or the state, and thus the task of values education is to meaningfully convey the socially approved values to young people."* (Cummings et al., 1988, p.5)

Analysing the values education traditions of many countries, Cha, Wong and Meyer, point out that in a tradition of radical liberalism *"moral instruction is difficult to ground in missing organized traditions of either religious or social authority"*, and conclude that *"Radical regimes will de-emphasize both moral and religious education in preference to broader instruction in social science and for emphases on participation in school as a matter of citizenship (more than organizational discipline)"*. They suggest, however, that *"In most modern societies, society is seen as linked to religious or social traditions, which carry more of the burden of sustaining the moral order and instruction which is seen as beneficial to proper moral conduct. ... Societies with established organized religions will emphasize religious instruction in the curriculum"*, whereas in societies which *"while retaining an emphasis on cultural traditions and their authority, either lack a unified religious tradition or have politically disestablished such a tradition we expect to find a curricular emphasis on moral education, as a slightly secularized version of established traditions, customs, and their authority. ... Societies built around a tradition of collective authority, but lacking an established religion, will emphasize moral education in the curriculum."* (Cummings et al., 1988 pp.13-15)

McNay and Ozga pose two questions. *“How do values in education originate, and who has authority to implement them? Are there different kinds of values and do they operate in different ways? ... The history demonstrates how value issues emerge unsystematically from the beliefs entertained by individuals or groups of individuals or interest groups or parties. They become policies when power is gained and the values become authoritative. Some policy movements derive less from a priori assumptions about what is morally right than from the observation and experience of practitioners. Practitioners identify the best ways in which pupils learn and what should be learned. These judgements involve assumptions about the kind of adult that education should produce and the world he or she should inhabit. ... Practitioner-based value setting is conditioned by the larger system and the values which flow through it; resource allocations, external examinations, maintaining schools as efficient organizations, all tap different sources of values and ways in which they are made authoritative. Recent policy moves, to incorporate presumed employment needs and parental demands, add to the range of values which teachers have to take on board. Ultimately it is they who select from them, because it is through teachers that the principal discernible products of education emerge.”* (McNay & Ozga 1985 p18-19)

According to McNay and Ozga, educational and social values are interlinked. Concepts of learning intrinsically involve views about the relationships between individuals and society, and the social issues of most concern have been equality and socialization. *“Socialization is the process by which each generation is inducted into the norms of society. It can therefore respond to a wide range of values, depending on the purposes for which children are to be socialized. The dominant norms are highly variable between societies and can range widely within any particular society. Indeed values pluralism is itself a dominant value in British society and one sponsored by education. ... At the same time, the schools have never been detached from the promotion of particular value assumptions. Patriotism, the work ethic, individuality, multi-culturalism, have jostled with legal requirements to teach religious education and offer acts of worship. Socialization has, on the whole, favoured value eclecticism, but with tilts towards the assumptions of a liberal capitalist society.”* (McNay & Ozga 1985 p20)

“The difficulty faced at the end of the twentieth century compared with mid-century and later nineteenth century isomorphisms is that one convergent and universal dynamic is not easy to detect. Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s dilemma that education must prepare the citizen and ‘man in

nature' simultaneously applies more forcefully than ever in a contemporary world in which convergent and interdependent economies coexist with a fragmentation of values and personal aspirations. All education systems need to be judged on their capacity to develop areas of morality, rationality and personal-cultural authenticity. And these educational goals can be conflicting rather than complementary." (McLean 1990 pvi) Few would claim that morality and personal-cultural authenticity carry weight equivalent to rationality in our current education system. Rationality still holds court even in the face of postmodern uncertainties. But it is in the higher academic reaches, where educationists might look to for a lead in such matters, that the system has suffered most.

Education and Research

Situated as it is, in a frame/context of human understanding, educational research has suffered from the same millennial uncertainties as the rest of the western world. It took a couple of hundred years to make the break, but old certainties were beginning to shatter. *"From Hume and Kant through Darwin, Marx, Freud and beyond, an unsettling conclusion was becoming inescapable: Human thought was determined, structured, and very probably distorted by a multitude of overlapping factors – innate but nonabsolute mental categories, habit, history, culture, social class, biology, language, imagination, emotion, the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious. In the end, the human mind could not be relied upon as an accurate judge of reality. The original Cartesian certainty, that which served as foundation for the modern confidence in human reason, was no longer defensible."* (Tarnas 1991 p353)

From a Darwinian/Freudian identity crisis, the uncertainty spread towards the bastions of material factuality. *"In the first instance, the classical Cartesian-Newtonian cosmology gradually and then dramatically broke down under the cumulative impact of several astonishing developments in physics. Beginning in the later nineteenth century with Maxwell's work with electromagnetic fields, the Michelson-Morley experiment, and Becquerel's discovery of radioactivity, then in the early twentieth century with Planck's isolation of quantum phenomena and Einstein's special and general theories of relativity, and culminating in the 1920s with the formulation of quantum mechanics by Bohr, Heisenberg, and their colleagues, the long established certainties of classical modern science were radically undermined. By the end of the third decade of the twentieth century, virtually every major postulate of the earlier scientific conception had been controverted."* (Tarnas 1991 p355-356)

“Something indeed was ending. And so it was that the Western mind, in response to these many complexly interwoven developments, had followed a trajectory that by the late twentieth century had largely dissolved the foundations of the modern world view, leaving the contemporary mind increasingly bereft of established certainties, yet also fundamentally open in ways it had never been before. And the intellectual sensibility that now reflects and expresses this unprecedented situation, the overdetermined outcome of the modern mind’s extraordinary development of increasing sophistication and self-deconstruction, is the postmodern mind.” (Tarnas 1991 p394)

It is hard to tell just how much postmodern theories have permeated the classroom, but it seems unlikely that teachers would have embraced uncertainty when academia was still reeling from the challenge. *“In our own moment of cultural transition, Jeffrey Nealon has asked, ‘How does one make thought or action truly critical if the category that could ground such a criticism - truth - has been withdrawn?’”* Bereft of the category of truth, Nealon poses a series of possible answers based on contemporary educational and literary theory - answers that present the academic disciplines as products of appropriations of power that lead to new subjugations of people. He argues that human beings create competing interpretations of the world to justify competing institutional practices that give power to their own group. To make an action critical, in his -view, we must preserve a radical skepticism about the production of knowledge and the institutions that produce it.” (Olsen 1995 p115)

Educational research was not expected to tell the purpose of education, but it did expect to be able to determine facts, using rational thought processes identical to those taught in schools, processes of observing, recording, counting and comparing. *“Comparison is a mental operation which seeks relationships between observable facts; it is also a social scientific method for establishing relationships between relationships. Through reflection theory, the two aspects of comparison can be bridged with the concept of self-reference, which can be placed on an equal level with scientific truth. These two are different ways of dealing with and understanding experience; through this common task, diverse social phenomena can be brought together for reflective understanding and for bringing practice and theorising in education together under an internal system of reflection.”* (Burns & Welch 1992 pxv) Ethnographic approaches seem better equipped than most to handle the change, however.

“Ethnography is also a counterpoint to the bland and misleading, rational scientism (or psycho-humanism) which predominates within the more prescriptive writing of educational management and administration. ... I see a possible role for ethnography (as sets of cultural texts) in relation to theorization, similar to the role played by historical texts in Foucault’s genealogical method. In other words, there is a methodological affinity between ethnography and genealogy. (There are also important parallels between critical policy research and Foucauldian sociology.) Foucault defines genealogy as: ‘the union of erudite and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today ... What it really does is to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledge against the claims of a unitary body of theory that would filter, hierarchise, and order them in the name of some true knowledge. (Foucault 1980:83) The genealogical approach interrupts the taken-for-granted and isolates the contingent power relations which make it possible for particular assertions to operate as absolute truths. ... Ethnography is a way of engaging critically with, and developing interpretations of, ‘the real’. Like genealogy it is disruptive, it is often about giving voice to the unheard, it is also about the play of power-knowledge relations in local and specific setting; here, the curriculum, management, leadership, choice and competition. It enables the analyst to focus upon and explore ‘events’, spaces which divide those in struggle. It is very much about local memories and marginalized perspectives (Maguire and Ball 1994). As Thomas (1993: 68) argues, ‘Critical thinking that challenges accepted images and tweaks the conscience into intellectual re-examination and social action embodies a struggle over ideas, metaphors, policies and behaviour.’” (Ball 1994 p2-4)

“The best that can be done is to look for knowledge from different perspectives, in the context of the social and historical situations in which it was discovered, interpreted and constructed. This knowledge is thus self-consciously situated in its context, and always subject to revision. There are three important consequences for researchers. ... First, there is no possibility of the acquisition or creation of stable, unchanging knowledge, since all knowledge must be subject to critique from other viewpoints, which may fundamentally revise current structures. ... The various reconfigurations affect other structures, so it is necessary for there to be a continual questioning of the new political alignments being found. ... So even while some old narrowness of perspective is lost, inevitably some new problems of narrowness will be created. This is not

the smooth progress hoped for under positivism. ... It is more like building a garden, where work never stops and where unexpected growth can alter the development of the whole. ...

Second, since knowledge bears the marks of its knowers, attention must be paid to how it is grounded in the individual perspectives and positions in a discourse of the researcher and the subjects. ... It would be impossible to pin down any one individual with an exhaustive description of the many ways of working of power and values at these micro and macro levels. Yet some or many of them are likely to be relevant for the construction of knowledge. ...

Third, it is not just perspective and position that need to be taken into account, but also the particular ethical and political views of the researcher. ... The ethical and political views underlying the getting of knowledge should be as clear as possible, even while accepting that absolute clarity is an impossibility, since they cannot be fully specified. ... Acknowledging ethical and political views helps both to unmask any bias that is implicit in those views, and also to provide a way of weighing up the validity of the knowledge.” (Griffiths p82-83)

“It is worthwhile struggling for justice and knowledge, even though they remain fallible and uncertain.” (Griffiths 1998 p83)

Chapter Three

General Methodologies & Paradigms

As with all research, the methodology is dependent on several things, the purpose of the research, the nature of the research material, and the audience for whom the research is intended. This being a research project for a particular 'academic' purpose, I do recognise the humility of my standing, and much as I would like to think of my conclusions having some impact on the education system, it is more realistic to recognise that the initial aim of the document is to achieve academic qualifications, and a recognition from academic peers that I have something to contribute to academic discourse. It would be nice to think that my work might prove useful to the growing number of educationists working in related fields, and am satisfied to have gained a deeper insight into a subject which has fascinated me for many years, but I recognize that the initial and main audience for the work does not reach far beyond a very few. It is unlikely to achieve a mass audience, and almost as much as the nature of the material, I feel this influenced my methodology.

The initial problem for any work produced for assessment within the academic system is that the system is a functional hierarchy, and as Becker points out, "*credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system*" (Becker 1967 p127), and any researchers who refuse to abide by that "*hierarchy of credibility*" are actually expressing "*disrespect for the entire established order*" (Becker 1967 p127). This may not be too much of a problem for subject matter which lends itself to straightforward quantitative numerical analysis, or which fits easily into a positivist or 'naturalistic' tradition. But where the issues being dealt with are not only qualitative but those 'grand ideas' which more recent postmodern viewpoints find it necessary to attempt to deconstruct and demythologise without supplanting (the post-modern denial of universal truths necessarily also rejecting their replacement by the 'grand idea' of postmodernism), a more complex scenario is involved.

The ludic and ironic aspects of postmodernism unfortunately lead those who use them into a quagmire of 'disrespect', and much as 'my-kid can-paint-better-than-that' critiques of Picasso are most easily answered by the realistic works that show the prodigious talent of his pre-teen years, so it may prove necessary to display a knowledge of pre-postmodern methodology to earn the right to play with disrespectful challenges.

Brown and Dowling take the position that educational research should produce a coherent set of statements established and located within explicitly stated theoretical and empirical contexts, a process that *“begins with vagueness and hesitance and plurality and moves towards precision and coherence”* (Brown & Dowling 1998 p137). They see this as intrinsic to the process regardless of the realist or constructivist leanings of the researcher.

“constructivism and realism are epistemological and not methodological positions. They are concerned with the origins of structure rather than its practical description or production. From our perspective, then, it is no more necessary to resolve your epistemology in your empirical research than it is to incorporate a declaration of your religious affiliation. Unfortunately, however, the tendency to make a pass at epistemological discussion is commonly presented in lieu of adequate theoretical development”. (Brown & Dowling 1998 P137)

Despite Brown and Dowling’s misgivings, however, a declaration of religious affiliation would seem to be an absolute necessity for this research considering its subject matter. At the same time, as a consideration of current epistemologies would seem central to the themes involved, so great care must obviously be taken in ensuring “adequate theoretical development”.

When the theoretical field is so vast as to include the essential nature of human life and the ways of understanding truth, meaning and reality, how is it possible to reduce this to the confines of a small scale academic research project? From the outset, it was clear that a major problem to be considered was how to avoid the accusation that “this is a life’s work, not research for a degree”. For someone bringing a life obsession into the academic community, the learning curve with regard to the constraints of academia is steep indeed. One soon realizes that *“the theoretical field more appropriately refers to a notional community of researchers and/or practitioners as well as to their output. Your work, or the work that you are reading, is entering into discursive relations with this community. In other words, the theoretical field comprises ... (the) authorities within the theoretical field.”* (Brown & Dowling 1998 p138-139) In a similar fashion, whereas one might hope for a readership outwith academic specialists, *“Where the work is research, its readership may be understood as a subset of the authorities of the field.”* (Brown & Dowling 1998 p139) To someone arriving from outside the academic system, these relationships can seem incestuous to say the very least.

Nonetheless, assuming that an established problematic can be found, remembering that “*the problematic is to be constructed with reference to work in the research genre*” (Brown & Dowling 1998 p140), a focused problem must be defined in theoretical terms (which can be expressed as propositions, hypotheses, or questions), with concepts that can be developed to enable their empirical measurement or operationalization, once more bringing us full circle, as “*Like the theoretical field, the empirical field also constitutes a community or communities. Again, these may be more notional than substantive. The field is being constituted by the research as an object of study which is to be described in terms of the theoretical problematic. It is this relationship of objectification which distinguishes between the theoretical and empirical fields. The theoretical field objectifies the empirical field and not the other way around. The community or communities comprising the theoretical field engage in the production and interrogation of research and of other modes of commentary on the empirical field.*” (Brown & Dowling 1998 p141)

Having focused the problem into a localized empirical setting, the researcher needs to deal with issues of reliability and validity, and eventually return from tangible results to a theoretical generalizability, as “*Essentially, no piece of research is of any value at all unless it does impose upon the way in which you interpret the world on subsequent occasions.*” (Brown & Dowling 1998 p145)

His first MSc proposal was a very improbable affair. He wanted to change the world, and dreamed of doing so with a grandiose action research project. He was wary of the tendency of academic research to go no farther than the vaults of a university library, just adding a few bytes of disk space to the electronic catalogues. Nonetheless, it was soon clear that his original plan would have to be abandoned. Though still hopeful that his project could be achieved one day, it was time for him to re-evaluate and return to the drawing board. At this point, he was struck by an interesting issue that had been blurred by his previous concentration on schools. Universities themselves are an integral part of the education system, training teachers and assessing pupils for the educational progression critical to their future lives, as well as providing research guidance to politicians and the like. In any approach to an educational research problem, he would need to pay close attention to the parameters and context of the research process. Such reflexive issues seemed best approached through a post-modern paradigm and methodology for academic acceptability, and fortunately his life had left him well equipped to operate within that paradigm. Having lived through virtually every postmodern archetype, his life-experience might seem to suggest him as a prime example of a manifestation of postmodern man. It ought to have been easy.

Illustration No. 4

“The act of asking questions is crucial. We want to maintain that it is the process of asking questions that drives the development of structural coherence. The kind of questions to be asked and the way in which they are put comprises a mode of interrogation. ... There is a sense in which it is the mode of interrogation which defines the activity - in this case, research.”
(Brown & Dowling 1998 p138)

“There are four questions of value in life, Don Octavio: What is sacred? Of what is the spirit made? What is worth living for? And what is worth dying for?” (Don Juan De Marco – script by Jeremy Leven)

Classic methodologies

In the ‘Landscape of Qualitative Research’, Denzin and Lincoln look back on the history of ethnography as categorised in the work of Vidich and Lyman - the early pre-seventeenth century ethnography, the colonial ethnography of the seventeenth to nineteenth century explorers, and through to the studies of the “civic other”, ethnicity and assimilation, of the twentieth century. Written in 1998, the Landscape considered the recent methodological revolution that had taken place in the social sciences, with the blurring of disciplinary boundaries and the focus on an interpretative, qualitative approach to research and theory. Recognising that *“the ‘field’ of qualitative research is defined primarily by tensions, contradictions, and hesitations ... (existing) in a less-than-unified arena”* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 pvii) they proceed to analyse twentieth century qualitative research, reducing it to five phases. It is perhaps worth glancing at these phases as they serve as the academic context for any current qualitative research, and the historic springboard for its methodology.

In the ‘Traditional’ phase (1900-1950), typified by Malinowski, the ethnographer sees his work in terms of ‘science’, with laws and generalizations fashioned out of his experience, who *“organized ethnographic texts in terms of four beliefs and commitments: a commitment to objectivism, a complicity with imperialism, a belief in monumentalism (the ethnography would create a museumlike picture of the culture studied), and a belief in timelessness (what was studied never changed). This model of the researcher, who could also write complex, dense theories about what was studied, holds to the present day.”* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p14)

Indeed, this would seem to be true, yet within half a page they recognize the confusion that now reigns in the field *“Today this image has been shattered ... Old standards no longer hold. Ethnographies do not produce timeless truths. The commitment to objectivism is now in doubt. The complicity with imperialism is openly challenged today, and the belief in monumentalism is a thing of the past.”* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p15)

The middle of the century brings the ‘Modernist’ phase (1950-1970), which *“builds on the canonical works of the traditional period. Social realism, naturalism, and slice-of-life ethnographies are still valued. This phase extended through the postwar years to the 1970s; it is still present in the work of many (see Wolcott, 1992, for a review). In this period many texts attempted to formalize qualitative methods (see, for example, Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Cicourel, 1964; Filstead, 1970; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; J. Lofland, 1971; Lofland & Lofland, 1984). The modernist ethnographer and sociological participant observer attempted rigorous, qualitative studies of important social processes, including deviance and social control in the classroom and society. This was a moment of creative ferment. A new generation of graduate students, across the human disciplines, encountered new interpretive theories (ethnomethodology, phenomenology, critical theory, feminism). They were drawn to qualitative research practices that would let them give a voice to society’s underclass. Postpositivism functioned as a powerful epistemological paradigm”.* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p16)

This was seen as *“the golden age of rigorous qualitative analysis, bracketed in sociology by ‘Boys in White’ (Becker et al., 1961) at one end and ‘The Discovery of Grounded Theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) at the other. ... The ‘golden age’ reinforced a picture of qualitative researchers as cultural romantics. Imbued with Promethean human powers, they valorized villains and outsiders as heroes to mainstream society. They embodied a belief in the contingency of self and society, and held to emancipatory ideals for which ‘one lives and dies.’ They put in place a tragic and often ironic view of society and self, and joined a long line of leftist cultural romantics that included Emerson, Marx, James, Dewey, Gramsci, and Martin Luther King, Jr. (West, 1989, chap. 6).”* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p17)

The years between 1970 and 1986 are represented as a phase of Blurred Genres, with its beginning and end defined by two books by Geertz, ‘The Interpretation of Cultures’ (1973) and ‘Local Knowledge’ (1983). *“In these two works, Geertz argued that the old functional, positivist,*

behavioural, totalizing approaches to the human disciplines were giving way to a more pluralistic, interpretative, open-ended perspective. This new perspective took cultural representations and their meanings as its point of departure. Calling for 'thick descriptions' of particular events, rituals, and customs, Geertz suggested that all anthropological writings were interpretations of interpretations. The interpreter had no privileged voice in the interpretations that were written. The central task of theory was to make sense out of a local situation. ... A form of genre dispersion was occurring: documentaries that read like fiction (Mailer), parables posing as ethnographies (Castaneda), theoretical treatises that look like travelogues (Levi-Strauss). At the same time, many new approaches were emerging: post-structuralism (Barthes), neopositivism (Philips), neo-Marxism (Althusser), micro-macro descriptivism (Geertz), ritual theories of drama and culture (V. Turner), deconstructionism (Derrida), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel). The golden age of the social sciences was over, and a new age of blurred, interpretive genres was upon us. The essay as an art form was replacing the scientific article." (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p18-19)

As if it were not enough that boundaries of ethnography were becoming difficult to define, the years from 1986 to 1990 are categorized in terms of a 'Crisis of Representation'. *"the crisis of representation appeared with 'Anthropology as Cultural Critique' (Marcus & Fischer, 1986), 'The Anthropology of Experience' (Turner & Bruner, 1986), 'Writing Culture' (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), 'Works and Lives' (Geertz 1988), and 'The Predicament of Culture' (Clifford, 1988). These works made research and writing more reflexive, and called into question the issues of gender, class, and race. ... New models of truth and method were sought (Rosaldo, 1989). ... Issues such as validity, reliability, and objectivity, which had been settled in earlier phases, are once more problematic. Interpretive theories, as opposed to grounded theories, are now more common, as writers continue to challenge older models of truth and meaning."* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p19)

Finally, the years 1990-2000 are categorized as 'The Postmodern Challenge'. *"A double crisis of representation and legitimation confronts qualitative researchers in the social sciences. Embedded in the discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism ... these two crises are coded in multiple terms, variously called and associated with the interpretive, linguistic, and rhetorical turns in social theory. This linguistic turn makes problematic two key assumptions of qualitative research. The first is that qualitative researchers can directly capture lived*

experience. ... This is the representational crisis. ... The second assumption makes the traditional criteria for evaluating and interpreting qualitative research problematic. This is the legitimation crisis. It involves a serious rethinking of such terms as validity, generalizability, and reliability” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p21)

“From its turn-of-the-century birth in modern, interpretive form, qualitative research has been haunted by a double-faced ghost. On the one hand, qualitative researchers have assumed that qualified, competent observers can with objectivity, clarity, and precision report on their own observations of the social world, including the experiences of others. Second, researchers have held to a belief in a real subject, or real individual, who is present in the world and able, in some form, to report on his or her experiences. ... These two beliefs have led qualitative researchers across disciplines to seek a method that would allow them to record their own observations accurately while still uncovering the meanings their subjects bring to their life experiences. ... Recently, this position and its beliefs have come under attack. Poststructuralists and postmodernists have contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed. Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience.” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p23-24)

So, with the social sciences apparently set on a course of ever more rapid fragmentation into competing paradigms, the end of the century seemed to offer as an alternative only a rapid inward spiral towards solipsism. And as the timescale shortens from one methodological phase to the next, with a Tofflerian increase in the rate of change between phases, how long before the graph of phase change reaches its asymptote, Denzin and Lincoln’s reduction of phases to ‘moments’ is realized, and the Cheshire cat of felt reality, objectivity and validity, fade into a mist of deconstructive postmodern methodologies leaving little more than the questionable experience of a smile without a cat. What hope is there for a student looking for solid foundations on which to base research? Where could I begin? Go back to the question? What question?

No, better I think to go back to the impression that predicated the hypothesis of which the question is a formulation. When I speak to educationists from any number of different faith groups, we may have our ontological and epistemological differences, but I always seem to leave feeling exhilarated, spiritually uplifted, in good humour, and feeling that we have been speaking the same language - and the higher up the system I go the better I feel. When I speak to educationists from our secular state education system, however, I tend to emerge enervated, depressed, and feeling as though I have been trying to communicate with aliens - and the higher up the system I go the worse it seems to get.

I am aware of wearing two hats when I work or study at university, one very focused on an intellectual aspect, that I think of as 'academic', and the other that is all-inclusive of my identity and experience, that is expressed in the language of Islam. The latter is always there, even when I talk to people who have little grasp of the 'academic' side, just as it is with people who do have that grasp, such as secular educationists. So the contact is there, but the discourse is constrained by the secularity of what is accepted as permissible to say. Even educationists with a faith commitment have informal and formal speech, the former personal, and the latter when speaking with 'responsibility' towards the system.

Faith educators also have a grasp of my 'academic' discourse, but with them, my 'all-inclusive' discourse is in play all the time, as there are no secular constraints and a huge overlap of concepts and worldviews to explore, each using his/her own religious language to critique secular perspectives. The combination of a human connection seated in the 'heart', and an academic discourse seated in the 'mind', is a far more satisfying experience than the frustration of expression I experience when in the confines of the secular.

Experience suggested a hypothesis that 'Faith educationists and secular educationists, even when using similar words, are essentially talking a different language', which prompted a number of related questions. Is it true (necessarily incorporating our understanding of the nature of truth)? Is it generally perceived as true by either faith educationists or secularists? If so, are these languages congruent, mutually exclusive, or is one language a subset of the other providing the possibility of one-way communication only, and if so which way? If it is indeed the case, as Brown and Dowling suggest, that "*it is the process of asking questions that drives the development of structural coherence*" and "*it is the mode of interrogation which defines the activity*" (Brown & Dowling 1998 p138), how do we approach a methodology for issues of language through questions formulated in language? Perhaps it is necessary to

utilise discredited methodologies because come what may they still relate to a common human experience in the same way that we accept the pragmatic use of word forms based on obsolete philosophies. After all, most people still prefer to talk of 'sunrise' as opposed to 'earthspin', and even in the post-Einsteinian language of science Newtonian physics is recognised as having its realm of utility. We must consider whether it is necessary (or even possible) to abandon all reference to Cheshire catness when we accept that we are only dealing with a smile. Since Godel, mathematicians may have accepted that "no mathematical system can be proved consistent without recourse to axioms beyond that system", and at the higher levels of intellectual discourse, it is necessary to integrate such uncertainties, but few would reject all statistics as irrelevant and invalid; in the everyday world of human experience numbers still count.

As Guba and Lincoln say: *"both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm. 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"* (in Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p195). No matter that *"strong counterpressures against quantification have emerged ... to question the very assumptions on which the putative superiority of quantification has been based"* (in Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p197), we base our democratic system on the counting of votes, and we still form judgements by weighing one side against another.

For research to have a pragmatic utility, therefore, quantification will play a certain part. Nonetheless, it is necessary to bear in mind those problems implicit in such an approach, the critiques that apply from both inside and outside the paradigm. Intraparadigm critiques include issues such as 'context stripping' (necessary focusing on selected subsets of variables), 'exclusion of meaning and purpose' (an inability to quantify aspects of human understanding and will), 'etic/emic dilemmas' (the disjunction of grand theories with local contexts), 'nomothetic/idiographic disjunction' (the inapplicability of general data to individual cases), and 'exclusion of the discovery dimension in inquiry' (privileging normative methodology over the insights of creative and divergent thinkers). Extraparadigm critiques include 'theory-ladenness of facts' (interdependence of theoretical and observational languages), 'underdetermination of theory' (impossibility of inducing theory from facts), 'value-

ladenness of facts' (interdependence of values and fact-interdependent theories), and the 'dyadic nature of inquirer/inquired-into' (interaction of inquirer and phenomenon). (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p197-200)

The Nature of Paradigms

Clearly, the paradigm which is the context of a researcher's investigation must be clarified as a basis for any research, and "A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do. The beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness. ... Inquiry paradigms define for inquirers what it is they are about, and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry".

(Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p200) They define the ontology (the form and nature of reality and what there is that can be known about it), the epistemology (the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known), and the methodology (how the inquirer can go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known) of the researcher.

"We have already noted that paradigms, as sets of basic beliefs, are not open to proof in any conventional sense; there is no way to elevate one over another on the basis of ultimate, foundational criteria. (We should note, however, that that state of affairs does not doom us to a radical relativist posture; see Guba, 1992.) In our opinion, any given paradigm represents simply the most informed and sophisticated view that its proponents have been able to devise, given the way they have chosen to respond to the three defining questions. And, we argue, the sets of answers given are in all cases human constructions; that is, they are all inventions of the human mind and hence subject to human error. No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right; advocates of any particular construction must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position. ... What is true of paradigms is true of our analyses as well. Everything that we shall say subsequently is also a human construction: ours. The reader cannot be compelled to accept our analyses, or our arguments, on the basis of incontestable logic or indisputable evidence; we can only hope to be persuasive and to demonstrate the utility of our position". (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p201-202)

It is intriguing that in discussing paradigms language inevitably reverts to the religious terminology, 'beliefs', 'metaphysics', and 'faith'. For the ultimate context in which this current research is set (namely the belief system of the researcher) must inevitably be an 'Islamic' paradigm. But with the research being set in a secular academic context, having no recognition of that Islamic paradigm or terminology, it will be necessary to find an alternative recognisable paradigm as a starting point and a language into which to translate that alien terminology. At this point, it must also be made clear that when identifying an 'Islamic' paradigm what is really being defined is the Islam of the researcher. Despite a shared terminology and some foundational beliefs, the world of Islam is, to mix metaphors, a very broad church, that includes a sixth of the world's population and spans over fourteen hundred years. Within that historically and geographically wide-ranging family one inevitably finds an enormous divergence of perspectives.

Guba and Lincoln, however, reduce the social science paradigms to four, Positivism, Postpositivism, Critical Theory (and related ideological positions), and Constructivism. Of these, there is no question that my perspective best relates to the latter, with its relativist ontology (with local and specific constructed realities), its transactional/subjectivist epistemology, and its hermeneutical/dialectical methodology (note the religious terminology again) (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p203).

Constructivism & the Islamic Paradigm

Despite the risk of pre-empting later analysis of the acquired data, it seems appropriate here to consider Guba and Lincoln's assertions as to the nature of Constructivism in terms of an Islamic paradigm.

First let us examine their description of Constructivism's relativist ontology: *"Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions. Constructions are not more or less "true," in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. Constructions are alterable, as are their associated "realities." This position should be*

distinguished from both nominalism and idealism (see Reese, 1980, for an explication of these several ideas).” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p206-207)

In Islamic traditions, only God is ‘The Real’, and the name that is given to this Reality is Allah. For convenience the translation of the Arabic term ‘Allah’ is usually accepted as ‘God’ in English, but there is a subtle distinction. Arabic has two words where in English we have one. In the English language a god can be distinguished from another god, as in the multiple gods of the Greek, Roman, or Hindu pantheons. Arabic recognizes that understanding of what is meant by a ‘god’, and the word ‘Ilaha’ means god in that way. But ‘Allah’ is a different word, perhaps better translated as ‘The God’, a God of which there is no other and to Whom no other can be compared. Mankind has no way of apprehending Allah through intellect or description. The best we can do is use a Name, as a name does not define, it only indicates, and ‘Allah’ is known as the Greatest Name. *“There is only one creed and that is, there is no Reality but Allah.” (Haeri , Beginnings End p22) “He knows what is before them and behind them, and they comprehend Him not in knowledge.” (Qur’an 20.110)*

At this point I think I need an aside, to discuss the problem of gender specific language. English has the neuter ‘it’, whereas Arabic just has what translates into ‘he’ and ‘she’. But of those genders, the female is understood to be what is defined, and the ‘he’ stands for everything else. So the Arabic word translated as ‘he’, strictly speaking, means not ‘masculine’ but ‘not feminine’. It is necessary to be especially conscious of this understanding when interpreting Qur’an translations. Where appropriate in other contexts, I will often change the translation of ‘he’ to ‘who’ (‘hu’ being the sound of the second person masculine singular in Arabic), but with interview subjects using the familiar gender specific language of everyday speech, I have made no attempt to de-gender material. I must apologise to female readers for any additional effort required in the reading. With particular regard to the use of the word ‘He’ for the Divine, however, re-interpretation of apparently gender specific language is an absolute requirement for both sexes.

All human knowledge and understanding is essentially rendered limited and imperfect by the finite nature of the human that interprets it. We are limited by the nature of our life experience, including our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual make-up and the world with which we interact through sense perceptions, intellectual languages, affections and preferences, values and moralities. The primary distinction is between Creator and created,

and we share aspects of our experience not just with other humans, but also the rest of creation. We share our understanding communally, but our individual perception is recognized in that we only bear responsibility for our own actions. Ultimate qualities and all perfections are attributed only to Allah, and these also are referred to in terms of Names (traditionally Allah is attributed with ninety-nine names drawn from the Qur'an, but the list of ninety-nine names does vary around the Muslim world). Humans are incapable of apprehending truth, but Allah is 'Al-Haqq', the Truth.

"Allah is the Truth, whose being is ever unchanged.

Haqq is that whose essence is valid in itself, and whose essence is the cause and is necessary for all other existence. As He does not gain his existence from other than Himself, he is eternal. Everything else is temporal; since Haqq is existent by itself, not influenced by any other, He is non-changing. He is the only true existence. Other existences which appear truly to exist take the truth of their existence from Him.... There are other things in existence that are seen by the intellect as corresponding to that Truth. We call these things 'truth' as well. Yet the truths of all other existences change in their relationship to each other, and finally, when they disappear, the belief in their being true becomes invalid." (Bayrak 1985 p68)

Guba and Lincoln describe the epistemology of Constructivism as transactional and subjectivist: *"The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the "findings" are literally created as the investigation proceeds. The conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears, as in the case of critical theory."* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p207)

From an Islamic perspective, investigator and the object of investigation are not just interactively linked, but are united in a paradigm of oneness called 'tawhid'. *"There can be no doubt that the essence of Islamic civilization is Islam; or that the essence of Islam is 'tawhid'. ... 'Tawhid' is that which gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus makes of them an integral, organic body which we call civilization."* (Faruqi 1986 p73)

In its essential form, tawhid is simply the affirmation of the Oneness of Allah. But just as 'Allah' is distinguished from 'ilaha', so the Arabic language has two words for what is English

is just 'one'. The word 'wahid' is used in counting, and is 'one' as in the unit of a sequence of numbers. Indeed, one of the Names of Allah is al-Wahid, the One. "Allah is One ... in His attributes, in His actions, in His orders, (and) in His beautiful names." (Bayrak 1985 p85). Yet there is another word used of Allah, which is 'Ahad', with a meaning perhaps closer to 'oneness' as it is a 'One' which is indivisible and incomparable. Qur'an says "Say Allah is 'Ahad' ... like Whom there is no other 'Ahad'" (Qur'an: S.112).

This unitary nature of the Creator predicates a unitary nature in creation, and the principle of tawhid is expressed throughout Muslim history in a variety of ways from the exoteric to the esoteric, from the academic and intellectual to Sufi traditions of the spiritually experiential. Al-Faruqi describes tawhid in terms of five principles:

Duality: Reality is of two generic kinds, God and non-God; Creator and creature. The first order has but one member, Allah, ... The second is the order of space-time, of experience, of creation. ... The two orders of Creator and created are utterly and absolutely disparate as far as their being, or ontology, as well as their existence and careers are concerned. It is forever impossible that the one be united with, fused, con-fused or diffused into the other. ...

Ideationality: The relation between the two orders of reality is ideational in nature. Its point of reference in man is the faculty of understanding. As organ and repository of knowledge, the understanding includes all the gnoseological functions of memory, imagination, reasoning, observation, intuition, apprehension, and so on. ...

Teleology: The nature of the cosmos is teleological, that is purposive, serving a purpose of its Creator, and doing so out of design. ... The physical and psychic functions of man are integral to nature, and as such they obey the laws pertinent to them with the same necessity as all other creatures. But the spiritual functions, namely, understanding and moral action, fall outside the realm of determined nature. They depend upon their subject and follow his determination. ... Necessary fulfillment applies only to elemental or utilitarian values; free fulfillment applies to the moral. ...

Capacity of Man and Malleability of Nature: Since everything was created for a purpose ... the realization of that purpose must be possible in space and time. ... As subject of moral action, man must therefore be capable of changing himself, his fellows or society, nature or his environment, so as to actualize the divine pattern ... creation must be malleable, transformable,

capable of changing its substance, structure, conditions, and relations so as to embody or concretize the human pattern or purpose. ...

Responsibility and Judgment: If man stands under the obligation to change himself, his society, and his environment so as to conform with the divine pattern ... then it follows with necessity that he is responsible. Moral obligation is impossible without responsibility or reckoning. ... Judgment, or the consummation of responsibility, is the necessary condition of moral obligation, of moral imperativeness.” (Faruqi 1986 p74-76)

So creation of the investigator and the investigated is an ongoing process in time and space, with the investigated being created in terms of natural law for the understanding of the investigator, and in terms of moral law for the purpose of the investigator. The process of discovery is an inner process reflecting outward manifestations.

“As one embarks upon the path, one becomes aware that one’s present mental and physical condition arises from a variety of factors, ranging from the genetic to the environmental. Some of these factors are inherited; some are acquired; most of them can be changed. Some of the subtler influences on us, such as changes in the radiation in the atmosphere, are barely detectable. However, our recognition of any outward factor, whether subtle or obvious, depends on its existence within us. ... From the Gnostic standpoint, there is no separation. The concept of separation exists only for the sake of illustration and outward experience. It unfolds a situation that is completely unified.” (Haeri 1987 p4)

The affirmation of unity in tawhid forces us to confront the experiential multiplicity of existence and recognize that this is not its true nature. *“It is like a perpetual fever, a constant hallucination. Things are multiple, alien and solid. There is not even continuity, yet we persist in it. I am the same one who was here yesterday ... My reality is confirmed socially, so I exist” (As-Sufi 1975 p1).* This feeling of the solidity and separateness of our physicality persists despite all the contrary assertions of modern particle physics. For with theories concerning the nature of substance becoming ever more paradoxical and esoteric, it would seem that Western science itself, from its nascence in a positivist objectification of ‘reality’, is being dragged (kicking and screaming, to be sure) back to a less tangible view of the world that, particularly in the Sufi traditions, the Islamic paradigm never lost.

In about the year 1100, Imam al-Ghazzali said *“Do you not see that while asleep you assume your dreams to be unquestionably real? Once awake, you recognize them for what they are – fantasies without substance. Who then can assure you of the reliability of an existence which when awake you derive from the senses and from reason? In relation to your present state they may be real, but it is also possible that you may enter another state of existence which will bear the same relation to your present state as this does to your condition when asleep.”* (quoted in As-Sufi 1975 p23)

Finally, Guba and Lincoln describe the methodology of Constructivism as hermeneutical and dialectical: *“The variable and personal (intramental) nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents. These varying constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutical techniques, and are compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange. The final aim is to distill a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions (including, of course, the etic construction of the investigator).* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p207)

Clearly, ontology and epistemology are subsumed under tawhid in a way that is comparable to their merging within constructivism, but as Faruqi explains, tawhid is also the essence of Islamic civilization in its methodological and contentual dimensions. Here, the methodology of tawhid refers to much more than academic research methodology, as it determines the forms of application and implementation of the first principles of Islamic civilization. Nonetheless, with the slight intellectual stretch required to reduce the ocean of tawhid to the puddle of constructivism, points of comparison may be made.

The methodological dimension of tawhid includes three principles - unity, rationalism and tolerance. Echoes of the need for interaction between and among investigator and respondents can be seen in the principle of unity, hermeneutic interpretation in the overarching principle of rationalism, and dialectical debate in the principle of tolerance, which *“transforms confrontation and reciprocal condemnations ... into a co-operatively scholarly investigation.”* (Faruqi 1986 p79) Finally, the contentual dimension includes tawhid as the first principle of metaphysics, ethics, axiology, societism and aesthetics.

Empiricism & Scientific Method

In the Islamic tradition, the Gnostic reflects the Divine Intellect to his own degree, but unlike other created beings, he reflects it actively, his participation being a conscious one. *“Thus ‘knowledge’ and ‘science’ are defined as basically different from mere curiosity and even from analytical speculation. The Gnostic is from this point of view ‘one with Nature’; he understands it ‘from the inside’ ... The intellective function, so defined, may be difficult for Westerners to grasp. Were it not for the fact that most of the great scientists and mathematicians of Islam operated within this matrix, it might seem so far removed as to be irrelevant to this study. ... We should be mindful here of the changing usage of words. ‘Intellect’ and ‘intellectual’ are so closely identified today with the analytical functions of the mind that they hardly bear any longer any relation to the contemplative.”* (Nasr 1968 p23-24)

The methods used were not always entirely divorced from modern science, however, and particularly in the realm of physics they utilized the outlines of Aristotelian thought, and developed the empirical method. One tradition in particular sought to analyse the meaning of the sensible aspects of Nature using observation and experiment. Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi is well known for his studies of optics, and physicists such as al-Hazen and al-Biruni (who measured specific weights of minerals) and al-Khazini (who measured densities and gravity). *“This sort of physics, which resembles the works of Archimedes ... is of much interest from the point of view of modern science, whose unilateral approach to Nature is based on a somewhat similar perspective.”* (Nasr 1968 p127)

The empirical approach, therefore, though never central to Islamic science, is not inimical to its traditions, and in point of fact, without the Muslim development of empiricism it is unlikely that it could have been rediscovered in Europe for the re-birth of her ancient Greek heritage in the Renaissance. The success of empirical science in matters tangible, however, has meant that in the West wide-ranging attempts have been made to apply these principles to less tangible phenomena, as in the social ‘sciences’. In an attempt to apply these methods to a ‘science of man’, David Hume made clear that *“The only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation”* (Hume 1739: 42), distinguishing clearly between fact and value *“Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact”* (Hume 1740, III.ii.1: 193), and concluding *“Morality consists not in any relations, that are the object of science; but if*

examined, will prove with equal certainty, that it consists not in any matter of fact, which can be discovered by the understanding” (Hume 1740, III.ii.1: 202). Unfortunately this not only divorces morality from truth, but also places the ‘facts’ of science outwith morality, a point of view difficult to accept for someone working within an Islamic paradigm.

But these empirical principles are now deeply ingrained in the academic system, so before moving into less concrete systems, it seems prudent to examine the current research in the light of scientific method, to see how it may align itself with the same, as well as to discover the nature of its variance.

Problem selection, Definition and Hypotheses

As I focused my research, I re-examined my original hypothesis, and realised that hypotheses can change to suit the research situation. The hypothesis is constantly open to restatement during ongoing analysis of the research project, adapting to suit what data is attainable, rather than data being sought to suit the hypothesis. Rather than expressing the hypothesis in terms of two groups, and bearing in mind that the research is set in the context of academic readers, themselves members of one of the groups under consideration, it was possible to simply examine the language of faith educationists to provide useful data, as its difference should be recognisable (or not) to those reading the research. It was enough to hypothesise that ‘Faith educationists express a unified and distinctive perception of education in their language’. If the research is to be read by members of the secular education group, they can consider for themselves whether the data is distinctive. Although this meant that I could concentrate on the faith group, I nonetheless carried on with secular group interviews to use as a contrast and comparison group during analysis.

L.R.Gay says: *“the scientific method involves induction of hypotheses based on observations, deduction of implications of the hypotheses, testing of the implications, and confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypotheses” (Gay 1976 p14), and the research certainly follows the route of observation, induction, deduction and testing, though perhaps falling short of confirmation/disconfirmation. Similarly the research followed the steps involved in conducting educational research, which should “parallel those of the scientific method: selection and definition of a problem; execution of research procedures (collection of data);*

analysis of data; and drawing and stating conclusions” (Gay 1976 p15), with the exception that while only too happy to draw and state conclusions, I imagine I give them less scientific credibility than Gay would suggest they warrant.

Gay provides a clear, well-defined, and quite specific sequence of procedures to ensure that one’s educational research adheres to scientific method, and through most stages of the research these are clearly followed. The process of selection and definition of the problem has already been described, with the exception of the review of related literature. But here, the nature of the research problem as defined, by stepping outside traditional research genres and categories, brought its own methodological problems to the normative approach. For any literature search looking for items specifically related to the topic only highlighted the limited range of material available (research into interfaith perspectives on education is rare indeed), whereas any consideration of the matter from the point of view of all relevant topics meant that whole libraries would need to be reviewed.

He was always more than happy to attempt to read his way through libraries, and it was a pastime that occupied many years of his life. Reading by the age of three, he rapidly developed a voracious appetite for books, an appetite that never abated. The magical tales of childhood turned into a more mature polyphony of reading in his teens, balancing the maths and science of his schooldays with psychology, art and architecture at home. Different times, when the publication of DH Lawrence was a cause for heated moral debate. As schooldays turned to student days, he read at a blur; Sartre and the Existentialists, Kafka and Burroughs, poetry of every kind, plays from Restoration tragedies to Ionesco and the Theatre of the Absurd, Samuel Beckett to Joe Orton. He read all of Shakespeare and Shaw, most of Dickens (there always seems to be one you have missed), all Virginia Woolfe, Hesse and Borges and reams of others. Somewhere in there were Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, and all sorts of popular and esoteric sciences, Charles Darwin to Charles Forte, and then even worse there was science fiction, sometimes five or six a day just taking a breather from whatever was the main attraction (he was lost to the addiction racing through his blood in those days), Philip Dick and Chip Delaney and far too many more to mention, he was even a founder member of ‘The Friends of Kilgore Trout’ (named after Kurt Vonnegut’s alter-ego, a science fiction fan-club, that grew in his absence with the rapidity of an alien in the Little Shop of Horrors). Two years went by in a cottage in Fife, reading little except philosophy and religion, and then he travelled, a physical time of re-thinking and regrouping. After his return there were hundreds of volumes of Islamic literature for the taking (as well as the occasional break for William Gibson and similar cyberpunk). But a lifetimes reading can be academically irrelevant no matter how enjoyable. He often thought that his five year concentration on the needs of academia had made his reading unbearably utilitarian. He sometimes felt he had almost forgotten how to read without a pad at his side and a pen in his hand.

Illustration No. 5

“I say that it is not illogical to think that the world is infinite. Those who judge it to be limited postulate that in remote places the corridors and stairways and hexagons can conceivably come to an end – which is absurd. Those who imagine it to be without limit forget that the possible number of books does have such a limit. I venture to suggest this solution to the ancient problem: The Library is unlimited and cyclical. If an eternal traveller were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which thus repeated, would be an order: the Order). My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope.” (Borges 1962 p58)

Well, I searched all the usual research databases, and scoured the library catalogues, but the prescribed Literature Review of a scientific approach tends to be self-limiting, as written for the research community it is necessarily restricted to pre-researched pigeonholes. When research is to be grounded in a field that is a 'notional community of researchers', and a discursive relationship made with a readership composed of 'a subset of authorities of the field', it is much easier to avoid originality. So the scientific reductionism that has shaped so much of modern academic life means that there are few trans-disciplinary investigations undertaken. Over the centuries Renaissance Man has been reduced to blinkered specialisation through a concentration on focus, and now academia presides over the imminent extinction of the polymath. It would seem that the research community itself is aware of the suggestion that a constantly narrowing focus, for all the power it bestows, can be self-defeating, and trans-disciplinary groupings for cross-pollination of ideas are being formed in places such as the Santa Fe Institute. As with the onset of postmodern approaches, there are signs that some people are feeling the need to break free, not least in the field that has benefited most from scientific reductionism, science itself.

Chapter Four

Research Plan and Evaluation

During the re-evaluation of my research topic, it became apparent that from within the university itself (though I must stress not from all its members) there was a clear suggestion that the Islamic paradigm (and perhaps any other faith paradigm) was irrelevant, obsolete and indefensible in the face of a postmodern challenge. Strangely enough, although postmodernism is generally understood to refrain from privileging any individual discourse of experience over another, the impression I received was that my own language of discourse, discovered through my life experience, was considered by some to be inadmissible even within postmodernism. Now if in post-graduate research into the modern challenge to school pupils' faith identities within the education system, I was myself facing a challenge to my own faith identity, it was inevitably necessary to somehow include that within the debate. And if postmodernism was seen as an acceptable paradigm in a way that my own paradigm was not, then it seemed that the best solution was probably to approach the problem from within the self-referential postmodern paradigm itself. If it is difficult for me to live my faith identity and openly express its authenticity as part of my academic work, how much harder the task for a Muslim child less well equipped to bridge between cultures and paradigms.

He knew he was going to have to cross that bridge from the minute he read about it in the book. It was Meetings with Remarkable Men by Gurdjieff, when the hero is led into the high, high mountains, and has to cross a bridge - a narrow, rickety ladder spanning an apparently bottomless chasm, and no other way to go except back. Just the thought of it was enough to trigger his vertigo (he could quite easily get giddy from just standing on a chair), but the panic really came with the sure and certain knowledge that one day that bridge would be in front of him, and he knew he would have no option but to try and walk across. It wasn't until some years later, in the foothills of the Himalayas that the bridge finally took him by surprise. It was only a few miles from the monastery to the local village, so he went alone, but he'd only done the journey in one direction, and the woods and rice paddies all tend to look the same. As the path meandered out of the woods into the sunlight, he turned a corner and was overwhelmed by fear. Not quite a bottomless chasm, but deep enough to kill, with boulders down below and an awesome bridge across the top. Two fallen trees, no thicker than his forearm, nailed together with bits of broken packing case, spanned a gap of several metres and his path led directly to one end. Of course he could have gone back, or tried to find another way around, but that wouldn't have been playing the game. It was so scary he had to laugh, but there was no-one there to hear, and no-one to see him make a fool of himself as he hurtled to oblivion. So he took a few steadying breaths, held his arms out from his sides, and put one foot in front of the other.

Returning to the original hypothesis with regard to the disjunctive communication between faith and secular educators, the key research questions are; 'Do faith groups have a cohesive voice in their approach to education, and if so, what marks it as distinctive from the secular system?'. The methodology refocused on a set of qualitative research interviews, initially a small-scale comparison of faith educators, seeking out commonality of language, in the hope that an approach might be discovered that would prove useful to the secular educational debate. Relevant interview topics were listed, support questions formulated, and opinion sought on the results in a series of preliminary interviews. Key interviews were carried out, tape recorded and when the results were evaluated, conversations were held with a number of teachers and Local Authority Education Advisors, allowing for differences of voice. Finally, a number of Islamic specialists were consulted for comment on the work from within the Islamic paradigm, and research results were referred back to participants for comment.

Sample Selection, Data Collection & Analysis

With regard to the sample size, a decision was made early on to sacrifice quantity for quality. Faith education interviewees were drawn from a range of contacts formed through the researcher's interfaith work, and care was taken to be representative not only of those 'foreign' or 'ethnic' religions normally included when matters of minority faith are considered (Bahai, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh), but also the full breadth of Christian traditions seldom considered as sharing the problems of minorities (Baptist, Church of Scotland, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic), and a group which often slips through the net of traditional categorisation (Unitarians). The sample size for the faith educators was fourteen, but all involved were in senior positions within their organisations, and most were recognised as official spokespersons on education matters. These were people of great influence within their faith communities, and it seemed preferable to limit the interviews to such religious 'leaders' rather than broaden the sample, because through their experience and particular responsibilities for education, they have had the opportunity to acquire great skill and experience in articulating the issues. This group could be recognised as an 'opportunity sample', taking advantage of a small, specialised, and distinctive group of people, drawn from a pre-existing loosely established network. Similarly, only nine interviewees were drawn from within the education system to allow other 'voices' to act as a counterpoint, but these were drawn from a range of contacts established by the researcher during years of working alongside them on projects within their own schools or departments.

All teachers interviewed were responsible for Religious and Moral Education within their schools, and Advisors were similarly responsible within their Local Authorities (Appendix 1)

Drawing interviewees from a network of old acquaintances meant that a certain 'trust' was already established, permitting a personal ease and depth of interview response that would not have been possible in a meeting between strangers. The initial stages of the research, consisted of a series of unstructured interviews, unrecorded, but with notes written at the time and expanded from memory. Out of these initial interviews a strategy of approach to subsequent, more extensive interviews, was derived. Along with 'Education', 'Faith', 'Culture' and 'Identity' were identified as the key, interlocking issues to be explored. Prior to the structured interviews that followed, interviewees were sent a list of themes for discussion - as considered in detail below (Appendix 2). In order to avoid the formal 'political' language required when publicly speaking as representatives of their organisations, interviews commenced with a statement of assurance that any views expressed would be accepted as personal (though clearly, considering their positions, most could be accepted as generally reflective of a more widely accepted opinion). They were also assured that the content and conclusions drawn from their interviews would be referred back to them prior to any form of publication.

In the preliminary unstructured interviews, there was considerable interchange of dialogue in the interrogation of the issues, but the structured interviews involved a withdrawal of the interviewer to a more detached, non-interventionist, 'observer' role on the part of the researcher. To reduce variables as much as possible, aware that it is only too easy for a researcher/interviewer through choice of question to guide interviewees towards a specific mode of language, they were encouraged to extemporise without prompting as much as possible, and permitted maximum latitude of response. Where prompting as to the specific nature of information seemed necessary, a list of standard questions had been prepared, to again eliminate researcher influence on response as much as possible (Appendix 3).

Interviews were tape-recorded, and although intended to last less than an hour, many of the interviewees seemed happy to extemporise at length, with interviews ranging from a minimum of fifty minutes to a full hour and fifty minutes at the opposite extreme. The minimal intrusion on the part of the researcher means that the data recorded would seem to provide a reliable insight into the personal perceptions, concerns, and mode of expression of the interviewees.

The interviews were transcribed in full before analysis, chopped, re-organised and sorted according to theme. Results of the analysis are dealt with in following chapters.

As Brown and Dowling refer to the mode of interrogation, it *“may be thought of as a frame or a jig, perhaps. The kind of tool that holds in place the components of an object while it is under construction. ... the finished product emerges from an extended process of organization and clarification. ... The notion of a jig is a useful metaphor, but it should not be taken too literally. A jig is a rigid tool and, as such, it is prescriptive. The mode of interrogation is, by definition, interrogative. It asks particular questions of the research, it does not provide the answers. Furthermore, a response to one question may have an impact on a response to another that has already been made. Thus the mode of interrogation is an inherently dynamic kind of jig. There is, ultimately, no necessary termination point to its application.”* (Brown & Dowling 1998 p147-149). So it was with the interviews.

Inevitably, interviews had often had more of the nature of a conversation than questionnaire, and the standard questions were not permitted to act as a straightjacket, particularly when one interviewee had raised an interesting issue not on the standard prompt list, which it seemed pertinent to refer to succeeding interviewees for their opinion. It was also common for interviewees to range widely and laterally across the field, leaping from one theme to another, skipping some altogether, availing themselves fully of their ability to extemporize (many of them also being preachers, it must be remembered), with the researcher needing to make judgements as to when intervention was necessary if the interview were to be constrained into something resembling the originally intended thematically organized format.

Dissertation & Critique

When considering a dissertation, it may be salutary to remember that even Wittgenstein had his original BA thesis rejected by Cambridge due to the lack of a Preface and References, and therefore not complying with University thesis regulations. The formal requirements of a thesis can impose undesirable constraints on the communication of ideas, which it is necessary for a researcher to take on board, and although in the approach to the gathering of the data great care was taken to maintain a detached objectivity, it is in the analysis and presentation of the data that the ‘intrusion’ of the researcher becomes most obvious. Fortunately, the capacity for postmodern research approaches to include an element of

reflexivity has opened up possibilities of examining data unsuited to empirical methodologies in more relevant and appropriate ways. Even bearing in mind that the results looked for in social sciences require 'replication' and not 'repetition', the researcher needs to consider the ways that a reader might assess the validity of the representation of the source material.

The validity of results may be affected by the small size of the interview group, or the fact that the subjects of the research were all known to the interviewer personally (as well as many of them being known personally to each other) prior to the interviews. Thus the group could be seen as a small group of friends sharing similar understandings (though committed to different forms of expression of those understandings). Despite their high standing in their individual organizations, they could also be seen as not necessarily a typical cross-section representative of wider views. Such issues are considered in more detail throughout the thesis, but for the moment it is sufficient to say that the research was intended to seek out broad paradigmatic comparisons in comparatively free-form data, as opposed to the precision of focus usually associated with old ideas of 'scientific' method. The interviewees were not 'challenged' by the interviewer, attempting to expose weaknesses of argument and differences of opinion. With a Muslim researcher interviewing a Christian, a Hindu or a Jew, the disagreements are evident and have been discussed for centuries; this research was designed to search for degrees of commonality, and areas of shared perception.

Though the research will hopefully be recognized as having relevance and validity, certainty of conclusion was never its aim, more a case of illuminating, shining a light in a place that people do not usually get to visit, to see what shows up. Perhaps, like Patti Lather, the researcher was *"Attracted to wandering and getting lost as methodological stances, trying to stay lost, bewildered, suspended and in flight (Serres, 1995:262?), I have sought what playwright Tony Kushner terms "non-stupid optimism" about the possibilities of research that makes a difference in struggles for social justice. Such hope works against the humanist romance of knowledge as cure within a philosophy of consciousness and an ethics of empathy. Rather, it works toward innovations leading to new forms, negotiation with enabling violence attentive to frame narratives (Spivak, 1993), thinking the thought of the limit of the saturated humanist logics which determine the protocols through which we know. Here the work of theory is to help us think through our enabling aporias as we move toward practices of*

academic writing that are responsible to what is arising out of both becoming and passing away." (Lather 1996 P18)

Postmodern methodology

The research still has to face the question of how to provide a breadth of vision, as opposed to interrogative focus, yet remain within the parameters of an 'academic text'. At the same time, it is necessary to find a methodology which allows a researcher to communicate within an acceptable framework at the same time as operating from within a paradigm significantly different from the familiar. And as has already been made clear, values are intrinsic to the paradigm of the researcher in a way that requires their integration and hence possible effect on issues of validity. As Griffiths explains: *"Value judgements are often treated as if they are opinions which bias research. Researchers may expect to - or be asked to - find facts or information, and keep their opinions to themselves, or, at least, not allow them to affect the results of the investigation. This expectation is often confused with the expectation that researchers should keep their value positions to themselves. However, all serious researchers recognize the difference between opinion and knowledge - even if they disagree about how to identify each of them. Similarly, all serious researchers recognize the dangers of allowing dearly held opinions to affect the care with which unwelcome research results are treated. Bias exists ... in relation to the undue influence of opinion, but also especially from a lack of reflection on the values held by the researcher or research team. Thus, ... the removal of bias requires researchers to address their value positions, which therefore need to be explicitly stated as far as possible."* (Griffiths 1998 p47)

Griffiths quotes Elbaz (1988), who discusses fact and value from the point of view of critical theory in an analysis of Augustine's 'Confessions', and who says that the distinction between facts and values relates to a logic of propositions which conceals a static view of the world. *"In other words, reality is assumed to be a homogeneous, consistent and non-changing phenomenon that can be verified ... The division between fact and value does not allow for the complexity of our sociality. A fact is already an interpretation: interpretation is 'sine qua non' to the possibility of language and communication."* (Elbaz 1988: 29) Just as has already been suggested in consideration of the Research Plan, if the researcher is to be included as a function of the research, the methodology currently best suited to the task is postmodern methodology. But what is postmodern methodology? In 'The Landscape of Qualitative

Research' Denzin and Lincoln say: *"Poststructuralists and postmodernists have contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed. Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience."* (Denzin 1998 p24) The researcher accepts his/her situation as a multicultural subject, set in a historical and geographic context, with experientially defined conceptions of self and other, and possessed of an ethical and political stance. The researcher accepts that he/she is *"bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which – regardless of ultimate truth or falsity – become partially self-validating"* (Bateson 1972 p314).

As opposed to Guba and Lincoln, Denzin and Lincoln categorise the social science theoretical paradigms under a slightly wider range of headings: Positivist/postpositivist, Constructivist, Feminist, Ethnic, Marxist, and Cultural Studies, with a variety of sub-divisions under these categories related to specific interpretive communities (but still a seemingly fairly narrow range of accepted perspectives from which to study the complexities of the human condition). Having already introduced and discussed an Islamic paradigm, however, I will make no attempt to consider it in comparison to these new categories. The newer theoretical paradigms embrace a wide variety of strategies of enquiry, each comprising *"a bundle of skills, assumptions, and practices that researchers employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world. Strategies of inquiry put paradigms of interpretation into motion."* (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p29), as well as a wide variety of methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials. The real advantage of postmodern methodology in this case would seem to be that it enables the researcher to draw from all other theories and methodologies at will, with the proviso that these are reflexively justified within a research which should be *"politically decentering, methodologically idiosyncratic, and representationally unbounded"* (Constas 1998). A postmodern perspective should be *"radically eclectic, determined in the context of relatedness, recursive in its complexity, autobiographically intuitive, aesthetically intersubjective, phenomenological, experiential, simultaneously quantum and cosmic, hopeful in its constructive dimension, radical in its deconstructive movement, liberating in its poststructural intents, empowering in its spirituality, ironic in its kaleidoscopic sensibilities, and ultimately, a*

hermeneutic search for greater understanding, that motivates and satisfies us on the journey.”
(Slattery 1994, pp. 266-267)

“Qualitative research is endlessly creative and interpretive. The researcher does not just leave the field with mountains of empirical materials and then easily write up his or her findings. Qualitative interpretations are constructed. ... This final tale of the field may assume several forms: confessional, realist, impressionistic, critical, formal, literary, analytic, grounded theory, and so on (see Van Maanen, 1988). The interpretive practice of making sense of one’s findings is both artful and political. ... There is no single interpretive truth.” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p29-30) But for western academia, which has for so long borne the mantle of power bestowed by its assumption of the role of ‘keeper of the truth’ (a role once reserved to the authority of the church), this breakdown of the old dogmatic certainties comes as a challenge, and those who use it must use it with care. In that hall of mirrors where the theoretical and empirical fields are a notional community or communities of researchers, it is probably necessary to shed old habits of trying to reduce complex issues to simple language when the use of big words shows you understand them. Irony and humour with dual meanings are dangerous when they lie cold and unexplained upon a page. Yet *“It must, by means of a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, practice an overturning of the classical opposition and a general displacement of the system. It is only on this condition that deconstruction will provide itself the means with which to intervene in the field of oppositions that it criticizes”* (Derrida 1982:329)

For the language of postmodernism may have made wide inroads into academia, but it is unintelligible almost anywhere else. *“education, both as an institutional entity and as a discursive community, is directly concerned with the legitimation of knowledge (epistemological concern), the legitimation of practice (pedagogical concern), and the legitimation of values (moral concern). If educational researchers choose to recede from these legitimating practices, then they will indeed contribute to the malaise of conservatism that so many academics, postmodern and modern alike, see as an abhorrent feature of present-day education. In my view, a great deal of the postmodern writing that does not align itself with either a pragmatic agenda or a critical position fails to achieve anything of value beyond the immediate world of educational researchers. Discourses of educational inquiry that are irresolute or neglect the practical in favor of the highly abstract confirm Zygmunt Bauman’s (1994, p. 187) view that “postmodernity has a value of its own insofar as it purports to capture and articulate the novel experience of*

just one, but crucial social category of contemporary society: the intellectuals.” (Constat 1998)

Despite the assertions of Stronach Allan and Morris (1996) that “*Post-modernism – in one form or another – has already begun its long march through other areas of educational concern, such as pedagogy (Kellner, 1988; Giroux, 1988; McWilliam, 1992), value (Burglass, 1994; Carr, 1995), curriculum content in subjects and areas as various as English (Green, 1995) and special needs (Corbett, 1993), as well as teacher education (Wilkin, 1993)*”, how many subjects (apart from religious education) are taught within schools from a standpoint that the truth of what is being taught is subjective? We form our understandings of truth and values as part of a social and cultural unit. “*Although it is true that at some level all research is a uniquely individual enterprise - not part of a sacrosanct body of accumulating knowledge - it is also true that it is always guided by values that are not unique to the investigator: We are all creatures of our own social and cultural pasts. However, in order to be meaningful to others, the uniqueness of our own research experience gains significance when it is related to the theories of our predecessors and the research of our contemporaries. Social and cultural understanding can be found by ethnographers only if they are aware of the sources of the ideas that motivate them and are willing to confront them - with all that such a confrontation entails.*” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p81) We assume that most of our understanding of the world comes from those around us, and that despite our individuality it is possible for us to understand each other.

Most of the world undoubtedly functions on this pragmatic basis that human experience is shared and communicable, yet the postmodern paradigm challenges such notions of empathy. “*To argue against empathy is to trouble the possibilities of understanding, as premised on structures that all people share. The issue is the lineations of cognitive access to other individuals and what one can experience of another, ‘the riddle of intersubjectivity’ (Sawicki, 1997, p. 126). It is also about audiences and issues of resisting competent readers and intentionality, some rhetoric outside of persuasion, some focus on what we cannot know, a move away from fantasies of mutuality, shared experience, and touristic invitations to intimacy.*” (Lather 1998 P4) Yet in challenging the possibility of empathic understanding, postmodernist research situates itself in a paradox of the impossibility of communicating the research experience itself. The researcher finds him/herself in a hall of mirrors talking to him/herself. And finally, just in case an Other shows interest, to prove the point that mutuality is fantasy, opacity should be intrinsic to any text that claims to be illuminatory. “*What Sommer terms a recalcitrant rather than a persuasive rhetoric questions enlightenment*

views of understanding as necessarily liberating. Forcing understandable identities, overlooking differences "for the sake of a comforting, self-justifying rush of identification," the will to understand the Other is therefore a kind of violence, "an appropriation in the guise of an embrace". This is how empathy violates the other and is part of the demand for totality. A recalcitrant rhetoric is about inaccessible alterity, a lesson in modesty and respect, somewhere outside of our desire to possess, know, grasp. Here, "interpretive reticence" makes sense as we learn to listen to what the Other has to say without the mutuality presumed by empathy. To withhold the anticipated intimacy that invites conquest, teaching the reader how to read at some distance, with respect for the distances: this is the readerly response our text tries to constitute, a defiant book that teaches unanticipated lessons by being 'hardtoread.' ... Denying the "comfort text" in moving away from fantasies of mutuality, shared experience, dialogue and touristic invitations to intimacy, the book declines the too easy to possess knowledge and reader entitlement to know. " (Lather 1998 p5)

Now I understand that no more than a handful of people claimed to understand Einstein's Theory of Relativity when it first saw the light of day, but unfortunately, in the world of 'social' science I think that in order for our research experience to be meaningful to others it needs to be communicable, even beyond a tiny circle of academic contemporaries.

"No matter how tentatively proposed, I believe that it is vital for the educational research community to understand and offer definitions of its own discourse. To claim that our activities are beyond our own coherent understanding borders on nihilism and does little to promote critical dialogue that must remain the cornerstone of all inquiry, postmodern or not. Arguing for a coherentist philosophy of education, Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski (1996, p. 265) claimed that 'if the social world is irrational or incoherent then it is a virtue for our theory to say so, but to say it with clarity, coherence, and enough detail to foster the construction of explanations, or to permit fruitful engagement and debate.'" (Constas 1998 p41)

I feel that the problem for academic research is that it is trapped within number and language, and postmodernism may serve as a useful intellectual structure for the viewing of individual and social experience, but it is not the experience itself. It must be recognized as the language of an academic elite trying to reflect upon the condition of the masses around them, while the masses always prove too wide a subject for the mirror to reflect.

The majority of shared human experience is inevitably non-verbal, and is always reduced by academic abstraction, however pleasant the intellectual indulgence. As our means of communication become ever more rapidly multi-media, how long can the written thesis survive? How long before the dissertation becomes a documentary? If mathematical formulae are evaluated in terms of beauty, is it imaginable that beauty might supplant logicity as a prime requirement in other areas of research.

Despite its occasional opacity, postmodernism has shone a bright interrogative light on the frailties of previous western paradigms, and its future is cast in an interesting 'religious' terminology "We conclude that notions of hybridity, transgressive validity, and negotiation are research 'virtues' worth exploring in further deconstructions and constructions of methodological inventiveness. They offer the prospect of a risky redemption, a positive phase of post-modernist emergence: First an initial period of apocalyptic panic, accompanied by, or succeeded by, a mood of cynical or ludic creativity. Second, a phase of substantial experimentation. Third, a phase of apocalyptic panic accompanied by, or followed by, prophetic confidence in new modes of hybrid creativity. (Zurbrugg, 1993 p. 162)" (Stronach Allen & Morris 1996) It is intriguing to imagine how much this 'prophetic confidence' will be reflective of the old.

As Denzin and Lincoln say: "Marcus, in Volume 1, Chapter 12, argues that we are already in the post 'post' period – post-poststructuralism, post-postmodernism. What this means for interpretive, ethnographic practices is still not clear, but it is certain that things will never be the same. We are in a new age where messy, uncertain, multivoiced texts, cultural criticism, and new experimental works will become more common, as will more reflexive forms of fieldwork, analysis, and intertextual representation." (Denzin & Lincoln 1998 p30), and despite utilising the postmodern paradigm for this research, history suggests that there will be life at the end of the postmodern road (preferably not 'post-post' anything), and this is an issue which will be dealt with in Sections 2 & 3.

Before broaching analysis, in considering the acquisition, interpretation, and understanding of the data, I would like to highlight a number of issues that confront the postmodernist approach of rejecting empathy and "fantasies of mutuality" in the attempt to present and communicate the acquired data in the form of results or conclusions.

The most obvious (and even quantifiable) problem is the reduction of the data required for its presentation. Avoidance of "interpretive violation of the Other" would require little more than presentation of raw data, yet the data consists of hundreds of thousands of words. The implications to validity of the limited range of interviewees has already been mentioned, yet with every increase of the number of subjects the problem of reduction becomes worse. The more people that are interviewed, the less possible it is to adequately represent their responses. This inevitable reduction has a serious effect on any number of aspects of representation of the interviews. I therefore not only chose to eliminate myself from the data as much as possible through standardised topic lists, I also treated the data with the utmost care to achieve as far as possible a selfless reduction to essentials. After the faith data had been grouped thematically, I then reduced it to approximately 12,000 words for each of the four sections, then by stripping out phrase by phrase and word by word, following nodes of understanding, reduced it finally to approximately 5,000 words per section. This was an extremely rigorous and painstaking process. At first it seemed like an archaeological dig, recognising the structure that needed to be revealed and brushing away superfluous words. In the final stages, it seemed more like a process of condensing, with the words of individual speakers melding together, losing some of their individual distinctiveness but with certain shared themes reinforcing each other.

The various interviews took on a very different response according to whether the approach was formal or informal. In most cases, the introduction of a microphone and tape recorder to a greater or lesser extent affected the response of the interviewees. Sometimes the recordings clearly brought into play a much more formal and guarded response to themes than in original unrecorded interviews, as might be expected where interviewees were used to distinguishing between their 'private' voice of personal opinion and 'public' voice representing organisation and/or community. Nonetheless, in the majority of cases responses were still extremely 'conversational', even with those extemporising around the themes with minimal interruption, often in fact near monologues. A word or two of response on my part seemed sufficient to sustain a feeling of two-way communication, rather than a one-way oration into a tape-recorder.

This conversational tone in the extemporising format also brought its problems of analysis, of course. One long unbroken paragraph of transcription could interweave themes, and give answers to unasked prompt questions impromptu in unexpected and if not random certainly unplanned sequences. It provided a context for an awareness of subtle variations in the use of language, similar words bearing different meanings in different paradigms.

Often, familiarity with the interviewees meant that I was aware of a whole level of inferences and subtexts that were not overtly stated. I have a history with these people, and it was impossible for me to be a 'stranger'. Yet if I had somehow averted all personal contact with the interviewees, and managed to achieve a disengaged, anonymous 'scientific' response, a vast amount of information would have been missing from any data achieved.

"Less than 7% of communication is verbal" (Morgan Stanley Dean Witter – TV Advert)

How much of our communication is non-verbal? Perhaps I should have video-recorded the proceedings to examine the contribution of my own body language. When examining the validity of data, how acceptable is it to use laughter as a sign of shared understanding, throwaway lines that echo previous conversations and shared references? Before the interviews we have had conversations about Books, TV and Politics, have an idea of shared likes (Fromme, Tillich, Evans, Holloway) and dislikes (a common loathing for Richard Dawkins), and these things are surely integral to any interpretation of responses.

How much one can trust or use responses to direct prompting? How much is an interviewee response reconstructed to please the questioner? Then again, when I felt the need to try to clarify a point, and did my best to rephrase an answer in my own words and to suit my own understanding, could a one word agreement be trusted in the light of its possible use as a mere completion and expression of a wish to move on? How acceptable is the inclusion of unrecorded data, either from informal interviews with notes written up after the event, or from the conversations that provided the social context that surrounded the interviews? Often, this data seemed to be the most personal and revealing, yet a decision to disclose it would bring into play ethical decisions as to when research becomes tabloid journalism. In fact, the quantitative side of the data was fairly simple. When I could explain the hypothesis to an interviewee, and for a response receive an emphatic "Absolutely!", the difficulty was not establishing a perceived difference, but trying to see it through the explicatory language of the interviews.

In point of fact, all qualitative research would seem to be ultimately reduced to an ethical perception. Human experience and communication are so enmeshed in a near infinite number of variables, that eventually its validity as research comes down to a matter of whether the reader trusts the researcher. And in research, as in religion and politics, I am sure that it takes more than an argument to change tastes, preferences, perceptions and

understandings, with those involved in similar fields usually only really trusting those who have come to the same conclusions as they have previously. Trust, so central to the sharing of human knowledge, can sometimes be instinctual, but usually requires a history.

Chapter Five

Introduction Terminology & Analysis

Fields of research & Question construction

So I set my understanding of the needs of my own faith community in a social context of concerns for morality as expressed through media and politics, concerns for values transmission in education, and concerns for 'a better society' - not forgetting concerns for intellectual stringency and conformity to recognised academic disciplines and discourses. My field of interest covered a vast territory, and needed to be reduced to specific fields of research.

The initial source of research interest was the problems of a minority living in a multi-faith society, faiths that have had a profound influence on cultures while co-existing throughout the world for centuries. It therefore seemed that it would be useful to consider the issue from a global as well as a local perspective. The voiced concerns were for issues of personal and communal identity and values, and in particular the relationship between faith communities and the secular schools to which they sent their children. But this relationship is inevitably problematic, as it goes to the heart of the aims and purpose of education, the nature of religious understanding and the meaning of knowledge.

Before establishing the themes and structure of the interviews, I had to reconsider the research focus. If I was going to concentrate on faith educationists, what was it I wanted them to talk about? I could start from the premise that Muslim children go to state schools, and discuss whether their experience is comparable to the experience of children of other faith groups, but along with my interviewees, I have been involved in these matters for some years, and a list of common problems would come as a surprise to very few. So rather than an examination of the problem, I thought it preferable to examine the solution. This also meant that I could go back to first principles with regard to the issues, and the interviewees all said they were happy to extemporise around whatever themes I proposed.

After a brief consideration of the terminology to be used, the structured interviews were divided into four main themes: -

'Aims of Education' examining the interviewees perception of education in its historical, current and ideal contexts. This theme also considered the content and process involved, and the relative importance given to issues such as self-esteem, motivation, discipline, creativity, play, media, inclusion, multiculturalism and values.

'Education, Culture and Identity' exploring the relationship between education and the formation of a child's identity. This theme considered the distinction between child and adult, the relationship between individual, family and community, the relationship between culture and identity, the cultural context of education and its part in life learning.

'Faith and Culture' exploring the context of values, morality and ethics. This theme considered religion as a language for the spiritual, the relationship between church and faith, and faith as culture or aesthetic.

'Sustaining Faith Minority Culture and Identity' exploring current social and educational problems and requirements, and faith amidst cultural change. This theme considered faith in a postmodern society, including issues of questioning and authority, truth, certainty and doubt.

Somehow he seemed to end up being sought out as an 'expert' on matters related to the Muslim community, which in fact was far from the case. What he was good at was taking the little knowledge that he had, and expressing it in English in a way that made easy sense to his listeners. He gave hundreds of talks, in public libraries and university lecture halls, to kids and adults, and somewhere along the line he got asked to go on TV. If he had known what it was going to be like, he might well have refused on first contact, but he didn't, and he soon discovered that names on the programme researchers lists are not just for Ramadhan, they are for life - and they get passed around. One week, he had three separate shows wanting an appearance, even though he just kept saying no all the time. He knew that TV can make a face all too public, and that was not a fate he relished. But they finally suggested occasional radio broadcasts, and he took the Director General's shilling, and that's the story of how he got to be mistaken for an 'expert' at the BBC

Illustration No. 7

The themes I chose were a fairly arbitrary division of the overall research field, drawn from my personal perception of the essential issues from prior experience. During the process of the research, what became an unexpected central issue, however, was my research process itself and my relationship to it, and the way in which it somehow reflected the situation of a minority faith pupil within a school, the need to be able to operate within two separate paradigms that for many might be seen as mutually exclusive. As far as my own educational process was concerned, it would be necessary to show that my faith perspective was not rendered an irrelevance by the postmodern paradigm.

Fortunately, prior to my faith commitment, my life was essentially a postmodern journey. Strip out the religious conclusions and I could be seen as a very model of postmodern man, but my faith paradigm did not seem to be a rejection of my previous postmodern self, more a progression, a development, a discovery of a way to align rationality and paradox, and a life pattern that seemed beneficial to all aspects of my life experience including the intellectual. Doubt was not inimical but intrinsic to my religious/life experience, and hard to reconcile with the 'narrative realism' that still dominates university life. For all the rapid advance of postmodern techniques, it barely needs example that a scan of university departments would reveal more people looking for 'proof'. The dominant discourse is still 'science', and the language of science, and it is almost impossible not to be drawn in. I think there is somehow something very human about still hoping for proof rather than opinion even when utilising postmodern techniques that have arisen precisely to confront those antique ideas of certainty.

For 'opinion' is not necessarily less trustworthy than 'proof'. In fact, it is used as the basis of the majority of societal 'truths', as for example on the TV news, when political views must be countered by 'balance' whereas the views of 'experts' are more often treated as unchallengeable. I see opinion as based on wide-ranging data drawn from all the subtle complexities of a lifetime's experience, whereas 'proof' must inevitably be deduced from a much more restricted range of data that is tangible, manipulable, recordable, and reproducible. Surely just one experience of an intangible, indefinable and irreproducible event such as 'love-at-first-sight' is sufficient to convince the one who experiences it of the reality of its existence, for all the difficulty of proving its possibility.

As has already been pointed out, the subject matter of the research is vast, and any intervention between the data and the reader must be seen as a 'violation' in the postmodern paradigm, initiating the research paradox of an impossibility of presentation constraints or deductive conclusions. In the same way that a scientific ethnographer is expected to be impartial and detached, a postmodern ethnographer is now expected to be a 'stranger', 'marginalized' by virtue of self-reflection. Yet faith participants have recognised the necessity and difficulty of this problem for millennia, using meditation and prayer in attempts to achieve detachment from the self, in the full knowledge that the numbers of those put forward as examples of success in this endeavour are statistically insignificant.

My preliminary opinions were drawn from what might be called an 'inductive' as opposed to a 'deductive' response to the interviews. The data captured on tape for later analysis could only be a small part of the communication that takes place between two individuals. Facial expression and body language work on such subtle levels to complement and convey implication to words, and communicate meanings not intrinsic to the words, but which can be re-associated with them during a more deductive analysis.

Terminology

As mentioned, interviews began with a consideration of the interviewees' meanings, interpretations, and use of terminology, and before proceeding with any thematic analysis, it is necessary to consider the researcher's own use of terminology as well as his social science framing and value commitments. Most terminology considerations can be dealt with as part of the analysis, but at this point, when looking to define the interviewees as groups, it is essential to understand the thoughts behind the terms 'religion', 'faith', and 'secular'.

'Religion' is a term that is commonly used in society, with an assumption of shared understanding but little real thought as to the nature and limits of its definition, yet a more precise approach to words is needed when policy or legislation are involved. The difficulty is clear from the Home Office Research Study 221 on 'Tackling religious discrimination' (Hepple and Choudhury 2001), which considers whether legislation should prohibit discrimination on grounds of 'religion/religious belief/ religion or belief'. *"The first option is for the legislation to cover only 'religion'. Leaving aside, for the moment, the problems that arise in defining religion, it is clear that restricting the legislation to the protection of religion provides relatively greater certainty than the other options. Beliefs are a far broader category than religion. It would be clear, for example, that it does not cover political and ideological beliefs."* (Hepple and Choudhury 2001 p23) Under the second option, relating legislation to 'religious belief' it can be argued that other ethical belief systems which fall outside traditional religions, such as atheism and agnosticism, would be covered as *"Even if atheism is not a religion, atheism differs from typical non-religious discourse. The questions atheism and agnosticism deal with concern religion or religious issues"* (Hepple and Choudhury 2001 p23).

The broader approach of covering 'religion or belief' is that taken by the Human Rights Act in Section 13, which makes special provision for freedom of religion, though the HRA does sidestep issues of meaning by refraining from definition of either 'religion' or 'religious

organisation'. Similarly, Article 14 of the ECHR prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion without defining 'religion', and the Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on the grounds of 'creed' with no definition of the term. The OHRC does give some guidance, including non-deistic bodies of faith under the umbrella title of religion, but considering that *"The existence of religious beliefs and practices are both necessary and sufficient to the meaning of creed ... 'Creed' is defined subjectively. The Code protects personal religious beliefs, practices or observances, even if they are not essential elements of the creed, providing they are sincerely held."* (Hepple and Choudhury 2001 p25) *"The difficulty of defining religion is regarded as a key obstacle to legislation prohibiting religious discrimination."* (Hepple and Choudhury 2001p25)

With 'religion' being a term that, defined or not, has such widespread use this research could hardly avoid it. Nonetheless, the flaws inherent in the term and the narrowness of its historical interpretation have to be recognised. The idea of a being defined as a 'religion' with some form of organisation and hierarchy is not problematic for most Christian churches, even though such an interpretation is questionable in the light of current ecumenism and broader understandings of 'church', with authoritative structures not being seen as the essential basis of what binds Christians together. The term is also generally accepted in a pragmatic fashion by many non-hierarchical and non-deistic 'religions, even though it is not their descriptor of choice.

'Faith' tends to be the terminology chosen by 'religions' themselves when working together in inter-group activities (such as the Inter Faith Network and its offshoots). It is also generally preferred by those who profess to non-hierarchical, unstructured religions, such as Muslims or Hindus, who can be quite emphatic in their assertions that "we don't have a religion – we have a way of life". 'Faith' also suggests the inclusion of broader parameters of belief, including non-deistic 'religions' such as Buddhism, as it suggests no more than that the accepted belief system is recognised as an unprovable paradigm, giving 'religions' an equivalence with humanism and the sciences.

Strangely, those secular organisations which have such problems defining religion, rarely seem to feel the need to apply their definitive abilities to the title 'secular'. But if 'religion' is slippery, 'secular' is even more so, as dictionaries tend to define it as what it is not "*not*

concerned with or related to religion ... having no particular religious affinities”, and in this non-definition lies a logic trap which suggests that a secular way of thinking should not be subject to the challenges invariably applied to faith groups. The suggestion is that secularity is a non-stance, and secularism a non-philosophy. Yet it sometimes seems that despite lip-service paid to religious values, in the corridors of civil power, here, as in Europe and most of the ‘western’ world, secularism is seen as an unchallengeable bedrock of government, perhaps even more important than democracy itself. In any realm of civic co-operation, it is simply considered impossible to imagine a preferable alternative. The secular non-stance will be considered in more detail in a later chapter, however.

Analysis

For the purpose of this study, faith educationists were defined simply as members of faith communities known for their involvement in education, though in practice, the interview group had other important characteristics as described elsewhere. Great care was taken to avoid taking vociferous minorities as representative of wider community opinion. Secular educationists were equally simply defined as those employed within the state education system, though again the group had other shared characteristics. Each group clearly had a perception of their own and the other’s group identity, though a number of idiosyncrasies became apparent throughout the course of the interviews. Faith educators in general saw a clear distinction, even though frequently working within or in co-operation with the secular education system. Secular educationists were more likely to experience identity conflicts when having a committed faith while recognising the constraints of the system.

The secular education system is highly visible, quite clearly formal and hierarchical, and with senior figures in a position to suppress challenge or dissent through control of employment. The faith educationists group, however, though consisting of individuals who might be part of a formal and hierarchical sub-group, is informal, non-hierarchical, and largely invisible as a group, rarely being seen as cohesive, generally typified in terms of difference or disagreement, and often perceived in terms of the idiosyncratic or extreme opinions of individuals. This is perhaps a natural outcome in regions where religion is defined as essentially an issue for individual freedom of choice (as opposed to secular nationalism, for example, which has the right to impose its identity upon an individual at birth, and then retains the right to execute or imprison any individual considered sufficiently subversive).

During the process of analysis (as well as throughout all the research) there was the obvious need for self-critique, looking for inadequacies of theory or methodology, that critique being used to adjust both methodology and expectations. Despite the research being initially focused on the faith/secular group categorisation, individuals of course shared membership of many other groupings, specific faith, general faith, socio-political, ethnic, national, and cultural. It was therefore necessary to beware of unitising the 'voice' of each group into some preconceived homogeneity, yet at the same time allow for the existence of some form of common 'voice'. Pragmatic issues can also affect the direction of research. The interviewees may not necessarily be recognised as typifying primary groupings due to the limited range of participants. Those most likely to agree to participation already had a relationship with the researcher, with many to some extent being looked on as friends, a relationship that usually requires a certain similarity of viewpoint or perspective, a shared humour, language and ease of communication. Requests for interviews from those in senior positions in the secular education system were much less likely to be accepted. As one advisor put it bluntly "It's not in their interests to open their opinions up to question". Even if the original intention had been to establish a balance between the groups, issues of access would have made it impractical. Busy people have little time to offer those they do not know.

"In being so relentlessly sceptical, the questioning mindset is often at odds with the mindsets of a great many audiences that are more prone to absolutism. In particular, the members of virtually all social groupings do not want their realities questioned or treated sceptically. Instead, members believe and they want others to believe – to not use a questioning mindset as regards them. But, as a social scientist, the researcher is bound to doubt and to check and to hold all claims as simply claims." (J & L Lofland p154)

It may perhaps be of use here to consider the research in terms of the social scientific framing practices as typified by Lofland and Lofland. They distance their practice from many forms of moral and other advocacy, but do embrace a number of value commitments which are evident in the moral grounding of what they label the "questioning mindset", "*founded in the broad modern philosophical outlook commonly named humanism (Kurtz 1983, 1992). This is the dominant pragmatic philosophy prevailing in the public arenas of all economically advanced democracies and it is the underpinning of organized scientific endeavour, an endeavour*

appropriately labelled 'liberal science' (Rauch 1993)." (J & L Lofland p169). They have a value commitment to what they call "New Perception", abstracting from experience to formulate generic propositions and concepts, but recognising that this is not uniquely the preserve of social scientists, they compare their "questioning mindset" with the mindset of those they label "absolutists", *"for the social scientist, new perception is won in a hard process of inquiry and is never final. For the absolutist ... authority and finality stop further inquiry at some point."* (J & L Lofland p170). They espouse "Demystification and Reform", using the "questioning mindset" to facilitate *"the breakup of collective self-deceptions, the ideological 'logjams' to which all social life is inherently prone ... These social science aims are, of course, moral aims, the aims of widening people's perceptions of their situations and of enlarging their perceptions of social arrangements."* (J & L Lofland p171), call for a recognition of "Human and Moral Complexity" with which *"our higher ethical values as humans and humanists admonish us not to assess individuals, groups, or other social categorizations as either totally good or totally bad"* (J & L Lofland p172), and also plead for a commitment to "Larger, Dispassionate Understanding".

It must be made clear that this research is not framed in the self-limiting absolutist liberal science humanism of the Lofland social science paradigm, yet it does avow a questioning mindset, and an attempt is made to render the paradigm which is the context for that mindset transparent throughout the research. It does not aim to *"further the interests of one or another social category, a political or religious view advocating for such a categorization, or some combination of category or point of view ... rather than ... the broader values of inquiry, knowledge, demystification, and the like"* (J & L Lofland p174), but attempts to explore the field of research while openly contextualising the analysis in the ontology of the researcher. Thus it is clear that of the faith/secular groupings, the interviewer was a member of one and not the other. Therefore despite the attempted dispassion and objectivity of the interviews, social discussions around them were more likely to be voiced in an inclusive form, identifying with the group by the use of the term 'we'.

I have already mentioned the 'conversational' aspect of many of the responses, but as I consider the idea of detached objectivism in research to be a modern scientific myth, I find a 'conversation' to be quite a happy metaphor for the ethnographic dialogue. Just as a conversation suggests an exploration of themes with a willingness to follow where they

lead, the exposition of ideas in a context of questioning without the rancour of argument, a process of learning from the other and adapting paradigms in the light of new information. Conversations are creative, dynamic and self-referential, and even in their least prepossessing of forms have a subtlety and complexity that overwhelm any reduction to terms of data. Every human spends a lifetime developing the art, which is central to our formation of social understandings and personal opinion.

Like a conversation, the research was not simply a gathering of data, but an ongoing, shifting perspective in a constantly changing context with the accumulation of opinion. It was an interplay, with each side carrying that lifetime's baggage that determines tastes and preferences, sensory, emotional, conceptual, linguistic, artistic and such. It was a dialogue drawing on a heritage of genes, bodily chemicals, family environments, life-experiences, social backgrounds, and any number of different influences quite beyond the race/class/gender/sexuality windows currently fashionable. If Proust could not even encapsulate the thoughts of an afternoon, what chance the ethnographer doing justice to so many accumulated thoughts and opinions?

But taking a conversation and capturing it with pen or tape-recorder, turns it into data, and words can then be counted, searched for hidden meaning, or taken apart and recombined. Two things in particular sprang from the page after the first data sort, however. Having vowed not to assume homogeneity, I found that the faith group responses had a unanimity that many would find extraordinary. On showing the first sort to a colleague for opinion, the response was a certain puzzlement followed by "but the data has so obviously been manipulated to make it say what you want it to say", yet what they were reading was one small step away from raw data. The other peculiarity of the faith group data, distinctly lacking in the secular responses, was the frequency of the notation "(laughter)".

"In ethnography the analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research. In many ways, it begins in the pre-fieldwork phase, in the formulation and clarification of research problems, and continues through to the process of writing reports, articles, and books. Formally, it starts to take shape in analytic notes and memoranda; informally, it is embodied in the ethnographer's ideas and hunches. And in these ways, to one degree or another, the analysis of data feeds into research design and data collection. This iterative process is central to the 'grounded theorizing' promoted by Glaser and Strauss, in which theory is developed out of data analysis, and subsequent data collection is guided strategically by the emergent theory (Glaser and Strauss

1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990).” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995)

As previously established, I have decided to try to let the faith community data speak for itself in the first instance as far as possible, initially limiting my intrusion to editing and juxtaposition, though well aware that reduction of the data to approximately one fifteenth of its original bulk is in itself a form of analysis. For such a reduction, ideas need to be abstracted from the text, then re-introduced and re-expressed through a précis of the original. But with the original data being an aggregation of interviews, that re-expression becomes not just an act of analysis, but also one of synthesis. The intention has been not to ‘select some’ what was said, but to ‘condense all’ of what was said.

I have tried to let the data lead me towards its own synthesis, with a result that could be said to typify the ‘group voice’, but I have tried not to make the mistake of stripping away all flesh from the skeleton. So I have avoided the temptation to cut out all identifying terminology, and on occasion it may be obvious just which faith representative is the source of a quote, but on other occasions that same source may be indistinguishable. At times, a source may use terminology that seems quite faith specific, but expressing a meaning that is shared in a way that is much broader than the technical language used.

No attempt was made to treat the data from secular educationists in quite the same way. While hopefully representative of certain perceptions commonly expressed within the group, these quotes have been used as hints and illustrations to enrich the reader’s own immediate analysis of the faith group language, though the sections that include them were not intended in any way to function as a detailed and reductive analysis of the faith group ‘voice’. I used the secular educationist ‘voices’ only as a reflection and counterpoint to extend the reader’s personal response to the main data.

After much heart searching, I have also chosen to eschew labelling of quotations to signify the source, as I felt that such labelling only encourages the reader to compare and contrast individual quotes with preconceived notions of faith group perceptions. The disadvantage of not labelling is that the inner dynamic of inter-faith similarities of language are not immediately apparent, which religion used similar terms to which other religion about what, but interesting as such an approach to the data might be, that was not the purpose of this research. From an interest in the relationship between two groups, I had found myself compelled to concentrate on one, and out of that concentration sprang the possibility that

the combined 'voice' of faith educators might provide insight into possible solutions to current problems in education and society.

Giving the reader the best access to the data that I can achieve means that any such insights can reach out off the page to a reader and perhaps ultimately be of help in their negotiation and implementation of educational change. For myself, this research has led me to a place very different from the one to which I thought I was heading when I started. But that came from my interaction with the data and issues of analysis and synthesis, but that must be faced in Section Three. In Section Two (the next four chapters), I simply present the data in the manner described, following the four main themes. To introduce the style of presentation, however, I will begin with a short sample here, the opening to the interviews that was a discussion of the use of terminology. Text derived from faith educators has its own font, and changes in individual 'voice' have been numbered for later reference.

Terminology: Education / Instruction / Schooling / Training / Indoctrination

1. I think we'd see, state education obviously as training people towards exams, when we would like to see state education as preparing people for life, ... education's important for all people. It is a life-long process and continues, and school's obviously the front end, the front loading of that system, because we all go to school for quite a long time, ... at the beginning of the first section of our lives, but we are aware that it's ... important that state education, ... recognises that it's more than just about passing exams and teaching people to do quadratic equations and this sort of thing. Now I think it's much more about ... developing in people the faculty to think and reason for themselves and to live in the community around them. So that I suppose is not going to be instruction, I mean instruction is going to be a part of that, by learning about other's worlds. You can then start to see what is important in those worlds and use that to reflect back on your world, and I think in the state system that's probably most done through the religious and moral education side of things, because the other side of the curriculum has got so crammed with milestones you have to reach, etcetera.

2. I think we would use all the educational terms, but I think we would apply them in different ways. Yes, some of it's instruction. You are learning Hebrew as a language, and that's instruction, but when you apply it you may be singing a secular Hebrew song, but you may be singing one of the Psalms equally, so it has a double motivation.

3. Instruction, I would see personally, as I know something, or I have some skill that I'm going to pass on to you.

4. Yes. There are aspects of religion which you have to teach about. ... Children very often come to school with very little knowledge or practise of their faith, and yes it has to be instruction. When it comes to the festivals they are instructed, they are taught, they are learning what the festivals are about, the historical basis of them, but there's also the experiential aspect of it which they are able to have in a Jewish school. ... I think basically that I would use the word education unreservedly about the Jewish side of a child's development. Obviously there is another dimension. There has to be a development of a love for the religion and culture, which you may not develop in mathematics or English grammar, which is purely functional. But part of the education is purely functional. It's a means to an end. ... Yes there's instruction, but you have to have the experiential side of it as well, to touch the soul, as it were.

5. I would see education as the broad empowering of the individual to progress, to develop, to improve, that kind of thing, and the church I think would be quite happy with that sort of definition, as it would be talking about the broad empowering of people.

6. It's a complicated issue... because of the nature of Buddhism itself ... the whole question of instruction is a bit different. In the Buddha's teaching, he encouraged people to investigate the nature of life and come to their own conclusions, rather than to give them a set of preordained conclusions or guidelines. ... There is less of a feeling of a need that this is the way and this is the only way. ... much more a feeling of wanting to throw the individual back on themselves, their own intelligence, their own reflection, so they discover life and its truths first-hand. ... It doesn't want so much to give something from the outside as to encourage the person to discover for themselves.

7. Yes, that's right. I always compare my religion as like a forest which grew, it's not like a garden, ... it's just like a forest which grew naturally, ... and people follow whatever they want and that's how they develop. Even today the same thing happens in India. ... There are various schools of thought, but ... there's no one settled authority for us. That is good and also bad (laughter) ... there is no indoctrination in Hinduism. You grow up, and the things around you, they teach you, ... it's part of the family, part of the society, part of the community.

8. What has happened in the state system has changed so much in the last ten or fifteen years, we seem to have gone through several systems in fact, and it seems to be more of a sociological, anthropological, approach to religion than any real investigation of faith. What seems to me to be at

the heart of religion is ignored, ... and it's dealing with the surface and not with the heart of the matter.

9. I think that is quite interesting, because ... one might say that actually Catholic schools do a very good job for their faith community, and that's true at one level, but at a more profound level I would want to suggest that the very close tie up between Catholic schools and the state precludes Catholic schools from providing an alternative epistemology and alternative ontology and an alternative teleology, and I think that's a problem for Catholic schools, that they're really not in the business of providing an alternative. They are the same as state schools, but they happen to have a different discourse surrounding religious education and some features of the common life of the school. ... We function with the same curriculum, which I think is an extraordinarily truncated view of the world anyway, irrespective of whether it is being used in Catholic schools or not, and the same management structures, the same performance criteria, the same quality assurance procedures, and therefore if you apply the same quality assurance procedures how can you ever be qualitatively different. ... They have bought into the same language, the same discourse of performativity, so that religious education sinks or swims in a school according to how well it does in delivering particular sets of attainment targets.

10. I use education to cover two concepts, two terms, ... the word 'Tarbiyyah' means literally allowing the child to grow, and it's the same thing you use for plants. The child grows in the way that a plant grows, you have to provide for it, you have to look after it, you have to make sure that you've got the stem in the right place, you need it supported at the right time, you need water at the right time, and if you do this it grows to what it is supposed to be, and with the aims of education we have to get something, and what we have to get is already in the child. The child has the potential to be what we want him to be. It's just that it has to grow, and it needs to be nurtured in the right way. So education would mean nurturing, but at the same time there is another concept in Islam, which is T'alim, which is giving of knowledge. So both of these processes, of allowing the child to grow and the knowledge to come out, so to speak, and also the pouring in of knowledge which is the T'alim or instruction, both have their place under the title education as far as I'm concerned. One is for if the child has to be told 'this is the way' ... it doesn't just come naturally ... So ... for mathematics, you need to know that to use a cosine you need to use a particular formula, and some people may say well that's indoctrination (laughter), but for me ... whether you call it indoctrination or you call it teaching or you call it whatever you want to call it, it is what we're doing and it has to be done as part of education, and I come back to the two Arabic terms, which are Tarbiyyah, nurturing, and T'alim, teaching - Both are education.

11. I think ... that the word education ... would be seen in the broadest sense, ... it wouldn't just involve basic skills and vocational skills ... but something much more fundamental, that if you like, the life experience is about education, and that education in moral character ... is within it.

12. When the Prophet came, he was asked what are you here for, what is your role? He said I have been sent as a teacher. He came to teach, and so the whole of this religion is a learning experience, so to speak, and this religion is all learning, there's nothing beyond that. So religion is learning, and learning is religion. ... Life is learning, and learning is life, and that includes everything from being able to drive a car, to finding what the cosine of an angle is (laughter)

13. It's a way of life; it's a way of life. Whatever I learnt, I learnt from my mother's milk. You drink knowledge as you go.

Responses of the two groups had certain tendencies throughout that might be considered more as an outlook than part of their ontology or epistemology. The faith group generally spoke in terms of ideals, and explored ways that the system might be changed to align with them, whereas the secular group was more likely to speak of issues in terms of the pragmatic limits of immediate possibility within the current system "Just as important as defining what education is, is defining what education is not". Both approaches are not mutually exclusive, however, as all would recognise that at different times and for different purposes it can be preferable to see 'trees' as 'wood' or 'forest'. Another similarly non-mutually-exclusive general tendency that distinguished the groups could perhaps be summed up as the distinction between education as a profession as opposed to a vocation or service, teaching as opposed to nurturing.

Much like their counterparts in the secular system, faith educators describe what they do with one term only, 'education', though they understand that the other terms considered can be applied to certain aspects of what they and their secular counterparts do. And whereas they associate 'instruction' with the teaching of subjects within the state curriculum (language, grammar, maths), and could even laughingly consider the teaching of maths as 'indoctrination', their secular counterparts tend to disavow all terms apart from one, and are much less likely to treat any terms apart from 'education' as anything other than pejoratives "*We do not indoctrinate, we do not train, we do not school in the same way as they mean it, we do not give instruction in nondenominational schools. We do educate, it's a matter of opening*

minds and giving them knowledge, but we don't ask them to believe or not believe or to make comments on it. It's just that if we were telling them about Hindus we would tell them about the different gods and the meaning of some of the symbols that they hold and how a Hindu prays, but we do not ask them to make judgements about it ... Now in denominational schools you do get instruction, schooling, training and indoctrination, very definitely."

Of course, some teachers within the secular system also subscribe to a faith, and these have to walk a particular tightrope. *"Oh yes, RME teaching is quite different from faith teaching. The faith teaching is what I do in Sunday school, and I can see the difference. I don't teach any child to be a Christian. I don't teach any child to be a particular faith. I would hope that what I am doing is allowing them at least access to the ideas and viewpoints of people and hopefully never, although I suspect I do, as it is difficult not to allow my own opinion to intrude on that, whereas when I teach in the Sunday school I do, let my own beliefs and ideas come through."*

The objection to any possibility of a teacher indoctrinating children with a faith has to face the question of how you teach anyone to be anything. *"Well, I think we can probably lead them to it, I don't know if you can actually teach them to be Christian. I suspect that the reason that RME is so despised in this part of the world, I don't know if it happens everywhere, but I suspect it is happening elsewhere in Scotland, is because in the past religious education was in fact instruction, when we are talking about children being belted perhaps for not being perfect with their Catechism or whatever, and I think we have parental resentment against us, and it is not always the children's resentment because it was never their experience."*

No matter how eternal the principles may be, faith education has always inevitably been expressed in different forms according to the cultural context of its time and location. If secular educationists are to understand the perceptions of faith educationists and find any benefit in them, it will be necessary for them to grasp how they express their language of education now, drawing on a long history indeed, but currently existing in a multi-cultural global faith context. Although the first world no longer colonises the third quite as overtly as in the past, we still tend to assume that our perceptions are naturally superior and intrinsically correct by dint of them being ours, and fear what challenges our assumptions. Is there really so much to fear from those who speak of education in terms of reason, reflection, experience, discovery, and touching the soul, those who describe children's needs in terms of support and nurture, and speak not of life-long learning but life as learning, and life and

learning as religion, inextricable - and who laugh heartily during the telling?

“Article 2 of Protocol No.1 to the EHCR touches on the issue of religion and education. It states that: ‘No person shall be denied the right of education. In exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.’ The UK has entered the following reservation in relation to this article: ‘... in view of certain provisions of the Education Acts in the United Kingdom, the principle affirmed in the second sentence of Article 2 is accepted by the United Kingdom only in so far as it is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.’” (Hepple and Choudhury 2001: p.10)

Chapter Six

Aims of (Faith) Education

14. The Bahai approach to education is very much bringing out the qualities that are inherent in people, and developing them, rather than ... giving people a set of instructions to memorise, or to do, there is obviously a role for instruction in anything, but ... Bahais generally see it as a fundamental thing, ... that the real key issue in education is not the facts and instruction that is given, but it's in the development of the individual, and the individuals capacities that are inherent.

15. Well, ... in Tibet where our tradition comes from, ... the whole purpose of education was to make a good human being, and knowledge for its own sake was very secondary to that. ... it's not as though the sort of things which are in our present-day syllabus which are practical information about the nature of the phenomenal world we live in were not important, ... It's just that their importance is secondary to the question of why you are in this world, and what you can do with the potential of being, knowing about reality ... for the persons own sake and for the sake of the civilisation in which they live.

16. Religious education is really about helping young people think for themselves and reflect. It's not about just giving them facts. And teachers have got to be very honest and often say I don't know the answers to these big questions of life and morality. Perhaps they just don't like admitting that they don't know answers

17. The wholeness of the child must be addressed and ... there are people saying that must be done by the home, but sometimes it isn't, you know ... For instance, it's important that the maturing human being realises that death is the ultimate reality, and faces up to that. Now if the home is not going to do it ... and talk about matters of life and death, then the children are disadvantaged ... and so a school has responsibility.

18. That's right, education in the all-round sense ... is not about proving facts, it's about developing young people, and preparing them for life and not just jobs. I mean, ... our government's ... policies in terms of targets and attainments and that kind of thing, seem to be aimed at producing pupils for work, rather than educating for life, and giving them this all round education.

19. The ... Church has always ... performed a number of functions throughout history. ... But a strong tradition ... has been the notion of education as service, ... to liberate people, ... lifting people out of their misery, of giving them the equipment to produce the kingdom on earth as broadly conceptualised, not narrowly focused simply on to make ... more money

And why do we believe that it is our job to make kids literate and numerate, it's our job to do that so that we can survive in society, not so that we can get employment. ... Our job is not to produce factory fodder, but that's what the education system is doing now, producing factory fodder and producing fodder for universities

20. We see education as a broad process, and children should be exposed to the full breadth of interests and concerns, ... education is about preparing people for life, preparing people to be fully integrated members of a responsible society, responsible for itself, responsible within a world context, and responsible for the members within it, and so education ... is about ... enabling people to participate in that sort of society

There would seem to be considerable confusion with regard to traditions of faith education *“I haven't found in the past that a religion has a particular way of viewing education. ... It's not that, as far as I can see, there is an Islamic view about education and that's as true of the Sikh and the Christian and the Jewish ... there isn't a Muslim way or a Jewish way”*, but even though methods may have changed through history, a similar essential purpose of the education process would seem to be reflected in the language of them all. Education must address the whole being, with priority given to 'goodness', a concentration on the ethical and moral, and a recognition that this goodness is inherent within a human being, and a quality to be drawn out, rather than imposed from outside. Intertwined with this priority, however, and despite a common perception that faiths prefer a mindless approach *“I think it's important that state education knows about the range of views and is sensitive to them, ... many of them would be difficult to equate with what is seen as good education practice, ... because it's about instruction and it's not about thinking”*, was a universal concern that education involved not an unquestioning acceptance, but thinking and reflecting.

Another central concern is that this thinking and reflecting should focus not just on 'facts', but more ultimate issues such as matters of life, death, and purpose, with the aim of personal fulfilment rather than employment. It would seem that this is an ideal that many young

teachers would share, who perhaps eventually wilt under the pressures of the system “*What I always believed, was that what I was doing was facilitating children, saying to children this is where you will find this, but you need to go and learn it yourself, you need to make it the way you want think about it. But not all teachers do that. A lot of teachers get bogged down with the subject. More and more, teachers just want a package they can stand-up and deliver, saying here is a package just do that*”. If professional educating is not to turn into a daily drudgery, perhaps it needs a constant regeneration of those faith ideals that sustain those who see their choice of profession as a vocation and their work as an act of service. And that service is (after ‘God’) primarily to the individual, not, as many would expect, to the faith community. Education is not seen as a process of communal induction, but the nurture of an individual, though nevertheless an individual who is essentially a social being, whose fulfilment can only benefit society at large.

Content & Process

21. Where there is doubt you need learning skills to investigate and come to your own conclusion, but where you can, you benefit from your elders knowledge, and it's a process you find in education everywhere. For if we had to go and try and test every morsel of knowledge that we picked up we would spend most of our lives learning the alphabet or to count.

22. I would come at it from the point of view that human beings ask questions, human beings explore the nature and meaning of their existence, ... I think human beings look for something that will give meaning and value and purpose ... to their life, and I think the good teacher engages what they wish to communicate with the questions that people are asking, because if you give the answers before the person is ready to ask questions the answers are meaningless and they will be rejected ... and so it has to be child centred and person centred because otherwise you learn trite meaningless stuff, you don't actually learn it if you are instructed, or you are indoctrinated. If you haven't made it yourself you haven't made it your own, which is really what religion is wanting you to do, to internalise.

23. Is education not about helping young people to articulate the questions that they really have, but don't either have the tools or the experience perhaps to formulate them, and part of education's job is to bring that out and to help young people articulate questions that they have.

24. In our own churches, ... what we are aiming to do is get the children to think for themselves, by showing respect for their ideas, to help them respect their own ideas, and just to give them some practice in thinking these things through. That and oh, developing a sense of wonder, and awareness of, you know, the mystery at the heart of life, ... so that they value that as well, but always without trying to ... give them an answer which they are expected to accept as the answer.

25. The Bahai teachings say it would be better to have a child that had good character, but no book knowledge, than to have someone who was very learned about a lot of subjects and had no development of character. So, it's ... about first things first. And really it's a moral statement about education: that all education is good, but ... that moral development comes first.

For teachers in the secular system, the content of their lessons is largely determined by a curriculum, available textbooks and material, and their personal experience of academic subjects gained within similar constraints, and though many might question the imposition of a standard curriculum, few would challenge the prime educational importance of the subjects that are taught. Religion is also taught as a subject, of course, but it is really approached quite differently. *“RME simply is different, you know, right from the statutory basis of it, ... the fact that it is the only subject which is enshrined by law in the curriculum, and the fact that it is the only subject that parents have a right to withdraw their children from, means it is different.”* Even should they disassociate RME from their perception of education as practised within faiths, the fact is, that few teachers would see the requirements of faith education as inclusive of all the other academic subjects. Yet all the faith educators spoke in terms of the need for the most inclusive of educational content, the quantifiable, the interpretive and communicative. It is essential that knowledge is passed on from generation to generation, to act as a foundation for individual exploration and discovery, set in an educational context that has no limits (being the nature and purpose of existence) and no examinations apart from suffering and death.

All faith groups identified the educational process as being essentially one of questioning, yet the general view persists that faith is to do with the imposition of dogma, and as such forms the antithesis of education. *“I think you would be in real difficulty in nondenominational schools if you didn't separate out teachers' personal beliefs from their teaching of RME. I think it is totally inappropriate for teachers to impose or induct children into their own personal belief*

systems. I think that is really dangerous.” But as much as secularists may choose to ignore their belief systems, they still deal with human interactions, so it is hard to avoid issues of morality, and schools have rules, and nowadays have open policies for school ethos. “In terms of moral behaviour and spiritual behaviour, again, I think it is quite limited really. In terms of the ethos of the whole school, clearly we have a policy against bullying, and that applies to the way teachers treat children as well as the way children treat each other, and the way teachers treat each other as well. So in that sense, there is a kind of moral role model, but I think that really is as far as it goes”. Some were aware of questionable assumptions, however, “Who said education is not political? Who said it is an impartial facilitator? ... The educator, and the teacher and the professor, are all transmitting values, and if you know your science, you know your sociology, you know that”.

The Role of the Teacher

26. I think she or he can't not function as a role model. I guess maybe awareness is what it's about. I mean the teacher must have a religious position in the widest sense, even if that religious position is saying I think all religion is rubbish, ... and I think that ... the teacher needs to be straight with her class. I mean I was a teacher before I came into the ministry, and a lot of the way I see ministry is in terms of the way I used to see teaching. And that's what I do within my own congregation. They know exactly where I stand religiously speaking. They also know that I don't expect them to stand there as well

27. Can you get anything that's value free? I mean, I think we're past believing that ... anybody teaching or imparting knowledge can be totally objective. You're bound to approach it from particular perspectives I think. Maybe the important thing is to be honest about that. ... Alright, you've got to appreciate the educational ethos in which you are in, but there's no harm in saying to children, you must find out, you must discover, you must reflect, but this is what I believe, this is what I stand for, this is what I've found out ... (laughter) I would have thought that science also has to be honest and say these are the hypotheses on which we are working, and that anybody who is consciously not from a faith perspective is working from a set of hypotheses as well.

28. You learn by the way that the teacher sits, you learn by the way that the teacher dresses, you learn by every action that the teacher does, and that's why it's such a great responsibility on the

teacher, ... So the main focus, the main job of the teacher is to be the example, and that is whether he wants it or not. ... In addition to that, they have to do this job of instructing, ... 'if you add and two and two you get four', but what's more important is they will learn about the person that is teaching them, as they may not even learn that 'two and two equals four' unless there is a relationship built up with that person. So the two go together, one is the process of education and they learn from that, and one is the information, which is why I said that it relates to these two things, the nurturing of a person, the developing of or allowing the person to grow, ... and instruction.

29. The guru knows what is your aptitude and ...whatever individual vocation you would fit in, ... only one guru, ... not like now when every half an hour you keep on changing your teacher, it was not like that, only one guru. So ... he also guides you if you are interested in a spiritual path ... he takes you nearer to the truth, and in the process he tries to mend you, your ways of thinking, your attitudes, your morality

30. Well ... we tend to set very few individuals up as role models, ... even within the faith as religious teachers, one would practise the most humility possible, ... So one is setting a role model of humility. ... The whole person of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas is this role model, and on a deeper level all the teachings on what we call the Buddha nature are to assure people that all those qualities are inside themselves, to be uncovered. That having been said, on lesser level, in terms of everyday morality, then of course one encourages parents and anyone who is in a position of being looked to in a community to set a good example. I mean that is part of the Buddha's teaching, it's not just to be true to yourself internally, but also to be very mindful of your own actions and the effect they have upon others.

31. It's like you can't be impartial about anything. You are a neighbour. If you never see your neighbour you have done something. Whatever you do and whatever you don't do, you have influenced him through the interaction between two human beings, therefore there is no impartiality I think in these relationships

32. I think that all teachers have a moral obligation placed on them by virtue of their relationship to young people who are growing and developing and shaping their ideas, and I don't think that's exclusive to Catholic schools, ... The business of education is about the nurturing of other human beings. Historically in the Catholic Church that has always been true... I think if you look at the documents of the Church, the nurturing of the whole person can be traced right back, ... I don't think that lots of teachers want to be seen as nurturing anything, they want to be seen as teaching X from 9 to 3.30, and let me not have any more to do with this rabble. But I don't accept that as a thesis. I

don't accept that one is charged in education with doing nothing to help form and shape young people. It would seem to be a bizarre kind of education that said you know your alphabet or you know your sums, but you don't know how to behave in respect to other human beings, or you don't know how to love yourself, or you don't know how to come to terms with your own frailties, all this vast array of questions which every one of us is faced with everyday, and which most of us sublimate in the search for the dollar, because we think if we have enough of the dollars that these other questions won't haunt us. But they continue to haunt us, and unless we are nurtured in a set of world views which allow us to confront ourselves, then we will always be running from ourselves, and I think that is one of the difficulties in the idea that teachers can somehow prescind from their social and moral and personal obligations to students. It seems to me to be bizarre, and I've yet to find anyone to present me with a convincing argument as to why that might be the case, ... and if you ask a Communist is education a moral activity there are quite clear that it is. Now we might disagree about certain features of what would count as a moral activity, but we're certainly not in disagreement that education is a moral activity

It seems that most secular educationists recognise that, like it or not, the teaching relationship must take into account some consideration of the teacher's situation as a potential role model. *"A role model I think is a difficult thing, because I do think all teachers function as negative or positive role models for individual children."* Nonetheless, the parameters of behavioural prescription are inevitably seen as problematic. *"I suspect it's a kind of old-fashioned idea, and yet, and yet we do represent education so it is difficult not to. I suppose I would like to think so in some respects, but in others there is a huge responsibility in it I suspect. But it's something I can't with an easy conscience say this is right or wrong. Should the teacher function as a role model? Probably, probably."* *"It does, whether it should depends on what the teacher is like. Scary!"* The problem, of course, is that the role model relationship involves a pupil's reaction to the teacher as a person, taking it outside the medium of the subject and more into the realms of those aspects of people that we usually consider more important. We are dealing with personality, issues such as manners (in Islamic terminology known as 'Adab'), tastes, intentions, beliefs and commitments.

Now, whereas there is a profound suspicion of a sense of religious commitment in an RME teacher, in a way that no conflict would be seen in a science teacher's commitment to a science based paradigm *"when children go to a science lesson there are learning how to be scientists and the teacher is a role model in that sense, whereas in RME, the teacher's role*

model is really about asking children to learn how to learn”, in the wider school context commitment is often seen as the mark of a good teacher, and in that context even a personal religious commitment is not necessarily seen as something to hide. “I think teachers should also be very open about whether or not they have a faith, so that if they are Christian it is perfectly legitimate for them to say so, or if they are Muslim they should say so, but it shouldn't be said in a way that is going to cause the children any embarrassment or difficulty, I think it is something that we say as people. If you are interacting with children, you are going to go in and say I had a terrible day yesterday, you share experiences with them if you want them to be open and sharing with you, and I think you should do the same with your faith ... not asking them to agree or disagree with you, but just letting them know”

The unquestioned commitment, however, is to ‘education’ which *“we represent”, “I think the teacher is neither an impartial facilitator nor a committed guide, unless they are committed to education ... They are employed as teachers, not employed as Jews or Muslims or Christians or whatever, and I would rather they were committed to education than anything else.”* though as with faith, it tends to prove convenient to leave that educational focus of commitment with a fairly loose definition. But that may not fool the children. *“I think the way you are seeing the world is very obvious to the children. ... So you are a guide whether you like it or not, and your level of commitment is seen whether you want to hide it or not, I don't think it can be hidden. If you are not committed at all, the children will know. I think it's better to be committed, because children take that on board. They value that; they see that as to be committed is not to be wrong. ... I think children are pretty straight”*

As well as a commitment to ‘education’, the faith group’s perception of the teacher’s role obviously depends on a faith commitment, but also clearly recognises the need to give ‘example’. This requires a self-awareness and a reflexivity throughout the teaching process in a way that is echoed by the postmodernist movement in academia. This reflexivity is also recognised as a necessary function of a commitment to truth, at the heart of which is truth to self. The teaching relationship, as all relationships, is seen as centred on the heart, so faith educators speak of caring, healing, and nurture (a word that seems to terrify those in the secular education system), and the relationship is essentially one of sharing. To act as a guide, the teacher has to have experience of some of the journey, but in the journey of the spirit both teacher and pupil are travelling the same path together.

Attitudes to modern Educational Development/Psychology

33. Well ... you know if you're going back a hundred years or two hundred years I don't think there was a lot of child psychology about in the public arena, never mind in religious teaching. But ... it is just another dimension of teaching, so I mean yes, child psychology has to be an important.

34. One of the reasons why I find it easier to incorporate Vygotsky's understandings or Bruner's understandings is because it has a more practical, clear addition to an understanding of what should be going on in the classroom, whereas Piaget just provides an alternative way of looking at the development of the child as far as our view is concerned, and the reason why some philosophies are more acceptable, more easily incorporated into Islamic ideas, is that Islam sets down general principles and expects people to apply these wherever they go. So, ... when Muslims spread, certain things became incorporated because they fitted within the general guidelines of Islam. Which is why the medical philosophy of Galen is acceptable and Aristotle was accepted, but Plato may not have been. That's why certain psychologies are accepted much more readily than others. And in the case of Vygotsky it is clear why that understanding, which comes from his curriculum and the process of learning, is completely compatible with the understandings we describe in Islam.

35. Buddhism is very open to ongoing growth in the relative details of what make up day-to-day life. We have no problem with that, because the whole nature of Buddhist teachings is how to deal with a relative reality from an ultimate perspective, ... it does lend itself to being adaptive, and adapting to all sorts of circumstances. If we're talking about education as ... the process of acquiring intellectual data, then there isn't a problem with that changing. If there is a more modern or efficient way of doing it that suits the times and the people, then as long as that is leading in general to what Buddhism would consider good, that is a society which is more peaceful, more in harmony, where people care more for each other and there is less violence, ... if it is helping towards that then there is no problem with the actual means used.

Faiths educators are used to the idea of operating in a changing social context. After all, they draw their current understandings from a history of millennia of experience, and are used to the idea of adaptation given stability by being set in a context of an unchanging truth paradigm. The secular approach to education is a much more recent event, however, with no 'changeless' purpose to stabilize it, and a new scientific approach to change. For the last

century saw a 'Darwinian' perspective sweeping through our language of understanding of the nature of man, carrying in its theory the idea that what is new supplants the old, and that what survives is intrinsically superior to what does not. The suggestion is very seductive, as it affirms our own superiority over all that has gone before, and posits no more than survival as the determinant of fitness. The last century also saw the rise of the quasi-science of psychology, dealing with realms beyond the empirical, examining not just the physical, chemical or electrical characteristics of the brain, but the unquantifiable intangibility of consciousness. Like religion, psychological theories require faith, being unprovable even when having a quantifiable effect. The problem for a secular education system is finding a paradigm of human understanding and awareness, as with no empirical proof or agreed truth behind policies there can be no categorical justification for their implementation. The location of power over the educational paradigm within the secular system (if there is a paradigm at all) is extremely vague, and slippery as an eel. Obviously, theories can be influenced or implemented at many levels, individual teachers, schools, local authorities, universities and colleges, educational publishers, professional administrators and inspectors, politically appointed quangos, or education ministers. *"I honestly don't know who decides which tradition, I don't know if anybody does, but I would think most teachers are influenced first of all by what they learn in College, when they train as teachers, and then what they learn through staff development along the way."*

This vagueness leads to clear dynamic tension between the way that current educational policy is voiced and what actually happens in the classroom. *"If some of our schools only ever looked at their league tables, then they are achieving nothing and never have. They have to look elsewhere"* Politicians tend to talk in terms of the good of the nation, whereas the closer to the chalkface the more likely one is to hear of the good of the child. *"In our own authority, there is a major emphasis on raising achievement and on different types of knowledge, and ... the fact that if you can be encouraged to play an instrument, or listen to music, that will help you in other ways, because you will be a more fulfilled person, ... It's not just that you pile them into schools to learn the basics about how to sit an exam and pass it, but it's as important that children learn through music, they learn through art, they learn through anything they can"* *"I think, if you are in a very deprived area you have to find an alternative to exam statistics, and if many of the kids are going to be unemployed if they follow the pattern of their parents and grandparents you've got to find a different way to raise these kids self-esteem, so that they*

believe they are worth it, and they have better chance of leading a decent life, and you can't use academic ability and you can't use money, because they very often don't have the money, and they actually have the ability but they don't believe they have it, as they don't believe that anything will shift the fact that they are going to be unemployed and on the streets anyway. So you have to go in, I think, with a mixed model" For all the political gloss of empirical, tangible, current superiorities, the practicalities of implementation seem to inevitably push towards the 'unchanging truths' voiced by faith educators

Self Esteem / Motivation / Discipline

36. If we would affirm anything I think it would be the essential goodness, or at least potential for goodness in every human being, ... and what we are aiming to do with our children is to develop that into a healthy self-regard, and that's important in what we teach them, and also the way we teach them, and using a variety of techniques ... that are enjoyable. It's all part of that, that they should enjoy education, and ... work in a way that suits them

37. I think it is important that children have a sense of their value as individuals. ... and ... I believe that every individual is important, special, and has a unique contribution to make to society, and I don't like a society which allows us to devalue anyone because of their social class, or their occupation or whatever. ... It is not being addressed within the school system at all... The school system because it is so exam pressured, consigns folk to failure ... And ... I'm afraid you still get teachers who say that success is to get on to university after getting a bunch of Highers, and they are not interested in the other pupils, and we've not got that right yet

38. I ... actually prefer intolerance to apathy, because at least intolerance expresses a willingness to engage with the issue, ... and there's something to relate to, ... whereas with apathy there is nothing there, ... I think it's about developing reasons and the ability to work through for yourself, and as part of that you will develop a vision of yourself and where you stand in these things, and that's obviously about self-esteem.

39. Yes, it is interesting how many Christians will quote "to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbour as yourself", but they ignore "yourself" in that. You know, ... you have got to accept yourself for who and what you are, and love that, the Christian argument being that God loves you, so who are you to be fussy (laughter)

40. Motivation is to do with the character, and discipline is to do with the character of the teacher ... there is a relationship between us which naturally motivates the children and naturally disciplines them, so to speak ... But it's to do with the relationship. If you concentrate on being that example and developing the right kind of relationship then motivation and discipline come naturally as a consequence of it.

41. We start teaching discipline to the child from the cradle itself. ... If the foundation is not there, that discipline, ... do you expect the child as a grown up man to respect somebody? You do not. See, ... it's easy to straighten a plant when it's a sapling, put a stick against it and make it nice. Once it's grown big you can't make it straight, it will break. So you give that support and direction ... if you want to grow it straight.

42. A sense of humour, the sort of thing that can help you not take yourself too seriously, or have too much self-importance is very, very important in Mahayana Buddhism, and in Vajrayana Buddhism it's vital. Unless one can understand the absurdity of so many things, there's no point in practising it. But the very notion of discipline, throughout Buddhism ... is one of self-discipline. It's not one of an imposed discipline. It should come from wisdom, and realising that if you can stick to a certain discipline you are doing yourself a favour. ... It's based on an intelligent observation of the circumstances, realising that discipline is very often the key to personal freedom, and if you take that onto a deeper level, a sense of humour and a sense of play can free one from some of the more stupid disciplines one imposes on oneself ... bad habits, the force of habits anchored in egotism ... the way that one projects one's own personality, one thinks of oneself a certain way and projects it onto other people, ... the way we construct a personality, and make ourselves a code of conduct through habit and not through choice, or we just inherit that from parents and other things. One needs a sense of humour just to see the rigidity that we have imposed on ourselves.

If the main purpose of education is to develop goodness of character, all children start equally equipped for success. There is always going to be an army of children, however, destined at best to fill that vast range of unpleasant, dirty and/or dangerous, essential services, which will bring little reward and less prestige. What chance does an education, the primary aim of which is achieving academic qualifications and career prosperity, offer them for personal fulfilment? On all sides, there was agreement as to the importance of developing self-esteem, but equally serious doubts as to whether the current teaching system has the capacity to foster it. *"I think it's the best the people can do in this system. I mean there is a system, and*

this is the best the can be done. If you start from where the child is, and where the child comes to us, there is such a diversity of children now. But no teacher can hope to pick up everyone's self-esteem and go with it, except by being themselves committed to the way that they are, and for the child to get the sense of that, and know that everyone is valuable, and to understand that whatever they've got is valuable. But that's only in a small way." Not only is the development of self-esteem qualitatively different from the competitive nature of examination centred education, but it is something that many teachers need to develop in themselves. *"We were brought up in a culture where you were not supposed to have self-esteem."*

All parties seemed to recognise a link between self-esteem and discipline, and at some level the system would appear to have taken on board that focusing on subject teaching is pointless without it. *"I don't know how you can have self-esteem if you have no self-discipline, but it is a huge thing just now, self-esteem, participation, citizenship, democracy, all these things are now very high on the education agenda, and really if you haven't got high self-esteem you are not going to learn anyway, and it doesn't matter what you teach them"* Mechanisms are being implemented, such as circle time, often in a cross-curricular fashion and under the auspices of PSD *"How do you teach PSD? You need a context, and circle time provides that. It is one of the tools we would use for PSD"* *"I think there is a move to change PSD a lot in terms of motivating learners ... These things, self-esteem, motivation, there's a move now on assertive discipline which is about creating the boundaries ... and it is really about you working in partnership with laid out boundaries with the pupils"*. In the power relationship between teacher and pupil, all the weapons are on one side, while the other only has the power to resist or run away. *"You can't have discipline without motivation, and you can't have motivation without self-discipline as well. ... There is some lovely research that was done at Strathclyde University, where they actually went out and asked children what they thought made a good teacher, and one of the replies was 'a good teacher is someone who is strict for you and not strict for themselves', and I think that is absolutely it."*

Creativity / Play

43. Goddess Saraswati ... is the goddess of knowledge. She is apparent in all forms of creativity, music, dance, any art, anything and everything that is concerned with the creative knowledge shares

her presence. For us to worship her is to get a bit of that knowledge from her, ... and the creative part of it is anything which gives aesthetic

44. I think that people have to learn to feel, and to imagine. Developing imagination is very important in education, and there must be a way of doing that, helping young people to imagine, ... because I would say imagination is important to religious and spiritual development. How do you believe certain things unless you can develop an imagination and a feeling ... it's part of all round education.

45. And ... a whole lot of play stuff is in there as well, ... if what that's doing is socialising children, because in the good old days of the extended family you learned to interact with other children and with other adults as well, but in a nice little Western 2.4 children living in a semi or a detached house, you can get children who never learn to play with other children ... It's a real danger actually, ... but we are losing that in the city context completely, and that's why kids have to be taught to play and to share

46. The child has to play, and the prophet's advice to us was that we should play with the children for seven years, and then start teaching them. That doesn't mean that you don't teach them before they are seven or that you don't play with them after they are seven. ... There is a stage in the child's life where play is the primary motive, what their life is built around, and they learn through play, and then after that play still exists and is still part of their life, but becomes less important as they go beyond that point, that critical point. So play is absolutely fundamental to the learning process

47. Yes, in other words this all round person that we talk about ... we are more than economic beings, we are spiritual beings, and we have to develop the whole person. We're aesthetic people as well, we're people with feelings, feelings that appreciate beauty or music or whatever, and that whole aesthetic is an integral part of education which is neglected. The present educational system neglects a whole lot of areas ... the importance of learning to play together ... the importance of the aesthetic subjects. We get hammered about literacy and numeracy and all that kind of thing, and these other aspects, which are part of our development as people, I think, tend to be neglected

Far from being concerned with dogma, faith educators give great importance to creativity and imagination as an essential part of spiritual understanding. Of course, the need for creativity as a part of education has been recognised within the secular system for some time, but its priority varies greatly according to educational fashion. *"It's interesting about creativity, which*

is so much a part of the Seventies education philosophy. ... this is all part of the accelerated learning and effective teaching/learning skills, which has been adopted really quite nationally by the Scottish Executive, Learning Teaching Scotland, it's all much the same thing." The role of play in secular education also comes in and out of fashion, but its use as a teaching tool is usually recognised in the classroom, if rarely mentioned as a part of Government legislation or policy. In faith groups, however, the ludic and the creative unite in the aesthetic sense, with an appreciation of beauty in all its forms, a crucial vehicle for any approach to the ineffable.

Inclusion / Multiculturalism / Values

48. People ask 'Is Buddhism a religion or a philosophy?', and in fact it is neither one nor the other, but it is a universal care. It's universal. It's for everyone. And from that point of view, it doesn't really see itself as a faith apart from other faiths, it sees itself as a message of bringing peace and love and harmony to all beings ... they are just people, there aren't Buddhist's and others ... But then, in the actual human journey which a person goes through to become what we consider a good Buddhist, it's certainly much more than following a philosophy. Because a philosophy stops where the intellect stops, and the major part of Buddhism comes through the grace and the states that one discovers through meditation which are above and beyond the intellect. So from that point of view, you can't just say it's a philosophy, because its ultimate dimension, dealing with the absolute, is what religions tend to talk about. But it doesn't fit neatly into either category. It is just Buddhism. An egg is an egg. What other category would you put it into?

49. Yes, I don't think it's about religion, ... in fact what Unitarians were noted for especially in the last century when there wasn't a lot of public education was setting up schools for the wider community, to make sure that the poorer children got an education quite regardless of their religious position.

50. The Methodist world family serves like a multicultural family, and so the exploration of worship has tended to reflect the cultural pattern, and that's saying multi-ethnic multicultural, ... and it would be seen as an enrichment of British Methodism when people have come to Britain and brought ... Afro Caribbean traditions to us, Indian traditions as well sometimes. So we would see ourselves as inclusive, as a world church, Wesley said 'the world is my parish'. ... You will always have a group of people in any denomination, any religious movement, who tend not to be either the most confident in

their own faith, perhaps, or the most ... educated in their own faith stance, which leads to an exclusiveness and a defensiveness, and there are people who know their faith boundaries and know them well, happy to enter into a faith dialogue, or into a sharing relationship. ... We acknowledge a spiritual dimension with a mission to the non-spiritual, which we share with all other faiths

51. We have to be in dialogue with people of other faiths all the time just now, so that we can understand where they are, and what their needs and perspectives are, to live together in respect of each other. I mean a lot of intolerance is based on ignorance and the kind of mythology, myths that grow up about other people's faiths and what they are and what they do.

52. Relations with people of other faiths for churches, ... is always going to be an issue of the real truths, ... and if your revealed truth and our revealed truth don't mesh, ... that's a philosophical question we have to work with. ... I think the Episcopal Church certainly sees ... we must relate with people of other faiths, and we must recognise that they have the right to exist. ... If you're trying to develop within the educational context, develop the ability to rationalise and think things through in people, young and old ... then you have to accept that other people will see different solutions to the solution you see. ... It's easier I think for churches to engage with other faiths rather than no faith because at least when you deal with, work with, react or in some ways interact with other faiths, you can say we're all at least starting from a position where we believe that there's something of ultimate importance, ultimate worth, and the philosophical background is always going to be roughly the same, the philosophical model you are working with. Whereas I think when you get into atheism and agnosticism and all that sort of humanism, people start to worry a bit about what the model is, and you start talking past each other, whereas at least in faith communities we can recognise and we can share some sort of language.

53. The Jewish values that we teach them are values that they can take with them into their future lives, and when I was at the school we had children of other religions ... and ... some of the answers to why do you want to send your child to this school were usually ... they wanted their child to go to a school which had religious values, ... and as long as there wasn't a school of their own religion, then they saw it as the next best thing. I am aware that there are quite a lot of children who are not Catholic in Catholic schools, so there is some value put to schools which have a religious ethos per se.

54. To go back to ... education, allowing the child to grow, driving that is the idea that everything the child needs to know is already in it, so the child is naturally moral, and is naturally pure, and is naturally what you want the child to be. What you need to allow him to do is to develop into a social

being so that he can apply what is naturally good in his interaction with other people. So you don't teach him morality, you allow him or her to develop the ability to interact in the moral framework, and sometimes they need to be made clear as to what the moral framework is. It is naturally in there but they sometimes need to be told thou shalt not steal ... That is not teaching morality, ... that cannot be taught. ... You just have to teach them the rules.

55. It is possible to impose a morality which is not necessarily embraced, but which appears to be conformed to, and that makes the 11th Commandment "Thou shalt not get caught", and that may well be the society in which we are living. I do believe that it is possible to teach moral decision making, as a child matures to be able to say if you choose this what are the outcomes, and the key thing therefore is to teach consequences and the ability to predict consequences and then be able to say now, who benefits, who suffers. If hopefully the child has a value of themselves they have a value of other people, though you can make a child think about the value of other people and hopefully ultimately they will embrace the value of their fellow human being. ... So you can teach moral decision making. The problem comes when you get people who have been taught, or had imposed on them, a package of morality which isn't others considering, but is putting self first. I recently listened to adolescents arguing the morality of stealing a video recorder, and saying I'm doing you a favour because you are insured so you will get a more up-to-date version (laughter) ... and that's very much a, one could say entrepreneurial morality with deferred gratification ... the survival of the fittest

All individual faith groups in this country are now minorities, and as with all such have a right to question the manner of their inclusion. But in the education system, inclusion is a term that is still generally used with a very restricted meaning. *"I think inclusion in our authority is linked to ... Special Educational Needs, and it's often used only within the context of having more kids in mainstream who would previously have been in special schools. I think it's important that it does mean more than that, but it tends to have a very technical and very limited sense."* Other forms of inclusion, such as social inclusion, are beginning to share the terminology however. *"If you take the idea that inclusion is about kids being all that they can be, then in that sense, I think the authority does have ... a policy which says everyone is in, and once they are in the authority has got to do something for them that will be meaningful, and that hopefully they will enjoy, and that the staff can cope with, ... because if the staff can't cope with it, it's not going to work."* Inclusion, for faith groups, is a much broader term that nonetheless has its own problematic with regard to what is acceptable and what is intolerable, in particular with regard to relations with other faith groups. But whereas

religions tend to be typified by the often warlike tribalism of those least knowledgeable in their faith precepts, faith educators see the faith education process as one of guiding toward peaceful reconciliation and harmonisation with humanity at large. Often they considered the narrow parameters used to define their faith as being due to the misperceptions of outsiders, imposing their own paradigms on what they see in a way that misinterprets, misrepresents, and misunderstands. Of particular importance to faith groups understanding of inclusion, the global nature of religions means that throughout history they have spanned many cultures. Although inter-religion relations may sometimes descend into tribal warfare, most have long experience of multi-culturalism. But multi-culturalism as political policy implemented within the education system was often condemned as ill defined and inadequate. *“What we put into the system, into the curriculum, as multiculturalism doesn't make enough difference. ... What difference has it made in all these years?”*

One area central to all faith traditions throughout history is the critical place of moral values in the education process, whereas in the state system for many years they were ignored. But recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in values, with a realisation that their importance is not merely dogmatic but essentially pragmatic. *“Moral values are major element in our schools, and again it's the importance that children develop values and don't have them imposed, because they won't hang onto them anyway. But then you have the difficulty of whose values do you develop, and how far is a child allowed to develop their own moral values, some of which may not be acceptable to the teacher, but in some cases which will enable the child to survive in the community. So if they were to do all the good things, then all that would happen is that they couldn't go home at night, they couldn't survive in the communities they are in ... There's a lot of work done, particularly in the primary, in terms of circle time.”* As the importance of social and moral values to the running of schools is recognised, new mechanisms of exploration and implementation of values are being introduced. *“Most of the schools that you go into now you see things like Jenny Mosley's golden rules, to be gentle, to be kind to others, so the values are overt, that's what they would expect, the kind of behaviour that they want. It doesn't always work though, but I would say over the last two or three years there has been a big swing towards values. We don't work in Scotland anyway with a prescription. We work on guidance, and something like that is showing you that the guidance that is coming from up above is towards more values ... I think there has been a big swing.”*

Although values may have always been there in schools as an integral part of all human behaviour, particularly since the secular state took over the responsibility for financing and providing education, they have not always been acknowledged. *“It used to be what we called the hidden curriculum, but it isn’t hidden any more. It is overt ... it comes into things like positive behaviour policies, anti-bullying policies and raising achievement, ethos of achievement; this is all where it comes in.”* But a consideration of moral values does not just concern the pupils, and it is not always an easy process for teaching staff to break from a past heritage of a positivist approach to one where they have to scrutinize their own intentionality and value systems. *“Where you once pretended that education wasn’t value laden, I think more and more schools are recognising that they are, and this move between, you know, a Marxist analysis of schools, where we churn them out and tip them into society, and they are the factory fodder, you know this paternalistic we can mould them and shape them, to the fact that we have now got a bigger understanding of how children come in with values. They come in with baggage, we have baggage as teachers, institutionally education has baggage about what it expects from kids, and it is all now much more open.”* To bring about this newly required reflexivity of approach, however, postmodernist literature may well prove useful to teachers unfamiliar or ill at ease with faith tradition practises of critical self-examination in a moral context.

Chapter Seven

Education, Culture & Identity

Childhood | Adulthood

56. There are developmental stages, but when it comes to the difference between childhood and manhood there is a point where you have to say that person is legally responsible. Every society has to deal with that. Western society is struggling in some places to define is a person who is 14 a child, and I'm not sure what the law in Scotland is for murder, and now for rape in England, he is an adult whereas for something else he is a child. Up until about five years ago it was only murder, so he can murder at 14 but he can't rape, and all of this is something that society has got to struggle with. Islam states that as soon as he reaches puberty he is a man and is legally responsible regardless of age, and If he doesn't reach puberty by 18 according to some of the scholars he is a man anyway

57. Well, to be able to marry, and to take part, there are certain laws within the Bahai faith, and they don't apply until someone is adult, such as, obligatory prayer, fasting, all those become applicable at the age of 15. But ... at 21, Bahai are given their voting rights within the community, which is quite important, because the whole Bahai administration is run by democratically elected assemblies. ... It would be after someone was 21 that they are regarded as completely adult

58. There are certainly no specific landmarks until a girl is 12, and at that age ... a girl would be expected to take on all the responsibilities, for example the fast days, fasting on a fast day, a boy not until he is 13. A girl is seen to be mature a year earlier.

59. Obviously there is a physiological appreciation of the different stages of growing up, biologically, but then the question of emotional maturity, psychological maturity, spiritual maturity are not necessarily a function of age, so one would recognise what is relatively primitive as a mode of behaviour in a person, but that's not necessarily linked with age. For instance, some people are sexually very immature despite their age, emotionally immature, ... and the amount of confusion that's within the intellect, just in the way we think, the amount of confusion that's there in the way that we cope or can't cope with our various emotional problems, the way they overpower us, all of these are considered very immature.

60. I think we may have lost something culturally when we don't mark these different milestones. I mean when I was young there was such an idea of getting the key of the door. ... Now

kids have the key of the door wrapped round their neck on a piece of string when they're five years old, so they can let themselves in when they get home. But quite seriously, there were these milestones, ... when it was right, it was appropriate, we'll say, to do certain things or fill certain roles.

61. I think it's vanished from us as a society. I think that's more important to notice, that we haven't developed any sort of parallels with that as stages of maturing have changed. If it's true that young people are maturing earlier, or at a different time, then obviously the idea of coming of age at 21 is no longer all that appropriate, but we haven't sort of replaced that with coming of age at 17, as it were. It's just a blur, and indeed that blur leads itself into all sorts of problems, like early sexual activity and underage drinking and all that kind of thing. There seems to be the recognition that you do what you like when you feel like it at any stage in your development in life, and young people are involved in doing things and getting themselves into situations which they don't have the maturity to handle, and that blurring is partly because culturally, ... these stages of development have somehow disappeared, when it is appropriate to do certain things. Now we are so 'rights' conscious that we have the right to do it whenever we feel like it.

62. Yes, I think that the Christian church generally, ... would be guilty of this in my experience, of the dilution of rites of passage, and silly rites of passage, but it was traditional that you had ... actually ceremonies that were passed on, and it was in the liberal sixties that we decided not to regiment like that, and we actually lost something that children need, which are the signs of the marks of growing and that you can start to identify progress, ... and in the equality of the sixties, ... we lost some of the regimentation of society that was useful, so that you knew where you were and you knew what you could do, and that is why I think it is quite useful to say you may not do this, and now you may if you choose to, and I think that's partly why in our society, the next rite of passage after birth becomes marriage, and why for many people they want it to be such a showy occasion, because they have had no other rite of passage up till then, and I do think we need things to mark adolescence.

63. There was a time, say twenty, thirty years ago, when people would say there was a time for joining the Church, for confirmation, for taking part in communion. Now we have developed the idea that we should try to involve children in the sacraments, in the service, in the worship, and not wait necessarily until they are a particular age. ... We would encourage young people to sit with their family and for families to come to communion together, to church together, to emphasise the family element, and to help young people feel that they are part of the community of faith at whatever age they are at, so that's maybe the plus factor, although your milestones, as it were disappear.

64. The classic position is that confirmation is ... where you have reached sufficient self-awareness to take on for yourself the vows that were made on your behalf by your god-parents...12 or 13 it is usually done ... That's a recent breakdown in the Church, a recent shift ... And I'm not sure that the rites of passage mean quite the same thing any more. ... These things are breaking down

65. We do have confirmation, it's usually early adolescence, we're talking 14 to 15, well actually that's not early adolescence any more is it (laughter) ... We would mark stages of growing discretion, you know, and say the child has reached a stage of adult choice, and would normally have suggested that was the age at which children took on confirmation, adult membership of the church. ... Now ... historically ... you would not normally receive communion until that point, ... and the great debate was 'Do children understand what is happening at Communion?' to which the answer was 'Do adults?' (laughter) and to which they were plenty of clergy who said 'I don't understand either', 'this is a mystery of faith' etc. and so quite quickly people became aware ... that young children going as families to receive Communion felt part of a community of faith in a way that they hadn't when they just observed until they'd had it all explained to them unsatisfactorily.

66. The Catholic church has probably appreciated more, that faith is not just about rational understanding of what's happening. You know I suppose there was a time when we would have said 'Well you don't join the Church until you know what you are doing, until you understand it', but the fact is that you never understand it all. You never know what you are doing completely, and now we're being honest about that, and saying that ... faith, and totally understanding it, and knowing it all, don't necessarily go together.

67. I'm still wondering what I'm going to be when I grow up.

Individuals and society judge the matter differently. For individuals, the issue of childhood or adulthood is to do with the nature of a relationship, an assessment of individual maturity, and any such labelling may take place at an unconscious level. *"When do you stop treating them like children? I had never considered it before. Well it's got to be a gradual thing. You can't suddenly say 'right, okay, stop depending on your teacher and you are now in senior school'. Certainly there is an expectation that children will take responsibility for their own learning come fifth year, and the reality of course is that it depends very much on the individual"* As individuals, we assess such matters on an individual basis, whereas organisations don't always find it easy to function that way. *"The curriculum, as you know, is not yet well geared to a range of abilities, it's still geared to the top end of the market, ... and in*

theory you want an education system that allows each individual to progress at their own pace, but if you've got thirty in a classroom that's very, very hard to do, and I think the distinction between child and adult would blur considerably if you could do that, but practically speaking I don't think local authorities can."

To govern our relationships as a society we need legal definitions *"It is defined by law, and that for schools that change to adult comes at the age of 16, ... the age at which children choose whether or not they are in school, that is their adult stage"* and schools as legal entities have tried to follow a business model. *"I suppose most of the schools deal with it by contracts. If the young person is coming to school, then they have made a commitment, ... but on the other hand you can't insist that the pupil comes, because they are over the legal age"* Unfortunately, this quasi-legal contract is not a good example of the equivalent in non-school life. *"It means that the children can break that contract as many times as they like, but we can't"* How many other businesses would accept a contract like that? Young adults of 16 have the right to reject their education. Prior to that, it is legally imposed on them, though their schools do have the power to reject them. This position is soon likely to be clouded, however *"I still haven't thought through properly the implications of the new human rights legislation, which actually means in a situation, say where the school wanted to exclude a pupil, ... I believe now that even 12 year-olds have the right to appeal against the school's decision. So that distinction between child and adult has just recently been rejigged"*

In examining concerns as to whether education is for the benefit of the child or for society, and then formulating the best model to achieve agreed aims, it is necessary to recognise openly that *"this distinction between child and adult that is about power, and that's about a pedagogy"*. But in education, the locus of power is extremely hard to pin down. *"We are now asking children in S3 what they want to learn today. We are asking children to take responsibilities, and I think people struggle to get childhood, to get teenage years, to get irresponsibility, and now I think we are treating children as mini adults. I don't think that is what childhood is about. I think they should have the opportunity to not have to make decisions. ... I think we are putting too much pressure on children, and they don't have a childhood any more. I think it is dreadful, ... what do they base their decisions on, the poor wee things. ... I don't think children know what they are going to have to face. ... They will be mature before they are born soon. But that is a very personal opinion."*

Teachers are well aware of the pressures children face in the society outwith the classroom

“In terms of the life experiences a child can bring to the classroom, some of those children who sit in front of me have had greater and more challenging life experiences than I have had, and ... the child has the right to take that, and say this is my experience, and this is my response, and we don't have the right in any sense to make a judgement”, and also realise that what happens in the classroom may be the root of unexpected social effects at a later time. *“I think it is quite odd. Although we are collapsing their childhood by giving children responsibilities, I think, when they are too young to cope with it. People are actually taking longer to mature at the other end. I mean it could be just economic, that they can't afford to get married in their twenties, so they leave it until their thirties and have their families later. It might be that that's the only time they get any freedom. You know up until the time that they go into further education they are so regimented by all these different things that they have no time for freedom, so you must take that time for freedom somewhere. Maybe they are taking it later.”*

Yet it has to be considered where the power to change things lies. Do schools shape society, or does society shape its schools? *“I think it is also today's parents, because I don't think they want the responsibility of children, I think they just want mini adults, so they are occupied from the time the parents get up until the time the child goes to bed, and as long as somebody else has occupied them that's fine.”*

Individual | Family | Community

68. I think faith communities and the churches emphasise the importance of relationships, of building up good relationships, of understanding between individuals, and people learning what it is to live together, and that is a family thing, but it is a cultural, practical educational faith theme, I think, that we live as people in relationships and not just as individuals. The individual is important, and we keep saying it, that education must meet the needs of the individual child, and that's right, and I'm not wanting to decry that, but I think we also must teach people that we are not on desert islands, we are not individuals, that we live in relationships and must learn to relate to one another, ... it's about respecting yourself, other people, seeing yourself within a context. ... Society tends to break down these relationships, and undervalue I think the idea of relationship

69. The family has always been central to Jewish life, and I think you'll find even now most families have a Friday night meal together, even if they've strayed quite far from many of the observances. There still is a tradition of the family sitting together on a Friday night, of the family getting together at the major festivals, particularly at Passover, when the family gets together for the special ceremony at home, the Seder. It's still very significant in most Jewish homes, and when I say family, it's not just the immediate family, but the extended family, the grandparents, aunts and uncles and so on. ... We could measure our success at school by the feedback that we got from parents after Passover, when the parents and the extended family would feel very proud of how the children performed at the Seder table, and that has always been a measure, it's certainly not an academic measure, but it's been one that parents have always said, ... and they can see the link has gone down through the generations, and the youngest children are still able to recite the four questions and to sing the songs round the Seder table, and this is seen as important, and it's not about how much knowledge they've got about religion, whether they could pass an examination on all the festivals or Jewish history or they could write a whole page of Hebrew or whatever, but it's how they can actually contribute on a family occasion which is seen really as a measure of the success of the education system.... So this is part of the tradition of handing it on that is seen as important even now. ... It still matters.

70. We've moved from a community to a society that is a collection of families, ... not quite the nuclear family, but the small family unit of the people under whose roof I live, the people I live with every day are the key unit, rather than granny round the corner, and my brothers and sisters and my mother and father's brothers and sisters, that view I think is breaking down much more, ... little nucleated clumps as opposed to nuclear families, ... and those clumps want to stay together and share it for themselves, ... and that's what Tony Blair is appealing to, in the south east of England. You set up your little corral, and you circle the wagons around it, and you make sure it's safe, and you put a little alarm box on the outside of it, and that's why we need so many more houses, because ... people no longer live in communities, single occupancy people as soon as they can raise enough money buy a flat on their own, ... because we're now all much more seen as a culture where you are responsible for your own economic welfare, and therefore it is your responsibility to make sure that you yourself are properly looked after, and so you get your BUPA and your health insurance, and your stakeholder pension, and you have responsibility to make sure that you can look after yourself. Nobody else is going to look after you, that's the message that is basically banged home, and people very much say that this is an individualistic culture that came out of the time of Mrs. Thatcher, though I'm not sure that's a valid argument.

71. Buddhism tends to throw the individual back upon himself or herself. One of the main axes

of the teaching is that your own happiness depends upon yourself. Your own liberation depends upon what you do with your life, and there is a whole question here about modern day civilisation, and indeed education perhaps too, where one tends to expect something to come from the outside, expect somebody ought to do something, or society, or government, or legislation ought to take care of a problem, and from that point of view Buddhism is very refreshing and interesting for people because it puts liberation and quality of your own life back into your own hands. ... Buddhism does tend to say that even though the community at large, the family or the community at large can be a great support in your own evolution as a human being, in the end it does depend upon you, ... So in terms of the spiritual work that one is doing that's true. In terms of what one is trying to be in the world, then it is very important that one cares for family, with particular respect towards ones parents, and then towards the rest, not just of humanity, but the whole environment, the animal population and so on. There is a sense of duty that one is alive in order to make life better for everyone,

72. But they also emphasise a competitive society, and if that is the main thing, competition, a competitive society, you do undermine to some extent that whole belief in sharing and relating to others

73. Community ... is a collection of nucleated families, and that family can be a one person unit, or it can be somebody who has got eight children and is married, or all stages in-between, of different family units, so I think that does pose a question for us as to what do we mean by community. Tony Blair very much talks about community, but I'm not sure that he's actually developed the idea of what he thinks community is. I'm not sure he's moved on from the idea of closeness, and hanging out each others washing, and keeping an eye on each others children, which people no longer do, because nobody, fundamentally on the bottom line trusts the person next to them, because they see themselves as responsible for their own welfare, or the welfare of their little unit financially, and they're not sure that the person living next to them isn't some paedophile mass-murderer

74. It was said in our scriptures, for the sake of the country you can sacrifice the village, for the sake of the village you can sacrifice the family, and like this it also goes another way, first your loyalty goes to your parents, and then your family, and then your neighbourhood, it increases, by the awareness at every stage as you grow older and older, first when you are a toddler only your mother and father and your nearest relatives. Then you go to school and then you have a neighbourhood, then you go to college and university and you see more and more, and then you go into the wider world. Everywhere you must have Dharma. ... Dharma means that one which holds, which holds the Universe, there's nothing which is not included, everything is included in Dharma, truthfulness,

compassion, duty, righteousness, morality, ... we have to follow that at every stage. Your role increases, you are expanding, your mind should always expand

It is not unexpected that schools recognise their responsibility towards integrating a child with the wider community. *"I think it is very, very important that school makes children understand the importance of individual lives in terms of shaping the life of their wider community and wider family. In PSD, a lot of that focuses on those interactions, and how to handle those to the best of their ability. So we teach all of the children assertiveness techniques, for example, in the hope that that will help them interact better in their family and in their community at large."* Yet despite the complexities of any such integration, the pressures of the system can force schools to concentrate on little apart from qualifications for employment *"Yes, educating them into the sort of role that they can have in society is important, and I do feel especially at the moment with the anxiety over the new exam system for the senior pupils, that it is very easy for a school to lose that, ... you know most children do five subjects in S5 and S6, and if you timetable those for six periods a week, then there's no time to do RME or social education or anything else, ... but I think a school at the moment has to decide what matters, and ask what matters, not just producing children with good exam results, but producing young people who have a view of themselves acting on the world."*

Few schools, apart from faith schools would even consider it as part of their duty to help a child find a way of coming to terms with a parents view of the world, however, and this is not just a perception of practical impossibility. It is seen as outwith the scope and responsibility of the secular school system. Parents are expected to take an active interest in their children's education, but not to get too close. *"In terms of students' identity within the school all those three things are important, because the child is taken out of the family and out of the community in one sense and put in this new environment, in which I as a parent don't know the intimate details of my child's schooling. ... I don't really know of what they actually do in class, ... how much do they learn, how much has their teacher praised them, you know, have their relationships with their peers enhanced their learning, ... and for many they can flourish as an individual in the school setting, but they need the family and they need the community."*

The school system, bridging between an elected political executive at one end and classroom teachers at the other, would rather deal with the generalities of society or the specificities of individuals, than the complexities of family or the shifting borders and overlapping sets of community. *“It has to be a balancing act because that’s probably what life is, it is balancing the individual, the family and the community. I know that some people say it should be the community, but the community is only made up of lots of individual’s, and if they don’t feel they are treated well then it won’t operate as a community anyway, and quite what family means for individual children varies so much, and I think the trouble is that it becomes the kind of 2.4, the mum and the Dad and the children, and so few kids have that that the definitions become a problem.”* The power over delineation of community is also confused due to a school functioning as a community within itself. *“Yes and ... The community must by its very nature exclude those that do not fit into it, and ... this idea of we look after our own in our community, means that some one isn’t going to get looked after, ... and that has always worried me about the nature of community, it’s not all flowers.”* And in the search for a new intellectual model to deal with issues of social division, there is still a serious doubt as to whether ‘citizenship’ will be adequate for the task. *“There is a lot in citizenship about the importance of the community and the child as a citizen, and I imagine that will increase over the next few years because it is such a major government priority. Quite what you do if you happen to be a citizen of a country where you don’t approve of the structure is back to the morality again, it’s ‘whose morality?’”*

Identity / Culture Relationship

The Cultural context of Education

75. People like Burns or Scott, had no alternative but to have been steeped in a ... kind of Christianity ... christian with a small ‘c’, in the sense that it doesn’t mean that people have an active Christian faith, ... it’s not as important, it’s the culture ... but when you look at all the buildings that are around you, all the writings that we have, it’s difficult to say that they have not been influenced by Christian teaching

76. The Buddha did teach about this. He said that wherever one is, one should respect, and as much as is ethically possible try and be in harmony with local customs. This is the key to happy living

... So one would respect what is local, and appreciate it for what it is, but at the same time try to have a much broader perspective on its relativities. In Scotland you eat haggis, and in France you eat souffle, and in one place they really value this, and in another place they really value something else. You realise the regionality, the limitation of such things, but at the same time you try and appreciate what is local and live in harmony with it.

77. Well I think for Bahais, one's culture is a very important part of one's identity, and Bahais are encouraged to develop that wherever they live in the world and whatever culture they belong to ... I have stressed the Bahai writings about the oneness of humankind, but we don't look on that as a uniformity of mankind. We look on that as each culture bringing its own richness, like different coloured flowers in the garden, and that is stressed as very important, and you'll find that thing throughout Bahai education. ... So, for example, in Scotland Bahais will have Ceilidhs for celebrations, and a lot of activities here we would see reflect the local culture, and that's seen as an enriching thing.

78. Well certainly I've been to a Jewish Burns Supper, and yes, I think we are very much part of the Scottish culture. ... to such a degree that I know that there are some members of our community over the years that have gone to live in Israel and they still have a Burns Supper in Israel, ... like when you hear about Scottish people that go to Canada and so on they still feel very Scottish. It's the same with Jewish people, when they leave they still feel very much bound up with their Scottish roots. ... I think our children are exposed to the total culture, and I don't think there's any way that this can be stopped. It's powerful, and I think we just have to make sure that they feel confident as young Jewish people, so that they develop a strong Jewish identity, which will go with them wherever they go, and that's really our aim. The main aim is to arm them to go out into the big wide world, take their part in the big wide world, and come home to their Jewish home and their Jewish life and keep the faith going, the candle burning as it were

79. I mean, it's ... about knowing where your roots are, both your own and the culture's ... you need to know what's going on around you and why it's going on around you

80. I think that whenever Moslems travelled to another part of the world, to an area where there are not many Moslems, they come across aspects which are immediately and directly compatible with their religion, and there are things which may be completely contradictory to their religion, and those things they adopt are compatible, they are natural human elements of society, and there is no problem with them, and in that way they are part of this natural process of movement, and therefore have a place in Islam. So, for example, my wife talks about the bagpipes as being part of her culture.

You know when they go for Hajj in South Africa they play the bagpipes, and when they come back they play the bagpipes, ... and the first Muslim school in Cape Town is ... in an area where the Scots settled and it happens to be inhabited by the Muslim population, ... a Muslim school in a Muslim community. So are bagpipes Islamic? Are bagpipes Muslim? As far as Capetownians are concerned, bagpipes are much more Islamic than rave music for example, whereas to the English bagpipes are the instrument of the enemy. (laughter) So it depends on where you are, there's nothing intrinsically wrong or right about the bagpipes, and if the Muslims decide to adopt the bagpipes that's perfectly fine, ... and it doesn't become Islamic bagpipes ... it's just natural. It's us. But there are certain things that we can't adopt.

81. I suppose in terms of not accepting any aspects of culture, it would only be those things that we thought were actually damaging, and went directly against Bahai principles. In the Scottish culture, probably the most obvious would be the use of alcohol. That would be the most obvious one I could think of in that Bahais don't drink alcohol. That can be problematic,

82. Yes, you'll find certain things will be common across all, I mean our priorities and our concerns will be common. The culture will come out in the way we do things, the emphasis on things, but the attitude to alcohol would be traditionally taught as part of a regular programme. ... There is a thing called the Methodist association of youth clubs which is a whole British thing, and they came together recently and in conference agreed that they didn't want alcohol on church premises as part of the current debate, so there's a whole a lot of material that comes out from our Education and youth department, that's fed in through the youth organisations, ... and we're very good publishing little booklets. Some are better at it than others (laughter) we are quite good at gambling and alcohol

Immigrant minority faith groups, crossing and sometimes transposing cultures, are familiar with an exploration of aspects of culture with regard to personal and communal identity, in ways that would rarely occur to the majority community. To use an anti-racist analogy, how many people walk down the street here conscious that they are white? *"I don't know that people are always aware of the cultural context, that there is one. They think sometimes that education operates within a vacuum, and they don't realise that there is a culture, that in many schools if they had to describe it, they wouldn't say it was cultural they would say it was Christian, and partly that is because people maybe don't know that what they take to be uniquely Christian is not uniquely Christian"* Faith is not as evident as skin colour, but can have as powerful an effect on our view of the world, and to find a way of functioning faith minorities need to try to understand the faith context in which they are living, not necessarily

an easy task in a post-Christian society. *"I'm sure there is a kind of Judao-Christian morality which may not be a bad thing, the qualities of morality may not be a bad thing, but it doesn't do much for you if you're not a Jew or a Christian, I think it has to be a broader base, that's my reaction."*

But practicing Christians are also now in a minority, and might feel as estranged as any non-Christian in those areas of RME that all would feel are at the heart of any faith. *"Well personal search is the likes of the ultimate questions. ... We look at what is a human being, and then look at 'Is that all we are?' and that is really as far as we take it. I don't think it could be said to be particularly Christian. It is certainly looking for the spiritual in us all, the spirit in us all".* Avoiding religious certainties, we look to the pupils to find answers within themselves, with the school providing uncommitted impartial expertise. *"We are turning it into natural religion, aren't we. I must admit that has been at the back of my mind a couple of times ... well we all have to start off with something, and quite honestly that is where a lot of these kids are starting off from, there is just this need within themselves to recognise that there is something more to themselves. We do it from science, we get one of the science department to come along and show them ... how much water is in your body and how much fat and how much minerals, and say 'Is that a human being?'"* In the secular system, it is not acceptable for a teacher to make judgements in matters of faith, and to a large extent that also applies even to moral issues that arise out of the culture that surrounds them all. *"Who decides what are good aspects and what are bad aspects of culture? ... Better maybe that you have a staged and sensitive meeting with aspects of culture, rather than pretending that someone is going to make a decision as to what is good or bad, and decides what you are to be introduced to or not, because the way the world is now the kids will know anyway."*

Leaving it to the children does mean that many of the more crucial issues concerning the meaning of life can be ignored for as long as possible, but we must question whether this is really the ideal approach. Not many subjects would leave the most important aspects until last, and the intimacy of the primary teacher/pupil relationship would perhaps seem more appropriate. *"The more you can do in primary the better, because the teachers know the children very well, and when you do things like, if you had to deal with death and death rites, which we don't in primary, and we don't much in secondary either, but the time to do it would be in primary because the kids would be most protected and they would understand it best, but*

it's not necessarily done there" Ignoring death may be seen as sheltering the children from such disturbing themes (though perhaps it is more a case of sheltering the teachers), but such shelter may in fact be seen as inappropriate. *"I think in principle sheltering is the wrong way. Equally I don't think you just throw everything at them and say the best of luck, you have to sort it out for yourself. I worry about who decides what is appropriate to know and not know. I think knowledge should be open."* Even those who think that *"the kids will know anyway"* don't suggest that children be exposed to the wilder excesses of Internet depravity, but even in such matters we recognise that ignorance can be dangerous, and in the absence of what we might consider appropriate guidance from parents we accept a primary responsibility to provide knowledge we would consider beneficial to the child. The fact is that Faith groups would also suggest that ignorance of any purpose to life and death also has its dangers, and even with the best of intentions, parents are not always equal to the task of providing for a child's spiritual well-being.

Education & Life Learning

83. I don't think religion has a prayer if it tries to say that what's going on in the world out there is irrelevant and you should turn your back on it

84. The churches thoroughly embrace lifelong learning, ... We would see ongoing education as a priority for everyone ... in the past we would quite happily have talked about our duty to educate, I mean, Wesley himself ... argued that it was important to be educated about the world in which you live. We would now tend to say well that is less important, the State does that, ... We are secularised, and we would expect that to be done outwith the church ... but it's not outwith it, we would not draw the spiritual divide

85. The purpose of life is to develop spiritual qualities, and the main route by which that comes about is through our own life experiences, so that is the basis of the educational experience

86. Yes, Buddhism sees itself simply as a series of reflections and observations on the way that life is. So life as one lives it should be the proof of the pudding for Buddhism. ... I mean, the Buddha is no more than the way things are, it's not anything extra to that. And although you can talk about it, it's only in the living of life that you can really savour the value and depth of it, and in fact a real

appreciation of Buddhism, for Buddhists, really only comes with the passage of time and the weight of life experience, and all the things that happen, as you see people die, and you go through times of poverty, and wealth, and you see the changes that happen. Then the more that goes on, the more you appreciate the mature reflection on the nature of life which is the Buddhist teaching. So you can't give children experience. You can't give anyone experience, ... but you can help them to equip themselves to make the best of experience when it happens, and this is what we try to do, either through wisdom that is imparted through all sorts of ethical stories, or traditional teaching stories. ... All of this, if it is goes in correctly, when the time comes to experience, these things come back to mind.

For good or ill, children's first learning comes from their initial life experience with their parents *"You know the bottom line is that parents have taught the children to do everything that matters most before they come to school. Parents are the teachers of their children, and our role is a little kind of frill on the edge of that. I don't know that parents see it that way"*, but not all parents are equally equipped to provide a caring, nurturing and enriching life experience for their children. *"Some kids have such a stinking experience of life that the school is a safe haven, and they want schools to be as different as possible. They want them to be rigid. They want to know exactly what is permitted and not permitted. They want to see the same people every day. They want the bells to go at exactly the same time, so that even if they rebel they know what they've rebelled against, and it's a structure, because they don't have it elsewhere"* It is not only in socially deprived areas that children are isolated and thrown back on their own resources, and what they pick up from the life that surrounds them they bring with them into class. *"The relationship between school and experience drawn from life is absolutely indissoluble. ... It is no use us knowing things which we pass on to the children. The children have to turn that into action knowledge, a thing that they can use, and until they have turned it into something they can use they haven't learned it. They might be able to reproduce it for an exam, but they will forget it, ... so I think it is very important. So if ...you are starting a topic ... you would be very wise to find out first of all what the kids ... have learnt from TV and so on, because you can't deny that most children's learning happens outside of school."* Judgements as to the utility, or relative importance of such knowledge need to be explored and negotiated by teacher and pupil *"Good teaching begins with the child's own life experience, not with something they know nothing about. It should begin with where they are at. You should be able to draw them in, and then they can extend their horizons"* For faith groups, those horizons should stretch 'to infinity and beyond', and with life, learning, and religion being so intimately

interwoven, it would be considered essential that a child learns from the start that learning is not just for utility, to achieve something, but that learning has no end.

Chapter Eight

Faith & Culture

Values | Morality | Ethics

87. I think its fundamental that the first education that has to be provided for children is a sense of values, a sense of morality, a sense that life has meaning, that there are such things as ... relative values, but there are also some absolute values about what's right and wrong, so that's the fundamental on which you build the rest.

88. Well, I would think at a very basic level, for example, if I say respect for persons is a value which all schools should teach, I would have thought that that was a value that other faith communities would accept. ... justice, honesty, fairness, these things, respect for others ... I would hope that these were values which would be taught within the educational system ... But is it something other than being pragmatic ... is there some sort of truth system involved in this? ... Well, I think coming from a Christian perspective I would have to say yes, that these were based on a religious teaching which was important. They're not just there, there may be consensus about things, but I think they're not just important because we all agree, they are important because they are basic fundamental truths.

89. I mean, I suppose there are no a priori truths now as far as postmodernism is concerned. ... there are no values set in heaven as it were ... Yet it's interesting that so many world faiths share these values. ... Now these are being developed, discovered, thought out, whatever, within a completely non-Christian context, so people have come to the same conclusion that these values are important. Now it's a mighty odd coincidence if a lot of religions come to the same conclusions if they are not objective in some sort of way ... Well, is truth something we discover through experience, or something that can be given you, or is it a bit of both. I mean we're back to our question of a value free education system, which we're saying that there isn't. So it does seem to me we are teaching values and teaching truths, and perhaps then saying go try it out, this is what works. ...

90. We are more than economic beings, we are spiritual beings, and that we have to develop the whole person. I mean ... we're aesthetic people as well, we're people with feelings, feelings that appreciate beauty or music or whatever, and that whole aesthetic is an integral part of education which is neglected. The present educational system neglects a whole lot of areas, even something like sport is devalued in a sense, the importance of learning to play together, sharing in a sport, and what

that does for you, ... We get hammered about literacy and numeracy and all that kind of thing, yet these other aspects which are part of our development as people, I think tend to be neglected

91. Educate the parents, start from there, that is a good beginning. I mean, if a person comes to teach morality, half an hour or forty five minutes in a school, how much can they take in, imbibe, they cannot, and even ... the teacher, may not himself be an example

92. I'm very unhappy about values education because it's far too vague a term. ... Whose values? You may well be in a real indoctrination situation there, because somebody's values may well include racist values, sexist values and so on, and is it the value of the government that is in power, ... and I do firmly believe that God knows what is good for you, ... and those values have been revealed to and explained to humanity in several ways, in several situations at various times, and I think there is a case to be made for these our values, and I would want them tied to something.

93. Now I know that the humanist lobby would want to say that these values are intrinsic, and so on. I'm not convinced what basis they are saying that from, and it may well be 'here's a very good set of values that the world religions happen to agree on so we will say they are okay', because they won't conflict particularly, but you can't derive them from observation of the natural world, because if you say you believe in the survival of the fittest through evolution, then many of our moral values are stupid, because we support the elderly, we try to maintain life, we support the handicapped, and the logical conclusion to the survival of the fittest is that you don't

94. The Bahai view of the progress of civilisation generally, is that everything has proceeded from various founders of religion. ... So in that sense we don't see anything that's not ultimately in a religious context, in that the basic distinction between right and wrong that most people make actually comes from a religious background. That was the source of it, and therefore the morals, values and ethics, can be built on that basis. It's not the ideal basis. It would be better if there were an explicit recognition of religious faith from a Bahai perspective. But it can be built on.

95. In terms of Ethics, we don't make big statements on ethics, ... we say 'we leave it up to each individual Christian to come to their own position in light of their reflection on what is in the Gospel', which in one way is I suppose a cop-out, but I think recognises on another level that different people read the same thing and come to different positions. But we would recognise that faith has a role to play, religion, Christianity, has a role to play in informing people's ethical approach to the world around them, and that should be built on. Now, Richard Holloway wrote that book called *Godless morality*, and obviously he's trying to ... consider the possibility, if you live in a society that doesn't

accept the concept of God, how do you then start to have a discussion of what morality might mean. ... yes there is a much wider world than the Church just setting down positions, there is a wider world than religion.

96. Ethics is the very foundation of Buddhism and we talk a lot about many different paths and levels of the path and teachings which are suited to different people that are the foundation for everybody, and even if they take that first step, and that first step is an appreciation of right and wrong as it is defined within Buddhism, and one would hope the adoption of a certain number of precepts for living, the fundamental one of which should be not to kill and not to harm one's fellow beings. So that, for us, is of fundamental importance. It really is the foundation, it is literally of fundamental importance, and all the other aspects of Buddhism, be they meditation or the incredible intellectual domain that there is inside Buddhism are secondary to that, because without that it is like trying to build a house without a foundation. It is not healthy.

97. So from the point of view of its being situated within a local cultural form, it's just the ten main precepts. It says don't kill, or don't harm other beings, but obviously in a sophisticated world like ours, it's not easy to know what in fact is harm. ... But the guideline is pretty simple and universal, to do what brings the most benefit to the most people, and harms people, and indeed the environment and animals, the least. And then the guidelines of sexual morality are to do with not inflicting physical or emotional harm on the other person. They are pretty universal, but can be interpreted differently for different cultures. The guidelines for speech, about not saying things that cause harm to other people, it's all to do with helping others and not harming them. And the ethical guidelines for yourself. It says, for instance, don't be attached, so whether it's being attached to an ox or a bicycle or a car it doesn't make much difference. It aims to be universal.

98. Rorty would argue that human beings shouldn't harm each other, and that therefore the body politic is about not harming each other. This always seems to me to be an extraordinarily negative way of looking at human relationships, the kind of doctrine of non-harm, because then it allows anything to be said providing you can justify that it is not harming anyone, ... but only on a minimalist doctrine of what it means to harm someone, and we have to deal with not harming someone by the immediate consequences of one's actions, and not harming people by the restructuring and reshaping of society, whereby people accept that what is harmful is normal, and therefore it's not constructed as non-harm. ... You know there are thin and thick concepts of morality and nobody is going to disagree with the thin concept, at least nobody is going to publicly disagree with the thin concept, but the thin concept is so thin that when you actually try to cash it out you discover that it's not unproblematic.

99. It can't be independent of the belief system, whether you call the belief system religion or not.

100. I think culture produces a mythology which it weaves around. I mean I'm quite happy to look at things like some of our fairytales and say ... that if you love someone that awakens sleeping beauty, which is true, and that beauty removes beastliness, and those kind of things, and I think that across all cultures there is a bundle of stories that perhaps carry some seeds for the salvation of humanity, and the religions have perhaps got it together just a bit better at that level.

The secular system looks for a way to separate religion from morals. *"I think schools need to understand that you can be ethical and moral without being religious, and if people are very staunch believers that's quite hard for them. They say it isn't hard, but because they see values and morality and ethics as totally bound up in their religion, they find it difficult to see that it could stand independently for someone who is a humanist, or an agnostic or atheist, so I think it depends on whether you are a believer or not, and if you are a believer then there is no sense in necessarily making it independent of your faith, but you should understand that it doesn't have to be bound up with faith."* But the distinction between religion and faith or religion and belief also needs to be considered. Atheists and humanists are also believers in something. A belief system is a part of being human, and any belief system is going to involve faith.

Children get their faith from their parents along with their explanations of morality and values. *"How much can children be expected to accept their parents morality and values? No, we don't want them to accept their parents' morality and values. We want them to be able to live with them, but I think they should have enough knowledge to make up their own morality and values. Is that not what education is about, to give people enough knowledge to make informed choices and decisions. So although you wouldn't agree with your parents' lifestyle you can also tolerate it and choose to join them if you wish."*

The system also tries to draw the distinction between knowledge and morality, as though that might be a way to place parental faith outwith the compass of the teacher, but it also requires a definition of knowledge. It is looking at education from quite a different angle if a teacher is expected to know of each child's parents' faith and morality principles. *"I don't think children should be expected to accept them. I think they should be expected to try and understand them and I think they should be expected to respect them. But respect and accept are two different things and I think there is an inevitable tension between the views of especially the children at*

the ages I deal with them, in adolescence, I think there is an inevitable tension between them and the way their parents see the world, and I believe that every child has to come to their own resolution of that, you know, whether it is that they accept and are happy with their parents views or not will depend on those particular circumstances, but I do feel that they should try to understand them and try to respect them” Even excluding any faith context, the idea of acceptance of morality and values is seen as a pointless imposition. “I don't think children should be expected to accept their parents' morality and values because I think the idea of accepting morality and values is seriously flawed. I don't think you do it that way. Go along with, yes, because they love their parents, or because they are paid by their parents to do so, or because it is easier than fighting it, but I don't think that's how you develop morality and values if you accept something without knowing how you got there, it can be a very poor fit. Even if they end up with same values, I think you still have to get there. It's not an acceptance model, I think, that works.”

So in the quest for morality and values outwith a faith context, it is necessary to start somewhere. *“Probably it would have to be, putting it very simply, ... you start very crudely from a humanist position that says, without ignoring the god part, this idea that we as individuals and as community are of value, and then you spread out from there. But also from a child's position, because we know they don't come value free.”* Values are developed not through tradition, or heritage, or experience, but developed from the child's position using rationality. *“And this is a criticism ... of nondenominational RE, that it is easier, that the child can have any values whatsoever as long as they can be justified, supported, and rationalised through, and in a Catholic setting or a Muslim setting or a Jewish setting they are there, and it is solid and people follow them, but in reality in those schools they don't, and that is what's interesting is they are constantly challenged both inside, within, and from outside and it's that dynamic which is fascinating.”* Yet that dynamic involves an individual child and the school as a group, and the school determines the rules of socialization and expression. *“If a child goes into a school, if the religious child goes into a school, they will go in with their values, morality and ethics, and they will have them challenged and questioned, and extended and applied, and a whole set of exciting things will happen in terms of faith being a dynamic force.”* But will it be balanced, and where does the values language spring from? *“What we do is we say where are your values, because the child is not an empty vessel, particularly in secondary but also in primary, what are your values, and how do you express them, ... because I am not there to*

teach a set of values, but ... these values here, let us reflect on them, let us reflect on ourselves, let us challenge them, let us challenge ourselves and then develop. ... And it's this idea of what are we going to do, ... all these quite complex judgments. So it will be a developing morality."

Morals and values developed in the context of a culture. *"I don't think they can be understood outwith cultural forms, because I think that they condition. I don't think there's an absolute morality, I don't there's absolute values and ethics, an absolute, and I think that culture defines these shapes for people, and sometimes the faith and the culture define them."* And culture is seen as separable from faith. But in fact, both the 'faithless culture' and 'faith culture' paradigms include the other as a subset of their own. *"Culture, ...if it is separated from faith, then what you are doing is coming back to philosophy, to ethics, to law. ...So I think it is actually possible to separate those things out from faith, but I think that it is important that we try to look for places where a reference to faith, or a reference to belief systems, helps children to understand why some people behave the way they do, because of course it can make a crucial difference."* These issues can stir up deep emotions. Faith groups locate them not in the head, but in the heart. *"The worst thing for me as an RE teacher would be if a child were to come to me after four or five years and say you've really stopped me thinking about or practising my religion, you know that would be the antithesis of my job."* The spiritual heart wells with love and longing, and for some teachers of a committed faith, yet teaching within the secular constraints of the system, that longing can turn into an ache. *"Don't you dare to quote me, but it is like we have to discuss the human condition minus the desire we've got."* Most humans feel the desire to share their truth.

Religion as a Language for the Spiritual - Church v. Faith

101. One of the things I was going to take up as well is this notion of spirituality. I mean that there are two sides to this of course, there's the development of the therapeutic culture, the therapeutic self, which people have confused with spirituality. You know I'm not saying that self-help and self-therapies aren't good things, but I'm not convinced that they are the same thing as spirituality all the time, and I do think that spirituality goes across a broad range of human experiences and that people can be deeply spiritual who aren't attached to particular religious traditions, and no religious tradition has a monopoly on spirituality. But I think I want to make a

distinction between spirituality as a sense of the transcendent, an attachment to the Archimedean point, let's put it that way, and spirituality as a kind of self-help, and I think there's a lot of confusion at the moment between those two things, and I think that the confusion is further generated by some of the claims in the curriculum that spirituality is somehow aligned to moral activity or moral generation, the moral self. Now I'm not quite sure what that means. I'm not prepared to say that there is no connection, but neither my going to say that there is any necessary connection.

102. I'm not convinced that all church practices promote spirituality, and that's partly again because of the expectation of people in today's society, who are basically saying entertain me, or tell me something, and you get people who become very uncomfortable when we say we are going to spend quite a long time in silence now, and I think our concrete scientific world has lost some of the spiritual dimension, and one of the phrases that used to be used in Christianity quite a lot was talking about sacred mystery. ... I think we would do well to go back to sacred mystery, we have to be able to say that we are not omniscient, there are things we do not fully understand, and that's not a bad thing, you know,

103. Religious organisation is simply a structure within which the spirit of the community and of individuals operates, but ultimately the spiritual reality of each person is an individual thing that no one else, if you like, can penetrate.

104. It is to transport you from one place to another place. ... You are born as an animal, with an animal consciousness, when you are ... hungry you cry, when you are angry you show your temper, all these are animal instincts, but what religion teaches you, at least it should try to teach you, it doesn't matter what religion it is, is to elevate you to a higher human level, consciousness, ... you have logic, reasoning, you have to think what is bad and what is good, ... compassion, you need to get to a higher level. ... It is only a vehicle to carry you from one place to another place. So that way I think all religions try to reach that truth, try to touch that truth ... After all, what is God, God is only consciousness if we talk about abstract things ...consciousness, awareness of what you are, what you want to be

105. The Buddha didn't teach Buddhists he taught human beings. He didn't say we will make a religion called Buddhism, and the meaning of his teachings, we call the dharma, and what we see the Buddha as having done is to have taught what is universally true. It's very much like science. You find underlying principles, that run through many different things, and that are universal principles. It's only the same thing, but dealing with the activities of the mind, in the way it thinks, in the way it has emotions, in the way it constructs the universe and the person.

106. I think that a large number of Moslems accept that the spirituality of all religions is essentially the same, which is from the 'fitrah', something which is natural to everybody, and it's just that they are expressed differently in the external rites and rituals ... because it is clear from anybody who has looked at the spirituality of the east or the West that they are essentially the same, elements of searching, the same kind of feelings, the same kind of understandings

Some teachers point out that schools have changed. *"There are more and more issues in RME about spirituality, it has actually come back to the fore, and about what is spirituality in a school that isn't proposing a specific religious form of education, and it's about how when we talk about the spiritual life. There's all the definitions of spiritual, how in a nondenominational school do you further each individual child's spiritual experience if they want it, because for some children their life stance is that they don't want a spiritual experience, and you have to accept that, you can't impose something on them."* But if the spirituality of the child is mentioned in 5-14, that suggests that the system recognises the child's spirit whether the child likes it or not, and could embrace developing the child's spirit in the same way that it is devoted to the development of rationality, or physical health and fitness. *"I mean it is there in 5 to 14, I think, but not as strongly as other aspects of RME. I think it is a difficult idea, certainly I do. I think it would be an interesting project to come up with a working definition of spirituality that schools could use. ... I think to most teachers it is something they are quite wary of. I think it feels like delving too much inside the person. I think teachers prefer to kind of look on outside the person, by and large."*

Spirituality is different from other aspects of the curriculum, because the teacher stands in the same place as the child, sharing the educational journey. *"It is in RME, except when RME becomes a package to be delivered. If it's just a package, and the teacher is afraid, and I know a lot of teachers are, but then a lot of teachers are afraid, especially in nondenominational schools I think, because they don't have any system in their own mind. They don't have a spirituality themselves that they can put into words, and even if you don't put it into words, if it's not there; if it's there it's there for everything."* Some are trying to find non-faith-specific ways of sharing religious experience in a secular context. *"There's a couple of things that ... are tied in with active learning strategies and experiential RME, ... whereby the child has an experience within the classroom of what the spiritual may feel like. So say that we say that meditation is shared, that meditation as a practice is shared throughout history, a deep quiet*

stillness, you may do what is called a stilling exercise in your classroom so that the children have some appreciation of what that meditation upon god or whatever is. Even though they don't meditate upon god they have this thing that is a stilling exercise carried out. Whether that counts as a spiritual experience or spirituality depends, but I think there's more of a move to this."

A way to the spiritual is also sought through the natural world, and philosophical contemplation. *"Spiritually does come into things like personal search, wonders of the world, ultimate questions, ... but spiritually without a religious meaning, because you can have those feelings of awe and wonder irrespective of what religious faith you have. So it is the natural world I would think, and also discussing and exploring difficult questions, such as death and bereavement, and natural disasters or whatever, yes you would have spirituality, but not the way that say a devout catholic would think of spirituality"* But how does this spirituality compare and contrast with faith devotion? Is it different, and if so how, or is it no different at all? *"I think spirituality is a problem because, well theoretically it's bound up in whether you think there is a spirit or not, and not everyone would think that there is. If we take the word away, and it's about thinking and reflecting, and trying to develop respect for yourselves and other people, then I think that is what schools ought to be into, but the problem I think is that spirituality, ... is loaded ... towards certain religions, and it's whether those who are not religious would all feel they had a self, ... a spirit within them, and I don't know that everyone would, and if you are going to exclude some people then I don't think the word works."*

So it is a way of including all, but within certain operating limits of nebulous definition. *"In religious groupings, ... I think it's going to be much tighter, and it's easier in a sense, because if you say you're a believer within a given framework, ... then you know roughly what you are saying, there is going to be disagreement and a range of views, but it's going to be a range within very tight criteria. I think schools need to work on a broader set of criteria, to say that it is not just about being religious, but it is about being a person, and that everyone has to be included rather than excluded."* But then we need to consider if we include those who misbehave, or step over the operating limits. We also have to consider if we are excluding a class by the very nature and structure of the educational model we have designed, by putting the system outside their criteria of acceptability as a mode of education. *"Therefore there is the potential for difficulties between religious communities in schools, because some of them*

may wish for the narrow defining that they believe to be the absolute truth, God given, and schools need to work in a broader way. I think that can be a problem. Presumably one of the reasons some people would wish to have more faith schools than we have.” It could be said that if faith communities are looking to set up more alternatives to the system, that is because they feel powerless within the system to change the system, and so feel excluded. It would seem important that those in the secular system accept shared responsibility for any breakup of the system. Imagination may yet come up with an alternative approach which could include those currently feeling the need to go elsewhere.

Faith as a Culture / Cultural Language

107. I think one thing that is really very important in the educational question today, is to appreciate the value of tradition, because sometimes in trying to find a good political solution for education, you end up with somebody's bright idea of how to approach all religions and all faiths. But by making a system for analysing them and understanding them, it's like a series of parameters and criteria which assume a certain view of reality, which is almost like making a new religion in itself, a new basis for saying how does an intelligent ethical human being approach religions. But you are defining ethics and intelligence in the process of doing it, and I think this is an incredible arrogance that's happening at present. ... Because what we find is these traditions are vehicles for the heritage of humankind's wisdom, and they are systems that have been tried on millions of people and brought certain results, and it's naive to throw away the weight and the historicity of that, and assume that somebody's bright ideas cooked up overnight can somehow replace that.

108. For the Episcopal Church there are ... two quite clear schools. On one level, the Episcopal church is the indigenous Scottish Church, and we have people who see themselves ... as going back in a tradition to the Celtic church of Ninian, of Columba, ... and keeping that tradition alive, ... and they see themselves as an ancient tradition of Celtic spirituality, and that is not a small tradition in the Episcopal Church, and in that whole melting pot of the Reformation, for a while, the Episcopal Church was the established church, ... It's not impossible to see that with a couple of changes here and there we could be the national church of Scotland, and you could have ... an established church ... that held Britain together as a monoculture. I mean, there are people in the Episcopal Church who hold Culloden as a key moment, and on the eve of the Battle there was a Eucharist celebrated using Episcopal rites. The chalice and paten are still around. Most of the people who died at Culloden were Episcopalian. ... There's a service each year in Glencoe, people who really see themselves as the

indigenous Scots, and at Culloden they had a 250th anniversary service in five languages, none of them English ... and they really see themselves as keeping alive an ancient tradition of what being Scottish is really inherently about. And yet the Episcopal church is seen as this incomer, ... a sort of English white settler church.

109. It comes out of a shared experience of life, I think, over the centuries, the Jewish customs that have arisen out of the faith, celebrating the Jewish festivals. For some people, for many people, it's about going to synagogue and praying, perhaps on a regular basis, or on a more occasional basis when it's major festivals, so I suppose that's what I'm talking about when I say culture. ... I suppose you would say the civil religion is Christianity with Christmas and Easter and other times, ... and ... in that case I'm a Christian, because the main events of the year are Christian ... but there are certain cultural aspects of being Jewish which are landmarks in the Jewish year, or landmarks in Jewish history, events that happened to the Jewish people. ... I think that's what makes any people is shared memories, a shared history.

110. I suppose ... the closest you get to a concept of British culture is probably in the Anglican community, because it was exported around the world, and ... then there's the other side, which is this real proud Scots, ... and that's where the traditional heartlands of the Episcopal Church are, sort of in rural Aberdeenshire, and when the Episcopal church was a restricted church, there were still baptisms done through the window of Stonehaven jail, and all this sort of thing, but ... I think the church forming popular culture is much more of a Church of Scotland thing, because it is much bigger, ... and it does act as a national church. ... I think the Roman Catholic Church does a lot to shape the culture of the West of Scotland, but is that the Roman Catholic Church, or the Irish influence, and can you put a paper between the two of them

111. Obviously it's a biased perspective from my point of view, but it does seem to me that post-Reformation and for a few hundred years after the Reformation it was the Church of Scotland whose teaching was permeating society. I mean, people like Burns or any of the writers, or Scott, had no alternative but to have been steeped in a Church of Scotland kind of Christianity I would have thought. ... I mean ... it's Christian with a small 'c', in the sense that it doesn't mean that people have an active Christian faith, but when you look at all the buildings that are around you, all the writings that we have, it's difficult to say that they have not been influenced

112. I think it's fair to say there is a Methodist subculture, ... Methodism ... in Scotland is so small that everybody knows everybody, well not quite, but they know somebody who knows somebody, you know, and ... when my father was preaching in my grandmother's home church they said 'we've been

so looking forward to hearing you preach', and he thought it was his reputation as a great preacher, ... but it was Annie Duncan's daughter's man. Now that's culture as well, but it's culture within a community, and it says we are different from the Church of Scotland, and we ... stand for a couple of things that are a wee bit different, and so ... we would see ourselves as a kind of culture because we share certain values and certain emphases, which tend to be politically left wing, and that kind of thing

113. We tend to be I guess on the whole middle class, although not exclusively thank goodness, but thinking people, a lot of well educated people and often self educated people, people who like to think things through, reflective people, serious minded, often in some kind of caring work, lots of medical professionals, lots of teachers, or people who at other levels do that kind of work, very socially responsible, social responsibility has a very high profile in our movement as a whole ... concerned with social change and social accountability in that sense, and enjoying the arts and culture, and I think that does relate, it's not just because it's fun, but also recognising that that can be an expression of these other kinds of things, the beauty, and the wonder, and the truth at the heart of life.

114. Well, the first thing that occurs to me is Jewish humour. You know, ... faith and culture, it comes from the experience, and there are certain jokes I suppose, which it's alright if you are Jewish and you say them, but if you heard somebody say them who is not Jewish it would be offensive. So ... because of our experience over the centuries I suppose, ... we're very much aware of the Jewish condition and can laugh about it, ... so yes there's a Jewish humour, and ... that's part of culture.... I mean here, we've taken on the traditions of the local people to a certain extent, and we become, maybe much like chameleons, keeping our Jewish customs and traditions, but you know, integrating with the local ones, so Jewish culture takes on different forms depending on which country you are in. So here am I with my Scottish accent, and I'm sure very much integrated into Scottish culture. In fact, I can even tell you that when we say grace after meals, the introductory song that we have is one of the Psalms which you know you can sing to any tune, and very often we will sing it to Scotland the Brave. This is an integration of culture

115. Just now, we are studying with Tibetans. But Tibetans got their Buddhism from India, and the Buddhism itself ... is universal. But then one needs to counterbalance that with the value of tradition, and just now with Tibetan Buddhism, and most other forms of Buddhism coming to the West, you have a system that has been tried and tested for millennia, at least a couple of thousand years. ... It makes a lot of sense that people enter into that time tested tradition, and with time allow it to take on whichever face it will take on in the West, just the same as it has done as it travelled

from country to country in Asia. But it's absolutely practically impossible to adapt it overnight artificially, because it needs to happen much more organically, as the fundamental principles of the religion meet up with the superficial details of the culture and the interface sorts itself out. And that can only happen after decades, probably centuries of experience in a healthy way. So at the moment, people like myself are finding it necessary, if one wants to go really deeply into the religion to step a little bit into the Tibetan culture, not very much, but obviously we are dealing with a religion that only exists fully in its own language and it will take decades to translate things. So at the moment people are crossing bridges to the east while they are waiting for what was in the east to cross the bridge to the West.

Faith, identity, and culture, filled as they are with subtle layers of meaning, are inevitable booby-traps for those trying briefly to encapsulate their relationships. *"Faith identity and culture? I see them all as dynamic. You'll not catch me out on that one. All change."* But conversations take place with an agreed assumption of a certain shared understanding. *"I think you can have a faith identity and you can have a culture, but on one hand as an outsider I could say that the culture defines your faith identity, but if you are believer, then you would say no, it was God given, I was inspired, ... and I think it's whether you are a believer or not that conditions the answer to that question, but as an outsider you could say that some of the variations of form that you get, if you take away the inspirational aspect of God, appear to be conditioned or at least affected by culture."* But we must question whether the school dynamic, this godless culture, has a beneficial effect on children's identity. *"Well I can't speak for the Muslim children of course, I'm not sure that I can speak for the children in my own class for that matter, but going by the kind of questions that are raised, these are children who want to have some kind of identity, not necessarily the same as their parents, but just a way of describing what they think and believe, and very often it comes down to something along the lines of agnosticism. I would like to think there is something more there than they are prepared to take on board."* Wanting something more than agnosticism or not, a teacher has a particular satisfaction to gain from sharing in children's growth in this area. *"You know this child really reaching deep inside, both intellectually and spiritually, is what is the joy of RME. Don't you think so?"*

Religion as Aesthetic

116. I think that people have to learn to feel, and to imagine. Developing imagination is very important in education, and there must be a way of doing that, helping young people to imagine, ... because I would say imagination is important to religious and spiritual development. How do you believe certain things unless you can develop an imagination and a feeling

117. Yes, it's very useful. You see Buddhism uses, perhaps more than any other religions, meditations. It certainly has hundreds and hundreds of different meditations. Many of them involve using the imagination constructively, so that one needs some sort of visual support to let you know what you are supposed to be imagining, and how to do it. ... but the aesthetic is completely secondary in Buddhism. How you behave ethically as a human being, how you cultivate your own potential as a human being, in respect to yourself, and as a social element, is by far and away the priority. The aesthetics are not only secondary, but when we go back through Buddhist history, we find them coming in at a fairly late date, and you can actually see the various cultural and geographical influences. So it has left us with a body of art and decoration and other things which reflects the best of the countries which Buddhism touched, ... some of the greatest things mankind has done. ... Mankind peaks from time to time in different parts of the world with its artistic inspiration, but the religion itself does not depend upon that, they depend upon the religion. The religions inspired the works of art, and I think perhaps it is less important in Buddhism than in some other faiths. For instance in Christianity you have an incredibly important musical tradition, and music certainly is an inspiration for many Christians. This doesn't exist at all in Buddhism.

118. If we have an aesthetic it's probably through music, and language, it's probably through the gift of speaking ... the ability to use rhetoric and language. And music ... I would say it has a unique emphasis within the general Christian umbrella. Our hymn books begin with Methodism was born in song, ... A Methodist congregation, by definition, sings well because it believes it does (laughter) and so it does, and it's key. A lot of our theology is taught through our hymns, and you'll find that a Methodist will be able to quote lots of hymns, in a way that they can't quote scripture, but the theology has been worked out in them, particularly the liberation aspects of theology, long before "liberation theology" existed, usually in the words of Charles Wesley.

119. The whole mock-gothic thing is really a theological statement. You have the Oxford Movement, ... harking back to a golden era, where the ultimate thing was to be seen as mediaeval in your psychomentality, but a parallel and less well known movement is the Cambridge movement that

goes with it, which is an architectural and ecclesiological movement, so you get Hook in Leeds bringing in a surpliced choir for the first time in centuries. ... All this dressing them up in ruffs and surplices is entirely a nineteenth century thing. They entirely re-wrote the world of what churches looked like, and this idea that the ultimate thing was to be seen as a mediaeval church. It had a sacramentalism of feeling that you were in a mediaeval church. Numinosity is the way of faking it. That is the name that some people used for it, and you get these architects, ... harking back to trying to build churches so they look like they were built in about 1400 ... but people were still building gothic churches after 1900 ... they're still building them (laughter) and I don't know if they know why they are building them, I mean they build them because a church should look like that, and you see sixties town plans of what the city of 2020 will look like, and they have all these huge tower blocks linked with passageways, and then they'll have a gothic church in the middle of it. ... I suppose ... the church aesthetic ... has always been bizarrely dictated by theology and function, ... and people are trying to re-order churches now, very much, to give them instead of a linear context a much more in the round context, and so modern churches are much more being built that way, ... but I think it's an arguable case that function based on a theological perception of what you are doing has always at least informed the building of churches, and the ones being built today have some sort of perception of that, ... and we're now ... moving towards a priest as someone within a faith community, and people discovering their own faith and seeing how they work it through in their lives, and much less going along on a Sunday morning to partake in a sacrament and then go out to live their lives separately. I think those things are becoming more integrated.

120. There's an aesthetic that is flexible and can be applied in any culture or within any culture. You can get beautiful expressions of poetry in any language which are motivated by the spiritual, and that's the same with religion and culture, and if you have a spiritual element that is expressed in a building, whether it's a mosque or a church, whether it's in Scotland or Iceland, it will take on aspects of the surroundings, it will be driven by the spirit, so it does have a spiritual force which drives it, therefore the outcome will have a similar aesthetic, and you may find that of churches mosques and temples of different faiths.

"I'm not sure when you look at aesthetics. If it is to say that one religion is very different from another, then I'm not sure, because if you look at religions you could say that say Buddhism and Christianity and Judaism appear to have very little in common, and Hinduism as well for good measure, they appear to have very little in common, but some Christians and Buddhists and Hindus have a great deal in common, and it's because of how they internalise their own faith." When all faith groups talk of the crucial importance of internalisation of faith, there is

concern that secular teachers are inclined to delineate them in terms of their difference. *“I think it's what people do with religion that makes for the differences and similarities, ... and most of the great world religions have very similar forms, you know, in the idea that you can divide religions in the aspects of worship and festivals and buildings, and so on, and that these draw people together, but it's what you do with the buildings, and it's what you do with the festivals, that makes it unique to the religion, and that can produce similarities or difference.”* In fact, the secular anthropological approach, through its definition of categories of difference and similarity, assumes power over religion, and places it within its paradigm.

Chapter Nine

Sustaining Faith Minority Culture & Identity

121. You know, working within a tradition, within a religious movement that says each of us must think this out for ourselves, even at that level I'm clear that you reinvent the wheel, and if it's a religious tradition it's not just, you know, it's good for me to tell the adults and children in my care what I believe and what I've worked out, and how I've reasoned it through, even if they're not going to accept any of it as theirs, because it will help them think things through. Now if what I'm handing them is something as rich and complex as the Muslim tradition, the Jewish tradition, then it's not just what one person has thought through and learnt and developed, but it's what many, many people through the years have lived and died for and thought through, so it's something of great value, and while ... I would never say to any child or any adult 'you were born into this, you must stay with it', ... there can be so much of value, ... even if you decide to reject it you may choose to take a lot of it with you, ... Something that stays around for however many centuries, there must be something to be said for it, and we shouldn't lightly let it go

122. I feel that there is a need to know who you are and what you believe in, and I think that's the first principle. That should be a person's foundation, that they should be brought up according to a particular religion, a particular set of religious values. I think it's important for a person's self-image and identity ... the experiential side of it, actually living a religion. ... The pick and mix approach means that you can reject, you can walk away from it. I don't think it truly gives you a feeling of who you are. ... I've met children who don't know who they are, what they are, they've got no anchor in life,

123. Unless it's meaningful to you, unless it answers the questions you have in your life, then it's no good. ... I think that is important that young people learn to reflect and discover that which is meaningful to them, but it's also important that we lay before them our experience, where we have stood, ... so it's not just a matter of setting them adrift without any background, without any knowledge, without any facts, but a matter of holding up to them where others have been and asking them to look at that and to reflect on that

124. I think I would want to pass on my doubts to children, even, because I think my doubts are important ... There's a quote on my wall, maybe you didn't notice it, but it says 'There are two or three things I know for sure, however they are never the same things (laughter) and they're never as sure as I'd like to be'.

125. I feel the bottom line almost is that I would say my faith has given me something in my life which has stood the test of time, and I believe that I have something that folk without faith lack. It's a meaning, it's a value, it's a purpose, it's a sense of satisfaction, it's a hope, it's a depth of relationship. ...And I look at other people ... and I don't think they are as happy as I am (laughter) ... I would want to pass that on, and that's the evangelical imperative within the family and within the community, ... It is ... sharing ... because ... it's only by catching the light, perhaps. ... It can't be me up here telling, it's me grabbing you into my enthusiasm, and sharing my enthusiasm ... and ... you know I actually want you to have a good life, and to share and care for each other, ... and I would say educationally, unless you are prepared to get alongside people at every level, you're never going to be able to teach effectively.

"I don't think nondenominational schools are in the business to help parents pass their faith on or not. I don't think we are in the business of passing faith on, or damaging the ability to pass faith on. I think it's a parental and church, mosque or synagogue matter. If it's in the Roman Catholic sector, then that would be part of the raison d'etre for the school, and I know in the Jewish school it would be the same." But the raison d'etre of a secular school gives faith a much lower priority. *"A lot of teachers would say it is not the place for school to do that in the nondenominational sector, but for RME that would be the thing that you have got to accept where the child has come from, and you've got to support that, and you've got to approve it, it's not just ... passive if you are talking about being a Hindu, there's got to be the information about that child being a Hindu."* *"Yes, it's part of the affirmation, part of the schools responsibility, ... maybe in an informal way."* It is questionable whether this informal recognition is enough to truly affirm parents belief systems, however. *"I would say that parents have to be so strong to let their children know, because although children are at school much of the day, they see their parents more."* *"I just think school is not the only educator, ... I think parents are a stronger influence on them no matter what we think. Sometimes it doesn't look as though that is happening."* And the family/child relationship can be problematic. *"Now what do you do if you are facing a child or a student or a teenager who is in a terrible difficulty with their parents, and it's not really about religion, and this is the dilemma because ... the division between the generations isn't really about religion, it is about something else, normally put under the heading of culture."*

In fact, the parent/child link can be far from ideal. *"Sometimes we find that in some of our schools, particularly in some of the worst schools in terms of deprivation, the school works with the grandparents, they don't work with the parents, the parents are almost a lost generation, and it's the grandparents that count, it's the grandparents that come to the parents nights. One of our schools doesn't have parental helpers, it has granny helpers. They do have some parents, but it's the grannies who come out daily to help with the kids, and there is a recognition that that is good. ... but there is one missing. It's not just the model where you did include the grandparents or great grandparents because they were an element, it's that they are the only element, they are the only stability. ...In a lot of the schools they say it's the grandparents that look after the children, bring them to school, get them their uniform. They have become the parents of the children, and the actual parents are like aether, they are just not there. And yet it is hardly because they are having a wonderful life either. Some schools consciously try to bring in the older generation to young children to teach them things, ... an afternoon once a fortnight or once a month, when the older people in the community come to teach."* School could obviously play a much greater role in integrating the community, at the same time as developing an understanding of the needs of individual children.

"I think it is about an analysis of the learning environment of the school, it's not just the classroom, it's about the social relationships between children, it's about the walk to school and the walk back and all this kind of stuff, and it's about if children feel excluded from some of that because of who they are, they are a minority, and how does that affect their performance."

Whatever the minority, social, racial or religious, the system needs to reinforce inclusiveness while respecting difference. *"Well I think if you've got children in your class who are of a different faith then you value that, and you know maybe they would be celebrating Diwali or something, you would get them to explore what happens because it gives them a sense of value, so I think it helps them to keep it and accept it. And you know if you are Catholic and you have been to church on Ash Wednesday, and you came back to school with the ash on your forehead, I think we take notice of that, we don't push it to one side, but we say tell us what you do and you make more out of it. I think we could probably do more, but we are beginning to work that way."* Inevitably at the moment, however, information is asked of the minority faith child, rather than the depth of their knowledge being increased. *"In the past we have had practising Catholic children who resented any kind of attempts on my part to insist, or even suggest, that they would have a particular angle on an issue or anything, and it probably comes from being*

only one in eighteen kids or something, and that is a very difficult position to be in.” In an unsympathetic situation, peer pressure to conform to a norm can be immense.

“I think it's possible that schools, because of the way that they are, we have a class of children and we bring them in and we impart the same thing to all of them, even though we group them into learning groups, ... and I think doing that makes us trying to make them all the same, although they come in as individuals, we do that, we make them all the same, we take away a lot of children's creativity, we take it away rather than boost it or foster it. We know that though, and creative teachers know that this is happening, but it's the system that does it ... individual teachers can't do it.” The system needs changing if it is to be more open to individual difference, or inclusive of minority group paradigms. *“I think that some people in faith communities believe that their way of life is under threat. How far they believe that their belief is under threat is another thing though; that it's not that Christianity is under threat, but that certain Christians' way of life is under threat. It's not that Islam is under threat, it's that some Muslims don't like what they see in the world, and it's this difference between your belief, your faith and the way of life, and it is back ... this business of belief and culture. ... People will often say their religion is under threat, and sometimes I suppose it is physically under threat, if they are being abused or prevented from worshipping freely, but it suits folk to bind up faith and culture, because if you try to disagree with the culture you can always fall back on faith, and it makes it looked as if you are interfering with things into which you should not interfere.”*

Social Problems | Educational Problems

126. Oh yes, yes, we are infected by post-Christianity disease in that Sunday schools tend to lose children when they reach the age of ten, congregations are therefore becoming older, ... in Methodism there was a ... panic about ten or fifteen years ago when they started to say there are more Muslims in the UK than there are Methodists, ... No, we are losing numbers the way everybody is. ... there is a real fear about the future

127. Part of the problem is that we're very scattered, our congregations are very scattered. ... People are coming a long way, so as the children get older they don't want to come ... they want to stay where their friends are, ... and then they move out of the area very often, because we are a mobile society. So it's very much an act of faith, ... and there was a period of about ten years in this

church when there weren't any children at all, you know, none of the children and grandchildren of the folk who came here were actually coming to this church at all.

128. The world is changing very, very rapidly, and the church is having to change within that, ... The role of the church is if you like, passing itself on and recreating itself in younger people. ... I don't think we feel quite comfortable with telling young people this is what you have to believe ... I think there's a sharing with them of what we are, and that ethos and culture, ... and I think the demographics of churches, all churches, is that people drift away and come back. On one very simplistic level, they get to the point where the possibility of their own demise becomes more credible and realistic, and they start to look to the bigger questions, like 'What on earth am I doing here?'

129. I think ... there's a sense of resignation about it. Older people used to try and fight to make sure that what we believe in would continue and be upheld, to try and encourage the younger generation ... But now there's a resignation that the children will not possibly remain in the faith to the same extent. ... and people are accepting it with great resignation, philosophically, and a feeling that these are the times that we live in.

130. It is a new phenomenon. It is ... a post-war phenomenon, and I suspect it's because post-war we've become a capitalistically centred society that ignores the spiritual dimension. I don't believe that it's because children don't ask spiritual questions. You know, in years of teaching, kids ask spiritual questions. Children are taught not to.

131. Religion is ... treated appallingly. Where it is treated at all, it is treated as a kind of joke, as a sport of fools, there is very little serious interrogation of religious themes, or indeed the opposite of that, even less interrogation of the perceptions of the liberal elite. ... I always find I'm not agreeing with Cardinal Winning on a great many issues (laughter), ... nevertheless it is quite interesting that his challenge to, ... abortion on demand, received such vitriolic comment in the press and in the media generally, and you have to ask the question why. If we are, as these people claim, a liberal democracy, why is it that dissonant voices are always parodied? There's a kind of double standard at play here all the time. There is the claim to be a liberal plurality, but this is only a meaningful claim for those who actually share the assumptions of the liberal elite, ... and ... I probably have more in common with the liberal elite, in terms of what I actually believe, than I do with religious Conservatives. Nevertheless, I want to defend the right of those Conservatives to place their views of the world in the forum without having them disparaged before they are even listened to... and there is a fundamental dishonesty at the heart of it all, a profound dishonesty. ... Then government pretends to be a kind of referee between contesting and competing claimants, and of course government is

nothing of the sort. It's the shaper of the agenda.

132. I think this is more powerful than education. Education can only come part of the way towards resolving it. ... There is no doubt that today's society is very powerful. It's a free society, you can do what you like, you can become invisible, and I think most cultural groups are affected

133. It's something a bit more basic than just the educational system. It's what makes religion appropriate. Why do some people believe and others don't. I mean, I don't think that's an educational question ... that's one of the big, big questions isn't it. ... It's not just education, it must be to do with what we are as people, and how we acquire knowledge, and how we acquire knowledge of God, and how we develop certain capacities, like ... spiritual capacities and imagination, the capacity to feel.

134. I think that there's a concern that there isn't any serious religious education. I mean, ... what we're about is encouraging people to think ethically and religiously for themselves, to work out their own way and live by it. So what we're concerned about with our children ... wherever they go to school, is that they should be learning how to do that, and be learning what kinds of moral and social issues need their concern, ... I think ... we need to make it clear that religion is important and a valid thing, not saying religion is a historic curiosity, ... then it does encourage children to adopt that attitude

135. I do feel that non-Christian religions tend to get treated in a sort of cultural oddity type of way, as something interesting, and a 'look at what they wear' type of way, without going into the meaning, the actual meaning of the religion.

136. I think there's a lot of good work being done in the schools in religious and moral education, ... but as far as the teaching of RME is concerned, you can only scratch the surface of the other religions, and look through a window into the other faiths, and I don't think children can truly understand about other faiths by having a project, a six week block in their school career on one of the other religions. ... That's alright ... as part of your education, but if it's your religion and you're told ... we'll do a block on Islam, we'll do a block on Judaism, it's very nice while they do it, and you do identify with it, but that is not Jewish education, and ... it's not Muslim education. It's part of a whole. It's something else. But I don't think you can ... say this is religion.

137. I would argue that you cannot give children freedom to come to their own morality, ... Kohlberg ... said... that ... the initial stage of moral behaviour is to obey, and that ... unless you have the basis for obedience you can't then go on to start to explore why am I obeying this. ... You should

impose a morality on children, without necessarily explaining it even, because they don't understand the explanations. Yet if that's right then why shouldn't you also say that you should impose a religious practice on young people without necessarily explaining it, ... (Laughter) I suspect that what is in 5 to 14 starts at level A by saying giving children confidence to ask questions, but there is no solid awareness of matters of religion, ... and it quite quickly goes into allowing kids to start to say what does this mean for me. But I don't actually believe that teachers do that anyway (laughter) ... You see, ... a religious context, is really ... the ultimate teaching of morality, and you need a moral code to survive, and ... to ... impose a morality that allows the children to develop. I mean it's like imposing the rules of a football game, or imposing the rules of writing music. Within this confine you can be creative, you can explore, but there are certain rules that you have to keep for this to work

138. One thing that does concern me is ... I think children can get lost along the way of Personal Search if they are not guided by members of their own faith, and that's something that I feel very worried about, that we're putting the children in a failure situation, ... I feel that they've got to set their personal search within their own faith, and have any questions answered within their own faith, before they go into a situation where all those ideas are out on the table and it can become a problem ... It's setting them free from religion actually. It really is, because they lose their anchor totally, ... you have an anchor, you have a framework in which to live your life, and I think ... with a lot of young people and adults, that they've lost that framework, and they're out there lost

139. The issues I feel in Scotland are different. One of them is the role of religion. But the role of religion isn't necessarily the only issue. The issue of morality is I think more important, and whether children are getting a good moral education in state schools, whether they are getting an education which is compatible with what they are being taught at home, because the dual personality of children that can be produced by having two completely separate domains in their lives, one between nine and 3.30, and one for the rest of the day, that is an issue... it's just that there is a big difference between what happens at home and what happens at school. So they are the things we'd like to do, to reflect the home more positively, and to provide an education which has a moral framework to it, or where its philosophy is a moral framework, and also to provide a smaller family based education, rather than a very broad, mass-produced, so to speak, education,

140. I think a good multi-whatever education system cherishes useful diversity. ... My life has been enriched by the diversity that is around me, and I don't see why I should not allow other people to share that. ... I want education to treasure diversity, and therefore at that level to support it. Education is perhaps responsible however for the decay of identity at some levels, because it replaces spiritual quests with 'let's all get a piece of paper to get a decent job to get more money', because the

philosophy that actually underpins education, I mean post-war western liberal democratic ideals are permeated through the education system, ... and by that we are indoctrinating them in a way of thinking, western liberal democracy, a western way of thinking.

141. But by teaching them that you've got to pass an exam we are teaching another set of values, ... which may well be in conflict, which may be why so many young people are uncomfortable.

142. I think the main thing really would be to recognise the importance of moral character development. ... Even before the core skills, that has to be built in.

“The education system and problems run side by side. ... It's like drugs education just now. I mean the drugs problem out there in the community is not of the schools doing, but the school has to cope with it because it gets so big, and then education kicks in because people do not know enough, so they have got to be taught ‘do not dabble in drugs’, but by that time there is a whole community and there is a drugs industry going on, so the school doesn't have anything to do about that, but tries to.” Clearly, teachers recognise that teaching is set in a context of society at large. *“Then on the other hand, the education system has made everyone such an individual, ... not just the education system, ... families have become nuclear families, and you care a wee bit about this group, but you don't want to care about everybody else, and ... all that has an effect, and then it's back to the education system which is supposed to sort things out again. I think the education system is not responsible, but in the longer-term they are related.”* With a commitment to the individual child set in the context of society, schools have a relationship with each. *“I think education has a responsibility, it's like my son ... has a great talent. If he goes to a school and that isn't nurtured then I would be disappointed. If your child is Jewish, ... and that is ignored, distorted, destroyed, the school is failing in its responsibilities ... but I think you would have to negotiate about what is the schools responsibility and accountability ... what could it really achieve.”*

It is practicability of implementation that is generally seen as determining parameters to the education system's role. *“We can't do it. We would have to be ourselves, we would have to be, it has to come from inside. But if there is taught at a very young age about spirituality it's going to stay there. I don't think we lose that as people ... School ... was just a wee add on. Education systems add to family life, not the other way around.”* The education system doesn't

cover everything. *"I don't feel it is the schools role to sustain minority faith cultures or to satisfy faith community requirements. Again it's a bit like the Wittgenstein thing that if a lion could speak it wouldn't be a lion. I think that if you have a faith community it is the job of the faith community to regenerate itself, and the role of the school is to be sensitive to the communities needs."* But the community needs to take care of itself. *"I don't think you sustain faith externally of the faith culture, ... if you are dependent on the education system sustaining a minority faith culture I can't see how it can work. Being supportive of it, being sensitive to it, yes, but what do you do about the other minority faith cultures, what do you do about the ones who don't have a faith. I think it's unrealistic, but I also think it's a flawed model, that you don't sustain your faith culture only through school, it's too limited, it's very influential but it's too limited."*

Indeed, it is the limitations of school that need to be examined if the system is to be transformed for the greater good. *"I think if we stopped doing any kind of religious and moral education, and including religious observance in the schools, and teaching other world faiths, then we are going to be taking out from these children a whole range of experiences that otherwise they would not have, and you cannot make choices without experiences. ...I still think that there is a place for religion in schools."* It seems essential that the secular system retains control, however. *"I think there are individuals and groups within faith communities and ... it doesn't satisfy them because they are not looking for an open-ended approach, they are looking for beliefs that are put out as facts, they are looking for a system which teaches truth and not truths. ... But if RME is going to work in schools, in nondenominational schools, then it has to try and develop an understanding of religion and a respect for it, and it's not whether you become religious, that's a private matter, it's about having respect for people's religion, so you don't think someone is stupid because they are religious, but nor do you think they are stupid or worse still evil if they don't choose to be religious."*

Faith can be treated just as any other issue in terms of minority, or disadvantage, but many teachers must surely identify with the frustrated Cassandra wail of groups working for the betterment of society and seeing little progress in the direction they would prefer. *"Was it Bernstein who said something like 'education cannot compensate for society', and I think it's is really difficult to unpick that relationship. But yes of course we have children in our care and under our guidance for five hours a day for 195 days a year, and one would hope that that*

would make a significant contribution, but the facts don't actually bear that out. Schools have been, I think, fairly committed to equality of opportunity, ... you would have thought that by now you would be seeing significant changes, but I'm not convinced that the economics of the situation actually bear that out. ... So there you have at least, ... a 30 year project which is about racism, which is about social justice, and yet we are still not really seeing it. What that tells me is that school isn't the whole story, that there are all those other factors out there that work on children and mediate against school being able to create the ideal world, ... In our ideal society, in school, nobody is judged because of their family background, nobody is judged because of their gender, nobody is judged because they have a reading difficulty, but what we aim to do is get the best out of everybody, and have everybody contribute to the school and feel strong in themselves. But I know that is not the way that society works."

It could be said that is indeed the way that society works, and that the entropy of society is its tendency to not function as a society. But that society in schools is only possible under the discipline of a committed education system. Any solution to society's problems will need to come from the acceptance of self-discipline on the part of society itself. *"The schools are seen as responsible for absolutely everything. They see the kids from nine o'clock to three o'clock or half past three, and they are responsible for the entire world."* Humans are social beings. They cannot exist without society. They need society to procreate. A school may deal with children as individuals and social beings within the school community, but to deal with the issues that have greatest impact on a child's education, and to face up to it in the same way as the child, requires a school, and therefore the system, to take on society in an active way.

Faith in a Post-Modern Society

Questioning | Authority | Truth | Certainty | Doubt

143. The Bahai faith does have some fundamental aspects of its teachings that are not open to doubt, and it does feel that those things are fundamental principles, so if someone receives a Bahai education, they would be educated in that way. But ... also with the emphasis that it is up to each individual in their own conscience and ... within their own space, to make up their own mind, and to

have their own doubts, and to investigate those doubts, and to satisfy them. But Bahais would not teach that everything is open to doubt. No.

144. Certainly I'm aware ... that there is a real distinction between Unitarianism and most other faiths in the way we celebrate doubt as a tool. ... Doubt is the handmaid of truth, it helps you to work out what truth is truth, but that means that you can doubt anything, and ... makes the assumption, a kind of statement of faith, that truth, the truth, will survive. But in the end, no I can't say this is truth, and I can't say that anything I say has got to be accepted by everybody. ... Community, in a sense of the human community and other kinds of community is important, and post-modernism just seems to celebrate fragmentation as far as I can see

145. Well, within the orthodox tradition ... it's taught as the truth, as truth, and the children are taught to believe in God as One God, and the fifty paragraphs of the central prayer that finish with the word truth, and they are taught that this is our truth, and it's the one unchanging given in life. Everything else may be changing, everything else may be questioned, but we don't change the truths of religion, ... If a child asks a question we will give an honest answer, ... go on the journey with them when they do, and help them understand.

146. Asking questions is part of learning. You don't learn if you don't ask questions, and I also believe that the best way to teach is to ask questions, ... and I think the process of starting from a point of doubt and not knowing and coming to a point of knowing is what learning is all about, and so doubt doesn't mean that a person is bad, or that a person is stupid, it just means that a person has to come through the process coming from doubt to somewhere. The question is where are they going to, and at some point according to religion, it should lead to some kind of certainty, that they are convinced that this is the state of affairs or that this is the truth behind the thing, ... and so whether it is dealing with politics or dealing with is there a God, everyone has to go through this process of questioning and coming to a point somewhere. What's the point?

147. Buddhism uses, perhaps more than any other religions, meditations. It has hundreds and hundreds of different meditations. Many of them involve using the imagination constructively, so that one needs some sort of visual support to let you know what you are supposed to be imagining, and how to do it. You ... come across from time to time a really excellent mechanic who just through their years of experience and their own sharp mindedness will go to the heart of the problem very quickly, or an experienced surgeon or doctor. And they can make a decision in seconds because they can assimilate the information in the light of their experience without going through a whole series of thoughts with one thought leading to another and working out a conclusion. It's not like that. It's a

clarity of mind combined with a great weight of experience. So meditation techniques are just various tools for refining the mind so it can acquire this natural clarity that just knows what is going on, and it doesn't need to think about what's going on because it's a direct vivid awareness of whatever the issue is. It's a great maturity of mind. So when that's there, there is certainty, because when you look into the very nature of doubt, if you analyse it, doubts are thoughts, and it depends on the issue 'Is there a level of truth which is beyond thought, or is truth simply a question of thoughts, with one set of thoughts or paradigms truer than other?'. And if you are just down to thoughts, everything is relative. But if there is a level of awareness which transcends thoughts and which is bright with intelligence, as we see it as Buddhists, that is spirituality. That innate clarity of mind has all these qualities of love and care that religions point to, then when one enters into that state which is full of grace, ... we have to say that there is such clarity and certainty, so we believe that it exists. We're talking about what is not everyone's, or even very many people's disposition, but we certainly believe that it exists.

148. People confuse constantly between having a strong opinion and not allowing other people to voice their opinions and these things are not antithetical. It would seem to me a curious conversation if every party to the conversation said 'well I don't really care what I say' or 'what I'm saying is only accepted on provisionality at this moment in time'. It wouldn't be a conversation. It would be a kind of amorphous juggling of words which would actually mean nothing, and it would be impossible to move anywhere, and I think, I find myself caught in a bit of a dilemma here. Part of me kind of agrees with Wittgenstein in the lectures on the psychology of aesthetics and religious belief where he makes a point that you can look at a crucifix and ask a Christian what is that, and they can talk about the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus and so on, and you ask an atheist what is that and he would say it is a man hanging on two pieces of wood. And of course Wittgenstein would argue that you can never get that conversation going because they live in different life worlds and they are playing different language games. Now I think that's partly true and I think that is at least to some extent a function of post modernity and the loss of communal narratives. But on the other hand I think it's only partly true because I can have a conversation with the member of the British humanists association or the Moslem community, or the Hindu community, and there will be points of contact or points of reference and points of agreement. There will also be points of disagreement and of course as a Christian I accept a provisionality of all my formulations, that there is a possibility that I'm wrong about everything. That is what it is to have faith. You cannot have faith without the possibility of doubt. But that kind of existential provisionality, that notion of provisionality, as a universal phenomenon to your condition is quite different from the provisionality that post modernists like Rorty want to inject into the public discourse. They just want to say that there are so few things about which humans can agree that every claim to any kind of robust defence of a particular position is null

and void, just because there is no such thing as a robust defence of a particular ethical, social, political position. Except that Rorty would argue that human beings shouldn't harm each other.

149. Well, ... this is the difference between where we are, perhaps, and postmodernism, which is that while I have doubts and am searching, I believe there is something to discover, whereas would the postmodernist position not be, well there is just doubt, there is nothing else to discover except what there is and the doubts that you have. ... You know what I mean, a kind of difference in that we might be saying yes we have doubts and we are searching, but we believe that somehow there are answers, whereas is the postmodernist position not to say never mind about the answers, that's not important ... I mean there is a slight difference between using this word doubt meaning 'I am not yet sure, I am still thinking about it, believing that I might come to a conclusion', and saying 'well there is no conclusion', they are two different things

150. We're talking about the Enlightenment here, and, I have a friend who ... is of the mind that ... if we had the knowledge we could explain the whole world and reduce it to almost a formula, an equation, and ... we just totally disagree, and I'm very much of the opinion that there are so many things you can't explain, in fact most of the things, however far you extrapolate them, you could never explain them, and I was recently having a chat with a psychology professor, and he was trying to explain the philosophy of what they were doing, and I said 'well, what about ... a sort of whole spiritual dimension to this', and he said 'we call that dualism within psychology, and nobody even thinks about it nowadays, we don't give that space, we assume that everything can be explained, and it's just a question of time and we will be able to explain it'. And that's what I think the Enlightenment was about, and ... I don't think we buy into the whole thing. I mean if you go back to ... Plato, and his Republic, I mean he sees education as the vital tool behind it, and his rulers are the philosopher rulers, if you like, the educated. That's a bit of a cartoon (laughter), but I would say that's much more where we would be, a much broader vision of what education is about and what you expect learning to produce, not explaining the whole world, but trying to recognise that there are some things that have to be grappled with rather than explained.

151. I think in a postmodern society it becomes more important to have some exploration of faith, because postmodernist society is just that bit more loose. I think it's a society where everything is up for at least debate if not grabs, and that's a useful activity. I think it's inevitable that we are in a society now that will question everything. The intriguing thing is that the society's education creates its own gods. I would have pupils who would come to me from chemistry challenging every religious assertion that they come across but not questioning chemistry. ... Now what we need to do is have a good look at the god of science, and begin to say hold on a minute, the god of science isn't necessarily

giving us everything that we need.

152. I think there's a wider question are faiths going to be continually marginalized in society as less and less people say 'I sign up to a particular faith construct, or a particular recognisable body', and people just say ... 'I'm sure there's something in ESP, and Uri Geller must have had something', and just a recognition that there has to be more out there, and a 'Did you see that program last week on UFO's?' sort of approach to things. People will say that's not faith, that's just natural curiosity, and so faiths will get marginalized and in fact they may have more answers. I think that's a question that all faiths have to tackle, whether they will be marginalized in society and therefore making less impact on society. I mean there is a classic example, there was recently ... a conference on Active Citizenship in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, which really means volunteering, ... And they didn't invite the Churches, and twenty five percent, roughly, of volunteering is done through churches, and nobody even thought of inviting the Churches, because they didn't think the Churches were involved in volunteering, and they must be the biggest organization behind it. So we're just off the mental map, I think, of a lot of people, and it's one of the things the churches need to get back on the mental map ... I saw a figure yesterday, that the Church of Scotland's annual income, ... is £150 million a year, and they have investments worth £300 million. So that means that the Church of Scotland is probably spending in Scotland every year £150 million. Well there aren't many other people doing that, ... and they're not having the shout they should have on the back of that. I mean that's an enormous amount ... think if you had a multinational spending £150 million per year in Scotland ... And yet their major contribution is to the concept of community

153. We each work out our own way, but people who join ... are becoming part of a community, and that's about respect for one another, and one another's views, and for listening to one another, and learning from one another and helping one another along that journey of discovery, so there's actually a sense of not a unity, but a comm-unity that is created out of the differences, and it's a bit like a patchwork, ... every bit of it started out belonging to something different, but it comes together as a whole,

154. The ultimate truth is only one, but ... different people think differently, I like to say that wall is a white wall, you say it's a white wall in English, I say something else in my language, somebody else says something else, but the basic thing is this is a white wall. Whatever the truth is, is ultimately the same, ... if you've got some other way of expressing it fair enough.

155. I think people are more open to the concept of doubt than they possibly traditionally have been. You know, I think if a hundred years ago a bishop had got up and said I do have times when I

doubt and question the sky would have fallen in, and nowadays the sky doesn't fall in ... doubt is more socially and religiously acceptable ... than it has ever been. And yet the great religious thinkers have always had doubt. ... I can't think of a single thinker in any tradition that I'm aware of ... they all have doubts and questions in any century, But it's just more acceptable in religious circles to publicly say I have doubts (laughter). ... Is there an absolute truth? There probably is (laughter). But ... 'theologians are like nuclear physicists. We'll only know who's right when it's too late to make a difference', and I'm sure there are many absolute truths, and it doesn't strike me as impossible that they may actually be paradoxical

156. They are frightened to doubt, and of course one of the great enemies of progress is fear, and fear of doubt is one of the strongest kinds of fear that people have. I remember ... Basil Hume being interviewed ... and they said 'you are the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, leader of the Roman Catholics in England and Wales, do you ever doubt yourself?' And he said 'But of course I doubt. Of course I recognise that everything I have lived for and believed in and done may be wrong'. But I never see people like Richard Dawkins express the same humility. (Much laughter) quite apart from the fact that he is a rather silly man with some dreadfully asinine arguments, which really are ... no better than sixth form class debate ... It's quite extraordinary, quite extraordinary. But of course Richard Dawkins isn't on his own here. People become incredibly irrational about religion.

157. You know I have to get the stage of confidence that I say 'just because I don't think it doesn't mean it's wrong' (laughter) and I'm also prepared to concede that I might not be right. That's important.

158. Logical arguments are not sufficient to convince anybody, ... but ... they are indicators which point to something which is naturally inside you. There is an argument that is put to a child, look at the star, look at the sun, look at the moon, did it happen by accident? That is a question. Now there is no proof, although in Arabic we call it a proof, it's not a proof in a strict logical sense, an Aristotelian sense, it is an indicator. But that indicator indicates something, or strikes at something, which is in the inner being, our spirit. Now the inner being attains to certainty through the question, so the process of coming from doubt to certainty requires the question, it requires the indicator or sign, and it requires the spirit to feel satisfied of that, and once that process has been gone through we come to the ultimate truth according to Islam, which is that there is a pattern, it didn't happen by accident, and the Patterner is called Allah, God, or Whatever.

159. Let's say what most people call the mind, what most people use as their mind, is just a tiny part of their minds potential. It's like a machine of which only one part is used and unveiled, and ...

one finds areas of mind above and beyond thought, and in those states there are qualities of peace, and clarity, there are dimensions of altruistic care where you can unveil a compassion for other beings, all sorts of insight into human nature and to physical phenomena, wisdom in many dimensions. I think those doorways of mind remained locked for most people, who are in the part of mind which is to do with thoughts, and feelings, emotions. This area of mind ... is just one part of mind. The rest remains unexplored. We can ... imagine the difference, whether it's true or not we can't tell, between ourselves and a fly. We can think all they are interested in is flying on to shit and food, and eating, and doing the things they do. How could they even begin to imagine a Bach cantata or all of the other things we appreciate as human beings? ... We see those sorts of quantum leaps and possibilities as going on and on, and our duty and our potential as human beings is to uncover that. But I wouldn't tell that to a post modernist, because it puts them into a tiny little slot. It blows holes in their ceilings

“How does the education system deal with post modernist doubt? It doesn't know about it (laughter). This tells me more about the researcher than the researching. This is a man on the brink of a crisis here. Can anything teach anything with certainty? Go and read the Tao of Pooh.” So ‘those who know are not learned, and the learned do not know’? *“Well, I think there has always been doubt, it's not postmodernist, we're always in doubt. I think it's a bigger question in some ways to say how do we deal with the concept of absolute truth. I think that there's always been doubt, it's just that it wasn't acceptable to exercise it, because it made you a bad person, and it made you evil, or it meant you had not listened to God when God had called you. And people have always doubted and gone their own way, and if the RME as opposed to the education system, or maybe the education system as well, is about enhancing individuals, then the least you can say is that they will deal with their doubt better because they are thinking reasoning people, and they have had practice in thinking and reasoning. I don't think you can just produce thinking and reasoning people, they've got to have loads of practice and schools can provide that if they try, they can let kids exercise their mouths and the words and get used to dialogue and get used to listening, and that still makes for great uncertainties but maybe you are better able to deal with those.”* So if thinking and reasoning don't eliminate doubt, how do they help the situation? Should doubt not be approached using different tools?

“I think some teachers expect their pupils to accept their ideas as authoritative, and some pupils

want to. It really depends, ... if it's their views on a mathematical formula and they are any good, then fine, if it's their views on morality and religion and values and faith, then they are only there as a human being. If they are not going to behave like teachers, then they are not entitled to be treated any better or any worse." So how do you distinguish between a teacher and a human being, and which is better and which is worse? And if morality is just for human beings, are teachers better for concentrating on mathematical formulae? "I think schools can teach with certainty the idea of respect for yourself and others. That's not really going to go out of fashion. They can teach children to think, and to talk and to listen, ... and I think those kinds of skills will always last, because they are not linked to facts or spurious facts, or things that are disproved later, or things that are beliefs and were never facts in the first place." So if all facts are value laden, and all theories challengeable, is it only intellectual and social skills that matter? Is content an irrelevance?

"I think that what we do is we encourage children to explore and question and that is how I get them to deal with it. I don't encourage them to accept their teachers' views as authoritative. What I expect them to do is to accept their teachers' guidance towards finding their own view as authoritative." So teachers' views cannot be authoritative, but children's views can? Then why do the teachers examine the children? "There is always the risk that you are teaching towards the exam. There is always the risk that education is geared to those who are likely to pass the exam. The syllabus material is getting better. The range of examinations is getting better. ... I mean ... if you've got a much wider range of examinations with assessment, then the nature of education can be broader too." So our protection from the risk of education being geared towards exams is to increase the number of exams? "How do we not have exams? ... It is just a way of seeing if people can do things, seeing can they do what we have taught." So they have a questionable value to the individual and society, but are useful as a measure of the success of the education system? "I would say that even now we don't say that the teachers' view is authoritative, and a lot of our young people don't accept authority anyway, of any kind, maybe from the Simpsons." So society exerts authority of knowledge through culture, and the content of that knowledge is immeasurable and the authority untraceable? "We are there to provide a scaffold, we are not there to fill up empty boxes, or to drag learning out of them in some way, we're just there to support them." So who supports you? "Please Sir I've finished."

Chapter Ten

Believers and the Academic System

At this point, it is perhaps time to re-consider the research questions: Do faith groups in general have a cohesive voice in their approach to education, and if so, what marks it as distinctive from the secular system? The former should be recognisable within the data, but the latter requires an extrapolation from that 'voice' into the secular system itself, exploring the nature of secularity and its consequences for learners' development of personal and communal identity and values. These issues are, of course, themselves determined by our understanding of society, and what we mean by knowledge.

But before returning to those themes as defined in the research title, it is probably useful to re-examine the faith educators' interview responses under the thematic headings of the interviews (Terminology, Aims, Culture, Identity, Faith), and to summarise what was expressed there. To reduce the interview responses to a précis of a few pages is quite a different form of expression, the respondents' actual words being neither general enough nor precise enough for a summary. Reduction on that scale requires interpretation and re-expression by the researcher. The researcher takes what has been said, merges understanding of the responses with personal understandings of the themes being discussed, and then tries to briefly express these understandings to the reader from a personal viewpoint. By giving the reader access to the data, however, he/she is in a position to evaluate the researcher's response and assess its trustworthiness.

In my interpretation of the data, I must take on board my personal viewpoint constructed from lifelong experience, and one argument or one piece of information for the puzzle rarely has the power to effect a major transformation in the direction of such a construction. My life experience led me to the situation that my way of interpreting my perception has merged with the language of Islam. How is it possible to communicate with those who do not speak it? How can I understand an atheist, a secular humanist, a Christian or a Buddhist, even when we all talk English? On the other hand, and this is particularly pertinent for the writing of a thesis, can any of them understand me?

Along with my interviewees and academic colleagues, I share the language of west-European culture, post-Renaissance, post-Enlightenment, and now postmodern. But the fact that I can speak it doesn't make it my language of choice, or the necessarily the language of choice of the interviewees, but it is a shared language of ideas. The question is, when communicating in that common second language, did I understand what was said to me in the way that speakers intended, when they could only infer a range of concepts in their first language inexpressible in the second. I have to assume that I can make an imaginative leap, which then leads to the question of whether I can pass on those ideas in a way that makes them intelligible and relevant to someone else.

Understanding requires not just distillation, but analysis and synthesis. The information I receive must be synthesised with my prior understandings to form a cohesive perspective, that may reflect what I have heard but is my own. But stripping out the complexities of individual faith languages means that the result has a certain stark simplicity. This is the 'faith voice' as I understand it, but it is also a voice that I agree with. As is clearly the case with interviewees, I accept that it is necessary for me to challenge my own assumptions critically and often, but in the current situation I consider it valid to treat my stance as 'voice discourse', describing the world from a standpoint that sees itself as subordinated, and critiquing dominant knowledge forms central to the construction of subordination

Interview Data Interpretation

Terminology

Education is a term which is used to encompass all the learning that takes place throughout a life [1]. The teaching process includes the passing on of skills or information, that 'pouring in' of knowledge that is referred to as instruction [2-4], as well as the 'drawing out' of inner knowledge[6,10], allowing a pupil to grow, providing a fertile and protected environment for learning [7,10], and providing guidance, care and nurture [4,10]. What is taught in the formal teacher/pupil relationship is allied to, and should be designed as a preparation for, that greater learning process that we encounter in our experience of life, and incorporate into our way of life [6,10-12].

It is learning for life, learning the way of life, on which faith educators focus, for religion is invariably described as all-embracing, not a sub-set of the life experience [1,10-13]. Religious education as encountered in the curriculum is not religious education as seen from within a faith [8,9]. No subset of the curriculum can function as religious education when all

curriculum subjects are recognised as sub-sets of religious education. If life, education and religion are seen as inextricable within the religious paradigm, no 'objective' educational approach can be taken to it any more than an 'objective' approach can be taken to life [12]. Objectifying it is to change its nature [8].

"The prophet does not transmit merely a code of rituals commonly regarded as 'religion'. He brings with him a whole system of thought and action which in Islamic terminology is called 'al-Din' (a complete way of life)." (Maududi 1978 p6)

Learning may be life-long, but our early years of growth are vital to the framing of our whole approach to life. The universal concern of faith educators would seem to be that what goes under the name of education in this country, primary, secondary and tertiary, a near continuous daily occupation for up to sixteen or seventeen of the most formative years, gives no sense of such a nurturing into a way of life [18-20].

Aims of Education

The essential aim of education is the growth of the 'good human being', integrated with society through the development of the whole person. Education is seen as a service and a religious duty, implementing social justice and where necessary countering home disadvantage [14-17].

The key educational process to be used should centre on person centred questioning, with particular focus on those questions of life, death and purpose, that can have no 'proven' answers, but which a teacher must also constantly face. There was a clear perception with regard to questions of the nature and meaning of existence, however, that schools are much more inclined to deal with matters of 'nature' rather than 'meaning' [21-25].

From a faith perspective, the teacher's role is primarily one of example, influencing through interacting, and with the foundation of teaching being based on the formation of a relationship between teacher and pupil [26-32]. Faith educators are happy to adopt newly constructed views of the nature of mind, and structures of understanding, but are concerned that changes of scientific or social perception be set in a context of questions of eternal truth [33-35].

Self-esteem, motivation and discipline, are clearly intrinsically linked. The learning process requires motivation, and although fear can be an awesome motivator, it is seen as less efficient in an educational setting than motivation through curious interest seated in a vision of self-worth [36-39]. Learning also requires discipline, but all faith groups stressed that the only discipline that really matters is self-discipline, taught by example through the teacher/pupil relationship [40-42].

On the subject of creativity and play, faith educators unanimously stressed the importance of nurturing imagination as well as the aesthetic side of human nature, the expression of feelings and the appreciation of beauty [43-44]. There was also a clear statement of the essential need for play as a mode of teaching and learning, with serious concern that a current reduction in opportunities for play were having a profound effect on children's socialization [45-47].

“Al-‘Abdari also pleads vigorously for games and hours of recreation. He says: ‘If a pupil is kept from play and forced to work at this task without intermission, his spirit will be depressed, his power of thought and his freshness of mind will be destroyed; he will become sick of study and his life will be overclouded so that he will try all possible shifts to evade his lessons (Kitab al-Irshad wa al-Ta’lim p. 540)” (Shalaby 1954, p175)

With their innate concern for social justice, faith groups were anxious that education be open to all, with a requirement for inclusion in its broadest understanding, not just with regard to disability, but inclusive of all those disadvantaged in our society [48,49]. Being essentially global in nature, most faith groups feel that they have a particular contribution to make to our multicultural society [50-52]. Similarly, with current debates on the definition of (and justification for) values and their incorporation into education, faith groups feel that having discussed the issues for millennia, their opinions have some historical weight behind them [53-55].

Education Culture & Identity

Faith groups in general have traditions that assign adult religious responsibilities at an age which in the west we usually refer to as adolescence, the age of maturity that is assigned with

puberty [56-58]. There is a feeling that what were once recognised as milestones of progression from childhood to adulthood are being lost, and along with these new blurred boundaries other important issues are being lost along the way. There is an awareness that total freedom is in a way a loss of freedom, as there is nothing to be freed from [60-65]. Adulthood is not necessarily linked with understanding or emotional maturity, but is a recognition that along with freedom comes responsibility for self and others [59,67].

As every parent knows, each child is an individual, but faith groups are particularly concerned that as children construct their identities, they are given help to place themselves in a context of relationships [68,69]. Alternative faith schools make a particular point of the stress that they give to supporting the family. An understanding of relationships is needed to counteract the tendency for the 'responsibility for self' that comes with freedom, to become 'looking after number one' [70]. The competitive aspects of our society are visible all around, as for example in the world of politics and business [72]. Faith groups would prefer to stress the way that individual fulfilment is found through care for others [71,74].

"A sense of self-worth, personal well-being and an understanding of what caring for self means, is a prerequisite for an understanding of how to care for others. Qualities such as co-operation and interdependence are essential in our society of diverse people and cultures, a society which so often sees competition as the only way to survive." (ACTS Education Group p.6)

Through their relationships with others in their communities, faith adherents take on aspects of local culture as they spread around the globe [76-79]. But culture is interactive, and is often shaped as much by the faith of its local community, with one faith identity dominating the cultural context, as in Scotland [75]. Faith brings with it two aspects of identity to balance, a global quality to faith which defines what aspects of a culture are acceptable, and participation in that local culture itself. Methodists and Muslims may have problems negotiating a culture so heavily dependent on alcohol for socialization, but Muslims in South Africa play the bagpipes and Jews in Israel celebrate Burns Suppers [78,80-82].

Faith requires involvement in life, observation of and reflection on life. Life is the lesson that we have to learn, and the signs we have to read are written on the book of our lives [83-86].

Faith & Culture

A value system is tied in to the core beliefs of faith groups, and they are well aware of the challenge from those with no faith commitment as to the suspect nature of the truths on which they are based. But faith groups are quite familiar with others who believe in quite a different way, aware that their truths are not everyone's [87-89,92-94]. Personal ethics are at the foundation of religion, and whereas ethics need not be based on what is usually defined as a religion, they cannot be independent of a belief system [95-99]. It is that belief system which is a key issue for education to explore [100].

Not necessarily connected with morality is the question of the spirit [101]. There is clearly always going to be a problem defining spirit, and the word is used in many ways. In one way it is always essentially personal, but at the same time it can share in what was called 'sacred mystery' [102]. Religious organizations are structures formed around the relations of a community of like spirituality, vehicles to help you along the journey from birth to death [103-106]. The puzzle is to find the best way to ensure that all children are helped to come to terms with the journey they are on.

"They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more."

(Beckett 1955 p89)

Culture is also a word that is problematic in the definition, and faith groups approached it in a number of ways. They see themselves as bearers of tradition, both local history and the heritage of human wisdom [107-109]. And within each group there are smaller groups maintaining ever more localised traditions, each adding its own facet to the multi-culture [110-112]. But for faith groups, faith and local traditions combine in their community and individual identities [113-115].

All groups stressed concern for aesthetics as a channel for the imagination, a way of expressing a theology or spirituality through poetry or song, the decorative arts, architecture, or ritual [116-118]. There was concern that faiths are too often represented by temporal signs of their cultural expression, rather than the timeless aspects of the faith from which they spring [119,120].

Sustaining Faith Minority Cultures

Faith traditions are rich and complex, and not seen as a shackle to intellectual exploration, but as an anchor that can bring stillness and a time to evaluate the journey [121-123]. The journey is a personal one, but the identity constructed will be social, set in a context of family, friends and community [123-124]. There was some apprehension that the current curriculum showed little concern for this aspect of the education process in favour of subject based learning. But faith groups also believe they share a truth, a knowledge that they wish to share relating to a greater context in which education is set [125].

“God, in whose image we are made, is not only rational but is also loving and feels with and for creation. We therefore must understand ourselves as rational beings whose senses and emotions are essential to an appreciation of what it means to be a person. ... Within the school situation this ‘feeling’ aspect of our personhood must be seen as just as important, if not more important, than the mental, thinking, aspect. Our rationality can never be separated from that other part of us which the Bible calls our ‘heart’” (ACTS Education Group p.4)

In looking at their own problems, faith groups are also looking at society’s problems, the breakup of community through work-led population mobility, and the rapid rate of change in social and communication patterns [126-130]. It is recognised that education is political, and that changes in education can only come about as part and parcel of changes in society [131,132]. But the education system is central to the way we define our knowledge and understanding of ourselves and the world we live in. As such, the paradigm in which our education system is set is crucial to the identity formation of its pupils [133].

There is concern that too little emphasis is placed on the spiritual quest and issues of morality [134-137], and where a family might emphasise these matters in the home, a child can be at risk of a dual personality when moving between the domains of school and home [136-139]. It must be recognised that an exam focused school system is not neutral. It passes on the values and priorities on which the system is based [140-142].

It is hard to justify value systems without a priori truth. Faith groups have clearly defined truths at the root of their paradigms, but do not confuse truth with certainty. Doubt and questioning are recognised as intrinsic to the human condition, and an essential encounter

on the spiritual journey, but truth is recognised as being beyond thought [143,144]. What can be thought of is constrained by our humanity. Any overarching concept of truth requires faith, and must impinge on more aspects of our experience than the purely intellectual [145,147]. Rational explanations of what is defined as beyond thought will always bring argument, but acquired personal certainties need not be doubt free [148-150]. The universe will always be less known than known, and faith groups have spent millennia exploring ways of negotiating with that mystery [151].

But faith groups not only face life's mysteries, they are implemented in community ways of life [153], and this whole tangible aspect of faith community is to a great extent rendered invisible to the secular system [152]. Thus the link between truth premises, moral values, and their expression as a way of life is diminished. Faith groups have always faced challenge as to the validity of their paradigms, but feel that the secular paradigm is not at the moment put to an equal challenge [151,154-157]. In dealing with personal doubt, morality and sense of purpose, as well as with social welfare, and justice, faith groups are the inheritors of traditions of the knowledge and experience of innumerable generations [158,159]. If the secular education system, through lack of imagination, helps marginalize this, it will lose contact with a great human treasure and deny children a source of great understanding and wisdom, with life-long educational value.

Faith and Secularity

Having been raised and educated in a society that was vaguely spoken of as secular, I am also used to functioning in a public world where religion is considered to be private. So discussion of secularity itself in public institutions such as the education system, is constrained within its own parameters. Thus in any critique of secularity it is like fighting with one hand tied behind my back. But it has to be done to clarify the educational context.

The difficulties faced when attempting to define 'faith', or 'religion', were touched on in Chapter Five, but a similar problem of definition arises when considering secularisation and secularism. We can not even be really sure that we are always defining the same phenomenon. For example, we see secularisation as happening in societies all around the world, and yet the process that seems to be taking place is not necessarily always the same.

The fact that definition is so rarely seen as necessary may encourage dubiety, but definitions can be found, and not just from a western world perspective [8].

“The term ‘secular’, from the Latin ‘saeculum’, conveys a meaning with a marked dual connotation of ‘time’ and ‘location’; the time referring to the ‘now’ or ‘present’ sense of it, and the location to the ‘world’ or ‘worldly’ sense of it. Thus ‘saeculum’ means ‘this age’ or ‘the present time’, and this age or the present time refers to events in this world, and it also then means ‘contemporary events’. The emphasis of meaning is set on a particular time or period in the world viewed as a ‘historical process’. The concept ‘secular’ refers to the ‘condition’ of the world at this particular time or period or age. Already here we discern the germ of meaning that easily develops itself naturally and logically into the existential context of an ever-changing world in which there occurs the notion of relativity of human values.” (Al-Attas 1978 p14)

In *‘The Secular City’*, the Harvard theologian Harvey Cox refers to the work of Dutch theologian van Peursen in which secularisation is defined as the deliverance of man *“first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language”*. This involves *“the loosing of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed world views, the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols ... man turning his attention away from worlds beyond and toward this world and this time”* (Cox 1965 p2-17). Secularisation encompasses the political and social aspects of life, and also the cultural, for it denotes *“the disappearance of religious determination of the symbols of cultural integration”* and implies *“a historical process, almost certainly irreversible, in which society and culture are delivered from tutelage to religious control and closed metaphysical world views”* (Cox 1965 p20) [32,131].

Secularisation is seen as a *“liberating development”* ending in historical relativism. History is to be seen as a process of secularisation, with the disenchantment of nature, the desacralization of politics, and the deconsecration of values, making transient and relative all cultural creations, value systems and worldviews, so that history, the future, is open to change, and man is free to create the change and immerse himself in the ‘evolutionary’ process. This attitude requires that secular man be aware of the relativity of his own views and beliefs; as he must live with the knowledge that the rules and ethical codes of conduct which guide his own life will change with the times and generations. This attitude is

considered to be 'maturity' and hence secularisation is also defined as *"the removal of juvenile dependence from every level of society ... the process of maturing and assuming responsibility ... the removal of religious and metaphysical supports and putting man on his own."* (Cox 1965 p109) [35,122]

Cox and van Peursen are concerned to make a distinction between 'secularisation' and 'secularism', however, saying that whereas the former implies a continuing and open-ended process in which values and world views are continually revised in accordance with 'evolutionary' change in history, the latter projects a closed world view, like religion. Secularism is an ideology and has its own value system, which it looks on as an absolute, unlike secularisation which relativises all values and produces the openness and freedom necessary for human action and for history. For this reason they regard secularism as a menace to secularisation. Faith groups might well indulge themselves in a little ironic laughter at the thought of secularisers having theoretical problems with their fundamentalist wing.

Western Europe has come up with a range of solutions to the politics of secularisation. In the nineteenth century, with the development of the nation state and the rise of industrialisation, religious control of education systems faced increasing challenge. *"The state, with an interest in political integration and social control, gradually strove to establish a national educational system under its authority. This battle between religious and secular elites resulted in roughly three types of educational systems. ... Among these broad categories, substantial differences evolved regarding the religious or neutral orientations of public schools and the establishment of private religious education."* (Dijkstra and Peschar 1996 p47)

But little research has been done to examine any discernible effects that different systems might have, comparing religious and secular. Dijkstra and Peschar point out the difficulties in their 1996 paper exploring the effects of religion on educational achievement in the Netherlands, with diverse indicators as to the strength of religiosity or type of worldview needing to be defined, as well as taking into account socio-economic and cultural contributors to academic success patterns. Having highlighted a lack of multi-dimensionality in prior research, such as that by Greeley, Najmi, Coleman and Hoffer, ultimately their concern for the number of possible variables makes Dijkstra and Peschar much more hesitant about

conclusions as to the beneficial effects of religious schooling, even though their results showed some kind of agreement with earlier research [89].

“When we consider our finding, they as yet give no cause for discarding the assumption that religion affects educational outcomes. The level of education of students with diverse religious backgrounds clearly differed.” (Dijkstra and Peschar 1996 p64)

The secular/religious dynamic in Scotland has resulted in a system with its own ‘balance’ between the two, but which most involved would see as essentially secular, with the likelihood of moving even further in that direction. But with the problems of ill-definition of the secular, it can be hard to imagine a secular ideal of education to use as a model, and for a researcher with a faith commitment it can be hard to find any point of shared perception or understanding. The secular presumptions seem so unchallenged, the definitions so self-serving, the logic so shaky, and the proposed outcomes so unlikely, unimaginative, and uninspiring. Anderson, for example, seems to have a clear vision of the relationship between education and the secular, but it is hard to take it seriously [98,99].

“Education is necessarily secular; the more religious instruction there is in any ‘educational’ system, the less is it truly educational. ... Education may be described as the development of inquiry, the setting up of habits of investigation; and on that understanding religion, in so far as it sets limits to inquiry is opposed to education. ... To say that any subject-matter is open to investigation is to say that it is secular; to say that it is not secular is to say that it is not open to investigation and hence to understanding.” (Anderson 1980 p203-205)

All things are capable of being understood through inquiry, religion is intrinsically instructional and non-inquisitive, and all investigation is secular?

“Religious discipline and patriotic discipline are alike alien to education, the discipline of which is essentially that of study itself – intellectual discipline. And this is something that the child acquires by the operation of his natural interests and not by the imposition of authoritative standards. Or, using the broader term ‘morality’, we can say that the only intelligible morality is a secular one – the upholding of some way of life to which, merely as a fact, we are devoted. Such devotion can, of course, be helped to expression in immature minds, but not by the

methods of authority; only by the operation of a similar devotion in the mind of the teacher.”

(Anderson 1980 p207)

Morality upholds devotion to some way of life, devotion to which is a matter of fact?

“The best approach to religion in education, however, ... would be the treatment of religious writings as literature. The notion of ‘sacredness’ would be dispensed with; they would be treated as part of the subject-matter of a system of secular study. ... The essential point would be that such human imaginings and traditions should be divested of any notions of sacredness and authority which would mark them off from other studies.” (Anderson 1980 p210-211)

Imagination excludes sacredness?

“There must always be in religious teaching an element of ... compromise, in the attempt to square transcendental imaginings with actual events, and the acceptance of such compromises is bound to hinder straight thinking on the child’s part.” (Anderson 1980 p212)

It is hard to find common ground between those who believe that straight thinking only involves actual events and rejects transcendental imaginings, and those who wish to challenge the ‘actuality’ of events and for whom such transcendental imaginings are central to their lives and a necessary part of any education system that endeavours to give children understanding of the nature of human existence [159].

The Shaping of Individual Values

Secular or not, it seems that morality is integral to the education process, as the justification for education is that it is in some way good for us, itself a value judgement. As Baroness Warnock says, *“If the state regards education at least partly as a good of which no one should be deprived, something which constitutes a need, the state must have a view about what makes a satisfactory life which could not be attained without education.”* (Warnock 1994 p43) But the question of values can be problematic, and has exercised the minds of moral philosophers throughout history with widely differing results, from moral relativism to ethical absolutism, authoritarianism to anarchy. From the ancient Greeks, through Augustine and Aquinas, Hume, Kant and Marx, Bentham and Mill, to the twentieth century, post Freud, with Ayer,

Sartre, and now postmodernist scepticism, the issues are complex because exploration of moral values requires consideration of the nature and purpose of humanity itself [93,95].

In determining what is the 'good', we must consider competing claims not only as to its prescription, but also to whom or what it applies. An aspect of learning such as literacy may be of benefit to the state as well as the individual, but in this country we traditionally accept that *"it is the individualist rather than the corporate view of the matter which generates the concept of an educational need, a need, that is, which must be satisfied for the sake of the individual himself."* (Warnock 1994 p44). Finally, an understanding of what is 'good' depends on some overarching ontology which is its context and the justification for its preference [14,17,148].

I should point out that this concept of 'need' is part of a western preference for an approach to human values in terms of 'rights', defining for the powerless what they can demand, which is by no means a universal perspective. The Muslim world, for example, has always preferred to define the concomitant 'duties' incumbent upon those with power over those less fortunate. 'Rights' and 'duties' may address the same relationships, but is a very different way of seeing the situation.

Despite such long standing argument and uncertainty, teachers are expected to pick a path through the philosophical maze. *"Despite these differences and doubts, despite the scepticism over values and the rejection by many of liberal values, there is paradoxically a growing chorus of people who want schools, through their educational programmes, to counter anti-social forces, to help 'improve' society, indeed to make people good. ... The teachers in schools, colleges and universities have the job of reconciling the different forces – those, on the one hand, of traditional learning with its emphasis upon a readily understood map of learning, established texts and an agreed literary canon, consensus on what is worthwhile and a belief in traditional standards, and those on the other hand, of meeting the urgent needs of often disillusioned and alienated young people, of answering the call of society to produce the worthy and productive citizen and of doing all this against a background of uncertainty within society over the quality of life worth pursuing."* (Pring 1994 p12) [18]

Faith groups, with a clear ontology, can let values intertwine through religious traditions, and view life, religion and education in a clearly holistic way, a 'thick' theory of the good. But the

secular state needs to attempt to define moral values in a manner that is rationally justifiable and acceptable to all. McLaughlin says *"From a 'liberal democratic' philosophical perspective, however, there is no objectively conclusive way of determining which, if any of these 'holistic; views of life – or 'thick' theories of the good – is correct. They are deeply, and perhaps permanently, controversial. The differences of belief and value involved are tenacious and fundamental. Therefore such 'thick' views cannot be permitted to impose their particular vision on all citizens in the public domain through the use of political power."* (McLaughlin in Best 1996 p14) Unfortunately, 'thin' views can prove so thin that there is little substance to them, it being suggested that they are based on no more than consensus, and McLaughlin's suggestion that *"'Public' values do not presuppose some particular metaphysical theory of the self, or of the nature of human destiny."* (McLaughlin in Best 1996 p15) would seem to be either naïve or dissembling [15,19,20].

The assumption is that a 'thin' view is the only solution to the problem of 'thick' view conflicts, but it takes little effort to imagine a more expansive alternative, perhaps some kind of overlapping or intertwining 'thick' system. According to McLaughlin, the liberal democratic perspective on education requires that no attempt be made to 'educate the whole child'. *"At least in common schools, no substantial 'holistic' view of life should be transmitted to pupils, nor should they be shaped 'as whole persons' in the light of any such theory."* (McLaughlin in Best 1996 p15). There are many who would say that any education system with no base in theory of self or human destiny is hardly worthy of the name education, but theory or no, at some level people in the system do have to make value judgements [22,23].

Quinton says that the ethics of communication of belief is at its starkest and most demanding in the responsibilities of teachers. *"There are several distinguishing features of the educational relationship between teacher and taught which intensify the moral significance of right belief. In the first place, teachers occupy a position of power and authority; there is a measure of compulsion on the pupils to attend to what they say and to accept it, at least to the possibly habit-forming extent of reproducing it in examination. Secondly, teachers have, or at any rate express, beliefs about matters which by and large their pupils have ordinarily no opinion on one way or the other, because of their comparative youth and inexperience. This combination of institutionalised power with a lack of resources for intellectual resistance to their influence imposes a particular responsibility on teachers for the right ordering of the beliefs they express*

in their professional capacity. In social life and ordinary conversation beliefs are expressed on equal terms and in circumstances where there is no pressure on any of the participants to accept what anyone else affirms. I do not have to listen at the dinner party; I can close the book or paper; I can turn off the television. But the educational audience is the most abject of all in its captivity. In its innocence, furthermore, it is the most suggestible and responsive." (Quinton 1987 p42) [28]

The concern for the perceived loss of 'holistic' education expressed by faith groups was associated with an awareness that some 'thin' theories can in fact be a lot thicker than at first they seem, and can have profound effects on the nature of education and indeed society itself. As Pring points out, *"The integration of the world of learning and the world of work is on the agenda."* (Pring 1994 p29). The language of education is changing dramatically with its new metaphors drawn from the world of business, with 'shareholders', 'performance indicators', and 'quality control'. *"This changed language affects profoundly the nature of the activity as it is perceived, and the nature of the relationships between those who engage in the activity. Education ... becomes ... a description of a set of activities which lead to certain outcomes, those outcomes being worthwhile or not simply in so far as either the controller (the Government, say) or the customer finds them so. The judgement of the teacher – the one already initiated into an educational tradition – is relegated to insignificance in a world of mechanical rationalism, captured within this superficial language. ... no longer are the teachers expected to engage in ethical considerations about the aims of education any more than a Kellogg's worker is expected to raise questions about the nutritional value of cornflakes ... The market, therefore, imports a language through which the relation of teacher and learner is perceived differently and through which questions of value are eliminated from serious professional consideration."* (Pring 1994 p31-32) Education is being transformed into a value-free commodity [27].

If, as MacIntyre suggests, teachers can either *"continue to pursue the aim of fitting their pupils for the type and level of social role and occupation prescribed in their society for the products of that part of the education system in which they are at work, or they can continue to pursue the aims of enabling their pupils to think for themselves, but they cannot coherently pursue both aims"* (MacIntyre 1987 p34), it would seem clear which aim is being elevated and which eliminated from the system [19,47].

If the 'good' is defined as an individualist need rather than the corporate, no system can be devised without perception of the nature of individual identity. But as Sarkany points out, the concept of identity has spread wide in recent years from being a topic for philosophers, to now being an accepted focus of study for psychologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists. The work of Erikson has, of course, been inspirational to many modern researchers. *"Although serious methodological questions can be raised in connection with the extension of the scope of identity characterization from the personal to the social domain, it is undeniable that Erikson gave a strong impetus to cultural anthropological research. He stimulated the whole process of socialization ... created alertness for possible changes of identity during the course of a life; drew attention to a lack of coincidence of social and cultural borders; and suggested a research strategy ... the target of which is the individual. ... One of the important conclusions of research of this kind is that the idea of self is culture-specific. It cannot be separated from notions concerning the constituents of human substance, the construction of the world and the place of human beings in it."* (Sarkany 1992 p22) [122]

The individual is not a fixed entity, having variety within a self as well as between selves, and this variety has often been interpreted in terms of a number of separate parts, but as Hird points out, that can be problematic. *"While it makes empirical sense to talk about 'parts' and 'subject positions', this language presents a serious problem in conceptualising the self and inner diversity. ... Mullin (1995) outlines the consequences of a conceptualisation of the individual as a 'whole' of integrated 'parts'. The priority placed on unifying diversity within the individual (producing homogeneity) often means the individual is encouraged to assimilate her/his 'parts' (privileging one part and silencing the others), compartmentalisation (keeping the parts separate), remaining indifferent to the parts and their contradictions or attempting some kind of negotiation between parts."* (Hird 1998 p523) She sees the challenge as *"to understand identity as neither a cloak that can be put on or taken off at will, nor an iron cage in which the individual is forever trapped, but as that with which we fundamentally identify in particular ways in particular contexts."* (Hird 1998 p526) [121]

Social constructivist researchers, argue that identity is derived from different groups or domains encountered by an individual, with the representation of identity being one way of giving order to the world, and the development of identity being a lifelong project, repeatedly constructed and reconstructed according to the meanings and values that exist in society.

Volman and ten Dam suggest that *“In a discursive approach to identity, inconsistency is interpreted as complexity, an expression of the fact that an individual participates in conflicting discourses. Inconsistency does not necessarily mean that someone experiences herself/himself as inconsistent ... Fragmented identity can even function harmoniously (cf Giddens, 1991). Individuals will generally endeavour to perceive themselves as consistent and coherent.”* (Volman & ten Dam 1998 p539) [122]

Nesbitt highlights Ricoeur’s opinion that identity is not in opposition to either diversity or plurality. *“In Ricoeur’s view personal identity is a history – or story – and, as such, it is an interpretation. Similarly, writing about modernity, Giddens described self-identity as ‘the reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives’ (1991, p.5). This understanding of identity was foreshadowed four decades previously by ... Erikson, when he postulated the processual, interactive, integrative nature of identity (Friederichs & Gupta, 1995)”* (Nesbitt 1998 p191)

Ethnographic interview data supports an understanding of identity as constituted of interpretative narrations, ongoing and shifting, arising from successive encounters. *“It allows for expression of the affective element in identity and for seemingly contradictory responses from the same individual. Thus, responses to a single question on a single occasion need not be viewed as definitive, unchanging or exclusive, but as clues to one version of a narrative, a version which needs to be regarded reflexively, with its situationally determined variations (Kehily, 1995)”* (Nesbitt 1998 p196) [123]

There have also been wholly linguistic analyses stressing and using the universality of narrative, a key factor in the shaping of which is the social. *“For Volosinov, an individual’s identity, inner thoughts and outward articulations are all the product of social interrelations and can be seen to belong to the terrain of the social. This relationship between individuals and society through language is seen by Volosinov to be active, organic and regenerative.”* (Kehily 1995 p27) For Volosinov, *“Each and every word expresses the ‘one’ in relation to the ‘other’. ... A word is a bridge thrown down between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me then the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee.”* (Volosinov, 1973, p86)” (Kehily 1995 p26-27) Kehily also reminds us of Eakin’s argument that *“In self-narration a teller is socially displaying a language that speaks*

of and constructs identity and which is, simultaneously, creating and presenting a sense of self." (Kehily 1995 p29) It seems that narrative may not be a window into any individual mind, more of a cultural system by which a social group construct their world or organize experience, knowledge and transactions within the social world. (Kyratzis & Green 1997 p18)

No matter what the methodology, identity has an innate complexity, and Nesbitt's young British Hindus emerged as plural and integrated rather than binary or 'between cultures', with a British civic identity distinguishing them from their parents, and an Asian cultural identity distinguishing them from what is 'white' and 'western'. "*Hindu' emerges as their core identity, a transgenerational narrative thread. ... Respondents' identification of themselves as Hindu is not an assertion of returning to 'true teachings' as distinct from ethnic interpretations, but an assertion of family continuities, strengthened by an awareness of the relatively temporary, changing nature of identities based on residence.*" (Nesbitt 1998 p197) Faith groups clearly felt that if education is seen as for the good of the individual, it should pay more attention to such core identities and their search for a transgenerational narrative thread. This is particularly important in the light of the new population mobility and the fracturing of communities [79].

"I know from paying close attention to myself giving accounts in a variety of different settings, that I have a stock of ready narratives to draw on which fit particular situations and which tell me nothing new unless the person I am talking to helps me to produce something new."
(Hollway, 1989 p39) (quoted in Kehily)

Alternative Contexts of Identity

Of course the problem with discussing identity in the context of an avowed multi-cultural society is that we rarely take one board just what that means. I quote the literature and talk the language of academe in a learned fashion (learned not learned). I use other people's words so that I don't slip up and betray my 'otherness'. For that passive, non-invasive, barely definable secular system works to a very different epistemology to mine, and the cut and thrust of post-graduate research tends to work to a very specific language, spoken between specialists, and a judgement needs to be made as to whether to express myself purely in the language of a western university, or to try to translate a language that will often have no familiar historical or paradigmatic reference points.

This is a problem for a Muslim in the education system, as the material to which one wishes to refer comes from an alien tradition, and whereas those traditions may be studied, using the tools and perspectives of western secular educational understandings, it is perhaps not quite as acceptable to use ancient traditions as a basis of understanding the present. But if the research is to be reflexive, where else am I to go if not to my core identity. This problem is just as critical for other committed faith minorities, including this country's Christians. When not reduced to a 'faith voice', individual interviewees also have a 'thick' view of the world which cannot really be translated into the language of the 'thin'.

As a Muslim it is clearly not possible for me to present a 'Christian', Hindu or Buddhist, view of education, yet to exclude all views that are not shared strips each individual voice of the depth and richness of its tradition. This can be seen in the communal 'voice' of faith educators realised in the interview treatment. For me to reflect the individual commitment of interviewees requires that I look to my own Muslim traditions, as an example. The depth and complexity of tradition that can sustain a whole way of life is seen, not in the general principles, but in the detail. It's not just the devil that's in the detail. Unfortunately, the fact that I am drawing on Islamic traditions means that I will probably have to give references for basic knowledge, so to help in my attempts to explain a Muslim approach to identity and values in the initial stages, I will refer to Haeri, as he has a particular gift for explanation in western terms.

The world of Islam contains understandings of self and identity that have been discussed for centuries. The basis of knowledge of the self is that all humanity is one in its essence and origin. There is a primal or basic self which is the same in all human beings. We may differ biologically but the root of our motivations in life is similar. This model of the one 'Adamic' self is the pillar of all Islamic teachings *"We have all come from one source, and that one essential reality pervades all dual manifestations in existence. The physical world is based on duality, and everything in nature is created in pairs of opposites. All experiences, events, causal relationships and mental and intellectual appreciation are based on experiencing those opposites. We seek to understand, balance and reconcile the experienced opposite forces, driven as we are by the awareness of the essential unity within. This inner drive is unconscious and lies beyond our intellect and reason."* (Haeri 1989 p1)

This life is seen as a training-ground for us to witness the perfection of the universal laws of nature which drive us towards seeking the limitless source of unity. We are born with an

inner tendency which constantly motivates us towards our unitive origins. *“Our purpose in this life is to discover and know the basic nature of the self and the spiritual foundation which underlies it. We will only attain contentment when our potential as a spiritual being is fulfilled.”* (Haeri 1989 p3)

The Arabic word for ‘personal identity’ is ‘nafs’, but the word contains many other meanings such as soul, or self, or psyche, mind, spirit or life. ‘Nafs’ is also defined as a living creature, an animate being, essence, nature, inclination, appetite or desire. For our current purposes ‘nafs’ can be defined as the self or soul, which is non-physical, not part of a body, and not needing a physical body as a condition for its existence. *“The soul or self is that which breathes dynamism into physicality and gives it life. ... The self has its origin in the realm of the unseen, and is primal and indestructible. ... It is influenced by the mind, will, intellect, heart and other cognitive processes. ... It is the essence that illumines and vitalises the body. We could say that when the power or light of the self reaches all parts of the body, it is in full wakefulness. When the self disconnects with the outer or physical body but not with the inner, it is in a state of sleep, and when the self disconnects with both the outer body and the inner, it is called death.”* (Haeri 1989 p32)

A basic system of classifying the self in terms of three levels or aspects is described by many Muslim writers. Some describe it in terms of three stations of being, or worlds of creation, but in all of these classifications, there are clear parallels which they share in common. One system describes three creations or evolutions of the self. The first creation manifests itself primarily through the outer senses of the natural, physical world, the second through the five inner senses of the world of imagination and non-physicality, whilst the manifestation of the third creation is by the power of the intellect and spirit. The physician and philosopher Avicenna defines these three levels in his Canon of Medicine as the vegetal self, the animal self and the rational self.

The thirteenth-century philosopher al-Tusi, notes that unlike the physical body, the rational self can contain opposite conditions simultaneously. It can comprehend both hot and cold at the same time, for example, not moving from one state to another as the physical body does. The rational self instantaneously and simultaneously perceives all opposites and all potential states. It is the rational self, that simultaneously perceives all events received through the

senses and can judge them accordingly, for the rational self has within it a common denominator of sensing. This is called the unifying sense (though it is also referred to as common sense), because it has the ability to simultaneously integrate all the various senses. The rational self has the ability to reflect on what it perceives, judge it against its own rationality and experience, and in that way distinguish between the true and the false. *“The rational self is the abode of wisdom, knowledge and the higher virtues. It is designed to ride upon the animal self, which is the vehicle of the self to its higher virtues.”* (Haeri 1989 p38)

In Muslim traditions the five outer senses are reflected in five inner senses. They are the unifying sense (or common sense), imagination, the faculty of attributing meaning, memory, and the faculty of cognition or thinking. The unifying sense is the faculty that allows us to relate and integrate the sensations perceived by our various senses. The imagination is the conceptual ability to form images of physical reality even though that physical reality is not present. The faculty of attributing meaning is the imaginative capacity to understand concepts in relation to people, situations or objects, the capacity that connects the intellect with the faculty of imagination. Memory acts as a depository or bank in which the pictures of attributed meanings are stored for retrieval, and cognition is the faculty that enables us to transfer the self from known areas to as yet unknown areas or states that are potentially possible, based on what is already known. Cognition is the outer manifestation of rationality.

“The self contains all the faculties of sensing, both the outer and the inner. It is the locus of the senses, but is not the senses themselves. The seer, after all, is not the eye, the hearer is not the ear, nor is the speaker the throat. It is man himself who is seeing, hearing and speaking. The self that is within us is therefore the true origin and source of all the faculties of the outer and inner senses. It is the self that is the prime mover and motivation of all of these faculties.” (Haeri 1989 p45)

According to al-Miskawayh, the self in its relationship to virtue can be defined as possessing four facets or aspects. He describes these four aspects as follows. The bestial self, motivated by the power of attraction, and the virtue of which is modesty. The predatory self, motivated by repulsion, the virtue of which is courage. The rational self with the virtue of wisdom, and the fourth aspect, the combined virtues, when modesty, courage and wisdom combine to result in the ultimate virtue that is justice.

At the beginning of a life, each human consciousness interlinks with its environment as well as to time and space before and after its existence, and from the start each being acts as though it is central to all that goes on around it and every other creation peripheral to it.

“Each individual being thinks he is something special and seeks acknowledgement. ... The key lies in the fact that each of us reflects the same aspect of the truth which lies within. ... The heart of the human being contains the truth of the absolute uniqueness and central importance of the creational source. That truth is at the core of all creation, and because man inherently and potentially contains the secret of all creation, he sees himself at its centre.” (Haeri 1989 p155)

It must have been some time in his mid-teens that he went on a school trip to the Planetarium. It was not often that they got to break free from the classroom and face the excitement of being in public together, a tribe on the loose and looking for something a bit more interesting to gaze at than a blackboard. Indeed there was plenty to attract their attention quite apart from the swirling star projections. There were school parties there from all over, new faces to check out - and half of them were girls. Like most of the others, he was well prepared for the encounter. His collar was exactly the right shape and size, and his tie was knotted in the current fashion. Trousers of immaculate cut and precise dimension broke neatly over shoes that were agreed by one and all to be the only kind of footwear to be seen in. But those were just the outer signs of something that went much deeper. It was not that he was fashionable, so much as that he knew he had style. And as if that was not enough, above it all there was his crowning glory, the perfectly teased and sculpted head of hair. Thus equipped, he was ready to take on all comers in the preening, posing and horseplay involved in this gathering of the tribes, and he strutted his stuff in front of girls whose beauty took his breath away. It was a heady time, sexually charged, the air heavy with pheromones, but the official purpose of the afternoon was to sit in the dark and contemplate the universe, and so they did. And out of the dark came a wondrous vision of the stars and galaxies, but with a supercilious commentary apparently determined to deflate any associated feelings of awe or wonder. So he left the auditorium with the climactic words ringing in his ears “Well, if you didn’t realise before that you are an insignificant speck of dust in the corner of an insignificant galaxy, you must now, because that’s the way it is.” Of course he knew even then that such an idea was utter nonsense. He was witty, brilliant, irresistible to girls, and he had immaculate hair. Like every other teenager there, he knew that he was actually the crown of creation and the centre of the universe.

Illustration No. 8

Chapter Eleven

Knowledge and Religious Understanding

Clearly there are many ways of classifying and categorising knowledge, from the complex to simple dualities, but one simple structural division is that of Bernstein (1999). He looks for a social basis for differentiation between two fundamental forms of pedagogic discourse, generally seen as oppositional rather than complementary, and often seen as coinciding with the division between the oral and the written. *“Bourdieu refers to these forms in terms of the function to which they give rise; one form creating symbolic, the other practical mastery. Habermas sees one form as constructing what he calls the ‘life world’ of the individual and the other as the source of instrumental rationality. Giddens, following Habermas, sees one discursive form as the basis for constructing what he calls ‘expert systems’. These ‘expert systems’ lead to a disembedding of individuals from their local experiential world, which is constructed by a different form. Underlying these contrasts or oppositions is a complex multi-layered structure of pairs operating at different levels of individual and social experience ... In the educational field, one form is sometimes referred to as school(ed) knowledge and the other as everyday common-sense knowledge, or ‘official’ and ‘local’ knowledge. These contrasts are often ideologically positioned and receive different evaluations. One form becomes the means whereby a dominant group is said to impose itself upon a dominated group and functions to silence and exclude the voice of this group. The excluded voice is then transformed into a latent pedagogic voice of unrecognised potential.”* (Bernstein 1999 p158) Bernstein considers these two forms of discourse in terms of the horizontal and vertical.

Horizontal discourse is associated with a form of knowledge we typify as ‘common sense’, not in its technical Islamic meaning, but common because all have access to it, and it applies to all through a common history, and shared human experience of life from birth to death. This kind of knowledge tends to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multilayered, and contradictory across but not within contexts. Bernstein sees the sites of this discourse as ‘segmented’. The discourse varies with the way the culture segments and specialises, the knowledge is segmentally differentiated, and inevitably some segments will be more important or powerful than others. Vertical discourse takes the form of a coherent, explicit and systematic structure, hierarchically organised, as in the sciences, or taking the form of

specialized languages, modes of interrogation and criteria for production and circulation of texts, as in the social sciences and humanities.

Horizontal discourse has a local, context specific set of strategies to maximise encounters with persons and habitats, and Bernstein uses the terms 'repertoire' for an individual's set of strategies and 'reservoir' for the total of sets of strategies of the community as a whole.

"Clearly, the more members are isolated or excluded from each other, the weaker the social base for the development of either repertoire or reservoir. ... The greater the reduction of isolation and exclusion, the greater the social potential for the circulation of strategies, of procedures and their 'exchange'. Under these conditions, there can be an expansion of both repertoire and reservoir. ... It is possible to see the inter-relations between horizontal discourse and the structuring of social relations. The structuring of the social relationships generates the forms of discourse but the discourse in turn is structuring a form of consciousness, its contextual mode of orientation and realisation, and motivates forms of social solidarity. Horizontal discourse, in its acquisition, becomes the major cultural relay." (Bernstein 1999 p160) The emphasis of the segmental pedagogy of horizontal discourse is generally directed towards a common competence rather than a graded performance, which is not to say that such common competences will not be the focus of competitive relations.

The integration of a vertical discourse is integration at the level of meanings. *"Vertical discourse consists not of culturally specialised segments, but of specialised symbolic structures of explicit knowledge."* (Bernstein 1999 p161) Hierarchical knowledge structures appear from within as motivated towards ever greater integrating propositions, and operating at ever more abstract levels. In contrast, horizontal knowledge structures consist in a series of specialised languages, such as the languages of sociology, for example functionalism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, and Marxism, each of which with its own collection of linguistic variants. For vertical knowledge structures, development is through more integrative theory, whereas for horizontal structures development is seen as the development of a new language. *"In a way, the opposition between theories in hierarchical knowledge structures is analogous to the oppositions between languages in a horizontal knowledge structure, but it would be a mistake to view this similarity as indicating no difference. ... in the case of a horizontal knowledge structure within the social sciences ... the discreteness of the languages defy incorporations into a more general language. Indeed, built into the construction of the language here is the*

protection of its discreteness, its strategies of apparent uniqueness, its non-translatability, and its essential narcissism.” (Bernstein 1999 p163)

Bernstein sees the perspective of the horizontal knowledge structure as being ‘social’ *“I say that this principle is social to indicate that choice here is not rational in the sense that it is based on the ‘truth’ of one of the specialised languages. For each language reveals some ‘truth’, although to a great extent, this partial ‘truth’ is incommensurate and language specific.”*

(Bernstein 1999 p164) This perspective is expected to become how texts are read, evaluated and created. A ‘gaze’ has to be acquired, a mode of recognising what counts as an ‘authentic’ sociological reality. But *“Clearly, acquisition of a hierarchical knowledge structure also may involve acquisition of a perspective; a perspective that a hierarchical knowledge structure is the only and sole pathway to ‘truth’. Its procedures are the only valid way to ‘truth’.”* (Bernstein 1999 p165) He also recognises that where choice of theory is possible, such choice is likely to have a social base.

The more simple a classification, the more likely it is to be applicable in other contexts, and Bernstein’s discourse analysis has many parallels to the knowledge relationship of religious groupings, each with its own integrating languages and abstract sciences leading to the truth, yet with an awareness of the variety of languages that permit the possibility of truth in other worldviews. But whatever structures of understanding we formulate, knowledge is like water in the atmosphere, raining on the earth like mercy. We gather it into streams and rivers that have a very different character, but ultimately all merge in the ocean of knowledge. There is and will always be more knowledge than we can encompass. We are its limitation. [156,157]

In my mind all thoughts, all imagery, all structures, are no more than ways we give order to the world. We look for simple geometries that can give shape to everything we see, and these are useful to give new perspectives on the world, but they are only ways of seeing, of understanding. At the same time, I am quite happy to relax into the everyday ‘truths’ of my perception and understanding. I do not believe that all truth claims are equally valid. I believe there is more to truth than the reconciliation of paradoxes. The universe will always be beyond our comprehension. From cosmology to the sub-atomic, the complexity is evident, and once having reduced this range of complexities to binary dependencies, hot and cold, good and bad, the only way to get simpler structures is to speak in terms of Oneness, in Islamic terminology ‘tawhid’.

If knowledge is an ocean, education is a sea, and still so vast that it is impossible to imagine that we could ever know all about it. So we break it up into smaller units that we can handle, and education becomes pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary, postgraduate, academic staff, academic and political administration etc. Reductionism brings power over smaller units, and thus politics can divide and rule. Political power over the education paradigm means that education can be commoditised through qualifications, or knowledge treated as an object to be purchased, and that change of attitude will need to be embraced by both schools and the University system (where, indeed, the sources of models for any change will have been located). What is clear is that any thought of change at a school level needing a reconsideration of educational paradigm must include within its schema education as it is envisaged at University level. [141]

Universities cater for the individual needs of students by offering choice of study in the ocean of knowledge, leading to greater and greater specialization. Every direction of inclination, a learner reveals more, the first response after every discovery is that it reveals more questions than answers, and the number of possible subject disciplines is infinite. Every tiny alleyway of knowledge can be pursued as a lifetime's work, and such focus, as with the sun's rays brings great power to control and manipulate at a fundamental level. But by disregarding a broader view and greater purpose, 'knowledge' and 'education' become their own self-justification. {18,19]

Then, as specialisation expands information, we suffer from information overload and the breadth of choice overwhelms. The new availability of Web-based information is just the latest chapter in mankind's encounter with the vastness of which we are a part, and every aspect of the education system will need a new vision to cope. As we are confronted with the impossibility of knowing everything, we need to learn how to choose what suits us best. The fragmentation of subjects means it is easy to become disassociated from general principles, not always to the benefit of the fragment. The principle of inclusion, now almost solely associated with disability, also embraces social, ethnic and racial, cultural and religious, inclusion. Considering the percentage of the population so embraced, it is hard to imagine that inclusion would not be a higher priority if the beneficiaries were not fragmented into

smaller lobby groups. And at the level of the child, the system shows its limits by the nature of those it excludes. [153]

A student's journey into the ocean of knowledge through the University system is essentially one of focus, through Honours to Postgraduate, through Methodology to Theory. But by the time that principles are examined, a student is really already out of sight of the shore. Few University courses involve students in consideration of what is the purpose of study at all, let alone discuss the rules that underlie the thinking structures that will be used. Bonnett, for instance, equates rationality not just with good thinking, but with the 'capacity to think' itself. Yet *"It is clear that rationality is not entirely neutral in its stance towards things: it has its own inherent purpose, viz., to evaluate them. Rational thinking, therefore, attempts to subject things to some sort of scrutiny and control. This has an important, but often unrecognised consequence: since 'to evaluate' is precisely to judge the fitness or quality of something in terms of some further more general goal or standard, rationality ultimately sees things from a perspective which subordinates them to something other than what they are in themselves. ... Reason works by standing back from things, disengaging thought from the immediacy of what is present in the here and now so that it sees things in terms of their location in some more general explanatory or justificatory framework. This framework itself consists of sets of rules for classifying things and connecting the classes of things so produced. Rationality, then, produces for itself a certain kind of reality whose structure is determined by its classificatory rules."*

(Bonnett 1994 p32)

"I care about what's actually true!" - Richard Dawkins (Segerstrale 2000 p376) [89]

Rationality is often seen, then, as the key to all knowledge, and it has been said that it is the temptation of one who expounds a new and fruitful idea to use it as a key to unlock all doors, and to explain everything by reference to a single principle. So Freud in the light of his theories famously regarded religious behaviour as analogous to neurotic behaviour, and *"Whether we think of Freud, or Marx, or Durkheim, or whomsoever, the method either boasts or conceals a particular theory of human nature. The first and most obvious point is that if we accept Freud's or Marx's respective definitions of religion (and we cannot consistently accept both!) then we are ipso facto accepting the correlated theory of human nature which underpins that definition. We should certainly ask for considerable evidence and argument before taking*

on board such a major intellectual structure.” (Sutherland). But fixed paradigms compete throughout every University system, while the system itself (like its students) tries to cope with the speed of change in the world around it and the infinite variety of choices that it brings as to the nature of truth. Recently the western intellectual encounter with that change has brought us the language of postmodernism to describe the world anew. [158,159]

He used to think of himself as postmodern man, though the term wasn't invented in the early days, of course. At school he may have excelled in mathematics, but away from school he preferred to read art and psychology. Then, when studying architecture he was taught Mies and Corbusier, but he was more interested in Fullerdomes and the early inflatables. He loved the Surrealists (saw Duchamp at the Tate) and was right there with Leichtenstein, Oldenberg and the others at the birth of Pop. He even read Andy Warhol from A to B. When he started work in theatre, he made the strange transition from architectural pretensions to longevity to the near instant disposability of working in repertory, a few weeks of construction, a few weeks of use, and a day to dispose of in a skip. Styles were assumed for a brief moment and discarded, and in the end all that was left was an impression in the mind of an audience. When even that became all too predictable, he took to the road, wandered round America, let go of previous cultural constraints, and much to his own surprise, travelled into that faith commitment that he professes to this day, the paradoxical integration of the postmodern with a 'grand narrative'. He used to say that it was not that his life seemed any less disposable or any more certain, just that he has now acquired a language that includes a vision of ultimate justice and purpose. And although he felt as though he was the same person that he had ever been, he never could quite work out if he had moved out and moved on, or had taken his postmodern self with him.

Illustration No. 9

If modernism is 'just now', postmodernism is living in the moment just after. As someone once said, 'It is the modern at war with itself'. Born in the language of art (Lyotard 1979), the border between art and reality eventually vanished in Baudrillard's simulacrum. Postmodern theory took root in considerations of language systems, and out of Saussure's sign system and its use to analyse culture, sprang the semiotics of Barthes and the death of the author. Then with Derrida, logocentric reason itself was targeted, stressing relational meaning and denying 'scientific' detachment. Much of the postmodern debate has centred on Foucault's perception of the relationship between power and knowledge, and its implications for the nature of truth, which meant that the speculative unity of all knowledge was disappearing. Now, or just after now, the Enlightenment was being challenged. But if truth and reason are effects of power, there is no ground, just discourse. So we face a paradox if theories of the impossibility of detached truth are true. In 1981, Baudrillard saw that reality no longer emits

signs which guarantee its existence, but that has only left us with a seductive, simulated world without hope or future. [149]

Hope and the future, as might be expected, are fairly common topics for consideration within faith groups, and in the world of Islam the stress on having hope is often accompanied by a similar stress on the need for us to have fear. *“Man ... is made of intelligence and will, so he is made of understandings and virtues, of things he knows and things he does, or in other words of what he knows and what he is. ... As for the essential virtues, ... they are the perfections of ‘fear’, ‘love’ and ‘knowledge’, or in other words those of ‘poverty’, ‘generosity’, and ‘sincerity’.”* (Schuon 1963 p156) Postmodernism is not dealing with new issues. It is dealing with the human condition, and its language often has echoes of a past that it may not always be aware of. *“Farabi and Avicenna ... believed perception to consist of a simulacrum of the reality of the object perceived within the being of the perceiver.”* (Mutahhari 1985 p164) Of course, such language is now assigned a technical meaning within a science such as semiotics.

One such echo can be found in the language of ‘signs’ in Islam. The Qur’an uses the word ‘ayat’ (sign) almost four hundred times, with a number of variations of meaning. The word is used for the verses of the Qur’an itself, as well as what are referred to as the ‘ayat Allah’ (signs of God), such as the sun, moon and stars, the heavens and the earth, the rain bringing life to dead land, and the variety of human tongues and colours. The signs of God in the creation are to be seen on the horizon and in ourselves, and to be read as creation unfolds through a process described as the Pen writing on the Tablet, revealing the Oneness of God in the multiplicity of creation. The Pen writes the book of our lives. As Murata and Chittick say, *“The Koranic use of this term ... alerts us to a fundamental insight of Islam, a point that Muslims find so self-evident they are often nonplussed when non-Muslims do not grasp it immediately: All of nature and scripture speaks to us directly with a specific message, and God expects us to read the message and act appropriately. ... The signs of God give news of God within the matrix of history. ... The fundamental difference between the traditional Islamic approach to the natural world and that of modern science is that ... Muslims already know that the signs are signs of God, but they are trying to understand what God is saying. The scientists feel that understanding natural phenomena has nothing to do with whether or not there is a god.”* (Murata & Chittick 1996 p54-55)

The consideration of signs is woven into the pattern of the Muslim way of life. *“The concept that regulates the reading of ‘signs’ of nature is ‘ilm’ (knowledge). In Islam, the pursuit of knowledge cannot be separated from the concerns of morality ... the concept of ‘tawhid’ (oneness), ‘khilafah’ (trusteeship) and ‘ilm’ are interconnected and shape the concerns and direction of rational enquiry... Islamic epistemology is ... unreservedly and uncompromisingly holistic, and within this context fragmented knowledge or reductionist epistemology would be a contradiction in terms.”* (Sardar 1985 p227)

Tom Wolfe writes of a prominent California geologist, who told him *“When I first went into geology, we all thought that in science you create a solid layer of findings, through experiment and careful investigation, and then you add a second layer, like a second layer of bricks ... But we now realise that the very first layers aren’t even resting on solid ground. They are balanced on bubbles, on concepts that are full of air, and those bubbles are being burst today, one after the other.”* (Wolfe 2000 p109) In his ensuing vision of the collapse of modern science, Wolfe sees man rediscovering something that can lift him out of the primordial ooze. Man names it God.

As the old certainties vanished with a pop, postmodernism filled the breach with a language for negotiating doubt. But doubt and certainty have been at the heart of religious writings for millennia. In the latter part of the eleventh century, Al-Ghazali endured intense doubts about the reliability of the rational faculty, yet his scepticism should not be confused with that of western philosophy. On the contrary, it was based on a ‘sure and certain’ faith in the fundamentals of religion, which raises the question of what did he see as the distinction between the ‘sure and certain’ faith and the ‘certainty’ he was constantly seeking. As Bakar says *“The answer to the above question is to be found in the idea of certainty (‘yaqin’) in Islamic gnosis. There are degrees of certainty; in the terminology of the Quran, these are ‘ilm al-yaqin’ (science of certainty), ‘ayn al-yaqin’ (vision of certainty) and ‘haqq al-yaqin’ (truth of certainty). These have been respectively compared to hearing about the description of fire, seeing fire and being consumed by fire.”* (Bakar 1991 p55) Certainty is not the exclusive province of the rational faculty. Al-Ghazali was aware that there are truths that can only be apprehended through a commitment of faith. Man is able to doubt because certitude exists.

All religions deal with the unproveable, and have their own languages of classifications for what needs to be accepted without proof in order to apprehend the truth of our existence. Now clearly some ideas, such as life after death, can have a profound effect on our expectations and behaviour individually and socially, yet are incapable of proof. You believe there is, or you believe there isn't, or you believe that a decision is not necessary. Whatever your answer, your decision will affect your perception of the world. The unproveable things defined as requiring faith in the language of Islam have clear echoes in other world faiths: God, the Angels, the Books of Revelation and Creation, the Messengers or Prophets, the Afterlife and its Justice, and man's Free Will in the light of God's omnipotence and omniscience.

In fact, postmodernism could be said to have sprung from a religious context. Ward (1997) highlights the 'French Connection' in postmodernism and considers why France became the ground from which much postmodern thinking which concerns itself with religious discourse takes root. He points out that many of the thinkers have strong religious backgrounds. Levinas and Derrida (and Cixous) are Jewish; Bataille, Lacan, Foucault, Certeau, Irigaray, and Kristeva emerged from Catholic schooling, and Barthes had an influential Protestant family history. As Rockmore points out "*More than either German or English language philosophy, French philosophy is distinguished by a strong emphasis on the relation between philosophy and religion, reason and faith*" (Tom Rockmore, Heidegger and French Philosophy, London: Routledge 1995 p8) and faith groups, whether Christian (Lakeland 1997, Ward 1997) or Muslim (Ahmed 1992), have been happy to get involved in the postmodern debate.

Viewed from another culture, the postmodern debate on religious discourse seems extraordinarily Eurocentric. Non-European faiths are not part of the historical intellectual context of postmodernism. As I see it, the association between religion, church, and power is not exactly relevant to a culture/religion that has no 'church' or clergy, and that draws no distinction between religion and politics. The dynamics of faith, power and knowledge are quite different.

In the short opening chapter to the Qur'an, recited by Muslims in every formal prayer, God is referred to as 'rabb al-alameen', usually translated as 'The Lord of the Worlds'. But 'alameen' is from the verbal root 'alama' (to know), which is also the root of 'ilm'. The Worlds are the worlds of knowledge, the worlds of language and number and sound and image and

imagination and all the worlds that are available to human knowing. In Islam, the search for that knowledge in all the worlds is considered a sacred duty incumbent on every Muslim, and that stress on the acquisition of knowledge is evident in all other faith groups. The great Muslim scholars devoted much time to the classification of knowledge, as for them civilisation was inconceivable without a full-fledged epistemology. But their world views were not constrained by the Enlightenment, which has dominated the approach to knowledge in the west. The western view of the world that underlies the education system is only problematic when a child is being raised to see the world a different way. It is not necessary for teachers to show any personal antipathy to a faith system when the epistemology itself does the work.

Ziauddin Sardar highlights the difficulty with regard to academic institutions in the modern Muslim world. *“To a very large extent, the problem lies with the very notion of discipline. Disciplines ... are not made in heaven. Neither nature nor human activities are divided into watertight compartments marked ‘sociology’, ‘psychology’ and ‘political science’. Disciplines are born within the matrix of a particular world-view. Disciplines do not have an autonomous existence of their own; they develop within a particular historical and cultural milieu and only have meaning within the world-view of their origin and evolution. The division of knowledge into various disciplines as we find today is a particular manifestation of how the western world-view perceives reality and how the western civilisation sees its problems. ... Thus to accept the disciplinary divisions of knowledge as they exist in western epistemology is to make the world-view of Islam subordinate to the western civilisation.”* (Afkar – Inquiry Dec 1984 p44) It seems reasonable to suggest that if such is the case for a Muslim, the same might apply to Hindus and Buddhists, and even Christians if one looks on ‘western civilisation’ as post-Christian. If a more expansive and inclusive system of education is to be developed, new geometries of knowledge will be needed. (See also Bakar 1992)

The worlds of knowledge are not just intellectual. Experiential, emotional, aesthetic and religious understandings are there. Even the humanist Abraham Maslow recognised that life’s peak experiences are not simply intellectual. But the back door materialism of secularity is forced to reduce emotions to chemical reactions. Such reactions neither explain the phenomena nor describe them, however, let alone contain them. Emotions can indeed be controlled with Valium, Prozac or Ritalin (or recreational drugs on the street), but although these solutions may seem rational and pragmatic, they do not meet with universal approval.

“It has been claimed that emotions and attitudes also have thought at their heart. For example ... if we consider such emotions as anger, fear, jealousy, does not each of them involve some sort of cognitive appraisal of the world? ... It has been claimed that it is this ‘thought’ element in emotion that allows us to distinguish one emotion from another ... Yet maybe this way of characterizing emotional development is too neat and puts too much stress on the intellectual? Perhaps it overlooks the way that, say, mood can colour our perceptions and appraisals and how in general our affective state forms a backdrop to, and motivates, the way we apprehend the world around us. That there is a reciprocal relationship between thought and feeling.” (Bonnett 1994 p15-16) But if emotions are in a reciprocal relationship with thought, they necessarily have a similar relationship with belief and worldview. As Elkholy says, *“What counts in our human society is neither science nor logic alone. The tremendous literature in the area of collective behaviour indicates the importance of contagious sentiments and emotions in motivating action and interaction and in the formation and continuity of organisations. Belief, as an important component of our attitudes, has always permeated life. Belief is the organising force without which life loses its full meaning ... a priceless heritage of our human society ... perpetuating the order of our expanding meaning of life.”* (Elkholy in Ahmad and Anwari ed. 1979 p.172) [47,116]

Times of high emotion bring laughter and tears, crucial facets of our human communication, but not a part of education except as a focus of disinterested study. In laughter you recognise the tears that are so close in mode of expression yet so opposite in experience. Buddhists find a sense of humour in the face of life’s absurdity an indispensable part of their learning process. Muslims have their farcical Sufi teaching stories (Shah 1968,1973,1983), Jews have a long tradition of Rabbinical humour as well as Woody Allen, and there is a long tradition of laughter as a central characteristic of Christian education. Conroy (1999) reminds us of how unfashionable it has become to suggest that education is to support the individual in her or his personal development as a human being if this is not in the same breath allied to the economy. In the world of attainment targets education is such a serious business that there is little room left for enjoyment, song – and laughter. *“Of course it is not meant to suggest that individual teachers in particular classes do not laugh with their pupils, but that is very different from believing that laughter itself is a fundamental and important educational category. ... For a Catholic school truly to reflect the mainstream of a Catholic philosophy of education it is*

necessary to provide pupils with a site for and sense of balance, a central feature of which is playful laughter. ... As the stentorian voices of education make the lives of children increasingly serious, the ... Catholic school has a responsibility to ensure an authentic balance; a balance which moves beyond the shibboleths of the global economy and challenges, 'playfully', the increasingly shrill voices of a crude utilitarianism within the political and educational establishment (Munro 1997)." (Conroy 1999 p47-51) [42,114]

The emotions connect people in a way that the rational can never do. Laughter is infectious, and likewise tears (c.f. the public response to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales), and we sometimes come together to indulge ourselves in an 'emotional resonance' with other people. All faith groups stress their concern for the relationships between self and other, and self and surroundings, with the human intellect providing meaning for the reality of experience, set in the cultural context of an all-embracing way of life. This form of education is regularly rejected as a possibility outwith devolved faith education schools. Yet the Rationalists rarely seem to be aware of any irony when they appropriate religious language to describe 'holistic' education in a culturally defined way of life. With regard to the core curriculum subjects, *"Oakeshott's view invites us to see them ... not just as curriculum subjects consisting of various components of facts, theories, concepts and skills – so many commodities to be 'delivered' – but as holistic traditions which embody that which is of enduring value and into which it is the sacred task of the teacher to initiate pupils. They are not simply to be made 'fun' or 'interesting' or 'relevant' (indeed, on this view they are the standard of what should count as relevant), but to be conveyed as living traditions with their own ethos, outlook and sense of illumination ... In short, then, the overriding aim should be not merely for the various areas of the curriculum to be 'encountered' or 'delivered', but to be lived."* (Bonnett 1994 p45) [12,13]

In excluding faith cultural context from schools, it is often readily assumed that a liberal education carries with it no indoctrinating tendencies, yet Oakeshott and others have shown it to carry a range of non-rational elements concerned with initiation into particular views of 'the good'. Bonnett writes of Oakeshott's view of culture, which he sees not as a set of rigid formulae to thought and behaviour, but having flexibility like a language. Yet he also seems to stress the need for content and skills to be embedded in a context of deeper understanding, based on arbitrary authority. *"The whole of social life, including language and the accumulated knowledge and understanding of a culture, is based on a structure of publicly shared*

conventions, i.e. rules. ... At a very fundamental level without rules of thought there can be no freedom of thought for there would be no thought at all. ... Without the rules of the game of football there is no game of football, and for someone to claim that their freedom is curtailed by these rules is simply for them to say that they don't wish to play football. ... Freedom consists not in abandoning rules, but precisely in deciding which rules to follow." (Bonnett 1994 p54-55)

Unfortunately for faith groups, they find that their rules are generally excluded from the debate, and all are expected to accept a 'rational good' in the name of national unity and harmony, to play the game with those who control the pitch and the ball, or try to set up a game with different rules somewhere else, on their own, though of course they will still be expected to pay their share towards the facilities that are designated for everyone. [152]

Clearly, some faith communities (such as the Muslims) are more vocal than others with regard to their feeling a need for greater faith cultural input to education to avoid the issue of divided identity in their children. The peripheral inclusion of religion as a subject for study is really just a distraction, if not a smoke screen. Muslim minority children in a state school have ownership of neither history or science (in fact most textbooks on the history of science jump from the ancient Greeks directly to Copernicus). Discoveries are western discoveries (how many have heard of Ibn Nafis whose work in the thirteenth century on the circulation of the blood predates Harvey by some centuries) and knowledge is western knowledge (how many have heard of Al-Khwarizmi, author of the 'Kitab al-mukhtasar fi hisab al-jabr wa'l-muqabalah', a translation of which introduced 'algebra' to the west). Muslim children are given no role models from within the history and heritage of Islamic civilisation (See Nasr, 1968, 1976, 1978; Sardar ed. 1988; Rahman 1989). [51]

Our history and geography still approach the world with an unashamedly occidental perspective. For example, Chaudhuri deconstructs the concept of 'Asia' as a continent *"The term, it is recognised, is essentially Western. There is no equivalent word in any Asian language nor such a concept in the domain of geographical knowledge ... The 'mapping pattern' between the two categories, European people and Europe as a continent, is isomorphic. One set transfers its structural unity to the other in a one-to-one ratio. However, it is the principle of contradiction (non-European) that establishes the identity of Asia, even though its civilisations and people are markedly different from one another. Of course, besides being non-European, Asia is also non-African, non-American and so on. There is a sequence of exclusions of which non-European*

comes first. For Europe, the notion of a continental unity is derived from that of the homogeneity of European people. But for Asian civilisation, their disunity or lack of apparent cohesion is not admitted as an argument against the use of the term Asia. On the contrary, the identity of people does not enter into the semantics at all. Geographical Asia is the inverse mirror of geographical Europe." (Chaudhuri 1990 p22-23)

This cultural imperialism through a combination of the political, the academic and the information media, has been well documented by Said (1978, 1997) with regard to the Muslim peoples of the world, showing how the colonial acquisition of power could be channelled through the classification of knowledge. But whereas this process can be analysed with regard to its effect on 'peoples', it can also be seen reflected in the situation of Muslim minority children in the education system, where the predominant culture of a school will tend to overwhelm all 'others'. Now the situation of the Muslim may seem quite distinct from that of the Christian in this country, but our education system is no more Christian than Muslim. Despite comforting words in the curriculum avowing the importance of religion in our society, looking at the hierarchy of authority within the system, in the places that count, education is clearly posited on a secular, post-Enlightenment detachment from religion. [138]

By defining itself as 'multicultural', or 'multifaith', the state gives the impression of being all-inclusive, yet this view of the state as an aggregation of grouped individuals also serves to reduce all groups to the status of minorities. The ancient practice of 'divide and rule' puts all faith minorities at the mercy of the system, and the processes outlined as they apply to young Muslims can be directly compared to a Christian 'loss of history', with aspects of faith being detached and discarded from a more holistic past. They may not know of al-Khwarizmi, but most children will at some point learn of the great European mathematician Sir Isaac Newton. Yet they will only learn of his science, not of the Christian commitment and the Bible study that were an integral part of his life as a scientist. The holistic worldview of Christianity once known as 'Theology' has suffered from reductionism. *"With the rise of the modern university in eighteenth-century Europe, this one knowledge and discipline began to splinter. The Enlightenment produced a number of quasi-independent sciences in the theological faculty ... Once this happened, the term 'theology' became a cluster term for a faculty, a set of disciplines, dogmatic theology."* (Farley 1988 p64) Religion was reduced to an object of study, and the living faith that sustained so many great minds is now treated as a practical irrelevance. [8]

The fragmentation of Theology is also symptomatic of the loss of the 'big picture' through systematic subject specialisation. The broadest education in our system can be seen in primary schools (and even that is being rapidly eroded), but the educational journey towards narrow specialisation is equally seen as progress towards 'maturity' of thought and the focused mind of adulthood, yet this process is not a 'sine qua non' of education. It has already been mentioned that in the world of Islam, all knowledge and understanding is subsumed within 'Tawhid', but in the Muslim tradition it was understood that there was more than one path to the acquisition of knowledge. Classical scholars were of two kinds (Faruqi 1986 p233); the 'alim' (man of science) defined as 'whoever specialises in any branch of the sciences and perfects his knowledge of it', and the 'adib' (man of manners) defined as 'whoever familiarises himself with every branch of knowledge, takes the best part of it and digests it'. In the west, nowadays, such breadth of knowledge tends to be only prized in game show contestants. [12]

Chapter Twelve

Education in a Multi-Faith Society

Education is seen as having value. It is worth something to the educated and also to the educators, as in some way it is recognised as being worth something to society. In the calculations of government, an educated workforce is seen as having economic weight. It has a cash value, and in that way demonstrates its utility. But few would disagree that the desirability of education is associated with a broader understanding of what is to be valued. *“Wittgenstein wanted to see value in religion in the same way that he saw value in music. Whatever explanation of religion is given he would reject on the same grounds as he would reject explanations of music – simply because they were explanations.”* (Kay 1998 p125-126) The aim of learning must be more subtle than the accumulation of wealth, though wealth may be a by-product. Ali bin Abi Talib is reported to have said *“Learning is preferable to wealth; you guard wealth while learning guards you, wealth will run short with spending while knowledge will be increased by dispersion.”* (Shalaby 1954 p162) If that is so, strangely enough, if education is good for business, what is good for business may not be best served by a competitive business model for education. [18,19]

Science, Beauty and Moral Values

The recent trend towards the quantification of educational results in terms of competitive exam-based league tables, affects not only the teaching of the traditionally more expressive and artistic aspects of education, the personal, the social and spiritual, but also what might be seen as the beneficiary of this mechanical approach, science teaching, actually being untrue to science itself. *“Increasingly, teachers have become aware that science and technology are not objective, impersonal, amoral activities but that they have, underlying them, fundamental issues relating to the very nature of the subjects and the purposes for which they are to be used in society. Teachers and curriculum developers have increasingly sought to see science in this wider, cultural context, to see how scientific ideas have been influenced by the world-view held by society at that time.”* (Brian Woolnough in Poole 1995 p10) If education is to be seen as a science, we must consider whether mechanistic approaches really conform to what is seen as good science. For science isn't what it was, and as it is the separation of science and religion that has shaped the western world is breaking down. Poole (1995)

challenges the division and shows how teachers may examine the nature of science and how their beliefs and values affect the way they teach it. He suggests that a religious perspective may be more useful than a relativistic approach. [10]

In questioning the sufficiency of rationality and its flagship, science, to explain the human condition, it is easy to give the impression that I am anti-science, when nothing could be further from the truth. Despite concerns for the scientific model, I love the way that science shines a light on the workings of the world. But if we are to see the rational scientific as a guiding principle for our schooling, I think it might be useful to see where scientific thinking might lead us, and whether this is in conflict with a religious perspective.

Tallis points out the problem with the increasing divergence of physical theory from common sense. *“Orthodox particle physics – which now holds that ... every particle/ event in the universe acts on every other particle/ event, however distant – seems to have only the slightest toe-hold on imaginable, never mind everyday, experience. ... truth in physics has ceased to be a matter of correspondence to experience outside the discourse of physicists.”* (Tallis 1999 p22-23) Here, physics confronts one form of relativism, that the truths of physics are only true within physics, they are relative to the discourse of physics. Thus recent developments in superstring theory offer solutions that cannot be tested by any imaginable experiment, and its truth resides in its coherence with other truths of physics. At the same time, physics converges on what some would call esoteric, the Islamic language of ‘tawhid’.

In 1989, in connection with his work on unification theory, Charon said *“To obtain unification we had to suggest a new ‘model’ of the particle of Matter, and according to this model each particle of Matter possesses a very important property, a ‘hidden’ property which was first not detected by Physics: the particle of Matter has got its own memory; ... we felt that maybe we were not so far from getting information on the functioning of the Mind. But we were not ready to accept that the Mind could exist at the elementary level of the individual particle of matter.”* (Charon 1989 p45-46) In fact, this idea that Matter itself has a Mind is thousands of years old, but this ‘memory’ is now part of a true scientific model. Charon also draws attention to another aspect of the unification theory. *“It concerns the way any object (the One) is linked not with itself (the person) but with the totality of the Universe (the Whole). In other words, we cannot separate any object from itself (which is evident) but also from the rest of the Universe (which was not ‘evident’ before the unification theory); any object is at the same time the One”*

and the Whole. ... We have two ways (and not one only) of 'access' to the Universe.” (Charon 1989 p45-46) Two ways, one looking outward and one looking inward, or as Qur'an says, the signs of God are to be seen 'in the horizons and in themselves', where mankind is to look for the truth.

Having done its best to destroy the language of religion, science is now trying to re-invent it. *“The principal function of modern thought has been the wanton destruction of 'superstition', a term which – though it may properly be applied to little habits which have survived in isolation from the doctrines which gave them meaning – has expanded to include every kind of belief in the supernatural. Bridges, ladders and, ultimately, the highroads provided by the great religions have at least one thing in common: they are invisible to those in whom this belief has been undermined.” (Eaton 1990 p160)*

In Islam, a mark of the believer (mu'min) is belief in the unseen world ('alamul ghaib). *“It is a belief that implies that the material or sensible world ('alamul shahadah) is not the whole of everything and that there is something beyond matter. It is knowledge of the unseen or, rather, knowledge coming from the unseen that allows man to have a better and more complete knowledge of himself and his destiny. It is a special kind of knowledge which his senses as such cannot give him. Just as man's dreams must be interpreted in terms of this world in order to get at their meaning, this world, if its meaning is to be grasped at all, must be interpreted in terms of the world of the unseen.” (C.A. Majul 1988 p66-67)* Through the spirit, man has within him access to a way of evaluating the meaning of the material world, by means of qualities such as mercy and compassion, through which man transcends the world of matter and can understand life in terms of virtue. As our teachers are pressured towards ever more narrowly defined quantified goals, science is recognising that its true criteria are elegance and beauty. [43,44,116]

“Like a work of art or a haunting poem, equations have a beauty and rhythm all their own. Physicist Richard Feynman expressed this when he said, 'You can recognize truth by its beauty and simplicity. When you get it right, it is obvious that it is right – at least if you have any experience – because usually what happens is that more comes out than goes in.' The French mathematician Henri Poincare expressed it even more frankly when he wrote, 'The scientist does not study Nature because it is useful; he studies it because he delights in it, and he

delights in it because it is beautiful.” (Kaku 1994 p130) Of course, not all of us have the maths to cope with 26 dimensions, but science is now seeing matter as the manifestation of something much less familiar. To return to string theory, Kaku explains *“The 26-dimensional space of the counterclockwise vibrations of the heterotic string has room enough to explain all the symmetries found in both Einstein’s theory and quantum theory. So, for the first time, pure geometry has given a simple explanation of why the subatomic world must necessarily exhibit certain symmetries that emerge from the curling up of higher-dimensional space. ... This means that the beauty and symmetry found in nature can ultimately be traced back to higher dimensional space. ... The symmetries that we see around us, from rainbows to blossoming flowers to crystals, may ultimately be viewed as manifestations of fragments of the original ten-dimensional theory.”* (Kaku 1994 p159)

As with other religions, beauty is a crucial aspect of the Muslim way of looking at the world. ‘God is Beautiful and loves Beauty’ said the Prophet. As Hassan says, *“Beauty arouses in us tender and noble emotions. It enhances our whole physical life in a harmonious, integrated way and as a vital stimulant stirs us to great actions. It reflects ever-new aspects of delight and bliss. It widens our horizons, gratifies our senses, chastens our taste, elates our emotions, enlightens our cognition, informs our lives, and helps in the better integration of our being. But apart from all that it does, it is a value-in-itself, a divine attribute, an ultimate goal, to be enjoyed in our religious experience, contemplated when found in Nature, and progressively realised in our bodies and minds, in our surrounding and society.”* (Hassan 1989 p77) If, as Feynman and Poincare say, beauty is that which attracts and motivates towards learning, surely we should be looking closer at the role of beauty in our schools. *“An explicit consideration of the role of beauty in word, picture, and architecture is important for several reasons. It offers an opportunity to ask why certain modes of human communication are more effective than others in conveying religious values. In addition, an appreciation of aesthetic qualities facilitates a deeper understanding of the emotional dimensions of a spiritual tradition. Feeling, mood, and intensity are important but often neglected aspects of religious experience.”* (Renard 1996 p107) A school should be a place of beauty. Beauty is a qualitative value we can use as a criterion of Truth. [47]

We say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but at the same time we think of it as only skin deep. In this culture, beauty, particularly of human shape and features, is often

treated as though it is a tangible, almost definable, in the way that a certain body shape may be promoted as ideal, simultaneously suggesting that beauty can be obtained by a dietary regime or perhaps plastic surgery. But the Arabic word for beauty has a different connotation. 'Ihsan' has the double meaning of 'beauty' and 'goodness'. Goodness is the ultimately beautiful, the beauty that is seen in the Eye of the Beloved.

Values were considered earlier in association with issues of identity, but values are also crucial with regard to the nature of the education process itself. Some understanding of values will be necessary before the formulation of educational aims, pedagogic theories or codes of teacher practice. In researching moral attitudes and conduct in schools, Carr and Landon were not surprised to find that Catholic schools gave values education a higher profile than secular schools. What did surprise them was that *"In schools inclining more towards what might be termed 'traditional' rather than 'liberal' or 'progressive' conceptions of values education, teachers were clearly more comfortable than elsewhere with difficult evaluative issues and seemed able to discuss them with greater facility. It seems that the greater emphasis placed on values transmission as an important dimension of education in the Catholic and independent schools had led, not to dogmatic complacency, but to a heightened awareness of the need for appropriate rational justification of actual practice. Elsewhere in the more liberal circumstances of schools accommodating a wider variety of social expectations of education, discussion of such issues was invariably less confident and well focused."* (Carr & Landon 1998 p166-167) Indeed, in the extreme 'liberal' case of a school operating in conspicuously culturally plural circumstances *"It would appear that familiar liberal nervousness about the dangers of cultural colonialism issued in something close to intellectual paralysis regarding the open discussion of values issues."* (Carr & Landon 1998 p167) If, as Rodger says, values must be expressed in action, this has serious implications for teachers.

In Carr and Landon's view It was clear that teachers' responses were greatly influenced by a contractual or consensual ethics – with quite problematic moral educational implications. *"Thus with regard to the example of adulterous teachers, though all discussions exhibited a welcome degree of sympathy and compassion for parties concerned ... there seemed to be a corresponding difficulty about recognizing that there might be any educational problem here at all. ... and the conceptual point that since adultery just is a matter of betrayal, promise-breaking and (invariably) deceit it must be morally wrong, irrespective of changes in social perceptions of*

the value of marriage, seldom came to the forefront of discussion." (Carr & Landon 1998 p173) They recognise that traditional ethical perspectives are changing, *"But if education in moral values is indeed a matter of the promotion and exemplification of what is true, right and good in some substantial sense then the widespread relegation of adultery from the realm of what is false, wrong and bad to that of social imprudence or inconvenience can surely have only the highest implications for moral education."* (Carr & Landon 1998 p173) The driving force behind such behaviour is often confused with the affect of the heart, but it is a matter of grave concern for society if coarse passion is allowed to replace the more subtle contributions of the spiritual heart. [28,32]

Sharifi points out that *"Neglect of the position of the heart, the very centre of the human being, that which can realize the Truth – in education, amounts to forgetfulness of the transcendental dimension of human life, to imprisonment in our limited sense of perceptions and our worldly being forever, and to confinement to areas which are by no means appropriate to our Intellect and real nature ('Fitrah')."* (Sharifi in Husein & Ashraf 1979 p47-48) If, as Ali bin Abi Talib said, knowledge grows with dispersal, the education process must be based on generosity. *"The great fault of modern education has been that, with all its advanced methods of training children, it has missed what is most important; namely the lesson of unselfishness. Man thinks that an unselfish person is incapable of guarding his own interests in life; but however much it may appear so it is not so in reality. A selfish person is a disappointment to others, and in the end a disadvantage to himself. Mankind is interdependent, and the happiness of each depends upon the happiness of all."* (Khan 1962 p88-89) On a pragmatic level, truth in values benefits the whole of society. [54,55, 68,72]

Essential values can inevitably be seen right through the workings of a school, through its Aims, its Policies and Practice. As Rodger says, *"Values determine Aims. Aims are expressed in Policies. Policies are guidelines for Practice."* (Rodger 1996 p13) [87,88]

Moral and Spiritual Aims of Education

When we look to the aims of education, we can look to the benefits to the individual, the effect of education on the development of identity and feelings, motivation and imagination, morality and spirit. Alternatively we can look to the benefits to society, relationships and the languages of communication between people, in which case we must have some idea of what sort of

society we want. *“What are the ingredients of the good life, in pursuit of which we undertake to educate people? How are we to tell whether the education on offer is successful or not? How are we to judge whether other things being equal, people’s lives will be better after they have received it? Without some standard of judgement, there can be no standard by which to determine what should and what should not form part of the education curriculum.”* (Warnock 1977 p129-130) In the context of a school, it needs to be asked if teachers also want what they say that learners should want.

Of course it is possible to concentrate on the learners, and leave the future up to them. Peters says *“Education, then, can have no ends beyond itself. Its value derives from principles and standards implicit in it. To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view.”* (Peters 1964 p47-48) This has the problem that it does not take into account that part of the education process which trains a child into a way of seeing. If education is an induction into a process, are teachers in a position to show how they learn rather than how they teach? As Erricker points out *“Michel Foucault wrote: ‘What matters is to create the conditions whereby we can all be artists of our own lives.’ The choice of the word ‘artist’ is highly significant since to regard a child as such influences the relationship we have with that child. We must take account of the different facets that constitute the creation of his or her whole identity.”* (Erricker 1997 p10) We must also consider whether teachers are able to set an example of being artists of their own lives to those that they teach. [26]

But as has already been discussed, the individual cannot exist in isolation, and education inevitably has a social function. *“Education, shorn of all frills and furbelows, signifies the transmission of experience from one generation to another. What is transmitted in an organized society with a history is not individual experience as such but the cumulative experience of past generations enshrined in folklore, traditions, customs, poetry and the like. These in their turn crystallize around – and also mirror- the basic concept of the place of man in this universe that a society has developed and cherishes.”* (Husein & Ashraf 1979 p36) The Muslim world has a vast cumulative experience, and at a world conference on education in 1977 the following was agreed. *“The aim of Muslim education is the creation of the ‘good and righteous man’ ... Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man’s spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative,*

physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection." (Husein & Ashraf 1979 p42-44) In the concern for the 'good man' (or woman!), this definition of the aim of education is not too dissimilar to educational aims voiced in Scotland in the not too distant past, and much of the rest is comparable to more recent curricula. What would seem to have been lost is the idea of 'goodness' being an educational concern. 'Goodness' is no longer seen as a prime aim for pupil or teacher. [25,87,98]

Quite apart from the fundamental aim of goodness, many other aspects of the list seem to be desperately short of syllabus time. Many have concern that our exam focused system leaves little room for concentration on the spiritual or the imaginative, and if teachers are denied the opportunity to be imaginative themselves in their classes, imagination in their pupils will surely suffer. As Warnock says with regard to the cultivation of imagination, *"The test here may at first sight seem frivolous, but I believe that, if properly considered, it is the very opposite: the test is whether or not the educational curriculum is boring."* (Warnock 1977 p151-153) The key issue, of course, is not whether those at the top of the class find it boring, but the effect the curriculum is having on the bottom half of the class. [44,46]

Another aspect of development controversially included in our school curriculum (though unnecessary to education after 5-14) is the spiritual, though as might be expected, faith groups tend to have a fairly well defined understanding and language for what they are talking about, whereas in a secular approach spirituality is usually much less well defined in the attempt to be all-inclusive. *"The Errickers seem to assume that the only solution to the fact of plurality is neutrality. Spirituality cannot be couched in Christian terms because the Muslim and Hindu would find it unintelligible. Oddly, the Errickers entirely ignore the fact that their 'neutral' approach is also unintelligible to the Muslim and Hindu. The Errickers concede that it is grounded in a secular world-view. ... Neutrality, as many have observed, is impossible. We are all tradition-constituted. In opting for a non-religious spirituality, the Errickers are suggesting a certain world-view that all religious people would find problematic."* (Markham in Thatcher 1999 p144) [89,152]

I always find it rather strange in an education system that claims to offer education for all, that so few see anything of concern in the fact that many Muslim parents prefer to send

their children to Catholic schools. There seems to be no concern for self-appraisal on the issue that Muslims could prefer their children to be educated in a Christian ethos, the Crusades notwithstanding, in preference to what is on offer at the schools 'for everyone'.

In the quest for definition of the spiritual, Clive Beck provides a list of what he holds to be the key spiritual characteristics (Beck 1991 *Better Schools* p63-64), while Donald Evans approaches the issue in terms of a set of 'attitude-virtues' in the hope that their taxonomies may provide a practical structure for a universal approach (Evans 1979, 1993) *"The theoretical structures of religion and morality ... need to be understood in relation to certain life-affirming stances such as trust which are the core of both authentic religious faith and genuine moral character. And since our fulfilment as human beings depends on the extent to which these life affirming stances prevail over their opposites, religion and morality and human fulfilment have a common core."* (Evans 1979 *Struggle and Fulfilment*) As Rodger points out, *"It is interesting that Evans sees his schema as a development of the ideas of Erik Erikson; and that it has, in general terms, strong resonances with the thought of Abraham Maslow. Interesting, that is, that – despite the wide divergences in world-view and, therefore, in the terms in which they express themselves – there is a strong sense that they are providing different descriptions of what are fundamentally the same types of human experience: and that these types of experiencing are conducive to human flourishing or 'actualization'."* (Rodger in Best ed. 1996 p51) [20,53,54,106]

In the end, the spirit is perhaps easier to feel than define, and so there will forever be those who will try to hone words in an attempt to fine the all-inclusive description. *"Fundamentally spirituality has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense ... This dynamic form ... can be described as a capacity for going out of oneself and beyond oneself; or again, as the capacity for transcending oneself ... It is this openness, freedom, creativity, this capacity for going beyond any given state in which he finds himself, that makes possible self-consciousness and self-criticism, understanding, responsibility, the pursuit of knowledge, the sense of beauty, the quest of the good, the formation of community, the outreach of love and whatever else belongs to the amazing richness of what we call 'the life of the spirit'"* (Macquarrie 1972 p.40-44) To develop the spiritual aspect of a learner, therefore, these are the capacities that we should be looking for in our teachers. [32,104]

An associated area with great relevance for schools, yet with perhaps even more contentious debate over its definition, is that of morality. Beck points out that *“Since 1988, there have been a significant number of further official documents which have not only sought to highlight the importance of ‘the spiritual’ but have also persistently sought to tie together ‘spiritual and moral development’ in a manner calculated to suggest that the two constitute an indissolubly linked double entity ... commonly, the discourse of the documents is vague, platitudinous and tends to mix unjustified assertion with equivocation. ... It would, however, be a mistake to see this mix of assertion and ambiguity simply as evidence of an inability to think and write clearly about these important matters. There is nothing politically innocent about it.”* (Beck in Thatcher ed. 1999 p160-162) Despite the lack of definition for morality, such documents suggest that despite our culturally and morally pluralistic society, there is somehow agreement on the role schools should play in these areas of beliefs and values. [101]

In 1977, Warnock could say *“A school is, and must be, a school of morals, and a good school will teach its pupils to behave well. But to say this is far from saying that in any formal sense morality should be part of the curriculum. What is sometimes referred to as ‘the hidden curriculum’ may be more important than the overt in this area of teaching.”* (Warnock 1977 p129-130) In previous years, the undefined hidden curriculum may have served the purpose, but in the much more prescriptive setting of schools at this time, clarity and priority debate would seem essential, even if the innate complexities that must be exposed are not the preferred debating ground of politicians. And those in power tend to be particularly disinclined to listen to ‘turbulent priests’ or ‘mad mullahs’, no matter what the sense they speak. A basic problem is highlighted by Richard Holloway. *“For moral systems to work, we have to accord them some kind of authority over us. The dilemma is that they then work too well, so that reforming them becomes difficult. But this, paradoxically, is a sign of their effectiveness. If they could be overturned without much of a struggle, they would lack the very authority they need if they are to condition us into some kind of conformity. Moral change is always bound to be contentious, though it seems to characterise human history. There are always those who defend the status quo, because it provides stability and continuity, and there are always those who push against it, because they experience it as morally stunting and imprisoning.”* (Holloway 1999 p18) [92,93]

Muslim scholars also debate the issue and see the problems. *“As far as morality itself is concerned, precisely because of the gradual separation of the educational system from its religious background, the question has now arisen as to what kind of morality to teach if one were to consider morality at all. The ethical dimension of life has become relativized and sometimes even put aside precisely because the teachers, the state and the various institutions responsible have not been able to agree as to what ethical norms should be taught to the students.”* (Nasr 1993 p213) An approach is suggested by Hazrat Inayat Khan *“Moral education depends upon three things: the right direction of love, a keen sense of harmony, and the proper understanding of beauty. ... The child must know that it is responsible for all it does, not only to its fellowmen, but to someone who watches it constantly and from whom nothing can be hidden; that however much justice may seem to be suffering in the world, there is somewhere the balance of justice which in time must balance things; and that death is only a bridge by which the soul passes from one sphere to another.”* (Khan 1999 p336-340) [17,87]

Morality is a personal issue, but it is also a matter for the society in which that morality is played out. It is not just a matter for the pupil. It is a matter for the teacher. Rodger considers the dynamics of morality in an open society. *“A traditional society is one in which authority can be wielded unhampered by any sense of doubt or inconsistency (because belief is sure and undivided). A modern society must live with an unresolved inner tension. The ideal to which such a society is committed is unrealisable in practice. The drive to openness can never be completed. For the freedom granted to the members of that society may at any time in some of its members seek to be totally unrestrained, thus posing a threat to the very survival of the society. Freedom, then, can be granted only within limits, however wide these limits be set. In an open society they are set as wide as is possible, consistent with the survival of the society. That this entails risk cannot be denied. What the open society believes, however, is that the risk must be accepted; since what is at stake is the very possibility of truly human flourishing, the realisation of human capacities, the expression of human creativity, the drive towards human autonomy.”* (Rodger 1982 p4) [137,138]

Muslim authors have also considered the issues, of course. *“We must think also of the responsibility which the individual has to society, and that of society to the individual. Islam tries as far as possible to harmonize their interests. Every individual is charged in the first place conscientiously to perform his own work; (this is) in the long run advantageous and beneficial to*

the community ... Again every individual is charged with the care of society, as if he were the watchman over it, responsible for its safety. Life is like a ship at sea, whose crew are all concerned for her safety; none of them may make a hole even in his own part of her, in the name of his individual freedom." (Qutb in Williams 1971 p48-49) Qutb also points out that the relationship between individual and society is set in a context of belief. *"Man, by his very nature, cannot live in this world as a detached, free-floating particle of dust. He must relate to the world in a definite manner by formulating an idea concerning his place in the scheme of things. In the final analysis, it is his belief-concept, that is to say his world-view, which in his own eyes determines his place in his surroundings. ... a strong tie exists between the nature of the belief-concept and the nature of the social system. ... A social system is a product of a comprehensive concept that includes an explanation of the origin of the universe, of man's place in it, and of his role and the ultimate purpose of this existence. ... A harmony between belief and the social system is both an organizational necessity and an intellectual imperative."* (Qutb 1991 p18) At this time and in this place, with the 'comprehensive concept' behind our social system so confused, teachers inevitably have difficulty in finding that harmony. [70,74]

The relationship between individual and society is in some ways echoed by that of a teacher and a pupil. It requires a merging of perceptions. *"We must recognize a principle of 'intersubjectivity' that defines our relationship with the child and contextualizes their learning. ... The implications of this involve appreciating how the learner perceives him or herself and how that perception influences what goes on in the classroom. Both the teacher and the child are engaged in the exploration of the child's mind, in a rational and affective sense."* (Erricker 1997 p10) What Erricker does not point out is that the child is also exploring the teacher's mind, learning how the teacher perceives him or herself at the same time. Teacher and pupil need to find a common language, and in some areas such as the spirit, that language can be difficult to find. *"A major difficulty in pursuing spiritual development effectively and providing sensitively for it in education is that human spirituality is, to a large extent, a forgotten language in the Western world. ... We are like people trying to speak in a foreign language about experiences we have ignored or lost touch with. Even the language (and, for some, particularly the language) in which our culture was once able to speak of spiritual aspects of experience is a barrier to understanding for so many."* (Rodger in Best 1996 p46-47) Some, such as Evans, have suggested that we should open ourselves up to relearning what recent generations have lost touch with, through a dialogue between modern consciousness and the spiritual

traditions of the world. The suggestion is that in this way we might find a language that provides continuity with developed spiritual traditions, while speaking in a modern accent and relating to contemporary experience. [28,107,128]

But developing a new language is not that easy. As Peters points out, *“It is a grave error to regard the learning of a language as a purely instrumental matter, as a tool in the service of purposes, standards, feelings and beliefs. For in a language is distilled a view of the world which is constituted by them. In learning a language the individual is initiated into a public inheritance which his parents and teachers are inviting him to share.”* (Peters 1970 p53) For a teacher trying to find a common spiritual language with a child, the pitfalls are only too obvious.

As ever, Wittgenstein gives us some useful insights to our way of thinking, with the usual proviso that differing insights are offered at opposite ends of his life. Grosch (1999) suggests that the Tractatus is the key text to understanding the demise of spiritual insight as an aspect of philosophy, pointing to the paradox of belief in a spiritual and mystical element to life while limiting philosophical enquiry to the supposedly pure facts and logic of scientific propositions. Grosch sees the Tractatus as the final logical conclusion of the late medieval split between philosophy and theology. Then the older Wittgenstein replaced his language theory with his language game analogy. *“Instead of philosophy being confined to science and logic, Wittgenstein argued that there are innumerable language games, science and logic being but two. Religion and theology, morality and behaviour, art and aesthetics, are also language games, all equally valid and philosophically legitimate. Part of our purpose, as human beings equipped for dialogue, is to examine each language game in which we find ourselves, in order to clarify its rules and rituals, its grammar and meanings. When we have done this, our mistake will be seen to be to judge the values and truth claims of one language game by the rules and grammar of another.”* (Grosch in Thatcher 1999 p188-189) [159]

When it comes to the communication of spiritual experience, however, teachers tend to be looking for something more pragmatic than philosophical, and the Errickers highlight the importance of metaphor. *“Wells makes the point that the ability of children to use language in depth and complexity is not related directly to the level of intellectual functioning. Taking this further, we may say that the level of language used tends to be related to the importance of the*

experience that the child is seeking to convey. Thus if the child seeks to convey the meaning and significance of an experience that is deeply felt, he or she will resort to a form of language which meets this demand. This will most often be metaphorical in nature regardless of the child's intellectual capacity assessed by other means. ... Within the constraints of a tightly prescribed curriculum and a competitive ethos there is no time or space to devote to the empowerment and affirmation of children that allows them to express themselves in this way. ... This would necessitate education policy being less content-led, more life-skills based and a recognition of the importance of the experiences that children bring to their own learning" (Erricker & Erricker 1997 p187-189) They also propose that such a form of learning could have its theoretical base in postmodernism. [22-24]

At the same time, the consideration of priorities harks back to an educational language that was once much more common. *"The humanities have two peculiarities. First, whatever part of human experience they are exploring they try to apprehend and recreate whole – as engaging the intelligence, the will, the emotions ... All this is not argued, successively; it is recreated so that it is apprehended by the reader simultaneously, as in life. Abstraction from the imaginative wholeness of experience, which is the first essential of other disciplines, usually means failure here. ... Second, the humanities ask questions of value about human experience (though not necessarily explicitly). They implicitly seek judgements; not the judgements of a functional morality (Does it work? Is it efficient?), but those of a substantial morality (Is it good? What is the quality of the life within it?)."* (Hoggart 1964 in Connell 1967 p149) Education currently tends to have more interest in the quantitative than the qualitative, judging by 'intelligence' in preference to wisdom. Muslim educators unanimously agree that the essential purpose of education is preparation for a life of purity and sincerity, Islamic education being seen as primarily committed to character building. (see Badawi in Al-Attas 1977 p104) [25]

The lump had been there for ages, but suddenly it started to get bigger. Strangely, other people often seemed more disturbed by the news than he was. After all, death was a subject he thought about often. Death was not a problem; it was pain that scared him. In fact, facing impending death on an operating table felt like a privileged way to go; not enough time to clear up too much unfinished business, but time for some tentative goodbyes. And then to relax and appreciate a final breath or two before the hypodermic squeeze and the no time to count to ten. What a mercy to die smiling, with a few familiar words of devotion upon his tongue, when there were so many more unpleasant ways it could have been. But that could yet happen. After all, he survived.

Intellect and Emotions, Religion and Culture

In the fourteenth century, one of the greatest minds in history, Ibn Khaldun, wrote of the limitations of the intellect. *“Man should not trust the suggestion his mind makes, that it is able to comprehend all existing things and their causes, and to know all the details of existence. Such a suggestion of the mind should be dismissed as stupid. ... Complete knowledge does not exist in man. The world of existence is too vast for him. ... This does not speak against the intellect and intellectual perceptions. The intellect, indeed, is a correct scale. ... However, the intellect should not be used to weigh such matters as the oneness of God, ... or anything else that lies beyond the level of the intellect. That would mean to desire the impossible. One might compare it with a man who sees a scale in which gold is being weighed, and wants to weigh mountains in it. The fact that this is impossible does not prove that the indications of the scale are not true.”* (Ibn Khaldun 1967 p350) [158]

Most teachers would recognise that there is more to education than the intellectual, yet probably feel more at ease with the intellect than the emotions in a classroom situation. Sullivan recalls Donaldson (1993) in calling for a balance between the intellectual and the emotional. *“All of us adults may be in danger of losing this sense of connectedness with the inner self and the inner world. In sharing stories with children we may make the mistake of simply sharing and forget how to enter into their world. For teachers in recent years the curriculum has often become so crowded that it has marginalized the opportunities to nurture the affective in children. And who has nurtured the affective in teachers?”* (Sullivan in Erricker 1997 p179) Teachers need to know how to exercise their imagination to enter into a child’s world, where they play the games that make sense of that world. Erricker’s viewpoint is that *“If we accept that children already possess a narrative within which they construct meaning, then it is meaning rather than truth or knowledge that underpins the education of the whole child. To put this simply, we cannot impose a narrative upon them which does not engage with their own, nor a rationality which does not make sense in terms of the way they have constructed meaning from their experiences. This makes the task of educating children much more provisional and tentative. It is contextualized by the relationships that we develop with the children in our care and has to acknowledge that their reality is the starting point for our communication with them.”* (Erricker 1997 p9-10) But this does make a bold leap from the teaching relationship to the teacher ‘starting’ with the child’s reality. Quite apart from offering the possibility that a teacher might be able to see through a child’s eyes, they fail to suggest

any reflexive aspect of the relationship, the teacher's reality changing through the relationship with the child. [22,54]

It is obvious that children's self concept, with its elements of descriptive self-image and evaluative self-esteem, is influenced by the way those around them respond to them. *"The relationship between a teacher's self-concept and effective teaching is as important as that between the child's self-concept and effective learning. Hall and Hall (1988) suggest that teachers should be encouraged to have a better awareness of themselves and their own behaviour. Burns (1982:58) reports on studies showing that teachers with a negative view of themselves had a negative effect on children's achievement."* (Suschitzky 1998 p8-10)

Considering those results, in the light of what Jenny Mosley says *"Until children begin to feel positive about themselves, until good relationships are established and until there's a calm, safe, caring, well ordered environment, the national curriculum cannot be delivered effectively to all children. Over the years, research has constantly shown a direct link between the enhancement of self-esteem and the rising of academic achievement."* (Mosley 1993 p12), it would seem that to deliver the national curriculum effectively there should be 'circle time' for teachers just as much as for the pupils. [26,28,37]

It is important that the need for development of teachers' affective and moral awareness be recognised. *"Everybody knows that children, and pupils at school who are not children, admire some virtues in their teachers, and despise some vices. It is far easier for children to see the qualities of character possessed by their teachers as good or bad than it is for them to make similar judgements about their parents. It is therefore all the more necessary for teachers to know what they are at, what characteristics they are displaying, since their virtues and vices will form a part of the whole picture of possible moral behaviour that a child will, gradually, build up."* (Warnock 1977 p135) As was suggested earlier, in the teaching of morality, it is not the intellect of the teacher that is important so much as their behaviour, and whereas teachers are taught the techniques of passing on skills and behaviour, they are much less likely to receive training, or even help, with picking a path through issues of morality and the self-awareness that it involves. [29]

Martin Buber describes the sharing that a child needs to fully comprehend the world as a process of 'communion'. *"The child, in putting things together, learns much that he can learn in*

no other way. In making some thing he gets to know its possibility, its origin and structure and connexions, in a way he cannot learn by observation. But there is something else that is not learned in this way, and that is the viaticum of life. The being of the world as an object is learned from within, but not its being as a subject, its saying I and Thou. What teaches us the saying of Thou is not the originative instinct but the instinct for communion. ... This instinct is something greater than the believers in the 'libido' realize: it is the longing for the world to become present to us as a person, which goes out to us as we to it, which chooses and recognizes us as we do it, which is confirmed in us as we in it." (Buber 1963 p114-115)

This talk of communion with the world may seem too esoteric for some, but if the spiritual nature of the child is recognised in the curriculum, the esoteric is intrinsically part of the debate. Finding a common language, as mentioned, is extremely problematic. As Rodger says, *"This process of being taken outside the 'normal' (pre-structured) way of perceiving is a process of being put in touch with reality – with things as they are in themselves. This is a difficult notion philosophically. It is nonetheless a central facet of spiritual ways that they seek to help those who follow them to disengage from their entrapment in beliefs which are authorized externally rather than on the basis of personal experience in openness to what is there to be encountered directly. ... Now, clearly, this kind of radical questioning could be subversive of 'normal' educational intentions and unsettling in the extreme."* (Rodger in Best ed. 1996 p60)

He points out that whereas questions can fairly be raised as to whether schools are appropriate or fit places for interest to be taken in the spiritual development of their pupils, if such development is neglected the damage that results clearly has an effect on the school. The problem for those working on the issue is trying to find a way to provide the stimuli and conditions for spiritual growth, without assuming a position of advanced status or presuming to 'manage' the direction of pupils' development. [22,23]

Having a particular personal interest in the varieties of religious experience, I am well aware how easy it is for the sense of power in an individual spiritual experience to be so overwhelming that it quickly turns into delusions of grandeur. History is littered with 'prophets' and 'seers' eager to lead anyone willing to accept their vision, and only a handful ever left their mark on history. In exploring that 'subversive' questioning which challenges 'authorised' beliefs, teachers take on the possibility of profound personal changes. If the spirit is to be experienced by teacher and pupil in a secular education system such as ours,

it might be an idea to set up an open and broad-based support network to keep feet on common ground.

The unsettling nature of the spiritual as a part of secular education is made yet more complex by the nature of our multi-faith society, but for a comparable problematic, we can look to a subject with many apparent similarities - culture. In fact, the distinction between religion and culture is hard to pin down in some cases, such as Hinduism (a western construct for the form of worship of those in the region around the Indus), and Islam (where culture is seen as situated within the purview of religion) *“What we call for convenience a religion is a fluid, developing, fuzzy edged stream of ideas and practices, influenced by and influencing other such streams and not easily distinguishable from ‘culture’. ... Like religions, ‘cultures’ are fluid, internally diverse and contested, influenced by and influencing other cultural streams. ... A culture is best thought of not as an entity but as a language or grammar ‘a language with which to construct a worldview’ (Jackson 1997), ‘a means of communication and representation repertoire’ (Aurenheimer 1990).”* (Cush 1999) As with religion, everyone has an understanding of what culture is, but that language is very imprecise. When faith educators spoke of culture, they spoke in a common voice that had meaning, but not the technical meanings of the academic research community. [76,77]

But those considering problems concerning faith should perhaps look to the treatment of culture for an example. Firstly the general idea of culture was reduced to a subject for study, which then split into streams of differing definitions, theories and methodologies, different associations or confrontations with allied subject areas, increasing its division through its popularity, until now, when ‘culture’ really has no working meaning without qualification. This precision of definition can be used as a tool to manipulate social outcomes, but in their implementation, many theories have been brought face to face with their fallibility. As the general meaning of words devalues, research texts even a few decades old can often only be understood in the context of their times, their words so clearly having changed meaning. New words come into fashion with their own inferences. ‘Culture’ as in ‘cultural studies’ has quite recently been in vogue, as once was the ‘society’ that brought us social sciences. *“One valuable insight presented by the anthropological study of culture is about the inseparability of culture and society. ... No human societies without culture – or conversely, no cultures without societies – are known; nor indeed conceivable. This distinguishes human social patterns from*

those of the organic and animal world; whereas ants, bees and others may possess genuine societies, they have no culture. Man, on the contrary, cannot dispense with culture at all. All social patterns for him are also cultural patterns. Indeed, it is futile to claim as to which, culture or society, has precedence over the other.” (Manzoor 1985 p33)

Writing in the 1970's, Husain and Ashraf were concerned to differentiate between civilisation and culture “*Civilization is an evolving process. It is a product of human curiosity which compels man to acquire more and more knowledge for its own sake and also to utilize that knowledge in actual life. ... Whatever he learns he applies. Hence there is a constant process of improvement in the instruments of civilization. ... In spite of constant change ... there is an immutable factor in Man; his spirit ... always penetrates behind and beyond the changing façade of social patterns and seeks the eternal, the essential, the immutable.*” (Husain & Ashraf 1979 p7) The timeless nature of man's spirit is demonstrated through great works of art, to which we respond even across centuries through recognition of the spirit. “*Culture, therefore, is based on the findings of this spirit of man. These findings are the result of three essential, stable and immutable ingredients of that spirit; man's power to choose between this and that, which implies man's spiritual ability to distinguish between this and that, and thus his consciousness of himself, others, and the universe; man's recognition of a norm of values which is so intimately ingrained in his nature that even a child can differentiate between truth and falsehood, ... and the demand for the absolute in all forms. ... It is this search for the absolute that is manifested in religion.*” (Husain & Ashraf 1979 p9) [104]

“At the lowest level, typically outside the reflective consciousness of its members (sort of like a cultural unconscious), are the deepest rules, the deepest foundational assumptions for a particular culture, rules or assumptions that I call, following Foucault, 'social regularities', rules or assumptions that constitute the nature of reality, the ways to know reality, the nature of the subjectivity of the knower, etc. It is this complex construction, then, that metaphorically is the culture, and ... the 'construction', the culture, is 'alive', is dynamic, is a virtual tumult of micro to macro activities or events. However, ... the lives of the members of a particular cultural construction take place within the terms (categories) of this complex, dynamic construction. To be a member of that culture is to live - think, act, talk, be - literally in the terms of its interlinked categories or nodes.” (Scheurich 1997 p162-163)

The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism

The fashion for 'culture' as a tool brought 'multiculturalism' to the education system but not without considerable criticism. Though standing for a wide range of social articulations, ideas and practices, Goldberg points out that the '-ism' is a reduction to a formal singularity, fixing it into a cemented condition, the ideology of 'political correctness'. *"Thus converted into the fundamentals of an '-ism', the heterogeneity characteristic of multicultural conditions is reduced to a pat and pedestrian doctrine, the dogma of presumptive correctness easily dismissed as politics hiding in an academic gown."* (Goldberg in Goldberg ed. 1994 p1) In multicultural education literature, the emphasis on cultures as discrete units is important *"Unless cultures are separate, well-defined units, they cannot be equal. In this way, the normative acceptance of relativistic equality leads to views of culture that ignore the realities of fuzzy borders and mutual interface and interdependency. ... As Perry (1992 p52) remarks, '...the tendency to view non-Western cultures as stable, tradition-bound, timeless entities shifts us dangerously back toward viewing others as beings who are profoundly and inherently different from ourselves."* (Hoffman 1996 p550-552) [78,80,106]

Burtonwood reports how Mullard describes multicultural education as a model of response to the education of black children. *"It is, he says, like immigrant education, multiethnic education and multiracial education, state constructed and state sanctioned. As such it is a white construction of black reality and it is one which defines black people and their cultures rather than racism as the problem."* (Burtonwood 1986 p130) Moreover, although there are diverse perspectives on multiculturalism around the world many seem to share some fundamental assumptions about the nature of self, culture and identity, prevalent in the western cultural sphere of influence. *"Olnick (1990) suggests that, taken as a whole, these discourses can be considered a 'symbolic order' that constructs and constrains action and choice. In this respect, then, it is critical for multicultural educators to become more aware of how the elements of that symbolic order are constituted or culturally embedded, so that we may move toward a more self-aware multiculturalism with greater potential to inform practice."* (Hoffman 1996 p546) [107]

Multiculturalism is unlikely to truly reflect cultural diversity, with views based on western norms of continuity, clarity, consistency, assertiveness, and individuation. Enhancing self esteem is at the heart of what many consider to be multicultural education's task, yet the

self-esteem discourse makes several assumptions that are not tenable cross-culturally. The first is that self-esteem is based on a person's awareness of him or herself as a unique individual with particular, personal, abilities and potentials. Yet, *"In many other cultures where the self is relationally constituted – that is, experienced, defined, and known entirely through and by social relations with others – one's sense of self-worth is not predicated on any notion of individual uniqueness but on one's ability to maintain harmonious relationships with others. ... Unless the American cultural bias toward valuing the self at the expense of the collectivity is put into question, empowerment is mainly another word for the unquestioned dominance of an individualism that oppresses."* (Hoffman 1996 p560-563) As May says, *"The field of multicultural education – as it is popularly conceived and practiced – is, like its predecessors, riven with theoretical inconsistencies and a seemingly terminal inability to translate its emancipatory intentions into actual practice. Multicultural education may be, arguably, more benign than its assimilationist and integrationist predecessors but, beyond its well meaning rhetoric, it is no more effective. It simply continues to perpetuate, in another guise, a system of education which disadvantages minority children."* (May 1994 p35-36 quoted in Hoffman) [55,87,131,153]

Some argue that 'intercultural education would be a better term, stressing that cultures are not discrete and fixed but constantly interacting. (Kwami 1996), while others use the term 'cross-cultural education' for a similar understanding. One such, Gail Nemetz Robinson suggest that physiological, emotional, kinaesthetic, tactile and other sensory modes of perception and responses influence understanding as much as cognitive modes which focus on knowledge about others. She considers cultural transmission to be multi-modal, with cultural learnings acquired within an integrated context, and cultural acquisition involving cultural change. Experience within a culture influences how we see other people. People use cues and schemas to anticipate and interpret the behaviour of others, each one related to cultural experience. [77-79]

Nemetz Robinson says *"The time has come to abolish unfruitful catch phrases like, 'Let's step into the shoes of the 'other' person, or 'Let's see it from 'their' point of view'. Such phrases lead to strategies of imitation and false hopes of total empathy or understanding. It is equally unfruitful to equate knowledge and awareness of cultural differences with human understanding. Such understanding must pervade the senses and influence behaviour."*

Ensuring that learners' own cultural and individual experience is reflected in their multisensory responses to new cultural stimuli will certainly never lead to objectivity in viewing someone else, but it may be a critical step toward approaching 'other' as part of 'self'. To the extent that we perceive other people as similar to ourselves, to the extent that we feel comfortable with their behaviours, and they with ours, mutually positive interactions may take place. It is in the process of developing cultural versatility, i.e. becoming a little multicultural – that the differences between people will be decreased.” (Nemetz Robinson 1988 p101)

If multicultural education is considered the wrong model to deal with racism, it is questionable whether it is any more likely to be able to cope with 'faithism' or 'religionism'. But in examining the experiences and perceptions that are often colloquially grouped together under the term 'religious discrimination', it is important to consider the parallel terminological and definitional debates that have taken place in respect of 'race' and 'ethnicity'. Weller and Purdam (2000) deal with the issue under headings parallel to those used with race, looking at religious prejudice, hatred, disadvantage, discrimination (including direct and indirect), and institutionalised religionism. They make the point that *“Within the social sciences the dominant tradition has understood religion to be a dependent variable of ethnicity. In this tradition, to varying degrees, religion has been seen as certainly a functional, and sometimes an almost instrumental reinforcement of the primary category of ethnicity. Others have argued that religion and ethnicity are to be seen as much more clearly distinct, or in a reciprocal relationship. By contrast, some have argued for the importance of religion as itself a 'social determinate' (Gill 1975).”* (Weller & Purdam 2000 p10) [103,135]

The problem is not imaginary. In 1993, the Runnymede Trust reported that *“Discrimination, exclusion and harassment take place on the basis not only of 'race' or 'colour' but also on the basis of culture, religion and history.”* (Runnymede Trust 1993) There is also, however, a negative perception of the effect of religious commitment on social integration, which Baumann considers quite unwarranted. *“As research on many migrant groups has shown, ... Apart from the cultural-national identification, whose impact is certainly not denied, religion takes on a crucial role for identity re-construction and the maintenance of distinctiveness. ... Contrary to widespread assumptions, ethnic religious participation does not seem to hinder social integration but on the contrary often contributes to a group adapting more quickly to the new context.”* (Baumann 1999) Weller & Purdam suggest that *“By marginalizing religions to*

the 'private' sphere, societies impoverish themselves and exclude the important social resources provided by, for example, religious community organisations which form a major part of the voluntary sector.” (Weller & Purdam 2000 p58) [140]

Religionism in the Education System

In the recent Home Office Research Study into religious discrimination, Weller, Feldman and Purdam report that the areas of life seen as most problematic from the point of view of discrimination are education, employment and the media, and as a source of unfair treatment many religions singled out teachers. Muslim organizations were most likely to say that hostility, verbal abuse and unfair media coverage had worsened over recent years. For those who usually look at the education system as essentially liberal and benign, the statistics may come as a slight shock. *“A similarly high proportion of respondents from Muslim and Sikh organisations, 14 out of 18 NRM/Pagan organisations and 10 out of 11 black-led Christian organisations said that their members experienced frequent or occasional unfair treatment from school teachers ... A majority of Muslim, Sikh, black-led Christian and NRM organisations said their members experienced frequent or occasional unfair treatment from education officials, or the policies and practices of education authorities. ... Parents and young people frequently cited examples of the ways in which schools and teachers failed to include, recognise or reflect their religious identities and beliefs. This was especially the case with respect to the treatment, in religious education, of the smaller religious minorities, since model syllabi do not give much visibility to these groups.” (Weller, Feldman & Purdam 2001 p24 -30)*

At an academic level, one manifestation of religious prejudice in the shape of ‘Orientalism’ has been expertly exposed through the work of Edward Said (1978), whose interest in western perceptions and representations of Islam has also led to a scathing critique of media reportage in ‘Covering Islam’ (1981). But the greatest hostility to religious groups in general would actually seem to come from committed rationalists, for whom religion is seen as intrinsically authoritarian, indoctrinatory and exclusive of independent thought. As White says, *“Indoctrination is objectionable in general because the indoctrinated person is prevented from reflecting upon and thence possibly rejecting beliefs that he has had implanted in him or that he possesses already. A liberal education is anti-indoctrinatory in its encouragement of independent-mindedness, even possibly to the extent of questioning the virtue of independent-mindedness itself and possibly rejecting it to become a religious believer.” (White 1982 p127) It*

seems very strange that fundamentalist rationalists should be so strongly opinionated with regard to a subject about which they care to have so little knowledge, but in the case of our example, John White (1982), the rational extrapolation of the rational perception of his original assumptions lead him to propose a repressive regime imposing an autocratic education system specifically designed to separate children from their parents and mould their vision of the world to reflect that of ... John White!

“If the parent has an obligation to bring up his child as a morally autonomous person, he cannot at the same time have the right to indoctrinate him with any beliefs whatsoever, since some beliefs may contradict those on which his educational endeavours should be based. It is hard to see, for instance, how a desire for one’s child’s moral autonomy is compatible with the attempt to make him into a good Christian, Muslim or orthodox Jew. ... The unavoidable implication seems to be that parents should not be left with this freedom to indoctrinate. Ways must be found, by compulsion, persuasion or enlightened public opinion, to prevent them from hindering the proper education of their children. I am aware that this suggestion will be far from universally welcomed. The freedom of the parent to bring up his own children according to his own lights has long seemed sacrosanct. But I would urge objectors to reflect on the rational basis of this belief. ... One probable reaction to this larger argument in certain quarters will be that it is ‘utopian’. ... One thing an objector might want to say of the present scheme is that it presents a picture of a perfect society which is quite unrealisable.” (White 1982 p166-167)

What is even more extraordinary is that White can look at his plan and describe it in terms of perfection, when clearly it would be an obscene educational dictatorship, more likely to meet a reaction appropriate to a despotic dystopian nightmare.

I am not sure if I should put the case against this argument more forcefully or with more detailed analysis, when I would prefer not to have to deal with it at all. But if I am not interrogating the ‘faith voice’ myself, I must show the challenge that is faced from outside. I do not know how much credibility is attached to opinions such as White’s, but he has been published, and the manner of his ‘rational’ challenge to religion is echoed by others, in print and conversation. If I do not dissect his argument more thoroughly it is quite frankly because it seems so weak as to barely warrant consideration. Perhaps some see his vision as focused searchlight in the dark. To me it looks like tunnel vision.

Chapter Thirteen

Myths & Realities, Perceptions & Power

As I try to examine the education system and the political power that shapes it, I inevitably draw away from any idea of consensus. Any detailed consideration of the workings of the system I draw from my concerns for Muslim children in our schools, using examples of how education might affect them. But though the specificity of such examples may have resonances with situations faced by other faith groups, the details are rarely likely to be mentioned by any communal faith voice. Similarly, any preference I might have towards a specific political solution to perceived problems is certain to face argument, not only with individuals in other faith communities, but with the Muslim community itself. Reference to the data from this point, therefore, is even less valid than in previous chapters. Searching for a faith voice still has a validity in any consideration of the educational situation, but it cannot argue from individual complaints against the system or vouch for any one structural or political solution. Faith educators may have much in common, but they remain individuals with their differences of opinion.

To make any radical changes in any part of the education system can only be done in a timeframe of many years. Things change so slowly; and yet things change so fast. Many teachers feel overwhelmed by the tide of educational change over the last decades and right up to the present moment. A new approach to school management, new curriculum, new systems of assessment and new examinations, new universities with new types of degree courses, a new technology and a whole new way of speaking of education.

Plus, Scotland's education system, independent of any general UK system, was nonetheless still under the control of the UK government until the recent devolution, so with the clear political division between Scotland and England for most of the last two decades, this adds yet another dimension to any consideration of the current situation. Even now, with a Scottish Parliament, no one would dispute the cross-border political links within parties, and undoubtedly considerable pressure can be exerted on Scottish politicians not to do anything to rock the English political boat, which may mean the occasional jib-trimming north of the border. But to be understood, the radical change recently faced by our education system must be looked at in the context of at least the last twenty years.

In the 1980s through the 1990s, there was an obvious shift in the approach to education, introducing the language of market forces, redefining education as an 'ends related' process and a product for consumers. At the same time, committees were established to devise new centralised curricula north and south of the border, to standardise the product. New examinations were introduced for comparative evaluation of schools, with 'league tables' being published on the basis of exam results. With this, the school system was turned into a market, with schools competing for pupils, but with the battle actually being fought by children in examinations, whose results were no longer a personal issue, but the 'standard' by which their schools would be judged. The suggestion was that parents would be able to choose 'better' schools for their children, but of course, with school places being limited the choice more often than not came down to schools selecting pupils.

Despite considerable disquiet with regard to many of these changes, the politics of the situation, with one party in power for eighteen years meant that the political ideology of the ruling party could be implemented with little challenge during that time. When a new government finally came to power in 1997, they found themselves facing a school system in the final stages of implementing the results of years of ideological change, and they were in no position to turn back the tide. Thus opposition quickly turned into accommodation and adaptation to the new status quo, and whatever the long-term ideals, there seems little inclination to establish a new ideology in the short term.

The new White Paper on education in England, far from looking back to what were once understood to be foundational educational principles, is pushing firmly in the direction of specialism, sponsorship, niche-marketing and private sector involvement, with differentially funded 'specialist' schools with partial selection of pupils (on the basis of 'aptitude rather than ability' - though no explanation is given as to how to distinguish one from another), and a need to raise £50,000 in business sponsorship as a criterion for receiving any additional government money. The current UK government sees no conflict in this integration of school and business, and clearly sees no relevance or comparison to business sponsorship of university research, a situation recently condemned by the Lancet and other research journals for the prevalence of business control and manipulation of publication (or non-publication) of research results.

Considering the political leanings in Scotland, it should be unlikely that Scottish education will quickly follow down the way of education modelled in partnership with big business, yet the echoes of that Westminster vision are plain to see in current policy documents, and that most critical aspect of education, the school curriculum, remains the direct heritage of the educational transformation initiated in the 1980s.

Curricula

Harrison says *“The education of the young is the fulfilment of the covenant between generations. It is in the provision of education that we offer to our young people the best that we ourselves have garnered from our fathers. We introduce to them the knowledge and ideas which have illuminated and enriched our lives: we seek to develop in them the skills and capabilities which we have learned are of use, and which have given us our present quality of life, we offer them the best of our values and beliefs, and hope that they will surpass us in the task of living in the light of them - and we do all of this in a process which we hope will deepen their understanding and enlarge their humanity. We call this process education, and we set up schools and employ teachers to put it into effect. ... Education, then, is concerned with the transmission of culture and of capability, with the development of the individual, and with a sense of belonging; and the school curriculum is the vehicle for this process.”* (Harrison in Clark and Munn 1997 p156) In fact, a school curriculum is no more than an attempt to answer questions of what should go on in a school, and who should be learning what, and how. So the curriculum matters, but the curriculum is itself part of a larger context, social and political, and any plan for further change must take that complex dynamic of forces into account. And though the curriculum may take years to change, change it always must, for as Harrison says *“we cannot claim that the influence of schools and of the curriculum on our young people is always an unqualified good.”* (Harrison in Clark and Munn 1997 p157)

A curriculum defines the aims and objectives of education, and in greater or lesser detail defines modes of teaching and content of learning. In that detail lays the difference between flexibility and definition, freedom and control. Despite the increasing provision of common classroom materials distributed to all schools via the web, teaching methods are less central to our curricula than teaching content, and it is necessary to understand the various ways that content can control the process. The selection of the areas of human experience to be

included can be critical. In 1972 UNESCO could say *“The neglect or disdain from which some elements of educational programmes continue to suffer, the deficiencies and imbalance of curricula appear to us to be among the most serious symptoms of the disease of which education is both the victim and the cause. The separation of its intellectual, physical, aesthetic, moral and social components is an indication of alienation, undervaluation and mutilation of the human person.”* (Faure et al 1972 p69) Many would see current curricula as focusing on a relatively narrow range of human experience, for all the current 5-14 Guidelines avowal of Breadth, Balance, Coherence, Continuity and Progression. But here the dependence on university education as a model can be seen. *“Perhaps the biggest influence on curriculum structure has been the notion that it should be built on a set of academic disciplines, be knowledge based and essentially about cognitive development. The theory of disciplines is, of course, not new and it has been revised and redefined to fit different contexts. It has influential and persuasive supporters and continues to be the basis of much teacher education. The principal case made for this model of curriculum is that disciplines, or subjects, are somehow timeless forms of knowledge. However, the idea of absolute truths has gone and with it much of the confidence we once had in ‘experts’ even though we live in a world of ever narrower specialisms ... the traditional view of knowledge built on a respect, even reverence, for specialists has failed because it reduces or ignores the importance of interconnections and relationships in favour of the ‘expert’. The school curriculum exhibits this same flaw.”* (Barr in Kirk & Glaister 1992 p37)

Disciplines are social constructs that reinforce an idea of a society in which boundaries are clearly defined, perhaps not the best approach to educating for an interconnected world. Those best suited to succeed in the system are unlikely to complain, however, *“For a minority it has been, and will continue to be, successful in terms of examination success and entry to tertiary education; but no matter how much energy is put into the quest for innovative methodologies, most adolescents simply don’t find the components of the curriculum compelling. The principal reason for this lack of enthusiasm is because the model fails to exploit or recognise the learner’s experience. It provides a view of knowledge that is not shared by learners but which is imposed on learners. ... If we in Europe need to ‘revalue more than ever human resources’ it is a factor that cannot be ignored.”* (Barr in Kirk & Glaister 1992 p37-39) Good teachers will always find a way to inject life into a subject, and try to tie it into pupils’ experiences, but where the model is prescriptive and the assessment paperwork vast, it can

only tempt teachers to abandon the effort involved in preparing imaginative approaches to teaching in class.

Religious and Moral Education

The different aspects of the curriculum can be considered in terms of the 5-14 Guidelines for Religious and Moral Education. Study of religion (Christianity and Other World Religions) has been divided into five subject areas or 'strands': Celebrations, festivals, ceremonies and customs; Sacred writings, stories and key figures; Beliefs; Sacred places, worship and symbols; Moral values and attitudes. For all the apparent neutrality of these divisions, they are an artificial structure imposed as a generalized perspective on religion, which are actually quite arbitrary, and many alternative structures of comparison have been proposed. Perhaps one of the best known alternatives is that of Ninian Smart, who considers religion in terms of seven characteristics or 'dimensions': Practical and Ritual; Experiential and Emotional; Narrative or Mythic; Doctrinal and Philosophical; Ethical and Legal; Social and Institutional; Material. As can be imagined, viewing religion in terms of such dissimilar perspectives might well use the same 'data', but will inevitably set any understandings drawn from that data in a very different overall concept structure for the essential nature of religion. The intention may be to allow children to form their own opinions as to the 'truth' of religious experience, but few are in a position to see the underlying intellectual structure on which their understanding of religion is being shaped.

"Students are encouraged to look at culture through the lens of categories that are familiar to them, assuming that needs, wants, and so forth are basically the same no matter where one goes. Rather than teaching students to challenge such assumptions and to look critically at how they shape their own and other's thinking and behaviour, this exercise simply reinforces the categories, values, and world views that are already in place." (Hoffman 1996 p550-552)

Although it is recognized that the experiential aspect of religion is crucial to its nature, it was felt necessary to separate this from the intellectual. This was done because the current approach to education requires a form of learning that can be assessed in a way similar to other academic disciplines. But it is the intellect that makes sense of experience, and so is intrinsic to determining the response to experience, seeing the context in which our experience is set, and determining a future life path in the light of that experience. The

suggestion that the five strands are universals, and comparatives between religions, therefore needs to be examined closely as to its basis for religious and moral 'education'.

Considering previous comments on the association of subject division with 'experts' in various fields, it is perhaps salutary to examine the composition of the Review and Development Group on Religious, Social and Moral Education (RDG5). Working Paper No.7, under 'Culture and Diversity' says *"Religious and moral education in dealing with world religions must be free from racial, cultural or religious bias ... Efforts must be made to ensure that religions are presented in a fair and accurate way that adherents of that religion would recognise and subscribe to. ... Factors producing bias in curricular materials include omission, condescension, images of superiority/dependence, generalisation, role stereotyping, life style stereotyping, inaccuracy or misinformation, tokenism, value-laden language and the presentation of a European/Western-centred perspective only."* (SOED 1991 p13) Strange therefore, that the 21 members of the development group deciding subject strands, attainment targets and programmes of study with regard to 'other world religions', apparently did not include any members of 'other' world religions themselves, an 'omission' that would perhaps reinforce the sense of 'otherness' of world religions. Of course, this omission may not have been due to 'condescension' towards (or assumptions of 'superiority' over) educationists from other world religions, but a genuine desire on the part of those convening the group to avoid any possible accusations of 'tokenism' that might have been associated with the appointment of just one or two. It does seem to have been an extraordinary assumption, however, that a completely European/Western development group were in a position to avoid a 'European/Western perspective only', certainly enough to recommend such a stance in their proposed curriculum.

I must make clear that I have no personal animosity towards the members of RDG5. Some of them I have known for some years – not friends in the way that one would use the term for those close socially and personally, but people I meet occasionally at gatherings of educationists, and with whom I am always happy to reacquaint myself each time we meet. These are people of the best intention, involved in the implementation of political instruction. I don't object to them not having a deeper knowledge of Islam, only that they were put in a position where they had to define how it is taught.

But the complaint against subject division goes deeper than mere input. Reduction of religions to discrete units for consideration, inevitably means that comparisons and

equivalences are drawn between religions in ways that distort. The Qur'an is not the 'Muslim Bible', nor Muhammad the 'Muslim Jesus'. The most meaningful comparison to be drawn between the two religions in this regard is between what the Qur'an means to Muslims and what Jesus means to Christians. This is just one example involving two world religions, but clearly many more incongruences could be found between Christianity and Islam, as well as all the permutations of other religions being studied, and that is before examining the detail of attainment targets. Now clearly attainment targets in 'other world religions' need to be fairly basic when each strand is unlikely to receive more than 0.2% of curriculum time, which leaves little room for much more than 'generalisation' and 'stereotyping', so once again the curriculum would seem to manifest all the 'factors producing bias' that it insists teachers should avoid. It is in such fundamental reductions that key differences of perception are insinuated. In Level E of the strand 'Sacred writings, stories and key figures', the 'different genres of religious literature' are exemplified as 'history, myth, moral teaching'; no suggestion of 'Revelation' as a recommended approach here.

The problems with a prescriptive list of attainment targets also include the issue of 'inaccuracy' and 'misinformation'. Centralisation of agreed information may have many advantages, but when that information is false, that inaccuracy is throughout the entire system. RDG5 may have consulted widely before issuing Working Paper No.7, but the attainment targets were minimal, and in many ways much more satisfactory, but after further consultation these were rewritten greatly expanded with more detail for the final guidelines, and hurriedly published with no further discussion of the final draft. To illustrate the effect on the Guidelines, it may be salutary to look at the changes in 'Moral Values and Attitudes' level C. The Working Paper target was *"Be able to explore the meaning of religious stories which illustrate moral values and be able to relate these to everyday living."* In the National Guidelines this has transformed to *"Show some knowledge and understanding of the code of conduct in one religion, e.g. the Ten Commandments as part of the Torah in Judaism, the 5 Pillars of Islam."* (SOED 1992 p10) Now the Ten Commandments may perhaps be described as a code of conduct, but the Five Pillars do not fit that description at all, being a collective term for the five aspects of formal worship in Islam. Not only do the Five Pillars have nothing to do with Moral Values and Attitudes (apart from being one facet of an integrated moral way of life), but they have virtually no resemblance to the Ten Commandments in any way, apart from the fact that they both begin with a number.

These examples may seem like petty fault-finding in the greater context of the curriculum, but the curriculum is set out as authoritative, and in fact the Five Pillars misunderstanding was transferred directly and unquestioned into the Scottish Catholic Education Commission RE Guidelines (1994) for use in Catholic schools. But these examples are not isolated but symptomatic of the lack of expertise in those deciding on the curriculum guidelines with regard to the teaching of aspects of Islam. Lack of specification may mean that many teachers get things wrong in their own way, but centralized misinformation means that all teachers get things wrong in the same way. One can be seen as simple ignorance, but the other is the establishment of a formally agreed ‘truth’ that never was. It is almost certain that the development group were more familiar with aspects of Christianity, but even so, in the light of Muslim experience it is likely that the Christianity curriculum subtext (and certainly the choice of strands) may have a similar ‘shaping’ function that does not necessarily do Christianity any great favours. The ‘distancing’ and ‘abstraction’ that is at the heart of secular education means that the very language of the curriculum is one of separation between pupil and teacher, *“In these attainment targets, pupils will:”* sits at the top of pages, and targets are expressed in the language of ‘otherness’: *“Know that Christians have...”*; *“Understand that Christians believe...”* etc. Compare this to the inclusiveness of the guide to the Veritas Religious Education Programme, The Irish Episcopal Commission on Catechetics ‘Children of God’ series (Melody 1987); *“How can I live my Christian faith with other people, young and old, in such a way that this faith becomes central in our lives and the basis of all our decisions? This is a question that faces every parent, teacher and priest.”* (p3) *“We are surrounded yet again by signs of God...”* (p6); *“We are all God’s children...”* (p15); *“We grow together...”* (p31). These are very different relationships between teacher and pupil.

Wright considers modern religious education in the light of Habermas’ analysis. *“It functions within a public education system that is differentiated from the lifeworlds of the diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs. In the main, effective ownership of religious education has passed from the religious communities to the state, and as such it adopts the state’s agenda of instrumental rationality; ...Phenomenological religious education in the 1970s and 1980s adopted a normative rationality concerned to pass on the liberal values of freedom and tolerance in a multi-faith context. The contemporary interest in spirituality reflects a dramaturgical rationality which serves the postmodern need to encourage individuals to achieve*

their own freedom and identity in a context in which society has lost faith in the possibility of anything other than localised solutions to its spiritual fragmentation. ... The system of religious education thus prepackages and forecloses the problem of religious truth and imposes its solutions onto the lifeworlds of our everyday beliefs. ... Thus religious education itself cannot be abstracted from the power structures that impose ideological representations: it functions instrumentally to construct and apply models and interpretations of religion that distort the issue of religious truth in the service of benign forms of social and psychological engineering.” (Wright 1998 p65-66) The difficulty a teacher may face in dealing with advice handed down from a higher state power can be seen in the recent HMI recommendations as to the conduct of Religious Observance.

Many understand Religious Observance to be *“The experience of and/or participation in worship, usually in the form of class or school assemblies”* (SRC, undated), which may well have been the original purpose of its statutory requirement in schools (its discontinuance requires a poll of local electors). But this is certainly not the way that it is defined in the RME guidelines, which say *“What is meant by ‘religious observance’? The term is usually taken to refer to assemblies, of the whole school or part of it, during which something akin to worship takes place. But ‘something akin’ covers a wide variety of practice.”* (SOED 1992 p55) Now Her Majesty’s Inspectors recently ‘advised’ teachers to include more non-Christian material as a part of Religious Observance, yet every inter-faith organisation knows that of all inter-faith activities, communal worship is the most difficult to deal with. There is no other area of inter-faith co-operation that is so sensitive, and so likely to give offence to those not involved in its formulation. Nonetheless, as it seems the rational thing to do, apparently no-one felt the need to investigate the matter before deciding on state policy, or they might have learned that for inter-faith worship, the only simple solution is silence. No matter how much one might approve of the aims of religious observance as stated in the curriculum, e.g. *“to promote the ethos of the school”*, and *“to provide opportunity for individual reflection”*, the easiest solution to the problem for secular educationists would seem to be to stop pretending that ‘something akin to’ is either worship or religious observance, and then discuss the options openly.

The fact that a part of the education process has a name which is misleading does not mean that same part of the education process does not have a worthy function. Faith educators may see RME only as ‘something akin to’ Religious Education, but what is dealt with under

that curriculum heading can still have many worthy purposes. In the general confusion between ethnicity, culture, and religion, RME can serve as a focus for related subjects with no specific curriculum time allocation. *“In countries such as Britain and Sweden, which have pioneered a non-confessional multifaith approach to RE since the late 60s and early 70s, it has been recognized by some as the main location for such multicultural education as existed.”* (Cush, Diskus 1999) Teacher education institutions in Scotland prepare teachers to take into account issues of diversity, in the knowledge that the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 imposes a duty on all those who provide services for children *“to have regard to children’s religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.”* (Scottish Executive Central Research Unit 2001 p40). Yet it is clear that *“Scottish education has largely failed to embed racial equality issues within teaching and learning in any systematic way. While some evidence exists of multicultural education being included within the curriculum, this inclusion has not been systematic across all schools, education authorities or curriculum areas nor has there been clear evidence of anti-racist approaches being developed and promoted. ... Teacher education courses fail to provide training to develop teacher competencies for working within a contemporary multilingual, multi-faith, multicultural, multiracial classroom.”* (Scottish Executive Central Research Unit 2001 p44)

It is not that religion is not the perfect umbrella under which to deal with such issues crucial to our society as cultural difference and social justice; this merely highlights the ‘usefulness’ of Religious Education. But crucial issues obviously require curriculum time, and if that time is not made available the concern must be that the multicultural tail could end up wagging the religious education dog. The problem for such time allocations is twofold: firstly, the more prescriptive the curriculum the less flexibility for implementation, the more teacher time used for assessment and the less available for group planning and execution of cross-curricular issues such as culture; secondly, where time is allocated for flexible use (20% in the National Guidelines), that time will always tend to be under the claim of those ‘exam’ subjects by which the school is being judged. In fact, it would seem that *“Linguistic and cultural diversity has gone largely unrecognized by educational service providers and where these issues have been recognized they are mainly seen as problems.”* (Scottish Executive Central Research Unit 2001 p46), and within that ‘cultural diversity’ lies the issue of faith minorities.

He once stayed on Iona for a Muslim/Christian relations week, with lots of shared workshops, and walks around the island, and lengthy group and individual discussions. Most of the week he made his prayers in his room, with the window looking out over the cloisters, but there were attempts made to find a way of shared worship. He took part in one not quite impromptu event in the Abbey, and it took a whole day for a fairly large group of people to come up with a way of bridging between the faiths, that held no offence, no threat, a common language with no misunderstanding. But that was quite an original affair, and he knew that it would not be so easy to participate in anything closer to the heart of Christian worship, and he knew that he had been invited to take part in the Communion that Sunday. In the event, it took a few hours of discussion between the Minister and himself before the parameters of what was possible were agreed. And on the Sunday as part of the Communion Service within the ancient walls of the Abbey, he recited and translated some verses from Qur'an, and shared communion bread with her and the congregation - though he didn't share the wine. But of course, that was Iona, and as a Glasgow minister said later "Well, I'd never get away with that in my church."

Illustration No. 11

Personal and Social Development

Another subject which now has a very blurred field with RME is that of Personal and Social Development (Health Education has also been made part of the group), a subject with a number of shared educational issues, not the least being the problem of definition. *"Personal and social development covers so many different aspects of a pupil's development that it seems impossible to make any coherent sense of it as a curriculum area. ... Personal and social development, though sounding grand, seems to be no more than a pot-pourri of sweet sounding, but only loosely connected, skills, habits, bits of knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, feelings. Furthermore, selection from all these would seem to reflect no more than what this or that teacher thinks to be personally nice and socially useful."* (Pring 1984 p4) Perhaps inevitably, when dealing with those areas which also preoccupy faith groups, the SCCC discussion paper, 'The Heart of the Matter' has many echoes of what has been said of RME. *"Education is not a commodity, a collection of qualifications acquired as a means to a future end. It is an end in itself, concerned first and foremost with the development of individual talents and capacities and with the fulfillment of personal goals in a complex and changing society. The very process of being educated develops in young people ways of understanding and behaving which help to structure the inner self and to promote the recognition that personal motives and actions must be mediated by the need for social responsibility. The imperative is to provide young people with a sound foundation on which to base moral and ethical decisions and behaviour which respect the dignity of themselves and others and the nature of the inter-*

dependent world in which we live. This is the heart of the matter. This is education for personal and social development” (SCCC 1995 p1)

The heart of the matter in education, and therefore the heart of the matter in teaching: *“To describe teaching without reference to its central role in personal and social development, would fail to capture its essential meaning. The processes of all teaching and learning are intimately bound up in personal and social development. Teaching is an enterprise central to intellectual and personal and social growth. Teaching is a role, not an act or performance, rather a series of ‘conversations’ in which the language, whatever the subject matter, is inevitably moral in its impact on learners.”* (SCCC 1995 p2) The discussion paper quotes Fenstermacher with regard to teachers impact as moral educators, and the way their behaviour needs to be shaped in the light of this. *“Just as we understand that teachers must engage in critical thinking with students if they expect students to think critically in their presence, they must exemplify moral principles and virtues in order to elicit them from students.”* (G.D Fenstermacher 1990 p135) This is a disturbing concept for many teachers, but the SCCC make quite plain that PSD is not just a topic for a subject specialist. *“Every aspect of education is related to every learner’s personal and social development. Without such relation, the subjects and courses are only aggregations of information, concepts and skills. Beyond the content lie the opportunities for learners and teachers to engage in dialogues and conversations that will go beyond but also make sense of the curriculum content.”* (SCCC 1995 p12) It seems strange therefore that the education system would put such stress on content, which is largely incidental. It would seem that it is RME and PSD that come closest to the essential nature of education.

Another attribute they share is that neither is amenable to the most common forms of assessment involving quantitative description, and in trying to focus on things which can best be described this way, it is possible to lose the very qualities it is wished to explore and assess. Describing the ways in which qualities develop is a complex matter, and there is a clear temptation to reduce that complexity to suit the limitations of the system. It is necessary to increase the range of ways to describe, interpret and evaluate, to achieve a more complete way of portraying the development of personal and social qualities in young people.

“Addressing the issue of assessment means recognizing that teachers perceive and interpret using a wider range of knowledge than is perhaps at present acknowledged as germane to assessment. An important element in this process is what might best be described as

'discernment', that is the exercise of professional judgement by the teacher. This is a matter of sensitivity, of perceptions and of subtle distinctions. Teachers are increasingly aware of the significance of this, and an appropriate language is already being developed." (SCCC 1995 p9)

And as Pring points out, *"Personal and social development cannot avoid political questions however 'neutral' the teacher's role is considered to be."* (Pring 1984 p5) In PSD as in RME, recognition of the validity of the individual response is crucial. *"Approaches to learning and teaching must therefore include a view of assessment which encourages learners to recognize the processes of their own learning through: reviewing progress; setting their own targets; negotiating their own pathways; and recording their own achievements. ... In education of personal and social development, assessment must recognize the central importance of the learners' responses and judgements in the process."* (SCCC 1995 p14)

The Heart of the Matter identifies a number of qualities and disposition, skills and understandings, that are essential for personal development, and all of these have the distinction that they are culturally contextual. For cultural/faith minorities, therefore, teacher expertise in such matters is vitally important. PSD, as well as being bundled with RME in the main 5-14 curriculum areas, is also named as a subject to be given priority as a cross curricular topic, along with a recognition of the importance of including a cultural context by the naming of 'the culture of Scotland' as another subject to be addressed across the curriculum. Social issues will also need to be addressed through 'education for citizenship' and 'education for work', which along with ICT make up the final list of cross-curricular aspects of education. (LTS 2000 p11) All of these aspects are intensely political. The LTS discussion paper on citizenship makes this clear when it says *"Ways and means are being sought to tackle disaffection and disengagement from society and, more broadly, to address issues of social injustice and of personal identity. ... Scotland and the rest of the UK exist in a rapidly changing wider world. ... Multinational corporations exert increasing influence over national economies and cultures via their investment decisions and their marketing of products and services. At the same time, the gaps and inequalities between the economically rich and poor seem to be widening. International and global trends create social pressures as well as opening opportunities for individuals and society. They raise fresh issues about the distribution of power and the extent to which individuals, local communities, territorial states and business corporations have influence over a host of social, economic and environmental matters."* (LTS 2000)

This concern for personal identity and social justice could be seen as springing from the same well of concerns that are dear to the hearts of religious believers, if it were not for the details that suggest a very different perspective on the world. *“Being a citizen is therefore, closely bound up with the multiple roles that individuals have in society – as producers or consumers of goods and services, as contributors to economic and cultural development – as well as with various facets of each individual’s personal, social and working life. For example, the opportunity to exercise personal choice as a consumer of particular products or services is an increasingly influential strand of citizenship in contemporary society.”* (LTS 2000) The ‘multiple roles’ of individuals have but four examples, three of which are entirely ‘market’ related: ‘producer’, ‘consumer’, and ‘contributor to economic ... development’. An individual life may be seen as ‘personal, social and working’, but the facet chosen as an example of citizenship is that of being ‘a consumer’. Thus it can be seen that the ‘good person’ that is the aim of faith education, is reduced to something much more economic in citizenship.

This approach to life is now seen as an important aspect of education from the age of three years old. Despite the fact that more playful personal and social facets of a child’s life may be seen as crucial by many educators, this aspect seems to have been overlooked in the concern for economic awareness in citizens. *“The editor is regularly told by teachers and others in primary schools that they ‘know’ or ‘feel’ that play for children is or must be a valuable process, yet they are also aware that this is not often reflected in their planning or curriculum management and that the context of education generally is antithetical to play. What is more, they really do not know what to do about it and find articulating the justification for play practices extremely difficult.”* (Suschitzky & Chapman 1998 pix) It is considered a truism that *“If we consider young children, it is a familiar fact that play is educational and is the crucially important way in which they learn to understand the world.”* (Warnock 1977 p151-153), but yet again it can be seen how a prescriptive curriculum has the capacity to render a subject or mode of learning unimportant and unjustifiable in an education system by means of simple curricular exclusion.

The Learning Community

The SCCC position paper ‘Parents and the Curriculum’ recognises that *“The home and the school are mutually dependent learning contexts, both of which are important influences on the*

lives of young people. ... Schools do not exist in isolation. They are an integral part of the organism that is the wider community. ... Since schools are keen to expand the dialogue to include those parents who are often hard to reach, there is a need to take a broader perspective on strategies for collaboration between schools and parents than is presently the case." (SCCC 1996 Foreword) If schools are to 'take a broader perspective', however, they will need to question some of the myths on which they base their views. The same paper, for instance, says *"Schools, for teachers, are very different places than for pupils, or parents. It would be surprising if that were not so. There is, though, a common denominator, whatever the perspective, and that is the concept of the school as a community in which learning is the first priority – a community of learners, a learning school."* (SCCC 1996 p3) Now if there is one thing that is instantly apparent in any school, it is that everyone is not there to learn. A small minority is there to teach. The fact is that although teachers may be conscious of life-learning and occasionally skill learning from their pupils, and no matter that teachers may be studying outside school hours, or have a different understanding of learning without qualification objectives, in the eyes of the pupils they are not demonstrating learning, they are demonstrating teaching. The community of learners does not include them.

Similarly, *Parents and the Curriculum* suggests that *"As well as 'taking the school into the home', partnership can also involve 'bringing the home into the school' by inviting parents to take part in a variety of school-based activities. Significant numbers of parents attend parents' evenings, become members of the School Board, join the Parent/Teacher Association, help at school shows, raise money at school fetes, help out in the library. For these parents the benefits of interacting in such ways with the school are substantial, both for themselves and for their children."* (SCCC 1996 p6) Notwithstanding the fact that *"As far as parent-teacher relationships are concerned, the formal mechanism of school boards has not resulted in the intended greater involvement of parents in school decision-making."* (Munn in Clark and Munn 1997 p158), the range of suggested parental involvement seems rather limited. The school fetes and shows, the Board meetings and PTAs, may well be highly educational, but it will not be education in any form that their children would recognize. In most of those 'learning school's it is only the children that are doing the learning. The adults are running things.

This division of labour is not the only way to see the purpose of a school. As Reagan says, *"A ... common theme in the non-Western educational traditions that we have studied is that*

education, to a great extent, has tended to be community based and communal in nature. Not only have adults and older children in the community tended to play important educational roles in the society but, with relatively few exceptions, there has been relatively little focus on identifying educational specialists in non-Western societies. Education and childrearing have commonly been seen as a social responsibility shared by all of the members of the community. Although individuals may play greater or lesser roles in this undertaking, it is significantly seen as the province of everyone. Thus the concept of some adults being 'teachers' and others (presumably) being 'non-teachers' is a somewhat alien one to many traditions." (Reagan 1996 p142) When the SCCC in 'Sharing Responsibility' claim that *"Effective schools ... recognize the need to ensure that the voices of all those directly involved in the school ... have a right to participate in some of the processes of decision making, so that school becomes something that is done 'with' them and 'for' them rather than simply 'to' them."* (Sharing Responsibility, SCCC 1996), what is not made clear is how learning is expected to be done 'with' them, at least not in the sense of 'using' but in the sense of 'accompanying'.

Surely if children are to learn that 'learning' is important 'lifelong', it would be useful for them to be familiar with the sight of adults studying. Certainly there are examples of parents being involved in schools in classroom helper schemes and the like. Munn says *"Schools have also been opening their doors to adults wishing to return to study, and adults studying alongside young people in daytime classes is no longer an unusual sight."* (Munn in Clark and Munn 1997 p158), and it may not be unusual for Munn, but such arrangements are not exactly common. There may be greater possibilities for new and flexible approaches in the New Community Schools, with the Prospectus stating as an essential characteristic *"Integrated provision of school education, informal as well as formal education, social work and health education and promotion services."* (Scottish Office 1998) The overall stress on integration of education and welfare, however, may concentrate on education as a service without considering the basic problem of making the process enjoyable enough for everyone, young and old, to want it. According to Munn, *"Many schools already make their accommodation, leisure facilities and learning resources available to the local community. Perhaps the changing structure of local government and the budgetary constraints under which it operates will encourage more collaboration between schools, leisure and recreation, community education and social work services."* (Munn in Clark and Munn 1997 p158) If the schooling that is

generally described as education is truly devised for the benefit of individual learners, young or old, it might be expected that more would devote themselves to it as a leisure pursuit.

In 'Teaching for Effective Learning' the point is made that *"A central principle is that young people should value and enjoy learning and be good at it. How crucial it is therefore that teachers themselves should value learning, enjoy learning, be good at it and should demonstrate this at first hand to the young people whom they teach."* (SCCC 1995 p23)

Unfortunately it also suggests *"For many people, the reason why they became a teacher is now well hidden. Teachers tend not to ask the questions: 'Why am I doing this?' and 'Why am I doing it this way?' As a result teachers can find that their practice is driven mainly by day-to-day imperatives."* (SCCC 1995 p24) In the day-to-day imperatives of targets and outcomes, it is easy to forget the most precious part of their relationship with pupils, their 'learning' example and their 'moral' example. *"I would expect to be able to count upon a fair level of professional consensus that education and teaching are inherently moral enterprises and that it is well nigh impossible for teachers to deny that much of what they do in the classroom, in the context of whatever else they teach, is liable to have – for good or ill – a profound influence on the attitudes, beliefs and conduct of their pupils of a broadly moral kind."* (Carr 1996 p2)

Pring relates the story of an American high school principal who sends a letter to his teachers on their first day at the school *"Dear Teacher: I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmans. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human."* (Pring 1984 pviii) Even at its easiest *"It must be seen that the profession of teaching is a very difficult and daunting one. It is based on the human qualities which live in the teacher. Whatever programmes we make, they can never replace or exceed the humanity of the teacher. If responsibility is taken from the teacher, the teacher is reduced. If it is given, then the teacher has the opportunity to further the understanding of the child and to assist in his or her unfolding personality. Teaching is a two-way process – the better our teaching, the more we receive back for our own enrichment."* (Thomson, 1996 p12) As

it says in the Heart of the Matter, *“The quality of young peoples experience in schools will only improve when the same is true for teachers and other staff members.”* (SCCC 1995 p3)

One major problem that teachers face along with pupils is that during the course of children’s education they encounter several very different models of the education process. Although the 5-14 National Guidelines are intended to provide continuity at transition from pre-school to P1 and from P7 to S1, there is no doubt that a child transferring from primary to secondary faces a different kind of ‘education’. *“The prevalent assumption in the post-war years, and long afterwards, was that secondary teaching, especially in grammar schools, was more important and so more worthy of graduates, who should not ‘waste’ their degree expertise on the under-11s.”* (Blyth in Richards and Taylor ed. 1998 p12) Fortunately this perception has changed to some extent, but its echo lingers on in many aspects of ‘difference’. Teachers have different types of qualifications, different literature, and in general a different pedagogy and attitude. One clear outward sign of difference is readily seen *“Class teachers, and especially those employed in infant schools, have been predominantly female. This has been partly because primary teaching with its distinctive pattern of terms and holidays but limited remuneration has tended to suit women rather than men, and partly because of established stereotypes of employment and of the ‘nurturing’ role of women. The result has been a limitation of adult role models not only for boys but also for girls. With the more rapid social maturation of both girls and boys, this issue has become more acute during the half-century since 1945, and there is little sign that any change in this respect is likely.”* (Blyth in Richards and Taylor ed. 1998 p13)

The relative status of teachers at different stages of education is also related to the status of pupils perceived in terms of the ‘evolution’ of the child into the adult. *“The words ‘baby’, ‘infant’, ‘child’, and ‘youth’ are commonly used to describe the continuum from total dependence to total independence. But they also imply a process of evolution to maturity in which changing expectations of behaviour and capacity can be expected which require, in turn, increasing rights, duties, and responsibilities. There are, nevertheless, clear, if decreasing, imputations of inferiority attached to each of these stages, with no rigidly defined categorical points at which individuals can be said to have moved from one to the next. Obviously the extension of compulsory schooling, an important reinforcement of juvenility, seems to lengthen this procession to adulthood.”* (Nicholas 1983 p14) This continuous period of education from pre-school to early twenties challenges many of the aims and ideals on which the different phases

of 'schooling' take place, and with the legal age of adulthood being lowered, and the future on which the system is predicated becoming ever more uncertain, questions must be asked as to whether the current system remains suitable to requirements. *"School and training systems developed in the past 150-200 years have never been intended to recognise and serve 'young adults' as such. In so far as they have prepared 'youth' for 'transition' to someone else's prescription for adult life, that initiation process has been based upon 'perennial' assumptions for a future that is now technologically obsolete, unpredictable and indeed dependent upon development by young adults themselves through a network of contacts, communications and learning resources without precedent.* (King in Burns & Welch 1992 p387-388)

Universities and the New Balance of Power

With nearly 50% of the school population now staying in education through university, as opposed to the 3% of only forty years ago, it is abundantly clear that universities themselves cannot be left out of any critique of the school system. It is necessary to consider whether universities are still doing what they were designed for, whether anything has been lost in such changes as they have recently been through, and whether they are suited to doing what is expected of them now. As it is also clear that their education paradigm dominates most school teaching, which is largely aimed at pupils achieving university entrance, it would seem urgent that as part of the education debate, universities look to their first principles before social, political and technological change, impose a new status quo from the outside. Geaves (1998) refers to Barnett's suggestion that *"a higher education designed around skills is not fulfilling the function of higher education at all. He suggests that it is 'a substitution of technique for insight; of strategic reason for communication; and of behaviour for wisdom'. Barnett argues that the subject areas in which the new universities specialise such as engineering, accountancy, business studies, and nursing are dominantly vocational. He suggests that their presence within academe is 'parasitical' as they depend for their existence on wider social institutions outside the domain of the universities themselves (Barnett 1994 pp.61-62). These are not subjects that focus on knowledge as emancipatory but utilitarian."* (Geaves 1998 p103) Barnett says that *"the clamour for a skills-focused curriculum is representative of a power-laden discourse. It is ideological in attempting to shift the university in a direction that reflects particular societal interests and it is threatening in that its assimilation into higher education will reduce the scope available to fulfil the emancipatory potential in the idea of higher*

education.” (Barnett 1994 p.55) Universities need to consider whether they still wish to remain ‘emancipatory’, and if so, how to achieve it.

Change is, of course, already happening. As Redner puts it, *“The multiversity is the institution of the future, for all over the world, including Europe, universities are being inevitable forced to change themselves in this direction. The reason is that the multiversity is a complex of institutions that can together fulfil all the diverse educational and research requirements of the state, industry and society in general ... What needs to be explored in greater detail is how the multiversity in the service of this symbiosis has expanded into a knowledge complex which holds a near monopoly of all knowledge in society.”* (Redner 1987 52-3 in (Burns & Welch 1992 p28)) It is perhaps noticeable that the idea of education being for the benefit of the individual has already gone missing, and that the balance of power between state, industry and society also needs to be considered seriously when a monopoly of knowledge is at stake. If universities are also ‘a community of learners’, and by reputation some of the best minds available to think about the problem, those learners should surely be concentrating urgently on the forthcoming changes that are likely to dominate their lives. Yet those learners have rarely been involved in consideration of general educational paradigms, let alone arching across subjects and disciplines. Richmond points out that *“As one writer puts it, ‘The curriculum has been expanded until it covers nearly every conceivable subject; and such is the variety of courses that merely to comprehend what the titles of all of them mean would require an almost omniscient mind. If one wished to obtain even a superficial knowledge of the buildings and other material facilities of the university one would have to spend at least a month in the inspection of them.’ A month? The twentieth century don may spend half a lifetime without knowing where this or that department is located or what goes on inside it and without even recognizing its occupants as colleagues.”* (Richmond 1963 p89-90)

Strangely, the recent domination of higher education by industry may yet lead to more holistic forms of education. There are signs of a demand for ‘higher order skills’, and Geaves quotes the Head of Planning at Royal Dutch Shell *“He argues that education has taught us to fragment problems into discrete components in order to make the task more manageable and therefore we often lose the ‘intrinsic sense of a connection to a greater whole’ (Senge, 1990, p.3). ... Senge argues that learning organisations need to move away from promoting ‘systems thinking’ which focuses on isolated parts of the system to ‘personal mastery’ where individuals*

are encouraged to commit themselves to lifelong learning by continually 'clarifying and deepening personal vision' (p.7). There is a spiritual content to Senge's approach to learning as he uses terms like 'focusing energy'; 'developing patience'; 'seeing reality objectively'; 'finding untapped resources'; 'being committed'; 'having a sense of mission'; 'being excited by life'. Senge argues that it is the role of a learning organisation to challenge deeply ingrained assumptions and mental constructions of how we view reality. He suggests that industry requires employees that are aware of their mental models and the effect that they have on behaviour." (Geaves 1998 103-104) This suggests that as universities rush to provide specialised courses to provide graduates tailored for jobs in specific industries, they may be losing a more holistic view that industry actually requires.

In my youth, as a student, there was a story at my university of William Empson and the wonderful lecture that he gave one day. The only problem was that to a large number of English Literature students, he gave the entire lecture in Chinese. Accompanying himself with Chinese bells and gongs, while the students sat uncomprehending, his lecture was undeniably ex-curricular. Yet of all the lectures those students attended in whatever subject, there is no doubt as to the one which will last the longest in their memories.

According to Foucault *"The role of the intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do. By what right would he do so? ... The work of an intellectual is not to shape others' political will; it is, through the analysis that he carries out in his field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to re-examine rules and institutions and on the basis of this re-problematization (in which he carries out his specific task as an intellectual) to participate in the formation of a political will (in which he has his role as a citizen to play)."*

(Foucault 1984 : ed. LD Kritzman 1988 p265) Yet if it is not the intellectual's role to tell others what to do, surely it is no more the intellectual's role to tell intellectuals how to think.

Questioning has its place, but action requires decision, which is only delayed indefinitely by eternal scepticism, surrendering power to those who think less and act more. Politics requires commitment to action, which requires a decision as to what is good and what is bad for self and/or society, and an understanding of some justice that is important enough to make an effort for. It is not a matter of telling others what they have to do, so much as trying to persuade others as to what is preferable. In matters of power and justice, the individual

citizen does not just play a role in a political will, but has an individual political will that for personal integrity must be expressed even as a political minority of one.

With skill in analysis of existing structures, and the power of reinvention of the familiar, the intellectual has an essential part to play in the reconstruction of political thought. To reduce intellectual participation to thought alone is to withdraw from the responsibility of power and set the intellectual quest in the same detached and ineffectual space as the 'personal' religious beliefs of a post-Enlightenment secular society. This would seem to be careless to say the least, in a world where politicians have direct control over the finance and legal structures of the academic institutions in which most intellectuals operate. Archer makes the point that *"The centralized system, in which unification and systematisation are the predominant characteristics, encourages the build-up of frustrated demands outside education and in the wider society. This is because professional educators lack the autonomy to initiate change internally in schools and colleges, thus satisfying some of their own goals, responding directly to student and pupil demands, and meeting those external requirements which are acceptable to them. Instead of these demands being propitiated by direct negotiation at the local or institutional level, thus drawing off discontent on a day-to-day basis, dissatisfaction accumulates. To effect educational change all groups must move outside the educational field to engage in political interaction at the national level."* (Archer 1979 p618)

Without access to political power, there is no access to those resources which enable the implementation of an educational vision. *"Access to resources affects which groups will be able to negotiate change in just the same way that the accessibility of the political centre influenced which parties could engage in political manipulation in centralized systems. ... Availability will be identified in exactly the same way as was used for political penetrability: resources are considered as inaccessible according to the degree to which socially significant parties do not possess them and cannot make use of them, and the extent to which other social groups can employ them to exclude these parties, their interest, and issues from processes of educational negotiation."* (Archer 1979 p400-401) Now, more than ever, the intellectual is under threat from an institutional drift towards industry-funded outcome-led 'education', yet those most likely to be affected seem strangely unperturbed. Edward Said goes to the heart of the problem, *"The particular threat to the intellectual today, whether in the West or the non-Western world, is not the academy, nor the suburbs, nor the appalling commercialism of journalism and*

publishing houses, but rather an attitude that I will call professionalism. By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper professional behaviour – not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and ‘objective’.” (Said, 1994, p.55) If intellectuals are to ‘disturb people’s mental habits’, however, that is always likely to be controversial, and what is controversial is usually political.

Political Change

Perhaps it is not too late for educationists to disturb the current ‘market’ view of education. Cunningham explains the early basis for the trend, *“Understanding the world of work’ has been an obsessive aim of legislators for education ever since the Great Debate of 1976. The context then was panic concerning educational effectiveness and economic productivity, against a perceived inclination for teachers to consider primary education as an end in itself, a space for natural development of the individual child rather than a preparation for anything else. The utilitarian response hardened during the Thatcher years, when Sir Keith Joseph advocated schooling as a means of promulgating the principles of free market economics.”* (Cunningham in Richards and Taylor ed. 1998 p27) But many have questioned the suggested direct link between education and the economy. *“The historical perspective indicates the complexity of the relationship between education and economic performance. There is no constant relationship between the two and, indeed, at times, apparently little relationship, if any, at all. Economic success depends upon a variety of factors – some of which may be described as being essentially economic, while others are of a broad cultural nature, and others again specific to what happens in schools. Connections between education and economic performance in terms of investment (as opposed to consumption) may be represented partly in ideals and values, in subjects and standards. Ideals and values, subjects and standards, are reflected in the attitudes and priorities of teachers, pupils and parents, of schools and curricula, and of employers and governments.”* (Aldrich 1996 p109)

As Cunningham says, *“Spirituality, morality, cultural, mental and physical development, all add up to a preparation for adult life. We can rest assured that personal fulfilment of the individual and a reflective and tolerant adult society are every bit as important to our future as a healthy GDP. The problem with the latter lies in the need to prophesy. Who would predict with*

any certainty the employment needs of our current primary children as they enter the world of work.” (Cunningham in Richards and Taylor ed. 1998 p27) Wealth and power are apparent to anyone looking to the great civilisations of the past, and clearly the Parthenon could not have been built without more than a small measure of each, but in the confrontation with such relics of the past, few would see their prime importance as reflections of the strength of ancient economies. *“Wherever you look, people are thinking in terms of market success ... But it is important to know that, historically, all of the cultural productions that I consider (and I’m not alone here, at least I hope not) the highest human products – math, poetry, literature, philosophy – were all produced against market imperatives.”* (Bourdieu, 1998, pp 27-28)

The situation is not hopeless, however, as control of the education system so clearly rests in the hands of politicians, who are usually ready to abandon principles if they seem to be unworkable and unpalatable to the voting public. In recent weeks, more stress has been placed on flexibility in the curriculum. Teachers’ problems with the curriculum have already been considered, but few would suggest that no curriculum of any kind was necessary. *“The traditional subject curriculum is undoubtedly adaptable, having existed for thousands of years. It is not that such a way of organizing the content for learning is wrong, but that it may not be sufficiently pliable to accommodate the demands of the future. It is a sign of rigidity that we have tended to respond to changing demands by devising cross-curricular themes ... This puts the subject taxonomy under enormous pressure, since it is often difficult to find ways of organizing two distinct approaches to content – subject learning and thematic learning.”*

(Whitaker 1997 p156) The dogmatic and authoritarian nature of detailed inputs prescribed for pupils has already been described, and Whitaker gives a fine example. *“Not one official document has been produced explaining the National Curriculum to the children for whom it was designed. This gives some indication of the low expectations of understanding held about our pupils, and a measure of the disregard held for their own hopes and aspirations.”* (Whitaker 1997 p157) Recognising part of the problem, the Scottish Executive has issued a circular (3/2001) encouraging education authorities to review their current approaches to flexibility and innovation in the curriculum.

3/2001 reports that the Discipline Taskforce of June 2001 *“identified an inappropriate curriculum as one of a number of barriers to learning experienced by disaffected young people. It endorsed the use of more appropriate curriculum management to support not only some of the*

specific needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural problems, but also a much broader range of pupils who experienced boredom and lack of inspiration in school." (Scottish Executive 2001) It encourages the New Community Schools to adjust the curriculum where "*a better education and experience would be offered for those pupils concerned*" and suggests that while the 5-14 and Secondary Stages Guidelines will result in a high quality education, "*it is unreasonable to suggest that they are the only model capable of delivering that result*". The simple reason for this change of focus is explained however, as "*it removes the bureaucratic burden of attempts to raise standards through detailed control of the inputs to school education.*" But the curriculum is only one aspect of the changes that have taken place over recent years. The Scottish Executive circular stresses that the attention of the Scottish Parliament will now be "*focussed on an outcome-based model for education. ... Performance measures and indicators related to these priorities will be published*". Schools and their pupils will still be judged by their examination results.

Hughes explores the issue of the effect of examinations on the teaching process, and comes to some awkward conclusions for the Government "The present study shows that learning opportunities are felt by pupils and teachers to be heightened when teaching strategies are transactional, that is, when they involve the integration of pupil and teacher concerns and interests. In short, it would seem that teachers and pupils value learning situations in which control over the content and direction of lessons is shared in different ways. It is also suggested that opportunities for such transactional teaching may be limited by the presence of certain conditions, such as the requirement to prepare pupils for terminal examinations, particularly for those pupils who are perceived by their teachers to be of less than high ability." (Hughes 1996 p 107) *It is not the curriculum that is the real problem, in that it can be rendered more flexible with the stroke of a political pen. It is the reliance on examinations for comparison that is the truly limiting factor in the functioning of the education system. As Fielding says, "In the United Kingdom most of the current pressures on schools centre round the raising of attainment as measured in public tests or examinations, largely though not exclusively in order to improve industry's economic efficiency and national competitiveness. This is at once superficial, counter-productive, and profoundly ignorant. It is superficial in the sense that it fails to understand that technical solutions to problems that demand a more comprehensive engagement with meaning and purpose lead to an even greater frustration and a deeper sense of despair. It is counter-productive in the sense that overemphasis on an*

uninspiring impoverished view of schooling will alienate teachers and students alike and thus turn out to be self-defeating.” (*Fielding in O’Hagan ed. 1999 p67*)

Chapter Fourteen

Back to the Future

One of the problems for any predictions with regard to the future of education is that they are inevitably based on the shifting sands of current history. During the period of this research, teachers and learners have faced the uncertainties of the new ideological emphasis of a newly arrived New Labour government in Westminster with their new policies, New Community Schools, and the establishment of a new Scottish Parliament. We have heard much heated debate on the funding of university education, more heat surrounding the teaching of sexuality related issues in schools, and chaos in the attempts to mark new national examinations. Policies in the same political party have on occasion moved in different directions north and south of the border. At the same time as the establishment of new faith schools was being encouraged in England, the Scottish Executive were setting out plans to claw back the only self-governing Episcopal primary school in Scotland. The SCCC has been restructured as LTSScotland, curriculum guidelines reworked, and HMI reports and Ministerial statements are issued almost before anyone has had time to read their prior communications. And all this is set in a context of rapid technological and global political change. On these uncertain foundations, we need to imagine how we might construct the future.

Just when he was getting close to the end of his dissertation, his wife flicked channels on the TV. And there was one of the towers of the World Trade Centre with smoke billowing from a gaping wound in its side. He just watched hypnotised as the second tower burst into flame, and then the pictures of the Pentagon in ruins. In what seemed like a few short moments, both towers were gone, and he knew that something had changed. It was not that he hadn't seen it coming. He had talked for years about the likelihood. He had been on those security free internal flights, and it was just too obvious and too easy. Someone was sure to try it sooner or later, he didn't know who, but there it was happening right before his eyes. Later that evening his mother phoned to see if he was safe, as the usual suspects were out attacking mosques and Muslims, in America, Australia, and here. But he could tell her he was safe and sound, and didn't expect any trouble. Over the following weeks, he watched as the thousands of troops prepared to fight a war against a 'muslim' enemy barely as substantial as smoke, while politicians and public figures showed an eagerness to learn and say positive things about Islam that was nothing short of extraordinary. How long it would last, he found it hard to say, but whatever, it may not have been the effect the bombers wanted, but in times of change he knew he had to look for signs of something that might be better.

Illustration No. 12

The future changes faster than we can imagine, and invariably in unexpected ways. It is demonstrable that scientific progress is not only faster than scientists predict, but in most cases faster than science fiction. It is less than twenty years since Bill Gates insisted that 640Kb of computer memory was as much as anyone could need. Clearly, amidst such uncertainty, when looking to education in the future it is necessary to go back to first principles and to reconsider our aims. What is it we want, and who is the 'we' that defines what is wanted? Do we look to satisfy individual or societal needs? Whose wishes are paramount, children, parents, families, communities, businesses, lobby groups, the public media, local or national governments? Then, having come to some sort of decision, how can a system be structured to achieve these aims, and would it be anything like the structure of the education system that we have? If we could start again from scratch, would we come up with the same solution? Many of these questions have already been examined, but they need to be considered not just in the context of what we have now, but the context of what is possible, taking into account what will be forced upon the system by the nature of what is practicable (technologically and politically) coming to fruition and overwhelming what is there.

The public face of educational change is political, voiced in the language of some nebulous benchmark of comparative international standards, the personal and national benefit of outcomes, and so the justification of who should pay for the system in terms of economic benefits accrued. Currently in Scotland, we still understand schooling to be a responsibility of society at large, paying through taxation. In England, even from the same political party, the language of education seems to be leading in quite a different direction, with university education in particular being seen as of such financial benefit to individual students that they are expected to pay for it, while it is hoped that businesses will recognise their benefits from the system by contributing voluntary 'sponsorship' (the days of the 'Burger King' primary school are probably not too far away). Yet in the days when 97% of school leavers didn't go to university, major businesses still functioned, taking the financial responsibility for educating their employees as 'trainees', in forms of apprenticeship. This did not just apply to traditional 'trades' - it was equally possible to be a 'trainee' research chemist or engineer.

As has been mentioned, deciding as to the benefits of education is very much dependent upon who decides what is 'good' - individual parents or young people, local communities or a wider society. Politicians, the business lobby and the media, have a particular interest on that

perception of public good, as young people thinking in new ways can affect the power bases of all these vested interests directly, so for all their pleas of innocence they cannot be seen as neutral in any argument. Already we have seen a recent shift toward a different form of politics, direct action, single-issue politics, and new coalitions linked only by mobile phone. Some might suggest that 'citizenship' is no more than an attempt to sustain the current political system in the face of a growing number of politically disillusioned people, those not bothering to vote, who see the vote as no more than a public legitimisation of underlying power systems that voting does not change. Extending current trends into the future, political change may be more a function of civil unrest than the ballot box.

Business now tells government its educational needs for the future, yet the Institute of Directors vision often seems to be no more than a short term solution to reinvigorate current economic power structures. It is questionable whether the 'education for work' that we are offering our young people is even relevant to the economic situation as it exists, let alone to any realistic vision of the future. Do 50% of available jobs really depend on the acquisition of a degree? When our unemployment figures were slightly worse than today, it was a common joke that a degree was now a requirement for employment as a bus-driver (as opposed to caution, patience, honesty, good social skills – and an appropriate driver's licence). It has long been known that the popular music industry makes more money than engineering, yet only one of the two is likely to be seen as a 'real' job to 'educate' towards. When, for a period of time, the Spice Girls could bring more money into the country than our entire manufacturing industry, we really need to consider if we are aiming our teaching at the right future. If industry is constantly fighting a losing battle against the future, with its near instant obsolescence and competition from an impoverished third world workforce, there might well be more value in such less technologically dependent skills as music, art and design. Investment in a national system of football academies might even be a more justifiable way of raising GDP. Certainly there is much more to be said by those who consider the main social and economic issues would be better served by looking to redistribution of wealth than training industry fodder. Similarly, it would seem essential to re-examine what we understand by 'wealth', for it is naïve to think that the capitalist economic and social system now in place is not liable to a collapse as rapid as the socialist systems of Eastern Europe.

As I write this final chapter, the US seems to be embarking on a 'crusade' of 'infinite justice' against 'terrorism'. But terrorism is just that violence targeted against the most powerful, which breeds amidst the economically and territorially dispossessed.

'Civilization', as western governments seem to understand it, could be embarking on a war that is unwinnable, and therefore endless if it is not to be lost. For all their apparent power, western economic systems are extremely fragile, dependent as they are to such an extent on 'virtual' money circulation. So ubiquitous do western/global financial systems seem, that it is almost impossible to imagine a world without them, but there have been other systems of money exchange throughout history, the traditional Islamic economic system for one. Unfortunately, the confines of this thesis don't allow me to explore that issue further, but if America were to fall through recession into depression, education provision systems there and here would inevitably come under serious re-evaluation and face even more rapid transformation. So it is a relevant issue to be considered.

The cumulative effect of all these transformations of the educational scene – at a time when many or all young adults' job prospects and career expectations are in question – is to make all young people aware that whatever school or initial preparation can offer them is of merely conditional relevance. Everything in future will depend on their own and their contemporaries' later modification of the system – by means which are at present probably outside the scope of the system. (King in Burns & Welch 1992 p394)

Business could face new technology based economic challenges if society finds new 'money-free' ways of exchanging goods and services. With the growing divide between the rich and the poor, and fears of global recession, the small community based barter systems established under the last Conservative government could merge with current web-based 'swap-shops' to form wider money-free (tax-free!) web-networked goods and services trading systems. The rich/poor divide could well entrench into moneyed and money-free communities. New digital currencies could appear, with no equivalent cash (early attempts at this were made several years ago) and no international boundaries of control. New company and employment structures will be needed in a world where the making of things is ever more automated and services are ever more digitised. In world where consumers are needed more than workers, new approaches will be needed to find ways of circulating wealth.

Our familiar forms of media, with their enormous lobbying power, are also facing unprecedented change. The majority of schoolchildren now have a mobile phone. This is just a hint as to what they will carry in their pockets in the very near future. Their pocket videophones will also provide music and on-screen news tailored to their preferences, as well as ready access to vast quantities of global information and knowledge. This is imminent, and its effect on print and television is unknown. *"The impact of globalism on these developments is not clear cut. Telecommunications – particularly when controlled by a few multinational companies (Smith 1991) – produce a world convergence of visual and linguistic culture encouraged by world trade in television programmes as well as satellite transmission and videos. Whether these global messages tend to produce a common global culture through the dominance of the use of the English language or through globally common forms of packaging and presenting visual images is uncertain (Rodwell, 1985). The range of telecommunications may also encourage individual choices of cultural menus as well as the emergence of esoteric, but possibly transnational, affiliations of ideology, taste and life-style (Toffler, 1980)"* (McLean 1990 p33-34) Computer games already make more money than music and movies, and they are already creating new forms of entertainment, virtual games played by a global community, with the formation of digital clans, and tribal allegiances. New game experience forms are inevitable, exploratory, co-operative, information rich and globally multicultural, and indisputably educational.

It may seem that such fantasies are outwith the scope of the rationality that is university education, but these imaginings are fairly prosaic compared to the changes that current primary school entrants are likely to face before the end of the education that is planned for them. *"The whole of education's relationship with society and work in industrialised (increasingly 'post-industrial') communities is on a moving frontier. Young adults are a frontier population par excellence. ... That is the essential point of principle we must accept. It is pivotal to all thinking about education. Who educates whom? For what? How, when and where? And what are today's and tomorrow's instruments and occasions of education? What kinds of participation, partnership and feedback will be conducive to educational development and reform? These are the key questions – quite different in emphasis from those which have exercised older educators. The answers are to be found – provisionally, and with continuous correction – by successive generations of young adults along a frontier of rapid and universal change."* (King in Burns & Welch 1992 p387-388)

In considering possible futures for education, we have to be prepared to ask basic questions of our system structure, such as whether we need schools or universities at all. Universities are already facing technological change that few in the system are even beginning to comprehend. Distance learning is transforming the idea of having large numbers of students in one place for anything other than socialisation. As degree courses come on line in Australia and America, and more and more university in-house on-line courses are made available on the web, with large companies establishing their own on-line universities to ensure that graduates are trained according to their needs, multi-media 'lectures'/presentations from the best teachers in the world will become readily available, along with video conferenced tutorials and workshops. If university students are to be seen as consumers, the market will take care of their needs, and distance learning degrees will undoubtedly be cheaper, and probably more exciting. Subject selection will be vast, with every imaginable specialization on offer, along with new forms of qualifications which allow more flexible approaches to study. Academic libraries will be available on-line, and with the expansion of the Gutenberg Project, every book ever written will be available on-line to read on a mobile screen, or listen to on an earphone. Even now, the Open University has over 200,000 students registered on its courses.

Similar fundamental issues need to be addressed when looking to the future of schools, such as 'Do we need them, and what for?' If, as the evidence seems to suggest, the various quite different systems across Europe actually make little difference to results, and education has no direct link to the economy or GDP, what is their purpose? We speak of schools as though they are institutions of learning, but an outsider might well see them more as day-care centres for children of working parents, or as a form of social engineering or policing. With one person having authority over so many, apart from the fact that they go home at night, the system resembles nothing more than an army training camp or a prison. It is hardly surprising that so many pupils have to be compelled by law to go there. Do we need the profession that we now call teaching, or could there be a different approach? Is the system priority teaching how to learn or teaching subjects, and if the former, do teachers need to 'know a subject'? Do teachers need to demonstrate that they know how to learn, or only that they once knew how to learn? If we assume any sort of average technological progression for language learning, the finest of language laboratories will soon be available on line, with voice recognition to check pronunciation, and software to pick up on any individual flaw in

vocabulary or grammar. In this case, there seems to be no good reason why, if children wish to learn Finnish, Arabic or Chinese, they should be deprived of the opportunity simply because a teacher doesn't know the language, as long as the teacher knows the learning system, and knows how to have a supportive relationship with a child. As referred to earlier, the teachers' role in school is currently recognised as being 'in authority as well as an authority', yet, even now, they are in a situation where they are not really able to be either.

With the vast increase of information now available to learners, it is impossible for a teacher to be an authority in every area of knowledge that a child might be drawn to explore, only those in narrow areas of expertise that suited the inclinations of the teacher. The problem was obvious long before the birth of the personal computer revolution, let alone the internet available information that has become available in the last few years. As Nicolas wrote in 1983, "*The first problem stems from the dramatic explosion in human knowledge which has undoubtedly occurred during the twentieth century (Holmes in Bereday and Lauwerys 1958). A common index of this phenomenon is the growth of human scientific knowledge which is estimated to be doubling every ten years. Given the sheer scale of this growth, questions of the following kind arise in many countries – 'How can school knowledge be kept up to date?' or 'What, out of this knowledge, should children be taught?' or 'What principles can inform our decision to include or exclude some of this knowledge from the school's curriculum?'*" (Nicholas 1983 p103-104) Despite the overwhelming nature of information growth that sets the teachers job as an authority on such shaky ground, this does not detract from the teacher's role as a source of knowledge and an example of scholarship, if we redefine our understanding of the terms.

This problematic distinction between information and knowledge, authority and scholarship, has been recognised for centuries. It was recognised by Ibn Khaldun in the fourteenth century "*It should be known that among the things that are harmful to the human quest for knowledge and to the attainment of a thorough scholarship are the great number of works available, the large variety in technical terminology (needed for purposes) of instruction, and the numerous methods (used in those works). ... Thus the student must know all the works, or most of them, and observe the methods used in them. His whole lifetime would not suffice to know all the literature that exists in a single discipline, even if he were to devote himself entirely to it.*" (Ibn Khaldun p414-415) Or, phrased in a slightly different way some centuries later, '*The fact is*',

Nathaniel Hawthorne once wrote after a visit to the British Museum, 'the world is accumulating too many materials for knowledge. We do not recognize for rubbish what is really rubbish'. In the discoveries of the last seventy-four years we have accumulated a great stock of knowledge, a lot of which is really rubbish. It is time for a bold, imaginative re-interpretation of our tradition. (Armytage in Gordon and Szreter 1989 p52) True scholarship cannot help but reveal to scholars that the more knowledge they acquire the more that they can see as being available for study. The most knowledgeable are aware of the vastness of their ignorance, and can be recognised by their humility.

As far as being in authority, teachers are similarly handicapped in that they have few punishments they can apply to 'miscreants' to enforce their will upon them, especially now that Scottish society has finally decided it is inappropriate for 'education' to be imposed through the use of brute force. Yet 'discipline' is seen as a critical problem in schools. Look on any university library bookshelves under education, and books on discipline will outnumber books on 'motivation' ten to one, even though motivation is the key to self-discipline, the only kind of discipline that is of any real use when fearful threats are not an option. But humans do function together voluntarily using different group power structures and disciplines. People function as teams or communities and police themselves in quite different ways from the discipline of a school. Those that don't want to be there aren't there, and those that are there work co-operatively, acting in ways that are mutually supportive and encouraging. Surely the idea of schooling being legally compulsory is unworkable. The original idea may have been to avoid the situation where a parent might keep a child from school to the child's disadvantage. But it is an unworkable law that cannot be enforced either on parents or on children, the parents most likely to require 'forcing' probably being those least capable of dealing with the problem, and the 'forcing' of children only increasing their dislike and resentment towards the place that society wants them to want to be. The most obvious solution to entrenched attitudes is surely to recognise that a pupil's relationship with the system must be voluntary. Then they might recognise that they are being offered the option of receiving something of value rather than having another person's idea of what is good for them being imposed regardless of their wishes. Schooling should not just be seen as 'education for work', but 'education as a leisure pursuit'.

It is questionable whether children really need to go to school, if their educational needs can be met as well or better in the home or another kind of environment, what with parental paranoia around travel between home and school, and feelings of inadequacy or boredom for so many children while they are there, with the resultant pattern of truancy and exclusions. *Telecommunications and information technology may even make this basis of schooling redundant. Children have access to means of learning broad principles from the technology itself. Increasingly there may be unevenness in this out-of-school achievement. Much research has focused on the great variations in language capacities children bring to school from the outside world. The same kind of process is likely to intensify with technological methods of acquiring numerical and spatial capacities. The argument of E.P. Thompson that English working classes became literate without schools in the early nineteenth century (Thompson, 1968: 783) increasingly may apply to a wider range of logical-rational cognitive skills. (McLean 1990 p34) Yet even our universities, though dealing with young adults and assessing by means of work submitted and exams, still usually insist on compulsory attendance at lectures or tutorials. Most students still have to clock in.*

The fact that one is looking to the future does not mean that we might not learn something from looking to the past, looking back to the best examples of education that humanity has achieved, the understandings they were based on, and the methods used. Traditional Islamic education may have been in decline for several centuries, due to political and philosophical changes that ultimately led to the weakness that permitted colonisation (reasons too complex and specialised to consider here), but looking back to when Islamic education was at its peak, we may find principles that are applicable to the future. *“Being very much a part of the community, the mosque university kept an open door for all comers to participate in the learning activities and in their general educational endeavour. Students attended and left on their own accord. They were not coerced but acted on their own inclination. ... Young children had, however to be made to attend the maktab (primary school) and a certain degree of coercion and discipline was exercised to enhance their motivation. Al-Qabisi ... argued that every Muslim child should be sent to the maktab by his parents; but he did not feel that it was the function of the state to enforce such attendance.” (Badawi in Al-Attas 1979 p106-111) If the system were voluntary, modern schools might be forced to explore ways to make what they have to offer more attractive and exciting.*

Another modern development in education that would seem to be counterproductive is the rigid separation of children into age groups, an extraordinarily unnatural arrangement, as has been mentioned. In a group without any form of seniority (apart from 'teacher'), ensuing power struggles will always leave some enviously at the bottom of the heap, unable to be of assistance to anyone less able, while those at the top have no one above them to lend maturity and experience. Groups of children that cross age ranges have a very different way of structuring and disciplining themselves, a much more familial and familiar way of socialising themselves. If adult 'classroom helpers' were also in the class to learn (with one in ten adults having reading difficulties, they could benefit more than the young ones), a much more natural approach to lifelong learning might be achieved. With current classes embracing a range of ability up to 'four years' either side of a norm, one would think that handling a range of ages but similar range of subject knowledge might be a great deal easier for a teacher to deal with, and with a 'class' much more reflective of society at large, all forms of inclusion would be easier to embrace.

"Traditional Islamic education was characterized by its lack of rigidity regarding attendance or age grouping. ... The able and studious were allowed to move forward at their own speed not restricted by a rigid curriculum nor herded in their age groups. In the same class pupils of different ages and different abilities sat side by side and took part in the exhilarating activities. The dull benefited from the brilliant and the able understood and appreciated both the difficulties and the merits of the slow learner. But above all, the school, like the mosque was classless. ... It was possible for a person regardless of age, to join any class of his choosing and to move on to a higher class once he felt able to cope. As the teaching took place throughout the day from early morning till late in the evening, it was possible for the old to combine education with other responsibilities such as work or family duties. ... Traditional higher Islamic education accorded the student a great deal of freedom to choose his own area of interest and to develop his knowledge in that particular area without hindrance." (Badawi in Al-Attas 1979 p106-111)

Compared to the fixed group lessons of current schooling, the traditional Islamic approach may seem wildly chaotic, but no more chaotic than village schools in remote areas of Scotland have been for centuries, and it was always a proud boast of Scottish Education that a child from such a school should be able to end up as a philosophy professor at one of our great universities. Our approach to education now is a product of a Victorian industrial mentality,

with just a touch of Henry Ford. Though slightly better than working children in factories, the systems, attitudes and power structures, remain much the same. But as with public libraries (with their new ICT centres), there is no reason why a school should not be treated much more as a communal facility, with guidance and assistance on individualised programmes of learning (as opposed to a national curriculum). The need for teachers to prepare and deliver 'lessons' will quickly vanish as a million individual/group educational projects come on line, and personal subject expertise will be unnecessary when tutoring can be video-conferenced, a mode of teaching already familiar to schools in the Scottish Highlands and Islands.

But if teachers are not needed to give 'lessons', it makes it easier to see what is even now their main purpose. With regard to the group, it would be concern for the socialisation and networking of pupils for mutual assistance through their learning, as well as co-ordinating teacher/pupil helpers and teaching/learning facilities. With regard to individual learners, the teachers' role would be one of encouragement (not criticism or negative comparison) and guidance through the subject maze, helping evaluate the validity and utility of information, as well as offering expertise in study skills and learning methods. These aspects of teaching would call on the full range of teachers' capabilities, critical, analytical and imaginative, personal, social and moral. It might also be suggested that teachers set an example by simultaneously learning a new language or improving their knowledge of a subject in an unfamiliar discipline, but in some way participating as a 'pupil' somewhere in the school. With no curricular constraints, a school's responsibility would be to the community it serves, not an indeterminate and faceless 'society' as expressed in the edicts of a government, and as with universities, it will be much less important to look to national qualifications, as a variety of international qualifications for a wide range of knowledge levels come on stream.

It is naïve to think that a Higher in ICT will forever and inevitably be more useful than a qualification issued by Microsoft. Similarly, it is not unlikely that history, geography, botany, zoology or astronomy, qualifications will soon be offered by Disney, or Time/Warner, or Sony, and recognised internationally. But detached from the need to use examinations by which a school as well as a pupil will be judged, teachers will be in a position to assist pupils with self-assessment, challenging both the self-deprecating and the over-confident. *"The promotion of students did not take place through the mechanical examination system which is so familiar to us. The teacher assessed the student's progress and determined the next step to be taken.*

The student himself, if able, assisted in this exercise. Each student, therefore, was free to attain his ultimate level in any of the areas of his interest without being held back because of difficulties in subsidiary or extraneous disciplines. ... Unlike the modern system which operates like a factory with a production line, measuring its success by statistical tables, traditional Islamic education measured its activity by the fact that it stimulated the community as a whole to take an interest in the higher issues so fundamental to its nature and survival.” (Badawi in Al-Attas 1979 p106-111) But as the popularity of sport and computer games shows, young people are not averse to competition per se, and without the pressures of largely age-related trials-of-passage annual examinations, there can be little doubt that most would be happy to take on some form of academic challenge. Then, when a pupil sits a distant independent examination, the teacher will be in a position to act as a referee of pupil honesty.

The essence of the teachers' role therefore, rests as ever in morality (both social and individual), motivation (a concern for pupil identity and self-esteem), and leadership through wisdom and example. *“Because of his role in the community and in the field of education, the teacher acted not simply as the guide to better knowledge but also as the example to better conduct. Teaching was not simply a profession to be sold but a role to be fully and completely performed.”* (Badawi in Al-Attas 1979 p106-111) But the teachers' role is not isolated from the context of the community. *“Traditional Muslim education was not an activity separated from other aspects of society. It acted in harmony with all other activities and institutions to confirm them and to be reinforced by them. Not surprisingly, the mosque, the heart of all religious activities, was the apex of the whole system. Neither the educator nor the student was isolated from the rest of the community. They more often than not combined other functions with that of education, thus retaining their close contact with everyday life. There was always a close personal relationship between the teacher and the student which ensured that moral and spiritual guidance was given along with the teaching of various skills. ... The level of achievement of the student in the traditional system was measured by the totality of the student as a person. His piety and moral conduct was regarded as of equal, or indeed superior, importance to his attainment in other spheres.”* (Badawi in Al-Attas 1979 p106-111) In the Muslim world, both universities and schools were clustered around the mosque, and all were situated in the heart of the working and worshipping community. If schools are to survive, they will need to return to that form of community openness, as opposed to a current trend towards a paranoid sense of siege. Communities must be reminded that tragedies such as

Dunblane seem all the more shocking precisely because of their rarity. So where a school run is now de rigeur to protect the children, and schools are concerned with their security systems, a child dies of abuse or neglect in the UK every few days. Familiar statistics rarely make news headlines, particularly when there is no obvious target of blame.

If we manage to create a new state school system, of such a traditional inclusive, family supported kind, most of the current concerns of faith minorities would be happily and easily satisfied. It is simply a matter of re-thinking our education system before it is re-thought for us. As Nixon says, *“What is required is a radical re-orientation of professional identity, and a radical re-definition of professionalism. ... In these ‘late modern’ days, it is essential that teachers, writers and professionals re-make themselves through a reconstitution of the public sphere. That reconstitution must be an act of will; of practice re-imagined and re-worked as a response to the old urgent task of re-figuring the ‘out there’ into new and difficult patterns of inclusion.”* (Nixon 1999 p219)

There are two essential questions for a university student: ‘What do I need to ascertain for my qualification?’ and ‘What would I like to ascertain for myself?’ I prefer to think that the latter should always encompass the former, so in exploring my hypothesis I have not only learned much about education, I have also learned much from my Muslim intellectual context. I have remembered things about learning. It is not just the encounter with things new, but the revisiting, re-arranging, re-classifying, and re-collecting of the familiar.

As for the research question ‘Do faith groups in general have a cohesive voice in their approach to education?’ it would seem to be a quite simple and straightforward question with a comparatively straightforward yes or no answer. The subsidiary question, however, ‘What marks it as distinctive from the secular system?’ hints as to the underlying complexities, and much of the thesis I have spent examining just how far from ‘straightforward’ those questions are.

If asked what I have learned from the data I acquired, I would be forced to admit in one way very little, in that within the narrow confines of the primary research question as formulated, the result was exactly as I expected. My impression from the data is that there is indeed a ‘faith voice’ with a largely cohesive understanding of the nature and purpose of education, and a common concern for the way that the current education system reflects

these. Of course, that does not mean that this conclusion may not be much more surprising to others.

Yet it took a considerable time to realise that those simple questions were not really the questions I wanted to answer. It is extraordinary how easy it was to forget the early time and effort that went into the selection of the title. That was the question I had to look to answer if I was to ascertain what marks that familiar faith voice as distinctive. My question is actually 'What do I mean by Knowledge, Religious Understanding and Education?' I used the data to explore my understandings, my context in the world in which I live, and the cultural language in which I formulate my thoughts. This thesis is the result.

From a consideration of current schooling, to a reflection on my own and my own life learning, I was led to examine universities and their paradigms of knowledge, which led to the heart of what I was doing, a search for a greater understanding of my own human nature, and through that an understanding of humanity at large.

"I believe that the human sciences do not at all lead to the discovery of something which would be the 'human' – the truth about man, his nature, his birth, his destiny; in reality, what the various human sciences are dealing with is something very different from man: systems, structures, combinations, forms, etc. Consequently, if we want to deal seriously with the human sciences, we will need above all to destroy those obsessive chimera constituted by the idea that we have to seek out man." (Foucault in Carrette 1999 p99)

It is my belief that there is more to creation than systems and structures of perception and understanding. There is a unity that is also perceptible, a 'theory of everything', ultimately impossible in science (who could ever claim to have apprehended everything?) but encountered in the experience of faith, an experience that gives balance to the intellectual.

"As for Bourdieu: is it all worth the candle? If it takes the best part of a decade to make sense of the core concepts of Bourdieu's theory only to find that one has no more ability to understand the world than one did before, then perhaps not. Yet the struggle to work with Bourdieu's concepts (and perhaps with Foucault's or even with Lyotard's), is worthwhile, just because to do so forces one to think. Without concepts – the tools of thought – we will not make much progress." (Nash 1999 p185)

From an Islamic perspective, progress is not a historical line of endless improvement, but a road humans travel together through changing scenery. Many interesting byways lead to and from the road at any time, which can be explored from curiosity in search of knowledge or delight. But the main road has the same characteristics of human values and experience throughout time. In the world of Islam, this road is known as the Shari'ah.

Using the tools of Social Science within the overall rules of the University has indeed been intellectually stimulating, but I cannot help feeling that it could have been a much more rewarding and enjoyable experience. The constraints that feel so archaic are perhaps best exemplified by the nature of research presentation. For someone more used to thinking in hypertext, with multi-media extensions, the linearity of a traditional thesis and the reliance on formal language and modes of referencing, serves as a discipline that does not always feel as though it is the ideal solution to the expression of certain ideas.

If universities are to be at the forefront of the revolutionary changes that education is facing, they will need to look to more flexible and inventive approaches, and be prepared to challenge their own traditions and certainties. But the road goes on, and I have to believe that the combined intellect at our disposal is capable of redefining the nature of education, and designing a more all-encompassing system. All it may require is an 'act of will', for models of change are there throughout history to guide us.

I wish, for the sake of those universities with which I have been associated, that I had more hope of a willing leap of imagination on their part. To be honest, I think that the university system is unlikely to move until it is pushed. Similarly the political and institutional structure that lies behind our education system is not eagerly looking for change. Nonetheless, if this research serves in some way to bridge the gap between believers and the education system it will have served its purpose, and that will do for me.

“Supervision of the things of the mind among the people and in government came to be consigned more and more to the ‘intellectuals’ in the best sense of the word. This was particularly the case with the entire educational system; and indeed the situation is little changed to this day. ... The Glass Bead Game, formerly the specialised entertainment of mathematicians in one era, philologists or musicians in another era, now more and more cast its spell on all true intellectuals. ... After Jocolator Basiliensis’s grand accomplishment, the Game rapidly evolved into what it is today: the quintessence of intellectuality and art, the sublime cult,

the 'unio mystica' of all separate members of the 'Universitas Litterarum', In our lives it has partially taken over the role of art, partially that of speculative philosophy. ... Experts and Masters of the Game freely wove the initial theme into unlimited combinations. ...It represented an elite, symbolic form of seeking for perfection, a sublime alchemy, an approach to that Mind which beyond all images and multiplicities is one with itself – in other words, to God. ... the symbols and formulas of the Glass Bead Game combined structurally, musically, and philosophically within the framework of a universal language, were nourished by all the sciences and arts, and strove in play to achieve perfection, pure being, the fullness of reality.”

(Hesse 1943 26-31)

In the world of Islam, it is traditional to make a formal apologetic closure at the end of any presentation, balancing the formal opening and parenthesis the work that lies between. There is no set phraseology, and there are many variations on the tradition, but with this I will end:

All-Merciful God, for the sake of Your beautiful names, and the sake of the ones in whom Your names are manifest, lead us on their path. Let us see Your attributes everywhere without, and cleanse the mirror of our hearts in hope that we may see Your Beauty reflected within.

Appendix One

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Appendix Two

The following document was sent to participants prior to interviews:

Knowledge, Religious Understanding and Education in a multi-faith society

An exploration of the relationship between secular school and faith community in the development of a child's identity and values in a local and global context

Terminology

Education | Instruction | Schooling | Training | Indoctrination

Preferred Aims of (Faith) Education

Historically | Currently | Ideal
Content & Process
Attitudes to modern Educational Development/Psychology
Topical Themes:
Self Esteem | Motivation | Discipline
Creativity | Play | Media
Inclusion | Multiculturalism | Values

Education, Culture & Identity

Education in/as the formation of Identity
Childhood | Adulthood
Individual | Family | Community
Identity / Culture Relationship
The Cultural context of Education
Education & Life Learning

Faith & Culture

Values | Morality | Ethics
Religion as a Language for the Spiritual
Church v. Faith
Faith as a Culture / Cultural Language
Religion as Aesthetic

Sustaining Faith Minority Culture & Identity

Social Problems / Requirements
Educational Problems / Requirements
Faith amidst cultural change
Faith in a Post-Modern Society
Questioning | Authority
Truth | Certainty | Doubt

Appendix Three

The Following questions were used as occasional prompt questions where necessary during the interview process. Wording was varied slightly to accommodate the situation of the interviewees.

Initial Questions

Are Faith communities considered in any discrete way in policy decisions?

Are statistics of faith communities known?

Do you see current provision as satisfactory for the education of children with parents of a committed faith?

Are there those in your community who would like to see a greater Faith component for their children in schools?

Are there those in your community who would like to see alternative full-time Faith schools for their children?

Would you say that the trend towards such alternative full-time schooling in your community is growing / diminishing / static?

Terminology

Education | Instruction | Schooling | Training | Indoctrination

Would you say that you use these terms in the same way and with the same meaning as those in faith communities?

Please outline your use of these terms with special reference to the relationship between "Education" and "Instruction".

Preferred Aims of Education

Historically | Currently | Ideal

What do you personally understand to be the purpose of education?

Do you see that reflected in current education policy, or a different emphasis?

Do you see Faith education traditions as having any relevance or value to the state education system?

Content & Process

Do you see the education process as informative, communicating a body of knowledge, or exploratory, developing learning skills, and do you see a difference to the approach of faith education in this regard?

Do you see the role of the teacher as an impartial facilitator / a committed guide?

Should the teacher function as a role model? If not, how do they avoid it?

Attitudes to modern Educational Development/Psychology

Is there a commitment to any specific tradition of development/psychology in the education system? If so, who decides which?

Topical Themes:

Self Esteem | Motivation | Discipline

Creativity | Play | Media

How much is education concerned with developing a child's self-esteem?

How much is this reflected formally in the curriculum?

Which should be given greater consideration, motivation or discipline?

Is this reflected in schools?

How much do creativity and play have any formal recognition in the education system?

Which do you think has more influence on a child's values and understanding, their schooling or the media?

Inclusion | Multiculturalism | Values

Do you understand the principle of inclusion as relating to anything other than disability?

Is this reflected in the education system?

Should multiculturalism be integrated across the curriculum? If so, how?

How important are moral values in a child's education?

How much are they a part of the curriculum, or non-curricular school organization or ethos?

Education, Culture & Identity

Education in/as the formation of Identity
Childhood | Adulthood

Does the education system recognize distinguishable stages of growth in human identity that determine the educational process?

What is the distinction between Child and Adult, and how or when is it determined?

Individual | Family | Community

Which of the previous should take precedence?

How are these balanced in PSD?

How much should they be set in a context of the Nation State?

Identity / Culture Relationship
The Cultural context of Education

What are the most important aspects of Cultural surroundings to be included in education?

Should young people be sheltered from aspects of culture, and if so which and why?

How does Personal Search relate to faith heritage?

Education & Life Learning

What should be the relationship between school education and experience drawn from life?

Faith & Culture

Values | Morality | Ethics

Should the foregoing be separated from /independent of Faith?

If so, on what should they be based?

Can they be understood outwith cultural forms and norms?

Is "Citizenship" an adequate basis for behavioural understanding and control?

How much should children be expected to accept their parents' morality and values?

Religion as a Language for the Spiritual
Church v. Faith

Does the education system recognize "spirituality" as having any importance?

How much is this recognized in the curriculum?

Do you think that "spirituality" needs to be understood in a different way in school to the way that it is understood by religious groupings?

Faith as a Culture / Cultural Language

Do you see identity as having a Culture associated with it?

How do you see the relationship between Faith identity and Culture?

Religion as Aesthetic

Can Faiths be identified by distinctive aesthetics?

Sustaining Faith Minority Culture & Identity

Should schools try to help parents pass on their faith to their children?

Should Faith be treated as a lifestyle choice?

Are you aware of any feelings among faith communities that their way of life is under threat?

Should schools be helping to bridge divisions between generations?

Social Problems / Requirements

Educational Problems / Requirements

Should the education system be seen as responsible in any way for social or community problems?

Can / should the education system be expected to find ways of sustaining minority faith cultures?

Can RME provision be expected to satisfy faith community requirements, and if not - why not?

In the future, how should the education system be changed and improved?

Faith amidst cultural change

What do you think of faith communities who try to use politics to bring about change in the education system?

Faith in a Post-Modern Society

Questioning | Authority

Truth | Certainty | Doubt

How does the education system deal with Post-modernist doubt?

Are pupils expected to accept their teachers' views as authoritative?

Can the education system teach anything with certainty?

Does the use of examinations as a benchmark circumscribe the nature of education?

Booklist

What references would you recommend to anyone wishing to gain an understanding of education?

Appendix Four

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Post Script

Mulla Nasrudin sometimes took people for trips in his boat. One day a fussy pedagogue hired him to ferry him across a very wide river. As soon as they were afloat the scholar asked whether it was going to be rough. *“Don’t ask me nothing about it,”* said Nasrudin. *“Have you never studied grammar?”* *“No,”* said the Mulla. *“In that case, half your life has been wasted.”* The Mulla said nothing. Soon a terrible storm blew up. The Mulla’s crazy cockleshell was filling with water. He leaned over to his companion. *“Have you ever learnt to swim?”* *“No,”* said the pedant. *“In that case, schoolmaster, ALL your life is lost, for we are sinking.”*

(Shah 1983 p3)