'A Tale of Two Cultures'

A dialogical study of the cultures of a Jewish and a Catholic
secondary school

Lynne Scholefield
Institute of Education, University of London
Submitted for the Degree of PhD
January 1999

Abstract

Interpreting culture as symbols, stories, rituals and values, the thesis explores the culture of a Jewish and a Catholic secondary school in a dialogical way. The survey of the literature in Chapter 1 identifies relevant school-based research and locates the chosen case-study schools within the context of the British 'dual system'. Chapter 2 draws on the theoretical and methodological literatures of inter-faith dialogue and ethnography to develop and defend a paradigm for the research defined as open-inclusivist and constructivist.

The main body of the thesis (Chapters 3-5), based on field-work undertaken in 1996 and 1997, presents the two schools in parallel with each other. Chapter 3 describes the details of the case studies at 'St. Margaret's' and 'Mount Sinai' and my developing research relationship with each school. In Chapter 4 many different voices from each school are woven into two 'tales' about the schools' cultures. This central chapter has a deliberately narrative style. Chapter 5 amplifies the cultural tales through the analysis of broadly quantitative data gained from an extensive questionnaire administered to a sample of senior students in each school. It is the only place in the thesis where views and values from the two schools are directly compared.

The final two chapters widen the horizon of the study. Chapter 6 presents voices which were not part of the original case studies but which relate, in different ways, to the culture of the two schools. Chapter 7, with theoretical ideas about Jewish schools and education, and Catholic schools and education, provides resources for further dialogue about culture within Judaism and Catholicism and for Jewish-Christian dialogue. The thesis ends with some reflections on possible implications of the two cultures for discussions about the common good in education.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge my appreciation of:

Contents

Introduction

I come from a background in religious education in Britain with a particular interest in the teaching of Judaism. When I began to work in a Roman Catholic College of Higher Education a few years ago I was not a Catholic. I found the experience interesting. I had a strong sense of being an outsider and this was at times uncomfortable but I was also aware that I was struck by things which 'insiders' took for granted; the dining room was called 'the refectory' (a Benedictine term) and there was a large chapel at the heart of the campus and of college life. I became conscious of things which Catholics seemed to do particularly well such as handling death and dying.

Becoming a Catholic in 1993 made me officially an 'insider' in Catholicism although I have continued, to some extent, to remember my outsider perspective. It also developed my relationship with Judaism in several ways. Catholics are very involved in Christian Jewish dialogue and, as a Catholic, I was somehow now 'licensed' to participate actively in that dialogue. In dialogue one somehow 'hears the other into speech' and both listening and speaking can be very powerful. Because dialogue is two way, I not only learned about, and from, Judaism more deeply I also discovered that I was finding my voice as a Catholic. This happened most vividly studying the Bible which, since I was now a Christian, was 'my book' too. In shared, inter-active study of biblical and para-biblical texts with Jews I drew closer to the texts themselves, to Judaism and to Christianity.

Going to Poland with a Jewish Studies delegation in 1994 I was the only Christian in the group; again an outsider. In the Jewish Museum in Warsaw there is an exhibition of items which survived from the Ghetto. We saw exercise books used by children in the days before they were sent to Auschwitz. These children would not have a future, they would not live to experience adult life, but it was still seen as important that they received education. One of the Jewish delegates summed up this commitment to education in those dreadful circumstances as 'the distilled essence of teaching'. Teaching and learning were a form of resistance to dehumanisation, an assertion of human identity where the human being, fully alive, is a studying human being.

Here was an idea of education which went far beyond the issues then raging in Britain about the National Curriculum. I began to wonder what Jewish schools in Britain were like. I became interested in knowing about their cultures, their traditions, their taken-for-granted ways of doing things. Meantime, I sometimes realised how quickly I had stopped noticing the Catholic particularity in the ways we did things in my own college. Some of the language, the traditions,

the values had become my own; I had become more fully an insider. I was visiting a large number of Catholic schools where I also felt very much 'at home'. I became interested in what these staff and students would say about their cultures, their traditions, their taken-for-granted ways of doing things. I decided to study the culture of a Jewish and a Catholic school in the light of my experiences of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Starting with personal stories and reflections about my changing relationships with Jewish and Catholic traditions already serves to introduce three aspects of the thesis. My research is qualitative; the subjectivity of the researcher is a part of the subject of the research and reflexivity is an important part of the methodology. Secondly, telling one's story is part of what happens in dialogue and much of the methodology of the case studies was designed to get people in the two cultures to tell their stories. Finally, the research is, to some extent, ethnographic; in ethnography, narrative is important in studying and writing about culture.

The thesis has three research questions:
- what is the culture of the selected Jewish school?
- what is the culture of the selected Catholic school?
- what happens to the study of each school culture when it is undertaken in a dialogical way?
The term 'culture' is defined as the symbols, stories, rituals and values in the school. The thesis speaks of a 'tale of two cultures' to emphasise the importance of both narrative and interpretation in the inter-faith study of culture. The cultures I have studied express something of what it means, in a particular situation, to be a Jewish or a Catholic school. They create a particular, distinctive, experience for students and staff and in this study voices of those in the schools are heard. One important context for hearing them is in dialogue about faith-based schools.

Faith-based schools are obviously linked to faith traditions and I explore how their symbols, stories, rituals and values relate to the wider traditions. Both Jews and Christians have used their understanding of the nature of God, of what it means to be human and an analysis of the right relationships between humanity and the natural, social and political world to advocate particular understandings of school and education. However, I deliberately delay this more theoretical thinking until later in the thesis so that it can be heard in the light of the tales of the cultures rather than the other way around.

In England and Wales, faith-based schools are a full part of the maintained system and the history of education in Britain is, partly, a history of the involvement of religious groups. Recent government agreement for state funding

of Muslim schools is only the latest example of the recognition that Britain's school system is potentially enriched, not threatened, by faith-based schools. The experiences of students and staff in these schools and their understandings of the meanings and purposes of education may be relevant for other schools and for understanding about education in general. The significance of the two particular Jewish and Catholic school cultures for the wider common good is a minor theme of the thesis.

There is plenty of theoretical literature about Catholic education and Jewish education but little field-based research into Jewish or Catholic schools in Britain has yet been done. However, there is some school-based research from America and Australia. I discuss this empirical work, which was a springboard for my own research, in the first chapter. I also briefly discuss the context of my research, the development, up to the present, of the Catholic and Jewish parts of Britain's unique 'dual system'.

Studying in tandem a Jewish and a Catholic school, maintaining a dialogue between their different symbols, stories, rituals and values, their wider traditions and their two theologies locates the thesis within an on-going, inter-faith, dialogue. This study also includes dialogue between the researcher and the researched, and involves consideration of what was familiar and what was strange, with what one sees as an insider and what as an outsider. I have tried to draw the reader into the dialogue too. These aspects of research design, analysis, interpretation and presentation are fully explored in Chapter Two.

Chapters Three to Five are the fieldwork heart of the thesis. In Chapter Three I introduce the two schools and explain how I chose them and set up the two case studies involving observation, study of documents, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The results of the case studies allow me to tell the tales of the two cultures in Chapter Four. The tales are still separate although, within each, there is a deliberate weaving together of multiple voices and perspectives. Chapter Five focuses on the students and their values, drawing mainly on an extended analysis of responses to the questionnaire which was given to samples of senior students.

Chapter Six brings in voices which were not originally part of the case studies. I analyse the symbols, rituals, stories and values of the two schools at a number of levels and relate them both to other relevant research and to the wider traditions of Judaism and Christianity. I also report on what staff at the schools said about my draft accounts of their culture. Finally, I explore a number of broader issues, relating to the culture, which were being discussed in the schools.

In Chapter Seven I introduce more theoretical Jewish and Catholic ideas about schools and education as resources to draw on in Jewish, Christian or Jewish-Christian dialogue about education. In a way, this thesis is not only an instance of dialogue but also a resource for further dialogue. Finally I widen the context further when I briefly suggest how what I have discovered about the cultures of two particular faith-based schools might contribute to discussions of the common good in education. In the conclusion I summarise how the thesis as a whole answers the research questions and indicate the directions in which research could go, beyond what is possible here.

Chapter One - Researching faith-based schools

Introduction

This thesis tells, and analyses, tales of the cultures of a Jewish and a Catholic secondary school from a perspective of inter-faith dialogue. The purposes of this chapter are to review the existing research into faith-based schools and to explain the context of my research in the system of maintained schools in England and Wales, some of which are Roman Catholic[1] and a few of which are Jewish.

1993 was an important year for those people interested in Catholic schools because it saw the publication of two major pieces of empirical research into Catholic high schools. Both were large scale studies; one was done in America (Bryk, Lee & Holland 1993) and the other in Australia (Flynn 1993). I will describe each in some detail to show the relevance of their findings and their methods for my own work as well as referring more briefly to other relevant research work into Catholic schools, including those in Britain.

There is no parallel piece of major research into Jewish schools although a number of smaller scale studies have been undertaken and I discuss those which are particularly relevant either because of their methodologies or their findings. Many of the studies refer to supplementary schooling rather than to day schools and so are not so relevant to this thesis. I will draw particular attention to the research into Jewish schools in Britain.

The theoretical literatures on Catholic and Jewish education will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. I refer to them in this chapter only when it is necessary to understand something in the research literature or the British school context for my own research.

Research into Catholic Schools

In 1978 Michael Hornsby-Smith published *Catholic Education: the Unobtrusive Partner* and in 1995 James Arthur's *The Ebbing Tide - Policy and Principles of Catholic Education* was published. Both authors commented on the paucity of research which had been done into Catholic schools in Britain (Hornsby-Smith 1978: x; Arthur 1995: 255). Hornsby-Smith, arguing that 'assertions about the goals of Catholic schools are amenable to empirical testing' (Hornsby Smith 1978: 9), reported on a number of studies which had been done mainly in the United States and in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s. He also discussed some small scale research in Britain and concluded that such research was beginning to

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[1] In the thesis I mainly use the term 'Catholic' rather than 'Roman Catholic' because this is the terminology used by the majority of Catholics. I am aware, of course, that some Anglicans also think of themselves as Catholic.

provide useful data about the qualitative nature of Catholic schools.[2] He argued the need for more research rather than what he termed 'aggressive assertion' (p116). Hornsby-Smith has continued to publish important studies (for example 1987; 1991) but, as Arthur noted in his critical study of what he saw as the failure of the Catholic hierarchy to implement the principles of Catholic education in Catholic secondary schools, there has not been any large scale research in Britain into the nature and outcomes of Catholic schools (Arthur 1995: 255).[3]

There is, however, major large scale research from both America and Australia. In Britain nearly all Catholic secondary schools are mainly or wholly state maintained (McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe 1996: 12) and the majority of Catholic secondary schools are for students aged eleven to eighteen. In America and Australia all the Catholic schools are private and there is a system of high schools for students aged fourteen to eighteen. The wider contexts of the schools in the two countries are also different from each other and from Britain. So any research results from Catholic schools outside Britain may not be easily transferable to the British context. However the international research data is suggestive and will be referred to throughout this thesis.

Marcellin Flynn has been publishing the results of large scale, questionnaire-based, surveys into the ethos or culture of Catholic schools in Australia since 1975 and has comparable data from 1972, 1982 and 1990 (Flynn 1993: 72). The data is from students in their last year of schooling, from their parents and from teachers in order to explore their views about their school. He has developed a number of scales and reported on the individual results and the interconnections between the scales. In his most recent book (1993) he referred to the overall picture which emerged as the *culture* of the school, divided into four sub-sections which he named:

    symbols;
    stories;
    rituals;
    values (p41).

I found this categorisation very useful as a way of identifying key aspects of the life of a school in which I was interested and I have used it in this thesis to explore both a Catholic and a Jewish school. I examine the idea of culture further in the

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[2] A huge effort was made in Britain after the Second World War to provide more and more Catholic school places and so attention was given to the numbers of Catholic schools rather than to their nature (Hornsby-Smith 1978: 21). Josephine Egan gave a useful summary of small scale research done in the 1960s which concentrated on the connections between attendance at a Catholic school and mass attendance or other religious observance (Egan 1988: 67-71).

[3] Gerald Grace, whose incisive review of Arthur's book is due to appear in the first volume of the new journal, *Education and Ethos*, has set up a Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education at the University of London Institute of Education (Grace forthcoming).

next chapter, and present and analyse my tales of the symbols, stories, rituals and values of the schools in Chapters Four to Six.

Flynn argued that the symbols are visible expressions of what the school is about. They may be material things such as crosses or statues of Mary, school badges or mottoes, or less tangible such as the school community itself which symbolises certain values and commitments to wider society (Flynn 1993: 43-45). The stories transmit the traditions of the school and these include religious stories and stories which people tell of their experiences in the school. There may be stories of heroes or stories of being a member of the school and participating in the curriculum and the extra-curricular life of the school (p45-49). Rituals are deliberately planned and repeated activities some of which may be religious but others of which establish broader patterns of relationships (p49-51). Underlying all of these are the beliefs and values which staff, students and their parents hold. Flynn was interested in religious beliefs and practice as well as views about education, and social and personal values (p40-43).

Flynn has made a very helpful division of the concept of culture in this way but the data from his questionnaires really gives far more evidence for the final element, the beliefs and values, than for the other three. I indicate here, briefly, the elements which, because his was a large-scale, quantitative, study, he did not find evidence for. Flynn is right that a 'Catholic school can be a powerful *expressive symbol*' (p159) for what people find meaningful. He included interesting data about the students, parents and teachers who make up the school community and their expectations of the Catholic school under the heading of 'expressive symbols' but he discovered little about the symbols within his schools. Similarly, there are no accounts of the stories which are told in the schools. He argued, rightly I think, that, in stories, people transmit traditions but he moved immediately to equating school traditions with school processes (p185) and then reported on people's views of the educational experience the schools provided. In the section on rituals the link was made with religious behaviour (p287) and the questionnaire elicited much useful information about students' religious beliefs and practices but there is nothing about the ways in which rituals in the school expressed and reinforced significant meaning.

Although he discussed each element at some length, Flynn's large scale survey (50 schools and nearly six thousand students, p26) did not really collect much data about the symbols, stories and rituals in the schools. To do that requires smaller scale, qualitative methods such as have been used in my own research. Flynn's findings, are, nevertheless very interesting and I draw heavily on them in Chapter Five when I analyse the results I obtained using a version of his

student questionnaires.[4] He used sophisticated statistical analysis and a large number of different scales which allowed him to produce a very detailed and intricate account of the schools and the students and to conclude that 'Catholic schools appear to be having a religious and academic influence on students which is independent of other influences such as the home, parish or peer group' (p400).

Anthony Bryk was the main speaker at a conference in 1993 at St Edmund's College, Cambridge, on 'The Contemporary Catholic School and the Common Good'. His lecture about the research work he and his colleagues had been doing was published in the book arising from the conference:

> Our findings are based on intensive field work in seven purposefully selected school sites, analyses of extant national databases on US high schools (both Catholic and public), and an exploration of the history and tradition which forms the distinctive character of these institutions (Bryk 1996: 25).[5]

Their book was called *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Bryk et al. 1993) and discussed in detail their research methodologies, which I followed to some extent, their empirical findings and their suggestions about how to make sense of what they found. By employing field work as well as large scale statistical analysis they were able to explore the differing realities of Catholic schools as well as what they share in common. From the national data they found that Catholic high schools are academically effective. They manage to:

> achieve relatively high levels of student learning;
> have this learning more equitably distributed with regard to race and class than in the public sector; and
> sustain high levels of teacher commitment and student engagement (Bryk 1996: 25).

The case studies enabled them to identify four factors which, they argued, were significantly responsible for the school effect. These 'foundational characteristics' are a core academic curriculum for all students, communal organization, decentralized governance and an inspirational ideology (Bryk et al. 1993: 297). The delimited technical core, with little student choice, is based on what staff believe all students can and should learn to nurture mind and spirit. This core curriculum results in a certain commonality of experience for all students and commonality of work conditions for teachers (p305). These opportunities for shared experiences, extending also to many extra-curricular activities are part of what Bryk et al. meant by 'communal organization'. They identified an extended

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[4] Many other researchers have adapted Flynn's questionnaires for their own work. See, for example, Cairns & Walsh forthcoming; Dorman 1998; Mok 1995.

[5] This very useful book, *The Contemporary Catholic School* (McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe eds. 1996) contains many helpful articles but most of these, unlike Bryk's article, are not reporting empirical research into particular Catholic schools.

scope of the role of the teacher in the form of personal relations with both students and other teachers. There are also shared beliefs about teaching and learning, and about how people should relate to one another.

> The Catholic school sees itself as a community that respects the dignity of each person...and where an ethos of caring infuses social encounters (Bryk et al. 1993: 299).

'Decentralized governance' referred to the way Catholic schools in America, unlike in Britain, are able to make all important decisions at the school level (p299). Although market forces operate to some extent, the schools are largely autonomous but influenced by a strong 'inspirational ideology'. This is based on the idea of subsidiarity and on a view of students which is concerned for the kind of people they become as well as what they know, understand and can do (p301).

Bryk et al. identified elements in Catholic teaching which underpin this ideology. There is the belief in the capacity of human reason to arrive at truth, including ethical truth.

> Drawing on systematic Christian thought, teachers encourage students to discuss and reflect on their own lives in the context of classic questions about the nature of person and society (Bryk et al. 1993: 302).

Symbolising and envisioning these beliefs are the words and life of Christ, the idea of the Kingdom of God and the hope of resurrection.

> Such images evoke our humanness. They add depth to a schooling process that is otherwise dominated by the rhetoric of test scores, performance standards and professional accountability (Bryk et al. 1993: 303).

In studying the culture of a Catholic school I was using a similar methodology to the one Bryk and his colleagues used in their field work and I was also focusing on the experiences of students and staff, their values and the images which they use. The authors suggested that the public schools were in difficulty because they were based on an uncritical acceptance of the value of market forces and individual choice. 'The absence of a contemporary public rhetoric about the proper formation of persons and the advancement of the common good is quite noticeable' (p318). The Catholic school aims to shape persons-in-community (p319) and one of the key factors in this is the voluntary nature of the school community (p314).

Catholic schools in Britain are, also, in a certain sense voluntary although most are not private and fee-paying; parents do make a choice to 'opt-in' to a Catholic school in a way which they might not to the local community school.[6] This thesis reports what I found about the communal organization and the

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[6] Catholic schools also sometimes have admissions criteria which mean that many parents are not able to choose them for their children.

inspirational ideology of a British Catholic school. It is interesting that Bryk is now working to improve Chicago public schools and believes both that there are things to be learned for all schools from the research findings in Catholic schools and that the Catholic schools make an important contribution to the educational opportunities available (Bryk 1996: 38-39). The research for this thesis was undertaken with the expectation that a dialogue can, and should, take place between those with experience of Catholic, Jewish and secular schools and the thesis attempts to begin that dialogue. Bryk concluded his summary of their research in this way:

> Contemporary Catholic schools ... educate a very broad cross-section of Americans of diverse race, ethnicity and social class....Instruction is not narrow, divisive or sectarian, but rather is informed by a generous conception of democratic life in a post-modern society. Moreover, many of these schools are located in very disadvantaged communities and constitute an important resource to their communities. It is observations such as these which lead us to conclude that Catholic schools serve the common good and the public has a stake in their preservation (Bryk 1996: 40).

There have been at least two other major, published, in-depth studies of Catholic schools. Peter McLaren, a convert to Catholicism, undertook an anthropological study of a Catholic junior high school in Toronto in the 1980s which had the intriguing title, *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* (1993). This was a very detailed study focused on how the details of school life acted as rituals which had an underlying, or root, paradigm McLaren called 'becoming a Catholic' (McLaren 1993: 180). In the book countless interactions are analysed, according to their ritual function, in reinforcing the idea of the 'obedient Catholic worker' (p220). Many of the students were children of Portuguese immigrants and McLaren judged that while the rituals of classroom life provided a certain stability in their lives their inherent values proved to be both alien and impractical (p222-223); unlike the schools which Bryk et al (1993) reported this school had failed to be 'good news to the poor'. Although the explicit religion teaching did refer to church teaching on social justice this vision 'was frequently contradicted by the ritualized structural relations through which these lessons were transmitted' (McLaren 1993: 231).

McLaren's work is very interesting, both in the way he approached it and in the final form of the book. The theoretical perspective he took dominated and while both the students and teachers are frequently described and their words are often quoted they, somehow, do not speak or are not heard, as much as the author is. The same point could be made about Nancy Lesko's book, *Symbolizing Society*

(Lesko 1988). The subtitle of this book indicates its close links with this thesis: *Stories, Rites and Structure in a Catholic High School*. She wrote:

Since...social and cultural practices often express what is otherwise inexpressible in words, social identities must be sought in the collective rites, emblems, myths and dramatizations of a cultural group (Lesko 1988: 22).

Her interest, was in the opposing structures of 'private' and 'public' and she made initial comments, which Bryk would later echo, that Catholic schools put greater emphasis on developing interdependence and co-operation among students and teachers than the more individually focused public schools (p3). She carried out a long-term study in a Catholic girls high school and identified a key structural conflict between the values of 'caring' which arose out of a communal, collective sense of school society, and 'favouritism' which depended on an individualistic, competitive ethic. Although there was much said and done in the school to promote caring and community much of the girls' conversation was about favouritism and individual success (p37). Lesko identified two distinct groups of girls, with relationships among themselves both inside and outside school, to symbolise the structural conflict in the school. Those whom she called 'rich and popular' were autonomous, competitive, exploitative of others and striving for self-development (p100). Both teachers and other girls identified this group as model students in the school despite the fact that they embodied qualities opposed to the school's explicit values. A group of girls whom no one seemed to regard as successes she termed the 'others'. These girls were loyal, emphasised group achievement and had enduring friendships; just the values the school supposedly promoted (p100). Lesko suggested that many of the schools' rituals mediated or resolved this structural conflict (p103).

Her theoretical concerns, like McLaren's, perhaps over-control the account she wrote of the school but her attention to the stories and rituals in the school reinforced my own decision to focus on these aspects. I wanted to explore the actual experiences and values of students and teachers, and to make their voices central to the account I gave. McLaren and Lesko both studied only one school. The alternative method of course is large scale questionnaire research like Flynn's. In Australia, Patrick Fahy published the cleverly named *Faith in Catholic Classrooms* (1992) where he examined whether there were grounds for confidence in both the academic standards and the faith development of students in Catholic high schools (p11). He had an unrepresentative sample of 23 schools, nearly all single sex boys schools, run by the Marist brothers and his conclusions from the questionnaires are unfortunately rather more 'aggressive assertion' than the

systematic analysis the many tables and figures in the book would lead one to assume.[7]

In 1983, Josephine Egan asked, what were then known as fifth form students, in all of the sixteen Catholic secondary schools in Wales, to complete a questionnaire based on statements used in official documents about Catholic schools (Egan 1988). She had nearly 1600 completed questionnaires about the religious backgrounds of the pupils, their views about the ideal Catholic school and their experience of their own school. She discovered that most were happy with their school but had a sense of isolation from other young people in other schools (p140). Less than half the students were regular mass attenders and they were quite negative about the RE and the social and moral education they received (p88; 141). Perhaps most interestingly, she found that the non-practising Catholic students were 'even more negative in their attitudes to the Catholic schools they attend than non-Catholic pupils' (p121). She and Leslie Francis have continued to draw attention to this factor (Francis & Egan 1993) but it has received little discussion.[8] This study was published in a collection called *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools* (Francis & Lankshear eds. 1993) which included many theoretical perspectives and the results of some empirical research.[9]

Leslie Francis, in partnership with several other researchers, has been examining students' attitudes towards religion for many years and some of his studies have been conducted in Catholic schools. For example in a study of 1,113 students in Scotland (Rhymer & Francis 1993) they found that girls and students from a higher social class were more likely to practise their religion than boys or those from a lower social class (p468). Age and gender were good predictors for students' attitude to religion, with younger students and girls more favourably disposed (p468). Students who attended a Catholic school or received explicit Catholic religious education (RE) in a non-denominational school had a more

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[7] For example, in his concluding remarks about whether one can have faith in Catholic classrooms he wrote, 'but the central place of all must belong to Jesus who stands at the centre of every Catholic school, in the middle of every classroom, in the heart of every student and teacher and in every loving interaction between teacher-pupils or between pupils' (Fahy 1992: 238). There is a much better, but unpublished, study of the Marist perspective on education which covers three secondary schools, one in Glasgow, one in Melbourne and one in New York (McMahon 1993).

[8] The recently published *Catholic Schools and Other Faiths* (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1997b) does not appear to be aware of this research. My own findings offer some, minimal, support for the distinctions Francis and Egan made. I discuss my questionnaire results in Chapter 5.

[9] There are similar collections of articles relevant to this thesis published as *Christian Perspectives for Education* (Francis & Thatcher eds. 1990), *The Contours of Christian Education* (Astley, J. & Day, D. eds. 1992) and *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education* (Astley & Francis eds. 1994).

positive attitude towards religion than Catholic students at a non-denominational school who had no Catholic RE (p471).

There is other British research worth a brief mention here. Robert Dent was interested in the way in which Catholic schools approached multicultural education and he produced what he called 'condensed studies' of five Catholic schools, each very different from the others (Dent 1987: 29). His studies were based on interviews with the headteachers, teachers with a range of curriculum and pastoral concerns and students. He concluded that the responses of the five schools to multicultural education differed considerably and were not determined by the number of pupils from ethnic minorities in the school. It was the recognition by the head and the staff of the need to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society which was crucial (p84). Bernadette O'Keefe's comparative study of church and county schools was published in 1986. This, and her more recent research into the development of evangelical Christian schools (O'Keefe 1992) are not directly concerned with Catholic schools but they provide an understanding of the wider context in Britain within which both Catholic and Jewish schools exist. Priscilla Chadwick has published two relevant studies. The first (1994) explored issues in joint Roman Catholic-Anglican education and the more recent (1997) concentrated on the relationship between the churches and government in deciding educational policy which affected church schools.

There is one final piece of research I want to refer to before I move on to discuss research into Jewish schools. I noted at the beginning of this section that there hasn't been much commitment to research by those who make decisions about Catholic schools in England and Wales. The publication of *A Struggle for Excellence - Catholic Secondary Schools in Urban Priority Areas* (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1997a) marked a significant step forward. This is the report of a consultation based on questionnaires and interviews of 27 headteachers of Catholic secondary schools in poor areas of England. It presented a realistic picture of the schools, identified some of the issues and challenges they faced and highlighted some examples of good practice in order to provide impetus for new initiatives (p50). The report ended with a call for further research to 'provide a wider evidence base to influence policy at local and national level' (p51).

I have reviewed both international and British research which is methodologically relevant to this thesis and has produced interesting findings about Catholic schools. Both Bryk et al. and Flynn paint a very positive picture but some of the research has suggested that a Catholic school may be falling short of the ideals and visions of the church and other studies have shown a gap between the expressed aims of the school and the experiences and values of students.

Research into Jewish Schools

At the Hebrew University in Jerusalem there is The Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. In his introduction to the first volume of *Studies in Jewish Education*, which the Centre has published every few years since 1983, Barry Chazan gave a helpful categorisation of Jewish educational research and examples of each category. He listed:

> descriptive data gathering;
> ethnographic and case studies;
> correlational - causational studies;
> historical analysis;
> curriculum analysis
> philosophical analysis and system-building
> inspirational - programmatic (Chazan 1983:18-19).

This section focuses mainly on school-based research, including some ethnographic studies. A great deal of demographic work has been done by Jewish researchers and there are good historical surveys of Jewish education in Israel and the diaspora.[10] I shall refer to some historical analysis and some data about British Jewish schools in the next section. Philosophical and theological, and more inspirational writing, is discussed in later chapters.[11]

The Jewish community appears eager for research and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which aims to safeguard Jewish interests, has its own research unit. In 1983 they published the fourth detailed report about Redbridge, in north east London, based on the 1978 Redbridge Jewish Survey (Kosmin & Levy 1983). Called *Jewish Identity in an Anglo-Jewish Community* the report covered data about various aspects of religious belief, practice and education. The survey of 500 Jewish households included 1200 people and the report broke the overall figures down in a number of interesting ways. The Jewish population in Redbridge was mainly Orthodox (73%) with 16% affiliated to Reform and Liberal synagogues and 11% unaffiliated (p7).[12] The majority attended synagogue only on festivals but had a higher level of religious observance in the home (p10-12). The explanations given for observing the Sabbath and festivals were mainly concerned with preserving Judaism by transmitting an inherited tradition to children; God and belief were hardly mentioned (p16).

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[10] See, for example, Waterman & Kosmin 1986; Himmelfarb & Dellapergola 1989; Iram 1993.

[11] I am referring here to the philosophical/theological work of Martin Buber, Michael Rosenak and others, and to writings of those such as the British Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks.

[12] The issue of Jewish identity is a very complex one. The majority of British synagogues are Orthodox and recognise the authority of the Chief Rabbi. There are also a growing number of ultra-Orthodox communities. Progressive Judaism takes the form of either Reform or Liberal congregations. There are also a few Masorti (conservative) congregations whose theological position is between Orthodox and Reform (see for example Schmool & Cohen 1998: 13).

This is the one report from the Board of Deputies which has detailed information about the level of Jewish education the respondents have received, the outcomes of various types of Jewish education and respondents' views on Jewish day schools. The outstanding feature which emerged was a clear difference between the level of Jewish education of males and females with some Jewish girls and women in every age group receiving no Jewish education. Most of the remainder (90%) had attended part-time synagogue classes until the age of thirteen with a small number attending beyond that time or going to a Jewish day school (p20). When different types of Jewish education were compared to synagogue attendance then synagogue classes beyond age thirteen and Jewish primary school show a positive effect but for the small numbers who had attended a Jewish secondary school there is a slight negative effect (p22). The authors of the report wrote:

> A policy suggestion which emerges is that education decision-makers should particularly concentrate their attention on the large element which is alienated by this type of Jewish education. Certainly before dismissing these findings out of hand as unrepresentative, they should undertake their own study of the overall impact on Jewish identity of Jewish Day School education (Kosmin & Levy 1983: 23).

No major, in depth study has been done in Britain and, in a small way, my own research will contribute useful data on this subject. The Redbridge community was not very positive about Jewish day schools with 61.7% of parents and 51.9% of teenagers opposed to the idea of a Jewish primary school, and 65.6% of parents and 62.1% of teenagers opposed to a secondary school (p33). Perhaps this is not the 'vast' majority which the authors claim (p34) but it is significant. The main reasons given both for and against Jewish schools were similar; Jewish children would be together. That was seen either positively or as segregating Jewish children from the wider community (p34). At the time there was a Jewish primary school in Redbridge but no secondary school although one has since opened.

These concerns about Jewish secondary schools are echoed in another piece of British research. Stephen Miller (1988) was also concerned with the effect of Jewish education on the religious behaviour and attitudes of secondary school students. He maintained that 'both the dependent variable of Jewish identification and the independent variable of Jewish schooling take on different values in different national or even local research contexts' (p151) so that it was difficult to establish a general model of the effects of Jewish education. Nevertheless, on the basis of his research he argued:

> Jewish secondary schools have at best no impact, and at worst a negative impact, on religious behaviour, attitudes and motivation (Miller 1988: 162).

This has not been the finding of other studies as we shall see but Miller is important for directing attention toward the need for 'fine-grain analysis of the processes occurring within Jewish schools' (p162) and this thesis attempts such an analysis.

These are the relevant British studies but others have also reported on the impact of Jewish schooling on identity, separating the school effect from other factors. Geoffrey Bock, in a large scale American study, concluded that 'hours of Jewish instruction' is the best predicting measure (Bock 1984: 239) and, in general terms, better Jewishly schooled Jews are more identified (p240). He distinguished 'public Jewishness' and 'private Jewishness' and found that Jewish schooling has most direct impact on identifying publicly as a Jew, with family background most significant for personal belief and practice (p252). Bock's use of 'hours of instruction' is useful because it can be applied to any form of Jewish education. He found that 1,000 hours seems to be the critical point at which Jewish education begins to have an effect and that there is a rise in effectiveness up to 12,000 hours. However, between 4,000 and 6,000 hours, individuals find their school experiences counter-productive, with increased schooling related to a decline in Jewish identity (p250). He didn't try to account for this, but it may be relevant to the disaffection which seems to be associated with Jewish day schools.

Harold Himmelfarb (1984) reported on a range of similar research in America and Australia which also suggested that the part-time synagogue based schooling, of less than 1,000 hours, which most Jewish children in those countries received, could well be largely ineffective. He wrote:

> Another finding which appears in all studies is that, in general, day schools tend to be more effective than supplementary schools but there is no consensus about which dimensions of Jewish identification are most affected by day schooling (Himmelfarb 1984: 279).

Detailed information about quality rather than quantity required the kind of in-depth studies which have been done in both America and Australia. David Schoem, for example, studied the curriculum of an American afternoon school using ethnographic research methods. He explored the ideals for the curriculum laid out on paper and the views of parents and teachers; he observed lessons and the students' experiences (Schoem 1983). What he found was 'curricular failure' (p85) with bored students and frustrated teachers. What he concluded I quote at some length, to indicate the kind of difficulties which Jewish supplementary schooling may encounter and to illustrate the detail which this type of research can generate:

Finally, despite the attempts of the administration and the school staff to convey a certain image and feeling about being Jewish through the affective curriculum and to teach knowledge, values, and skills through the cognitive curriculum, their efforts were often at odds with one another, and what the students experienced in class was most often different than what was intended. In fact, the desire to create some change and greater involvement in Jewish life through the school curriculum was not successful. Rather, what the students did learn about being Jewish was vague and ambiguous, and the feelings they developed were marked by ambivalence (Schoem 1993: 86).[13]

A detailed ethnographic case study of a very different kind of Jewish school was done by Brian Bullivant (1983). This was a small ultra-Orthodox day school in Melbourne, Australia. Bullivant wanted to 'explore the effects of values and value-orientations on the formal enculturation' of the boys at the school (Bullivant 1983: 40). He had a definition of culture which is relevant to my research:

Culture is a patterned system of knowledge and conceptions, embodied in symbolic and non-symbolic communication modes, which a society has evolved from the past, and progressively modifies and augments to give meaning to and cope with the present and anticipated future problems of its existence (Bullivant 1983: 45).

Bullivant discovered that there were two different cultures operating in the school and that they were in conflict. The 'Great Tradition' was about becoming a good Jew while the 'Academic Tradition' stressed examination success and university entrance (p58). The boys experienced two curricula, two timetables, two calendars and two quite different types of rituals which Bullivant analysed as being both expressive and instrumental (p60). This cultural dualism, he argued, produced highly charged, anxious, sometimes aggressive, behaviour from the boys in the traditional style classrooms although out of class they were friendly and informal in their relationships (p62). The boys appeared to be living with both value systems and expected to have traditional Jewish lives and high-status, professional occupations. The school achieved higher than average examination successes (p71).

This cultural dissonance is echoed by the findings of Samuel Heilman's observation based study of three American Jewish schools (1992). The tension between a secular life and a life based on Jewish beliefs and practices is fairly obvious but Heilman's detailed study enabled him to distinguish some of the subtleties involved in the process of disruption to classroom learning which he named 'flooding out' (Heilman 1992: 305). For some students he wrote, 'the Jewish school and classroom become the last ghetto, an extension of and often a

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[13] Problems with community-based supplementary schooling are part of the reason why there has been an increase in Jewish day schools.

replacement for the Jewish home, a standing contrast to the public school, the secular curriculum' (p311). However, this does not mean that the schools were completely ineffectual; they played the role of the Jewish community, the students had warm feelings for one another (p313) and learned enough about Jewish life in order to live the kind of Jewish life their parents do (p321). To that extent they succeed in reproducing the level of commitment in the surrounding community.[14] Heilman concluded:

> If we form communities in which being Jewish is a positive and active element of life, then we shall produce Jewish human beings, and our schools will ineluctably reflect that success. If we fail, our schools will mirror that failure (Heilman 1992: 330).

In 1997, at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, in Jerusalem, there were more than a thousand papers delivered. A number of them were about Jewish education and the topics covered were: education and modern Jewish thought; education and the formation of Jewish identity; the foundation of contemporary Jewish education; programmes for change and renewal in Jewish education; the formation of the educational system in Israel; the school and Jewish education; the Holocaust in Jewish education; the use of Jewish texts in modern educational practice; education in philosophy and *halakhah* (Jewish Law). The range is impressive and my research into the culture of a British Jewish secondary school in the late 1990s is connected to some of these topics which are explored in later chapters. As with the Catholic school, I did not set out to explore pre-determined outcomes, but rather to let the various voices in a particular Jewish school be heard.

What I have discussed so far in this chapter are examples of relevant empirical research into Jewish and Catholic day schools. The final section of this chapter discusses the historical context of these schools in England and Wales.

National context: Roman Catholic and Jewish Maintained Secondary Schools in England and Wales

In the nineteenth century, when many Roman Catholics came to England from Ireland, the bishops instructed that schools be built before churches (Arthur 1995: 15).[15] Both James Arthur (1995) and Priscilla Chadwick (1997) have recently written clear accounts of the history of Catholic schools in Britain. This brief

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[14] This is a particularly interesting conclusion because the Jewish school which I studied had, as its goal, the development of Jewish life and practice of the surrounding Jewish community as well as of the students.

[15] Jonathan Sacks noted that when the nineteenth century Rabbi, S.R. Hirsch arrived in Frankfurt he insisted on building a school before a synagogue. This 'was to become a model for the ...day school, treating girls and boys, Jewish and secular subjects, equally seriously' (Sacks 1988: 32).

account of the background to contemporary Catholic schools largely draws on their evidence.

State financial support for Catholic schools was very limited until the 1902 Education Act which recognised the existence of the 'dual system' of denominational and non-denominational schools and provided for their maintenance from the rates (Chadwick 1997: 16). The bishops had both the responsibility for, and power over, the schools and were the main group who tried to prise more and more financial support out of the government without conceding any of their control. They have always controlled religious instruction and appointed some of the managers or governors of Catholic schools but they were not able to maintain control over the qualifications of teachers or inspection of the secular curriculum (Arthur 1995: 36).

After the 1944 Education Act, Catholic schools opted for voluntary aided status and gradually, as well as all running costs, the state took on more and more of their capital costs, up to 85% by 1975 (Chadwick 1997: 33). The 1988 and 1992 Education Acts established the possibility of 'grant maintained' status where central government provides all the necessary funding and about 6% of the approximately two and a quarter thousand maintained Catholic schools have 'opted out' (figures from Catholic Education Society, October 1998). The bishops have been largely critical of this process, mainly it seems, because it has meant loss of diocesan control of Catholic schools (Chadwick 1997: 54, 59). There was also concern that the needs of the whole Catholic community, and perhaps the wider community, would suffer if parents at a particular school chose grant maintained status (Arthur 1995: 115).[16]

Before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) papal encyclicals required that 'the Catholic child from the Catholic home must receive education at the hands of Catholic teachers in a Catholic school' (Chadwick 1994: 13). This was mainly so that children could be instructed in the religious and moral truth which the Church proclaimed but with the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II wider educational and theological principles were advanced for the importance of Catholic schools.[17] The changing nature of the Catholic church since Vatican II forms the background against which any contemporary account of Catholic schools must be seen but they have always been understood as part of the mission of the church, centred on the person and example of Jesus Christ (Arthur 1995: 46).

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[16] For example, extra funding might enable the grant maintained school to expand and draw students away from other schools or colleges, making their viability problematic.

[17] These are discussed in Chapter 7.

In both America and Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a concern to ascertain what effect attending a Catholic school had on belief and practice and the conclusions were that there was a small, but significant, impact (see for example Hornsby-Smith & Lee 1980). Since that time there has been more interest in Britain in the qualitative differences between Catholic schools and other maintained schools although there is little empirical evidence about these differences.[18] Catholic primary and secondary schools often perform well in league tables of results and may be over-subscribed although some now have increasing numbers of non-Catholic pupils and teachers (Arthur 1995: 198). To end this brief summary of the historical background to Catholic schools there is some numerical data. The Catholic population in England and Wales is about four and a half million and there are 2,246 maintained primary and secondary Catholic schools educating just over 10% of the total school population. (McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe 1996: 12-14; information from the Catholic Education Society, October 1998).

The number of Jewish day schools in Britain (65 primary and secondary schools, Schmool & Cohen 1998: 21) is tiny compared to this although the historical development of maintained Jewish schools is similar, in some ways, to the Catholic story. Judaism has no central authority to organise education or to negotiate with government (Black 1998: 119) but education or schooling plays a central role in Judaism. The Yiddish word for a synagogue is *shul* from the German word, schule, meaning school (Rosten 1968: 384).[19] Traditionally basic reading and writing of Hebrew were taught to children in the *cheder* (room) and elementary instruction in the scriptures and rabbinic writings was given in the *Talmud Torah* (literally study or learning of the Torah, the divine teaching). Advanced study was done in a *yeshiva* (seminary) (Black 1998: 8). In a Jewish day school the traditional Jewish curriculum is taught alongside the secular curriculum but in Britain, right from the beginning of compulsory schooling in 1870, most Jewish children have attended non-denominational schools and undertaken supplementary Jewish schooling (Lipman 1990: 106).

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[18] It is precisely this point which James Arthur made when he claimed that, as a result of wide ranging changes in the educational system in England and Wales in the last decade, the majority of Catholic secondary schools are not significantly different from neighbouring schools and therefore are not putting Catholic principles of education into practice (Arthur 1995: 241).

[19] All Hebrew and Yiddish words are italicised in the text and the English equivalent is given when the word is used for the first time in any chapter. Hebrew is the language of the Bible and of the State of Israel, Yiddish was the vernacular language of Ashkenazi Jews of central and eastern Europe. Although when Jews were re-admitted to England in 1656 they were mainly Sephardi, originally from Spain and Portugal, the waves of immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were Ashkenazi.

There was a huge Jewish voluntary school in London, the Jews' Free School with places for over 4,000 pupils in 1900 (Black 1998: 1) and other Jewish voluntary day schools in Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham[20] (Lipman 1990: 106) but when the state maintained Board schools were established in 1870 they obtained the confidence of the Jewish community and Jewish parents.[21] Jewish immigration to Britain was at its greatest during these times but it is impossible to be certain exactly how many came (Lipman 1990: 45). The concern of the existing Jewish community and the new arrivals was 'anglicization', 'teaching the pupils to adapt to English usages in speech, manner, in mental attitude, and in principles, in such a way as to enable them to integrate successfully into the wider community' (Black 1998: 123).

This was undoubtedly successful so that by the 1990s the concern of the Jewish community was reversed; attention was focused on preventing any further assimilation of the remaining Jewish community. Jewish education, including the Jewish day school, was seen as the key to this process, and 'continuity' the key word (Sacks 1994a; Worms 1992). Jewish day schools had opened from time to time, most admitting only Jewish students, and between 1967 and 1982 the numbers enrolled in them, both primary and secondary, rose from 9,015 (25.2% of Jewish children) to 14,188 (46.9%) (Waterman & Kosmin 1986: 39). In 1996, 17,750 children (42.3%) were attending Jewish day schools (Schmool & Cohen 1998: 22). In London, where most Jews live and where most of the Jewish schools are, 53% of all children receiving Jewish education were doing so in day schools. The majority of the schools in Britain are Orthodox although not all the students are Orthodox or even Jewish. There is one Reform primary school and a number of ultra-Orthodox schools (p21). Of the five state maintained Jewish secondary schools, two are grant maintained.

So, within the maintained system of schooling in England and Wales, there are both Jewish and Catholic secondary schools but little detailed qualitative research into their distinctive nature. There is quantitative and qualitative research, mainly in America and Australia, to suggest that students are generally doing well, academically, in faith-based schools but that the impact of the religious character of the school on the students is neither as pronounced nor as straightforward as those in charge of the schools might imagine or desire. My research contributes some 'fine-grain analysis' (Miller 1988: 162) by exploring the distinctive

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[20] In 1998 only London, Manchester, Liverpool and Gateshead have both Jewish primary and secondary day schools (Schmool & Cohen 1998: 21).
[21] An early Board School, opened in 1874 in Old Castle Street, in the East End of London, deliberately appointed a Jewish head and many Jewish teachers. 95% of the 1500 pupils in 1883 were Jewish and the school was allowed to provide separate Jewish instruction after school hours. By 1900 there were 16 'Jewish' Board Schools in the East End (Black 1998: 119-120).

characteristics of the culture of a Jewish and a Catholic maintained secondary school in England. I have carried out two case studies, within an inter-faith, Jewish-Christian context, of the symbols, stories, rituals and values which make up the two cultures. The next chapter explores more fully the reasons for focusing on these elements, the theoretical aspects of the research methods chosen, the key concepts of culture, dialogue and story, and the final structure and format of the thesis.

Chapter Two - Theoretical Perspectives on the Research Methodology: Design, Analysis and Writing

Introduction

At the heart of the title of this thesis is the word *culture*. Much has been written about the study of culture and I discuss here some of this context for my own work As the last chapter showed I have made use of Flynn's extensive quantitative study of Australian Catholic high schools (Flynn 1993). My research was deliberately planned to explore the four aspects of culture which Flynn identified and to seek mainly qualitative data about the symbols, stories, rituals and values in my two schools. This chapter explains why I chose a case study, made up of observations, documents, interviews and a questionnaire.

I am interested in the way in which, by studying a Jewish and a Catholic school in tandem, there can be *dialogue* occurring in several different ways. I understand my relationships as researcher within the two schools as part of a dialogue in which it is particularly important to convey the meaning of individual elements in the culture of each school in the terms of the students and staff themselves. Their voices are central but they are not heard in a vacuum. In offering interpretations of the cultures I have brought in other voices and I have tried to interpret the meanings for 'the other', the person 'outside' the culture. This chapter explores the idea of dialogue in more detail and argues for an *open inclusivist* approach to inter-faith dialogue.

During the research a number of *stories* emerged. I have consciously chosen to highlight the narrative and interpretive quality of some of my findings and in this chapter I explain the reasons for the way in which some of the data will be presented. These are partly based in feminist theory but they also reflect work in narrative theology. In discussing the question of the validity and reliability of the research I argue for a particular approach to epistemological issues. Once again I will turn to the theology of inter-faith dialogue for insight on ways to take seriously the 'other' which don't collapse the difference between the researcher and researched and which engage with questions of truth.

Symbols, stories, rituals and values

It is useful to analyse the culture of a school, as Flynn did, in terms of symbols, stories, rituals and values because it is a limited definition of culture and particularly appropriate in a faith-based school.[1] Deal and Kennedy, in a book

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[1] Sometimes the term culture is used in a much wider way to refer to the many aspects of a particular society including, for example, its technologies, its religious beliefs and practices, its

called *Corporate Cultures* (1982), argued that companies with strong cultures outperform those with a less well defined and expressed culture. One of the key elements in the culture is the values:

> For those who hold them, shared values define the fundamental character of their organization, the attitude that distinguishes it from all others. In this way, they create a sense of identity for those in the organization (Deal & Kennedy 1982: 23).

They quote a powerful story about the values connected with intentions which was told at the New York Times:

> The story concerns a traveller who in medieval times meets three stone cutters along a road and asks each of them what he's doing. The first says, "I am cutting stone." The second says, "I am shaping a cornerstone." But the third answers, "I am building a cathedral." (Deal & Kennedy 1982: 41).

But it is not enough to have values for 'a corporate culture - and the values it embodies - must be ritualized and celebrated if it's going to thrive' (p59). It is in the symbols, the rituals and the stories that the values are passed on and the meaning of belonging to the organization is powerfully expressed. They advised people how to *read* the culture and the methods they suggested have been adopted in this study. They wrote that the 'culture analyst' should study the physical setting, read what the company says about its culture, test how the company greets strangers, interview company people and observe how people spend their time (p129-133).

There is nothing here to suggest that the culture just happens. It is, or can be, carefully constructed. This is what Eric Hobsbawm called 'inventing traditions' which means:

> a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm 1983: 1).

These may be deliberately invented or they may emerge in a less easily traceable manner and become quickly established. As later chapters will show, the cultures of the two schools I studied include deliberately created traditions but these often draw on pre-existing religious practices. Here I will briefly discuss three more examples from the literature about the culture of schools, drawing from writing about secular schools, Jewish and Catholic schools.

In an early study text for the Open University called *The Culture of the School* Roger Dale argued that culture equals 'group perspectives' and that not everything which is consciously promoted by staff operates as culture; rather the culture is in the 'taken for grantedness' of school life; things like the timetable or

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system of government and so on. Alternatively culture may be understood as referring only to the arts and literature and be connected with good taste.

the buildings.[2] I discuss in Chapter Four the importance of timetable in the culture of my Jewish school and also reflect on the meanings conveyed by the buildings in both schools. Dale's book has a rare and very interesting section on the importance of space entitled 'space speaks'. He argued:

> The spaces in the school and the way they are laid out ... influence and are influenced by school and classroom interaction. They also reflect an implicit set of values and an implicit view of the nature of the teacher pupil relationship (Dale 1972: 62).

He later referred to the 'values and symbols of the shape and contents of the 'container' (i.e. the classroom)' which form the meanings in which the participants, both pupils and teachers actually experience the situation (p64). He included a range of photographs to suggest the relationships between architecture and pedagogy and these photos are full of visual symbols. Together with stories and rituals these give form to the values of the school.

The importance of the whole environment is made clear in an American article detailing *What We Know About ...The Jewish Day School* by Alvin Schiff (1992). He argued that:

> In the final analysis, one of the major reasons for the impact of day schools on attitudes and identification is the full-day Jewish climate in which students are immersed. This, after all, is one of the reasons for the establishment of day schools (Schiff 1992: 156).

Schiff discussed the nature of the Jewish Studies curriculum in these private schools which varies according to the Jewish character of the sponsoring group and pointed out that little information exists about the academic achievement of students in either Jewish or general studies. What he went on to say begins to hint at the wider cultural elements in these schools:

> Yet from all available evidence it is clear that Jewish day school students acquit themselves admirably in high school and university settings. This is due largely to school standards, stringent requirements regarding homework, the general climate of learning in the schools and parent involvement in their children's education (Schiff 1992: 155).

Later in the same volume is Samuel Heilman's ethnographic study which I discussed briefly in Chapter One. As an ethnographer he was trying to:

> discover what constitutes normalness, to expose the taken-for-granted life as it unfolds within the institution. For it is the normal rather than the exotic that reflects and reveals the inner character of life as experienced by insiders. Throughout I have concentrated not so much on what is learned

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[2] Dale gave an example of an aspect of school life which he felt should not be seen as part of the culture of a particular school. He wrote, 'The house system, apparently the most assiduously promoted aspect of life in Hightown Grammar, seems not to produce anything in the way of group perspectives, though it clearly and consciously pervades the life of the school at many points' (Dale 1972: 23).

but on how it gets through and what impact it has (Heilman 1992: 303-304).

Heilman included some of the symbols, stories, rituals and values which made up the culture of schools he studied. One expression which he used to summarise this is the Yiddish word *heimish* (homey). Teachers wanted students to 'feel at home' in the Jewish school, at home with the culture and the students did display a closeness to other students and also to staff:

> The students demonstrated closeness and communion in many ways. They exchanged news about their lives. They shared food with one another and at times with their teachers. They often came to and from school together. Indeed, at times the most important part of coming to school seems to be opportunity to enjoy one another's company, in spite of their commonly experienced feelings of unease with the curriculum....It was common to find students independently reciting prayers or reviewing texts because this is the way of displaying their belongingness to the place....To be sure, this will only happen if the school injects Jewish content into the homey environment, making it clear that the feeling of closeness requires familiarity with Jewish lore (Heilman 1992: 312).

Other examples of this Jewish lore or *Yiddishkeit* (Jewishness) at work were students being called by their Hebrew names rather than their English names, the use of Hebrew and Yiddish words by teachers and students, frequent reference to Biblical and rabbinical characters and stories, discussion of *kashrut* (the rules about what food can and cannot be eaten) and of Sabbath observance, details of festivals and of differences within the Jewish community. Heilman concluded that what made an impact on students was the Jewish community which was created in the school by the Jewish teachers (Heilman 1992: 330).

The nature of a Catholic school community is the topic of Nancy Lesko's book (1988) referred to in the last chapter. Attention to the stories and rituals is necessary, she argued, because to ask students directly about their identity and values would be unlikely to produce much insight:

> To look at myth in a school is to examine narratives for their intent and for their symbolic contents and for the relations among elements of the story....In these stories are imbedded values, assumptions, and images of society and individuals as participants attempt to make sense of their experiences....The formal components of rituals include repetition, special timing or spacing, precise order, evocative presentational style and the collective setting....Especially in the religious-based school, rituals are likely to be well-articulated and well-ordered collective occasions, firmly established in school traditions (Lesko 1988: 25-26).

Lesko took a 'structuralist' approach to her analysis of the symbols, stories and rituals of the Catholic High School she studied, being particularly interested in the oppositions of a collective image of society and an individualistically oriented approach. She identified conflicting values of 'caring' and 'competition' and

suggested that some of the school rituals operated as temporary mediations of these (p103). She gave detailed descriptions of two rituals, the 'homecoming spirit assembly' and an 'all-school mass' (p103-117). These descriptions were intended to convey to the reader a sense of what the occasions were like[3] and are an example of what Elliot Eisner called 'educational connoisseurship and criticism' (Eisner 1985a: 219).

These terms are taken from the world of the arts. Eisner argued that in education, as in the arts, it is first necessary to 'see' what is subtle, complex and important. This is connoisseurship. It is developed by the opportunity:

> to attend to happenings of educational life in a focused, sensitive and conscious way...to compare such happenings, to discuss what one sees so that perception can be refined, to identify events not previously perceived, and to integrate and appraise what has been seen (Eisner 1985a: 221).

The art of 'criticism' is to enable others to 'see' it too:

> The problem of disclosing the character of educational events and the quality of what children are learning can, I am arguing, be conceived as an artistic problem. How can the results of educational evaluation be communicated so that the complexity *and* ambiguity *and* richness of what happens in school and classrooms can be revealed? (Eisner 1985a: 210).

I will return to Eisner's writings several time during this chapter because his work has influenced not only what I tried to discover in my two schools but also how I present the data and how I understand the epistemological aspects of the study. Lesko was able to provide the vivid descriptions that she did because she gave attention to 'face-to-face human interactions that are the bedrock of ethnographies' (Lesko 1988: 29). I would not characterise my own study as full blown ethnography although it has some of the qualities and raises some of the theoretical issues of ethnography. Rather, I would name the approach of this research as case study.

Case Study - characteristics of qualitative research

As Robert Stake argued, 'a case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied' (Stake 1994: 236). It is interesting to note that Helen Simons called her collection of papers about case study in the context of educational research and evaluation, *Towards a Science of the Singular* (Simons 1980). In a similar way Eisner's approach means 'we want to experience the pervasive qualities of *this* classroom, *this* school, *this* teacher' (Eisner 1985b: 8).

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[3] I found the description of the homecoming spirit assembly very difficult to understand and I think that this is probably because the author has assumed that the reader would be familiar with American school culture and so did not have to explain everything. It is just this sort of cross-cultural story telling which is a key element in inter-faith dialogue and which illustrates the difference between being an insider or an outsider.

Instead of a survey of many schools I wanted to explore the culture in *two* particular schools. The case study allowed me to ask: What can be learned from the single case? Although not essentially a methodology, the case study does have particular characteristics which Stake summed up in these words:

> ...that descriptions are complex, wholistic and involving a myriad of not highly isolated variables; that the data are likely to be gathered at least in part by personalistic observation; and that the study is likely to be reported in an informal perhaps narrative style, possibly using verbatim quotation, illustration and even allusion and metaphor (Stake 1980: 71).

The advantage of case study is that it is rich in detail, strong in description and in potential for interpretation (Nisbet & Watt 1980: 7) because although what is studied is a bounded system, a *case*, the boundaries are not impermeable. The case study may have, in fact, been chosen to provide insight into an issue or refinement of a theory, what Stake called 'the instrumental case study':

> The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else....The choice of case is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other interest (Stake 1994: 237).

My own interest in the two schools I studied is focused on an intrinsic understanding of the culture of each and on what happens when the study is undertaken in a dialogical way. Case studies are useful for refining theory and for suggesting complexities within a situation. However the case study does emphasise what is particular; it is not, primarily, concerned with generalisation. Indeed Stake argued that 'damage occurs when the commitment to generalise or create theory runs so strong that the researcher's attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself (Stake 1994: 238).

Although every case is singular it is also complex and not everything can be studied. Choices have to be made about what to focus on and which methods to use. In my two case studies I used a range of methodologies which can be termed *qualitative*. I also used a questionnaire which yielded quantitative data. I agree with Robert Burgess that:

> consideration be given to the kinds of methods that are appropriate for particular research problems and the ways in which different research techniques may be used alongside each other to obtain different types of data (Burgess 1985: 3).

While in the early days of qualitative research in education a case had to be made every time for the use of methods which didn't offer 'objectivity' and easily manipulated numerical data (see for example Woods 1977: 15; Adelman et al. 1980: 47), more recent writers have focused on the theoretical assumptions behind all forms of research, while recognising the distinctive nature and value of qualitative methods (see for example Cohen & Manion 1994: 6-9; Guba & Lincoln

1994:105-109). They draw attention to the paradigms which underpin all stages of research from the identification of possible research 'problems' through to the format of a final report. These theoretical perspectives are as important in case study as in other forms of research.

All research, it might be said, operates with a particular *ontology*, *epistemology* and *methodology*. Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality, of what *is*, of what reality is like. Epistemology is about knowledge and is obviously closely linked to ontology. It is concerned with what there is that can be known, what it means to *know* something and about the relationship between the knower, or would-be knower, and what can be known. Methodology is concerned with the *how* of knowing. How can researchers go about finding that knowledge which they believe to be there to be found?

The whole of the tightly structured *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln eds. 1994) is concerned with the different research issues and possibilities which arise when different approaches to these sorts of questions are considered. Writing in this handbook, Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln set out four alternative paradigms for research (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 108).[4] The four are *positivism*, *postpositivism*, *critical theory* and *constructivism*.

Positivism is the view of the world which has informed the development of modern science since the Enlightenment; knowledge is restricted to what can be discovered by the physical sciences. Positivism takes no account of the possibility that there is anything controversial about its own paradigm; in fact positivism wouldn't recognise that its world view is operating as a paradigm.[5]

Postpositivism is a more subtle view and can find some room for the human sciences. Rather than seeing reality as *there*, waiting to be understood in the form of natural laws or mechanisms, postpositivism draws attention to the imperfect way in which researchers apprehend reality. Positivism separates completely the empirical researcher from the object of research and claims to be both *objective* and able to offer verification of an hypothesis about the real world. Postpositivism concedes the actual impossibility of completely separating the investigator and object although this remains, perhaps, something of an *ideal*. The possibility of verification is replaced by interest in falsifying an hypothesis, in showing that something is not the case. Guba and Lincoln claimed that *qualitative*

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[4] Carr & Kemmis (1986) did the same thing in a rather different way with the focus on educational research. Their concern was to find a critical educational science and they underestimate, I think, the potential of hermeneutics.

[5] It was to this which Thomas Kuhn drew attention in his very influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1962). He argued that all scientific activity, both experimental and theoretical, was dependent on paradigms which sometimes continued to operate although evidence suggested they were inadequate.

methods can be used within this paradigm to give more context and relevance to some research. If the research is within a social or human context then the people involved in a study are not inanimate 'objects'. The meanings they give to a situation (called *emic*) need to be weighed against the theory being tested (the *etic*). For a postpositivist theory to be valid it may need to be qualitatively grounded (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 106). In both the paradigms the researcher is a 'disinterested scientist', aiming to explain, predict and perhaps control, phenomena (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 113, 115).

The third and fourth paradigms also share certain characteristics. In both, the distinctions between ontology and epistemology break down somewhat because what can be known is understood to be connected with the *relationship* between the researcher and the researched. In critical theory the research activity is understood as value determined. What is being researched is the structural product of social, political, economic, ethnic or gender factors. Because there is a transactional nature to inquiry the methodology has to be dialectical, to 'transform ignorance and misapprehensions (accepting historically mediated structures as immutable) into more informed consciousness (seeing how the structures might be changed and comprehending the actions required to effect change)' (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 110).[6]

In constructivism the most important aspect is the claim that all knowledge is constructed and so there are multiple realities that are the products of human reasoning. The factors mentioned in connection with critical theory such as social, cultural or gender differences will, obviously, influence the way in which different people see their world. This idea of vision is used by Donna Haraway to argue for what she called 'situated knowledges' (Haraway 1991: 188). She argued that the problem is :

> how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency
> for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for
> recognising our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings, *and* a
> no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real world', one that can
> be partially shared and friendly to earth-wide projects of finite freedom,
> adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited
> happiness (Haraway 1991: 187).

I find Haraway's account compelling and relevant not only for the traditional sciences but also for qualitative research. As she wrote:

> objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, and
> definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits
> and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises

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[6] An example of critical theory at work would be in the educational writings of Paulo Freire such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972).

objective vision....Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge (Haraway 1991: 190).

The stress in research operating with this paradigm is hermeneutical, concerned with meanings, and designed to promote interaction between researcher and researched.[7] 'The final aim is to distil a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions (including, of course, the etic construction of the investigator)' (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 111). Because of the hermeneutical concerns of this paradigm it is particularly important to pay attention to the way in which the results of research are written up. The constructed nature of the account must be clear and ways have to be found to allow different voices to be heard.

So where is the research in this thesis located within these theoretical frameworks? The case studies of the culture of a Jewish and a Catholic secondary school which are naturalistic, have some empirical data, and are interpretive, dialogical and reflexive belong within the constructivist paradigm. This does not, however, imply a *relativist* view of knowledge,[8] which would be highly contentious in the field of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

The theology of inter-faith dialogue

Questions of religious truth, especially where they are connected to beliefs about revelation, are central to thinking about the theology of religions and so about inter-faith dialogue. The three classic positions within Christian theology are often called, *exclusivism*, *inclusivism* and *pluralism* (see for example Race 1993; D'Costa 1997: 627).[9]

The exclusivist approach claims that God revealed the truth in Jesus Christ and that salvation comes only through faith in Christ. The Christian Church is seen as the guardian of the truth and conflicting truth claims are wrong. This is traditional Christian teaching but many Christians no longer find it a satisfactory response to the present world. They are aware of how much harm has been done to people in the name of an exclusive theology and as they have encountered people of other religions for themselves they have become aware of the richness of views which exist within the different traditions. Hans Kung, the German Roman Catholic theologian who has pioneered work on a global ethic (Kung & Keschel 1993) commented that exclusivism 'leads only to comfortable apologetics, to a

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[7] There has been some recent argument, too, about hermeneutics and religious education in Bob Jackson's book (1997) which I discuss later in this chapter, and also in, for example, Grimmitt 1994; Wright 1997b; 1998.

[8] Donna Haraway made this clear (Haraway 1991: 187).

[9] Jonathan Sacks used this threefold analysis in his discussion about the internal divisions within Judaism (Sacks 1993: 214-228).

closed and opinionated mind, in short to the dogmatism which thinks it already possesses the whole truth and, for precisely that reason, doesn't find it' (Kung 1993: xix).

Pluralism in inter-faith dialogue is often associated with the writings of John Hick. From the early 1970's he has been arguing that Christianity and the other faiths all, in different ways, mediate knowledge of the one Reality which Christians call God (see for example Hick 1980). Pluralism does not only recognise that there are differing views it also deliberately values diversity because no single religion or philosophy can contain or communicate all of the truth but through a wider understanding of different world views we can grasp more of the truth. Hick called this 'a Copernican revolution in our theology of religions' (Hick 1980: 181). The influence of Hick's work in the field can be seen in the publication of an entire volume of studies critiquing his views (Hewitt 1991).

There has been much debate about the extent to which Hick's pluralism is also relativist. He maintains that religions are the products of culture and that they need to be understood in terms of their culture. However he also argues that the religious history of humankind is interdependent; to use the metaphor in the title of his recent book, *The Rainbow of Faiths* (Hick 1995), the different colours that a prism makes come from a single source of light. Knowledge of this truth will come more fully when the religions are considered together or in dialogue, rather than from within one particular tradition. As Gordon Kaufman argued:

> Interreligious dialogue has become important for us. The problems with which modernity confronts us - extending even to the possibility that we may obliterate humankind completely in a nuclear holocaust - demand that we bring together all the wisdom, devotion and insight that humanity has accumulated in its long history, as we attempt to find orientation in today's world (Kaufman 1987: 13).

The attempt to be both pluralist and non-relativist is echoed by Hans Kung. He wrote:

> ...neither will anyone expect me as a Christian theologian to maintain a superficial and irresponsible *relativism* (of Christian, Hindu or Buddhist provenience) that relativizes all truth and nonchalantly equates all values and standards. I consider an *arbitrary pluralism* untenable, the view that approves and endorses without differentiation both one's own and other religions....The principle here is that nothing of value in the other religions is to be denied, but neither is anything of no value to be uncritically accepted. We need a...critical dialogue, in which all religions are challenged not simply to justify everything but to deliver their best and most profound message...in the awareness that none of us possesses the truth "ready-made", but are all on the way to the "ever greater" truth....The truth cannot be different in the different religions, but only one (Kung 1993: xix).

Kung is perhaps more interested in peace between the religions and a shared ethical concern for the benefit of all than in the 'one truth' and it is not easy to see what the difference is between *arbitrary pluralism* and *genuine pluralism* which, he claimed 'recognizes not only the existence of other religions, but their intrinsic *equal value* (Kung 1993: 180). Pluralism seems to privilege its own view of reality over the claims of the religions themselves. The secular, liberal values of equality and freedom, expressed democratically, are taken to be self evident criteria for judgements (Hick 1987: 28). Pluralism assumes the *results* of dialogue rather than laying the ground *for* dialogue (see Barnes 1989: 79). It fails to take account fully of the culturally mediated nature of *all* experience and the particularity of each religion. It is for these reasons that the third view, inclusivism, or one developed form of it, may be a more productive inter-faith paradigm for a cross cultural case study of a Jewish and a Catholic school.

The inclusivist view is Christo-centric rather than theo-centric. It was initially concerned with the question of salvation rather than the nature of Reality. Karl Rahner, one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century, argued that those outside the Christian faith can be saved because, somehow, God's saving grace, through Christ can operate on those who do not recognise Christ. They are 'anonymous Christians' (Rahner 1980: 75). This is the Roman Catholic theology of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The key document from the Council was *Nostra Aetate* - The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. Originally intended to put an end to Christian anti-Judaism after the Holocaust the final document, published in 1965, recognised that all religions develop from the human search for meaning and the Church:

> rejects nothing of those things which are true and holy in these religions....Yet she proclaims...Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 1:6). In him, in whom God reconciled all things to himself (Cor 5:18-19), men find the fullness of their religious life (*Nostra Aetate* par. 2 in Flannery ed. 1992: 739).

The more recent *Catechism* stated that:

> The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near since he gives life and breath and all things, and wants all men to be saved. Thus the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as a preparation for the Gospel, and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* par. 843, 1994:196).

This form of inclusivism has encouraged inter-faith dialogue and as Gavin D'Costa has suggested the dialogue with other faiths will be both influenced by

developments taking place within Christian theology and will help to develop them further (D'Costa 1997: 638). D'Costa finds an 'open form of eschatological trinitarian inclusivism' the most fruitful one for these developments (D'Costa 1994b: 489). This is because it is necessary to find an approach which avoids both 'smothering Otherness' and 'closure' (D'Costa 1994c: 165). He argued that there has been a tendency to veer in one of two directions:

> The first direction is in terms of hierarchical inferiority, subjugation, power and control (be it in categories of demonisation, unenlightenment or primitive tribe) so that otherness bears the opposite negative reflection of the image maker and can be subjected to that maker. The second direction is to make otherness sameness (be it in terms of cultural relativisation, liberal humanism's espousal of the universality of values such as justice and equal rites, or whatever) so that while it seems that equality is granted, it is always 'granted', that is bestowed in terms of the portrayer's system of representation (D'Costa 1994b: 487).

D'Costa was drawing on the work of Kenneth Surin who in a powerful article called 'A "Politics of Speech"' argued that exclusivism, pluralism and the type of inclusivism associated with Rahner fail to take proper account of the otherness of the Other (Surin 1990).[10] It is easy to see how arguments that Christianity has the only or the fullest truth mean that there is no need to pay real attention to the 'other'. More interesting is what Surin said about John Hick's pluralism. When Hick asserts that the different religions are all equally valid, different cultural approaches to the one Reality, Surin argued that:

> All the adherents of the major religious traditions are treated democratically in the pluralist monologue about difference (which of course is entirely relativized because difference or otherness is for the pluralist only cultural). In this monologue, the pluralist...speaks well of the other but never to the other, and indeed cannot do otherwise because there really is no intractable other for the pluralist. Constitutive features of the pluralist position serve to decompose or obscure that radical historical particularity which is constitutive of the truly other....Where a certain Christian barbarism presumes its superiority in order to justify the elimination or conquest of the non-Christian other, monological pluralism sedately but ruthlessly domesticates and assimilates the other - any other - in the name of world ecumenism and the realisation of a limitless better possibility (Surin 1990: 200).

D'Costa has attempted to show that open inclusivism can speak to the other and, indeed, listen to the other. This is because while Christians claim to have knowledge of God through Christ and the Spirit they do not claim to know everything about God. In this sense Christians do not possess the truth, they are

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[10] Ursula King, who has written extensively on religion and gender, argued that in most inter-faith dialogue the otherness of women was rarely noticed or made part of the dialogue (King 1998: 45).

possessed by it and so cannot control it or claim to have a perspective beyond it from which to see it and everything in its entirety. D'Costa wrote about:

> the mystery of God, who is known in Christ, yet still hidden. This approach I believe allows one to overcome the distorting dichotomy, because the centrifugal force at the centre is not homogenising, the one, the same. Rather it is relational and dynamic, revealed and hidden, known and unknown, unpossessable yet possessing, it is 'the enigmatic relation of the same to the other', the possibility of true communion with the stranger and the reality of our lack of such communion (D'Costa 1994b: 489).

He described here the Christian view of God as Trinity which is the central way in which God is understood in Christianity.[11] The term *eschatalogical* in D'Costa's description of his position refers to the way in which God can never be fully known in this world but only in the future, after death. D'Costa argued that not only does open inclusivism enable a real encounter with the Other it *impels* Christians into dialogue because in responding to the question about whether there is revelation within other religions:

> I want to suggest that the answer to this question must be both 'no' and 'yes', and that this *a priori* negation and assumption require to be held in unresolved tension which is then controlled, adjusted and determined by the *a posteriori* contact and encounter with specific religions (D'Costa 1994c: 168-169).[12]

I will discuss in more detail later the various factors which are involved in dialogue; here I just mention one element which D'Costa stresses and which is a result of avoiding closure. If no overarching theoretical structures are assumed which allow one to pre-judge, then in the encounter with the Other not only is there the transforming potential for new insight into God but there is also the possibility of having to reconstruct one's own understanding in unforeseen ways. As he wrote:

> In being radically open to the possibility of God's self-revelation outside Christianity, Christians must also be radically open to the possibility of judgement and questioning. Christians may come to realise the errors within their own understanding of faith and practice, such that deep repentance may be required....The depth, difficulty and extent of this challenge and questioning cannot be minimized (D'Costa 1994c: 173).

One of the pre-judgements which needs to be challenged as part of this process is the construction of *religion* itself. In arguing for an interpretive approach to religious education in Britain, Bob Jackson drew attention to the way

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[11] D'Costa wrote a very interesting analysis of two images of the Trinity, Andrei Rublev's early fifteenth century icon *The Trinity* and the Indian Christian Jyoti Sahi's painting *The Word Made Flesh*, discussing the different readings or understandings of Trinity which are made possible within the context of dialogue (D'Costa 1998).

[12] In a similar way there is a need for research into actual Jewish and Catholic schools and for this to be in dialogue with the rhetoric about Jewish and Catholic schooling.

in which the prevailing phenomenological approach had failed to consider how the ideas of *religion* and *religions* had been formed. The School's Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Model Syllabuses, for example, assume that there are six principal religions in Britain and they name them as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism (SCAA 1994 a and b). Jackson argued that these names are relatively modern constructions and that there are no simple, bounded, systems which neatly relate to the labels. In addition the existence of some identifiable entity called 'religion' is itself problematic (Jackson 1997: 50).

The details of the way in which Western academics, mainly within a liberal Christian tradition, constructed these terms need not concern us here. What is important are two things. Firstly, in open inclusivist inter-faith dialogue there needs to be careful attention to the Other's own self-construction and secondly there is a need to recognise that an individual's sense of religious identity is shaped by a range of factors and involves belonging to what Jackson called 'membership groups' which:

> include denominational, 'sectarian', ethnic and other social categories or combinations of them. The basic point is that when one meets a person from within a religion one does not meet someone who relates straightforwardly to a whole cumulative tradition (Jackson 1997: 64).[13]

Kenneth Surin, to whom I referred earlier, discussed the need to move from a monologue to the sort of discourse which focuses on 'the particular histories, the specific social locations, the varying repertoires of signifying practices, and so on, of those engaged in such dialogue' (Surin 1990: 202). In this sort of discourse:

> Meaning is constructed *between* speakers (who are always also hearers) and hearers (who are always also speakers)....The first thing this account of language would counsel is attentiveness to the apperceptive backgrounds of the participants in such dialogues (Surin 1990: 203).

In this thesis the two case studies exploring the symbols, stories, rituals and values of a particular Jewish and Catholic school should be understood within a paradigm of open inclusivism. Because this makes it possible for meaningful encounter with the Other leading to greater understanding and perhaps reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 112) I am arguing that *open inclusivism can operate within a constructivist, interpretive research paradigm to allow inter-faith case study exploration of Jewish and Christian school cultures.*[14]

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[13] I think Jackson is right here however Wesley Ariarajah (1998) has argued that ' the dialogue partner never treats you as a 'Reformed', 'Lutheran', 'Anglican' or 'Orthodox' but as a 'Christian" (p18).

[14] Peter McLaren, in his ethnographic study of a Catholic school discussed earlier, wrote that we must place 'our ethical relation to the Other prior to our ontological, cosmological and epistemological relation to our selves. Part of such an ethic involves an attempt not to camouflage ourselves in our statements about the Other or to impose upon the 'native' text the

This is now a good opportunity to begin to introduce some Jewish voices into what has been so far a mainly Christian exploration of the theology of religions. The nature of the debates have been different within Judaism, focusing mainly on Judaism's relationship to Christianity rather than on a wider theology of religions (see Cohn-Sherbok 1994). I will discuss here only a few examples which illustrate the distinctions which have already been made.

Arye Forta, a Rabbi within ultra-Orthodox Judaism and the writer of a GCSE text book for students, including non-Jewish students, studying Judaism published an article in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the major British, Jewish, weekly newspaper, entitled, 'Why inter-faith dialogue poses dangers' (Forta 1995). This gives us an example of exclusivism. He dismissed supposed positive reasons for dialogue such as reducing anti-Semitism or contributing to the messianic fulfilment of both Judaism and Christianity and argued that while the benefits were dubious the dangers were not. He questioned whether Christians would ever fail to have an evangelising mission in their encounter with Jews and also whether inter-faith dialogue is even possible at all.[15] Forta wrote:

> If I enter the dialogue as an authentic Jew, I must do so conscious of my role as heir to God's unique revelation at Sinai and imbued with a sense of Israel's chosen status. I must regard Christianity as valid in so far as it can lead people to an awareness of God and the Noachide laws, by which all humanity may serve Him, but weighed down with excess baggage - for example the divinity of Christ - which Christians will one day abandon in favour of a higher revelation (Forta 1995: 15).

His understanding of a full and final revelation already understood, which leaves no room for dialogue because it has already prescribed what is necessary for the other, is Jewish exclusivism.

Sandra Lubarsky made a strong case in her book *Tolerance and Transformation* for what she called *veridical pluralism* (Lubarsky 1990). She explained very clearly why she rejected relativism:

> The relativist judgement of parity prior to dialogue actually renders dialogue superfluous: If all traditions are equally valid, then there is little motivation for listening with anything other than curiosity to adherents of another tradition; there is no moral or existential reason to do so (Lubarsky 1990: 9).

She wrote about the possibility of dialogue transforming her own understanding of Judaism and gave some useful ideas about the way in which Judaism has self-transforming interpretive methods but, as a pluralist, she assumed a single, wholistic truth lying behind individual traditions which dialogue will make

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taxonomic nature and ethnocentrist assumptions of our encounter with Otherness' (McLaren 1993: 266).

[15] It is worth noting that the account which Forta gave of Christianity in his article is not that which many Christians would give.

more fully known (p10-13). Interestingly, this 'theocentrism' made her reject traditional Judaism:

> What does it mean to be God-centered in a world where we are aware of the limitations of our perceptions and truths and religious traditions? What does it mean to be faithful to God's presence in these modern times? Surely it means that we must give up the notion that everything that is important to be known has *already been revealed* to us (my emphasis) (Lubarsky 1990: 12).

Orthodox Judaism claims this full revelation not only in the written Torah but also in the idea of the Oral Torah. This idea is that what would be discussed and decided on in later rabbinic debates is already, in some sense, revealed by God at Sinai. The nature of this revelation is at the heart of disagreements between Orthodox Judaism and later movements sometimes called 'progressive' Judaism. Most of those actually involved in contemporary inter-faith dialogue are not Orthodox Jews (Breuer 1995: 284).

Something like the open inclusivist approach was taken by two Jewish writers in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* in 1995. Michael Kogan argued that for all religious communities including Jews:

> To be all they can be they must live in a self-transcendence arising out of full self-affirmation. This is our starting point in our attempt to construct a theology of Christianity, our partner in dialogue, out of the self-understanding of Judaism (Kogan 1995: 94).

Terry Bookman wrote that 'While we want to maintain our own truth, we must also find a way to remain open to the truth (as truth) of the other (Bookman 1995: 213).

Leading Jewish scholars in this century such as Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig and Abraham Heschel have written powerfully, if rather circumspectly, about the relationship of Judaism to Christianity. I discuss Buber's ideas about dialogue now and will consider his and Rosenzweig's understanding of education in Chapter Seven. As a minority group in Christian or Muslim countries for centuries it is not surprising that Jews should have views about these religions. These views have been largely tolerant despite Jewish experience of persecution. Today all forms of Judaism, from the ultra-Orthodox to the most liberal, are grappling with how to thrive in a pluralistic world and these considerations will form part of the discussion about the culture of the Jewish school.

In this thesis the concepts of culture and dialogue are clearly important ones. Some attention has already been given to the way in which culture is to be understood and I will return later in this chapter to wider issues involved in studying and writing culture. Here, I explore further the concept of dialogue.

This is rooted in Martin Buber's seminal book *I and Thou* (Buber 1958), originally published, in German, in 1923. The best way to convey the key idea is by quoting the first few lines of the book where Buber sets out what he regards as two different ways in which a person operates:

> To man (sic) the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude.
> The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks.
> The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words.
> The one primary word is the combination *I-Thou*.
> The other primary word is the combination *I-It*; wherein, without a change in the primary word, one of the words *He* and *She* can replace *It*.
> Hence the *I* of man is also twofold.
> For the *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* is a different *I* from that of the primary word *I-It* (Buber 1958: 3).

These two relationships can be with the natural world, with other persons and with God.[16] *I-Thou* is a subject-subject relationship of openness, directness, mutuality and presence, termed *dialogue*. When the relationship is *I-It* a subject-object dynamic operates and one knows and uses other persons or things without experiencing them in their individual uniqueness.

In 1929 Buber published *Dialogue* and it was combined with four other publications as *Between Man and Man* 'to clarify the "dialogical" principle...to illustrate it and to make precise its relation to essential spheres of life' (Buber 1965: xi). Buber argued that dialogue is necessary between Jews and Christians and in education; it is necessary in order to experience the other side of the relationship, to meet and to listen to the other. This meeting does not imply giving up one's own ground, rather dialogue 'teaches you to meet others, and to hold your ground when you meet them' (Buber 1958: 33). It involves authentic witness **and** the experience of the other which Buber called 'inclusion' (Buber 1965: 97). Anyone involved in dialogue is likely to be changed by the experience and there is no way of knowing at the outset what the changes might be. John Hull expressed these ideas about dialogue beautifully when he wrote:

> There is a Christianity which says, "I am holy and you are holy but the ground between us is not holy. If we meet on that ground, if we touch, we shall be contaminated". There is another Christianity which says, "I am not holy; I am on the way; my spirituality and that of the tradition I represent is incomplete. But I have affinity with you, my Muslim brother, my Jewish friend, my Hindu colleague, if you are also prepared to say, 'I am not holy; I am on the way; the ground I represent is not complete'". Then we will

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[16] I do not agree that there are only two ways of relating which are in some kind of binary opposition. Buber does not discuss, for example, the differences which it makes if the *I* is a man or a woman. On the other hand I think that the similarity between what Buber wrote about *dialogue* and the idea of 'situated knowledges' (Haraway 1991: 188) is suggestive for seeing dialogue as a way of knowing.

both say, "but the ground where we meet is holy ground because this is the place where we claim our full humanity" (Hull 1993: no page number).

Or as Buber wrote, 'All real living is meeting' (Buber 1958: 11).

His ideas about dialogue are, of course, relevant to any inter-faith situation and the open inclusivism for which I have argued impels one into attempting *I-Thou* encounter. In this dissertation I use dialogue as the best way to understand a whole series of relationships. There is my relationship with both the Catholic and the Jewish school and the importance of hearing clearly the voices from the schools. There is the potential for dialogue between the experience of the two cultures and the more theoretical ideas about education within each tradition. There is the possibility that there is something to be learned from both schools by Jews, Christians and those who are neither.

Objectivity and Subjectivity

Having considered something of the inter-faith background to this study I want to come back briefly to the question of *objectivity* and *subjectivity* in educational research. Carrying out a case study within an open inclusivist constructivist paradigm I am suspicious of the claims for objectivity such as those made by Denis Phillips (1990) within a positivist paradigm and drawing largely on the work of Popper.[17] It is interesting that a standard text book on research methods in education draws attention to some *religious* objections to objectivity such as in the work of Kierkegaard and Roszak (Cohen & Manion p22-25). The concern of these writers was with *relationships* and the importance of maintaining interest in the subjectivity of oneself and of others.[18] In this way it is less easy to treat other people as objects or to be alienated from them and the rest of life.[19] In her book on T*eaching and Religious Imagination* Maria Harris deliberately drew attention to the way in which both people and content are *subjects* in an educational context (Harris 1987).

As I have shown, rejecting a positivist paradigm does not necessarily result in a lack of interest in empirical data or concern for truth. Paddy Walsh has made a case for objectivity or 'objectivism' with a human face. Here, seeking for truth in education is combined with certain epistemological values:

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[17] This paper is the first in a collection called *Qualitative Inquiry in Education* (Eisner & Peshkin eds. 1990). The topics are 'subjectivity and objectivity', 'validity', 'generalizability', 'ethics' and 'uses of qualitative inquiry'.

[18] Several recent articles have explored the relevance of *intersubjectivity*, drawn from Gadamer's hermeneutics, to the teaching of religion in Judaism and Christianity. See for example Smith 1993; Moore 1995; Kerdeman 1998.

[19] In an inter-faith context one is reminded of the way in which perpetrators of the Holocaust deliberately *dehumanised* Jews before attempting 'the final solution' (see for example Gilbert 1986:134).

sensitivity to the local and circumstantial, freedom to follow one's bent, a decent humility considering our fallibility, an acknowledgement of the tacit, intuitive and visionary, and a sense of the inevitability of value disagreement (Walsh 1993: 80).

In a different way Eliot Eisner stressed the relationship between the empirical world, the knower and the truth which recognises that 'what we see and know are not *given* by what Dewey...called 'objective conditions'; they are *taken* by us' (Eisner 1993: 53). In discussing 'Objectivity in Educational Research' Eisner argued:

It is in the transaction between objective conditions and personal frames of reference that we *make* sense. The sense we make is what constitutes experience (Eisner 1993: 53).

It is therefore very important to give careful attention to the qualities of experience and Eisner has argued that qualitative research has six characteristic features:

- qualitative studies tend to be *field focused*;
- qualitative studies relate to the *self as an instrument*;
- qualitative studies are *interpretive*;
- qualitative studies use *expressive language*;
- qualitative studies give *attention to particulars*;
- qualitative studies become believable because of their *coherence, insight* and *instrumental utility* (Eisner 1991: 32-40).

In discussing the credibility or truthfulness of the present research at the end of this chapter I will refer to theoretical paradigmatic elements again. I will use Eisner's characteristics of qualitative research to throw light on the analysis of the data and the way in which the results are written up but at this stage I want to examine the various 'field focused' methodologies I employed in more detail.

Observation, documents, interviews and questionnaires

In carrying out the two case studies I used some participant observation, I collected documents, I interviewed staff and students and I administered a questionnaire.

Observation

Much of the material for the tales I tell came from observation in the schools. It is with this method that the study comes nearest to an ethnographic one. As Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson wrote in their introduction to ethnography:

The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data is available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 2).

Reflexivity is important here: recognising that we are part of the world we study. I was an observer in each school for seven or eight days spending time in a variety of contexts and with different people. I was in a number of RE lessons and also some other subject lessons when I followed a class for the day.[20] I also spent time in the staffroom, the dining halls and playgrounds and at meetings as well as administering the questionnaire, collecting documents and interviewing. I did not become a member of the school community although I was a 'participant' in some of the school's activities. Observation is not as simple as it appears, either to practise or to evaluate. The subjectivity of the observer is crucial and observation can be carried out in many different ways. As Stephen Kemmis reflected:

> ...observation is only rarely unobtrusive with respect to the observed and it is never unobtrusive with respect to the theoretical, ethical and ideological commitments of the observer (Kemmis 1980: 108).

The ethnographic literature is full of discussion about the epistemological nature of the observations and what has become obvious is that the person of the researcher is important.[21] John Van Maanen began his witty and very self consciously written book, *Tales of the Field* with these words:

> It (the book) is about how one culture is portrayed in terms of another in an ethnography. It rests on the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others. Ethnography is therefore highly particular and hauntingly personal (Van Maanen 1988: ix).

Not only will the presence of a researcher influence what happens in any given situation but the interests and concerns of the researcher obviously direct attention in some but not other directions. This is true both in the selection of a particular case to study and in sampling within cases. The process of selection and also interpretation will continue through the analysis and the writing (Clifford & Marcus eds. 1986; Van Maanen 1988; Atkinson 1990). I deliberately tried to observe occasions such as assemblies and parents' meetings when there would be explicit examples of symbols, rituals, stories and values. I made notes of what people said and what seemed to be happening in the staffroom and around the school. I also took photographs of wall displays and the school buildings and boundaries. These elements of the 'material culture', to use Ian Hodder's term (Hodder 1994), can be interpreted too to give insight into the culture. All of these, with some written comments about the interviews, are my field notes which I use to tell the story of the two schools in Chapter Four. I will have more to say about the writing of those stories later in this chapter.

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[20] This is what Ted Wragg in his book on classroom observation called 'pupil pursuit' (Wragg 1994: 87).

[21] See for example Hammersley & Atkinson 1983; Geertz 1983; Van Maanen 1988; Denzin & Lincoln eds. 1994; Behar & Gordon eds. 1995.

I was more of an observer than a participant during my time in school; however I was also playing a role not unlike the one I often play in visiting schools as a supervisor of trainee teachers. Students are very used to having visitors in their schools and classrooms and I was sometimes asked if I was 'an inspector'. I was very much an 'insider' in both schools as a former teacher and present teacher trainer but I was also a Catholic and therefore an insider in the Catholic school and religiously an outsider in the Jewish school. I was fascinated to read Alan Peshkin's account of how he, as a Jew, felt alien during a year and a half researching a fundamentalist Christian school in Illinois (Peshkin 1986: 21). In both my schools, in different ways, I had to maintain my 'marginality' and the sense of insecurity that often resulted (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 100). The theory of inter-faith dialogue helped me to be aware of the ways in which I was trying to make sense of these 'worlds' through the analysis of my experiences in them. Of course I was also explicitly seeking to gain an understanding of the way in which the insiders understood what was happening and I did that through the other methods: documents, interviews and questionnaires.

Documents

I was able to use a number of documents for a different purpose from the one for which they were originally written. Ian Hodder drew attention to the way in which 'text and context are in a continual state of tension' so that the meaning of the text does not simply reside in the text but in the writing and reading of it (Hodder 1994: 394). For example I was given copies of the prospectus for each school. These were written for prospective parents to persuade them to choose the school. I was interested in the value judgements implicit in what had been selected as the most significant things to present about the school. In these cases it is not so much whether the claims, in this case of the prospectus, are true but that they are thought important:

> As important as whether a given account is 'accurate' or 'objective' is what it tells us about the teller's perspectives and presuppositions (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 130f.).

As well as the prospectus I obtained from both schools their staff handbooks, inspection reports, materials given to parents of new students, newspaper articles referring to the school, other research reports and a variety of miscellaneous items. Most of these documents are public, designed to be read by a variety of audiences. To gain more personal perspectives I interviewed the headteacher in both schools and a number of staff and students.

Interviews

Interviews are important in a case study because, although they are time consuming, they yield rich detail. In *Interviewing in Educational Research* Janet

Powney and Mike Watts wrote that interviewing connects with theories 'that value human response in its actuality' (Powney & Watts 1987: 181). Interviews give people an opportunity to explain, in their own terms, 'what is going on'. This involves what Clifford Geertz called 'experience-near concepts' :

> An experience-near concept is, roughly, one that someone - a patient, subject, in our case an informant - might himself (sic) naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others (Geertz 1983: 57).

Just like all aspects of research, conducting interviews is not easy or straightforward. How does one know that the interviewee will tell the truth? How does the interviewer phrase the questions to get the answers he or she is interested in? How do the complex power relations between the interviewer and interviewee affect the outcome? Interviews are, of course, a particular form of conversation and sometimes they are very informal, even unsought by the researcher. Andrea Fontana and James Frey discussed 'the wide variety of forms and multiplicity of uses' which interviewing has (Fontana & Frey 1994: 361). I will discuss here some of the theoretical aspects of interviewing which are relevant to this study together with some specific information about the interviews I did.

Often interviews are divided into structured, semi-structured and unstructured categories (Wragg undated: 9) or structured, unstructured, non-directive and focused (Cohen & Manion 1994: 273). The structured interview is usually part of a survey. The questions and possible answers are all established beforehand and the sequence of each interview should be conducted in the same way. This is 'standardised' rather than 'reflexive' interviewing (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 113). Unstructured and non-directive interviews are at the other extreme; there is no set pattern to them so they are open-ended and the control of the interview is much more in the hands of the interviewee (Fontana & Frey 1994: 365-368). I used a semi-structured format for my interviews with a range of questions which were written on a prompt sheet. I varied the order on occasions but in general I asked the same set of questions in each interview. These included both requests for information such as, 'What have been the outstanding events in the school in the last year?' and other questions designed to elicit a more reflective response. I asked everyone to choose a symbol to represent the school and to suggest what should go into a film of 'a day in the life of' their school. I had piloted these questions with one of the teachers in the Catholic school and discussed with her the questions which had 'worked'. As well as giving me plenty of data she made suggestions about the wording of the questions. As each case study

progressed I also included requests for information about specific aspects which seemed to be significant.[22]

In each school I interviewed a number of staff including the headteacher and also students from various year groups to get a range of perspectives and ideas. I decided to use group interviews with the students for a variety of reasons. 'They are intended to indicate the possible range of experience and attitudes' (Powney & Watts 1987: 73). Although very individual views are unlikely to be aired, 'if an investigator wishes to get a picture of classroom life this can often be assembled quite accurately with a small group. Pupils will correct each other on points of detail until a consensus is established' (Wragg undated: 12). I found that interviewing groups of four or five students enabled me to get a sense of whether a particular experience was a general one. Fontana and Frey argued that:

> The group interview has the advantage of being inexpensive, data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, recall aiding, and cumulative and elaborative over and above individual responses (Fontana & Frey 1994: 365).

These were all benefits but I originally decided to use group interviews for students to make them less threatening. I was an adult and a stranger and the power relationships in a one to one situation would have been obviously unequal. They may always be so in an interview situation (see Oakley 1981: 40) but as Janet Powney explained:

> In fact I needed the students and their views far more than they needed me. One often reads about the asymmetry of power said to exist between interviewer and interviewee(s); the balance is normally seen to reside with the interviewer. I am coming to the view that 'one-off' group interviews of the sort I am describing probably shift power back to the interviewees, although it is a power they probably do not know they have (Powney & Watts 1987: 103).

The group and the individual interviews were all one-sided; I asked the questions and listened to the answers. In most cases these were spontaneous as the interviewees did not know what I was going to ask about and many had not had the opportunity to talk at length about the issues I was raising. The exceptions to this were the interviews with the headteacher in both schools where despite asking questions which tried to engage creatively with their experience I received fairly well rehearsed answers. I was never asked for my views on the school during the interviews although I occasionally was asked some factual questions by teachers about the research and about my lecturing job.[23] I agree that 'what seems to be a

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[22] There is a list of the questions used in Appendix C.
[23]The issue of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is widely discussed in feminist literature. The classic, and often quoted, article by Anne Oakley argued that 'the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of

conversation is really a one-way pseudo-conversation' (Fontana & Frey 1994: 369). This was true even in more informal 'conversations' in the staff room or dining room.

Most interviews in my case studies were arranged with particular people at particular times and I also had a few opportunities to talk to students or teachers informally. I tape recorded all the arranged interviews with the permission of the interviewees so that I had a full record of what was said and I could concentrate on listening:

> The interviewer must be an active listener... in order to assess how it relates to the research focus and how it may reflect the circumstances of the interview. Moreover this is done with a view to how the future course of the interview might be shaped (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 113f.).

It was important to listen carefully so that I could clarify something I didn't understand and notice anything which was *not* being said. Some of the tape recordings are not very clear, especially with the groups of students. When I realised this I made extra efforts to position the recorder carefully and I also tended to repeat back what the students were saying. The recorder picked up my voice clearly so I had a record and this strategy also affirmed that I was listening carefully to what was said and was a check that I had understood. At the beginning of each interview I explained that I was doing research in Catholic/Jewish schools and wanted the interviewees to tell me something about the special qualities of their school. I also explained that I would not share anything they had told me with other people in the school and would mask their identity in the thesis.

Because I was interested in the information they gave me and their general view of the culture rather than in an ethnomethodological analysis, an 'information' analysis rather than a 'perspective' analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 107), I did not need to transcribe everything. I listened to the tapes several times and noted the order of the questions I had asked and a brief summary of the responses. I noted the things which the interviewee(s) said were particularly important about the school and used that information to build up the cultural picture of the symbols, stories, rituals and values which I give in Chapter Four. I have also paid attention to the gaps, to what is never mentioned and to the occasions when people found it difficult to answer a question. I transcribed short sections where I wanted to have the possibility of quoting verbatim from the interview and I do this as part of the story I tell, built up from all the data I collected including the students' responses to the questionnaire.

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interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship (Oakley 1981: 41).

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were developed from the ones Marcellin Flynn used with students in 1990 (Flynn 1993). These had already been developed from earlier, more limited, versions which Flynn used in Catholic schools in Australia in 1972 and 1982 (p72). Although designed to yield quantitative data which could be subjected to sophisticated statistical analysis, the richness of the questionnaires made them ideal for use in a case study where they could provide qualitative data as well as some basic statistical information. The process of development from Flynn's 1990 questionnaires to the ones I used in my two schools happened in two different ways.

Paddy Walsh and Jo Cairns were making use of the questionnaires to carry out a series of case studies in Catholic schools in America, India, Botswana, Britain, Ireland, Indonesia and Australia. This is part of a series called *Faith and Culture in Contemporary Education* and Volume 3 is called *The Catholic School Now - A Culture of Faith in a Secular World* (Cairns and Walsh forthcoming).

So that the student questionnaires could be completed in one hour or lesson rather than two, Cairns and Walsh reduced them from two parts to one in various ways. Firstly they left out questions which related specifically to the Australian context such as 'Where were you born?' or references to the HSC, the examination which students take to get entry to University in Australia. Secondly they reduced the number of items within a section so that, for example, the possible reasons to be considered for staying on at school were ten rather than twenty. Finally they brought different sections together such as 'School Life' and 'School Climate' to make one section called 'School Life and Climate'. In total the number of questions was reduced from 370 to 184. The questionnaire ends with three open questions out of six which Flynn asked. These are:
- What have you come to APPRECIATE and VALUE about the CATHOLIC SCHOOL you attend?
- Are there any CHANGES you would make at your school?
- How would you describe the UNIQUE SPIRIT which exists in your school?

I used this version of the questionnaire in my Catholic school.[24] The letter to the students names 'hopes, aspirations, uncertainties and beliefs' as the focus for the questions and the sections are:
    background;
    staying at school;
    expectations;
    school life and climate;
    curriculum;

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[24] See Appendix A for the full version of the questionnaire.

religious education;

values, beliefs and faith;

influences on your religious development;

practices;

knowledge of Catholic teachings and terms;

personal goals for the future.

When I came to adapt the questionnaire for the Jewish school I wanted to include as much of the same material as possible but I was aware that the likely issues for a Jewish school were significantly different from those which would be of concern to Christians. I went through the questionnaire altering either the wording or the actual issue for each question and I give examples of a few of these here. Judaism is not based on beliefs in the way in which Christianity is, so question 34 which asks about the importance of Catholic schools providing an environment in which students' faith in God can develop was changed to one asking how important it is for Jewish schools to provide an environment in which students' practice of Judaism can develop. Similarly rather than a sentence saying 'I do not know my Jewish faith well enough' I wrote 'I do not know enough about living a Jewish life'. The letter on the front of the questionnaire referred to students' *ideas* rather than *beliefs*. The questions about the religion of the students and their parents became a question about the form of Judaism to which they belonged rather than about whether they were 'practising' Catholics. The 'no religion' option was retained but of course being a Jew is not simple a matter of religion.[25] In Section 6 the phrase 'Religious Education' was replaced by 'Jewish Studies' and question 97 replaces 'the place of the Eucharist in Catholic life' with 'the place of the Synagogue in Jewish life' although they are not direct equivalents.

The two sections where most changes were made were the ones about knowledge of Catholic teachings and terms which was removed completely and the section about values, beliefs and faith. Although Flynn's original questionnaire, of which he had provided copies during a visit to London in January 1995, had included questions about Catholic teaching he did not include these questions in the published version (Flynn 1993: 446). He wrote:

> In an effort to assess students' *knowledge of Catholic faith*, they were presented with 24 multiple choice questions related to various aspects of religious knowledge as part of this research. It quickly became apparent that Year 12 students were not familiar at all with the *theological concepts and language used*. (One student in a large high school, for example asked the writer: "who is this person, Grace?"). It was decided on grounds of *validity*, therefore not to proceed further with analysis of this section of the study. The average number of correct responses, however was 11 out of 24 (45%) with one student achieving all correct

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[25] This issue is discussed more fully in Chapters Five and Six.

answers (out of 5,932 students). *Whether students really understand basic concepts of Catholic faith, therefore, we were unable to determine* (Flynn 1993: 430).

Cairns and Walsh used a shorter, fourteen item, section which I included in the Catholic school version and it was only on analysing the results that I noticed Flynn's comments. In the light of the difficulties Flynn raised I did not try to devise a Jewish version of the questions.[26]

In the section on values, beliefs and faith I removed all the explicit references to Christianity such as 'Jesus Christ is truly God' or 'I would go to Mass on Sundays even if I were free to stay away'. I replaced them with either a Jewish equivalent such as 'The Torah is truly *min hashamayim*' (from heaven) or included an item which is relevant to Jewish life such as the state of Israel, marrying out, belief in God after the Holocaust and the *halakhah* (Jewish law). I kept the items which refer to ethical issues such as euthanasia or abortion.

Jonathan Gorsky, an Orthodox Rabbi and the Education Officer at the Council of Christians and Jews, scrutinised the revised questionnaire for accuracy and to check that nothing seemed inappropriate for a Jewish school. I then piloted it (Youngman 1978: 26) with a small group of sixth form students in the Jewish school to get their feedback and made two changes. Instead of asking about the students' and parents' 'religion' I was advised to ask about 'religious affiliation'. Secondly it was obvious while the students were completing the questionnaire that they did not understand the Hebrew terms I had used so I reworded those questions replacing '*halakhah*' with 'Jewish law' and rewording the question about the Torah to read 'The Torah is truly the word of God'. The final version of the questionnaire, with 169 items, which was used in the Jewish school, is in Appendix B.

As well as a small amount of qualitative data in response to the three open questions the questionnaire generated a large amount of quantitative data. This is analysed in Chapter Five and some comparisons are made between the responses from the Catholic and the Jewish school as well as with Flynn's results (Flynn 1993) and those arising from the international study (Cairns & Walsh forthcoming). The data about the students' perceptions of their school and their values and goals are also used in Chapter Four, to contribute to the picture of the two schools which emerged from the case study. In addition I present some pen

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[26] Although for all the questions there is an answer which is obviously intended as the correct one, there are one or two questions where it would be possible to debate whether the answer is really so simple. The average number of correct responses from the students in my Catholic school was 7 out of 14 (50%). Most students answered correctly about salvation and conscience but were least knowledgeable about ecumenism and the reasons why there are several gospels.

portraits of students constructed from the questionnaire responses in order to 'flesh out' the description of the schools.

These various research methods yielded the data which I have analysed to make sense of, and write about, the culture of the two schools. It is to a more detailed discussion of the issues to be considered when studying and writing culture that I now turn.

Studying and writing culture

There exists a good deal of literature about the study of culture. This ethnography may be anthropological or sociological and, more recently, the literature examines ways of reporting the findings as well as the methods to be employed in gathering data.[27] There have also been explicitly feminist approaches to the study of culture.[28] Researchers have systematically studied cultures different from their own and also elements within their own culture. Such study requires both observation and the communication of the results which come from analysing the data collected. None of these is a simple process. As Arthur Vidich and Stanford Lyman wrote:

> Sociology and anthropology are disciplines that, born out of concern to understand the "other", are nevertheless also committed to an understanding of the self....The data gathering process can never be described in its totality because these 'tales of the field' are themselves part of an ongoing social process that in its minute-by-minute and day-to-day experience defies recapitulation (Vidich & Lyman 1994: 24).

One of the ethnographers who has reflected significantly on this process of studying culture and from whom I quoted briefly earlier in the chapter is Clifford Geertz (1973; 1983). The difficulties, both theoretical and existential, of trying to study a culture he clearly recognised:

> ...the significant works of the human imagination...speak with equal power to the consoling piety that we are all like to one another and to the worrying suspicion that we are not. If we turn back to the ...text, as well as to the sorts of "life itself" it in some way refracts - the indigenous one toward which it reaches, the intrusive one out of which it arises, and the separated one from which we apprehend it - this deep equivocality emerges in every line. As we read it a series of instabilities - instabilities of perspective, of meaning, of judgement - is set up, the one pressing hard upon the next, leaving us, in the end, not quite sure where we stand, what position we wish to take up toward what is being said to us, and indeed uncertain about just what has been said (Geertz 1983: 42).

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[27] The publication of *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* in 1986 (Clifford & Marcus eds. 1986) was significant for this development.

[28] See for example Behar & Gordon 1995.

In a chapter entitled, '"From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding' he asked:

> ...if it is not, as we had been taught to believe through some sort of extraordinary sensibility, an almost preternatural capacity to think, feel and perceive like a native ... how is anthropological knowledge of the way natives think, feel and perceive possible? (Geertz 1983: 56).

His answer to the question involved recognising that when the researcher records what he or she has observed then a 'text' comes into being:

> The ethnographer 'inscribes' social discourse; *he writes it down*. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted (Geertz 1973: 19) .

In turning these fieldnotes into published ethnography more selection and interpretation goes on; a process of translation (Geertz 1983: 31). Geertz drew attention to the relationship between the concepts of the insiders in a culture and those of the outsider, the researcher, which are used to reconstruct the insider's world and interpret it for others:

> To grasp concepts that, for another people, are experience-near, and to do so well enough to place them in illuminating connection with experience-distant concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life, is clearly a task at least as delicate, if a bit less magical, as putting oneself into someone else's skin....The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to (Geertz 1983: 58).

Such interpretation uses 'thick' description (Geertz 1973: 6). Eisner explained this as 'describing the meaning or significance of behaviour as it occurs in a cultural network saturated with meaning' (Eisner 1985b: 112). Bob Jackson commented:

> The thicker the description in the fieldnotes, the more chance the ethnographer has of applying hermeneutical principles well in interpreting the structures of signification within a cultural scene (Jackson 1997: 34).

As well as moving between the concepts of the researcher and those of the researched, Geertz is also concerned to explore the relationship between the general and the particular elements of the culture:

> Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts that actualize it and the parts conceived through the whole that motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications of one another (Geertz 1983: 69).

I have quoted Clifford Geertz at length, not only because he is, perhaps, the most influential recent writer about studying culture but because this dissertation has been informed by the interpretive approach he advocated. Although Geertz does not assume, as I have shown, a simple relationship between the text and the culture, some of his critics are even more sceptical about the relationship between ethnographic texts and the cultures they purport to represent. In *Writing Culture* Vincent Crapanzano had a chapter called, 'Hermes' Dilemma:

The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description' (Crapanzano 1986). He argued that the ethnographer is a little like Hermes, the messenger god. Not only does he interpret but he uses various devices to persuade the reader of *the* truth of his message However, Crapanzano claimed, the ethnographer, and he discussed Geertz at length, does not recognise the provisional nature of his presentations (Crapanzano 1986: 51-52). The example of Geertz' work which he criticised is 'Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight'.[29] Geertz' highly sexualised interpretation never describes an actual cockfight or attempts to give a voice to the participants as individual people:

> The "Balinese" - surely not the Balinese - becomes a foil for Geertz's describing, interpreting and theorizing - for his self-presenting (Crapanzano 1986: 71).

It is assumed that the reader who is addressed directly will accept as final Geertz' textual reading of the culture. In the light of what I argue about inter-faith dialogue as part of the paradigm for my study I was particularly struck by the following comment near the end of the chapter:

> There is never an I-you relationship, a dialogue, two people next to each other reading the same text and discussing it face-to-face, but only an I-they relationship. And, as we have seen, even the I disappears - replaced by an invisible voice of authority (Crapanzano 1986: 74).

In his discussion of Geertz, Clifford and Crapanzano, Bob Jackson concluded that in 'Deep Play' Geertz has failed to apply his own hermeneutical principles rigorously enough and argued that:

> techniques from interpretive anthropology have a great deal to commend them when it comes to reconstructing the religious or cultural way of life of others (Jackson 1997: 45).

I agree with this judgement but I think that writers such as Crapanzano and Clifford are important, too, because by deconstructing texts they draw particular attention to the way culture is *written*. Clifford wrote that 'ethnography is actively situated *between* powerful systems of meaning' (Clifford 1986a: 2) and the text probably reveals more about the writer and less about the observed than ethnographers have imagined. Since the publication of *Writing Culture* (Clifford & Marcus eds. 1986) a lot of attention has been given by ethnographers to the way in which texts are constructed; what Clifford called 'ethnographic fictions' (1986a: 6)[30]. I will discuss some theoretical points here before reflecting on the way in which my findings are written up in this dissertation.

James Clifford stressed the need to include different voices in the text. In that way the reader is made aware that there are different understandings of what

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[29] This is reprinted in *The Interpretations of Culture* (Geertz 1973: 412-453)

[30] James Clifford has come in for sharp criticism for his deliberate omission of women from the seminar from which the book, *Writing Culture*, emerged (see for example Behar 1995: 4-5).

is happening and that the author's voice is not the only or the privileged one. Going hand in hand with this is a growing awareness of the voice of the researcher, a partial actor in the events being described but much more in control of the way the story is told. In his chapter, 'On Ethnographic Allegory' Clifford argued:

> The new tendency to name and quote informants more fully and to introduce personal elements into the text is altering ethnography's discursive strategy and mode of authority. Much of our knowledge about other cultures must now be seen as contingent, the problematic outcome of intersubjective dialogue, translation, projection (Clifford, 1986b: 109).

I have already referred to John Van Maanen's book, *Tales of the Field* and his use of the word 'tale' is deliberate for the 'representational style selected to join the observer and observed' (Van Maanen 1988: xi). I have adopted this usage in my title and thesis, and Chapter Four, particularly, has been deliberately written as a 'tale' in order to stress the narrative quality of writing culture. Van Maanen's book explored these narrative conventions of ethnography so that 'different modes of cultural portraiture can be identified, appreciated, compared and perhaps, improved' (p1). The impact on the reader is important because the tale must not only be factual and truthful but also 'evocative' (p34). Three different types of tale were discussed in some detail of which only the third gets approval. There is the Realist Tale where the author appears to be absent but in fact has the final word about how the culture is to be interpreted. The narrator poses as:

> an impersonal conduit who...passes on more-or-less objective data in a measured intellectual style that is uncontaminated by personal bias, political goals or moral judgements. A studied neutrality characterizes the realist tale (Van Maanen 1988: 47).

There is a lot of concrete detail and possibly also direct quotation from the people who have been studied. The present tense may suggest a timeless quality for this type of tale. This kind of writing does not allow the reader insight into either how the data was collected or how the tale was constructed[31].

Attempts to de-mystify fieldwork make up the second type of tale, the Confessional Tale, and this may be used to supplement a realist tale. In the confessional tale writers:

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[31]I am reminded of Jack Priestley's discussion about data. He quoted T.S. Eliot's lines about wisdom being lost in knowledge and knowledge in information. He went on to say, 'Eliot might, in our own time, have gone on to add another line namely, "Where is the information we have lost in data?" For, whilst information may have been regarded by him as being inferior both to knowledge and wisdom, at least it retained some conceptual connection with the person who was receiving it. "In-*form*-ation", as the word itself suggests, requires the giving of some form to whatever is being communicated. Data remains as disconnected bits of stuff quite outside of ourselves, demanding nothing of us and not necessarily having any effect on us at all as growing persons' (Priestley 1996:2).

attempt to demonstrate that an ethnographic report is more than a personal document; that it is something disciplined by proper fieldwork habits, including the attention the ethnographer pays to the epistemological problems characteristic of social science (Van Maanen 1988: 74).

In these tales there is a personalised author who interprets, as Geertz suggested, by 'tacking back and forth between an insider's passionate perspective and an outsider's dispassionate one' (Van Maanen 1988: 77). The outsider, of course, is not always dispassionate. Helen Simons wrote a fascinating confessional tale about what proved to be 'one of the most harrowing experiences of my research life' (Simons 1987: 141). This was an attempt to negotiate the dissemination of an evaluation report written as part of a fairly short case study. Her concern for democratic principles in doing evaluation arose out of an intense awareness of the power relations between the various individuals and groups involved in the case study (Simons 1987: 40). In a chapter of *Writing Culture* Talal Asad argued that political inequalities of language which make 'cultural translation' problematic had to be carefully explored by ethnographers (Asad 1986: 164). In the same book Mary Louise Pratt had some very interesting comments to make about the realist and confessional tale, which she called 'objectified description' and the 'personal narrative':

> I think it is fairly clear that personal narrative persists alongside objectifying description in ethnographic writing because it mediates a contradiction within the discipline between personal and scientific authority, a contradiction which has become especially acute since the advent of fieldwork as a methodological norm (Pratt 1986: 32).

What is particularly interesting is that she went on to demonstrate that this tension existed in travel writing long before the development of the modern scientific method and she quoted a number of examples from as early as the sixteenth century. The relationship between fieldwork and finished text is recognised, then, by many ethnographers to be complex but:

> At issue is the fact that there are always many ways to interpret cultural data. Each interpretation can be disputed on many grounds....Field data are constructed from talk and action. They are then interpretations of other interpretations and are mediated many times over (Van Maanen 1988: 95).

Because of this issue Van Maanen argued that he was less confident than he had been about the veracity and faithfulness of his realist or confessional accounts. He wanted a type of tale which brought together both the knower and the known and he called this the Impressionist Tale. He wrote:

> ...materials are words, metaphors, phrasings, imagery and most critically the expansive recall of fieldwork experience. When these are put together and told in a tightly focused, vibrant, exact but necessarily imaginative rendering of fieldwork, an impressionist tale of the field results....The story itself, the impressionist's tale, is a representational means of cracking open

the culture and the fieldworker's way of knowing it so that both can be jointly examined....Transparency and concreteness give the impressionistic tale an absorbing character as does the use of maximally evocative language (Van Maanen 1988: 102-103).

Van Maanen noted that this sort of writing may form *part* of a larger whole and there is considerable interest among feminist writers in experimenting with these forms of narrative. Ruth Linden began *Making Stories, Making Selves* with the words, 'This book is about the writing of itself' (Linden 1993:1). Over a period of time she had written three different accounts of Holocaust survivors and then:

> In order to expose the constraints on my early writing...I wrote companion chapters reflecting on each of the three core chapters. These metachapters examine the strategies I used to inscribe my authoritative, if usually silent, presence. They problematize concerns I prematurely foreclosed or altogether ignored the first time around: how claims on truth and reality, and points of view, voices and interpretations are established and maintained (Linden 1993:5).

Partly because of the highly charged nature of the material Linden was discussing and the significance of this for her own Jewish self-understanding, she was unable to separate neatly the 'field' from the rest of her life. She made an explicit reference to Van Maanen when she wrote:

> My "tales of the field" are a tight braid of Holocaust survivors' stories. Unwinding the knot in the course of writing this book has been tantamount to a process of intellectual and spiritual death and rebirth....Their stories have become my own. They have given me parts of myself and my culture (Linden 1993:8) .

I was not dealing with such dramatic stories and I did not spend an extensive period of time in the field.[32] The impact on me has not been so life changing as Linden described but, as I have argued both in the discussion on paradigms and in this section on culture, the tales I tell in this thesis are interpretive in various ways. I was a Catholic doing fieldwork in a Catholic and a Jewish school. I was mainly interested in the symbols, stories, rituals and values which make up the culture and to collect the data I used the particular methods, including observation, which I have described. In the next chapter I discuss in detail some of the specifics of the process of gathering the data (a kind of confessionalist tale) and in Chapter Four I have woven together some 'impressionistic tales' with more realist accounts trying to create a 'landscape' (Eisner 1985a: 210). Eisner included five very different examples of 'landscapes' in

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[32] Helen Simons noted that lack of 'immersion in the field' was one of the major differences between the case studies she discussed and ethnography. The other two are direct observation as the dominant technique in ethnography and an interpretive theory of the case by the ethnographer (Simons 1987: 79).

The Educational Imagination (Eisner 1985a: 256-338). This form of educational criticism is maieutic; its aims are to enable the birth of new perception, what Eisner called, *The Enlightened Eye* (Eisner 1991). It is empirical:

> in the significant sense that the qualities the critic describes or renders must be capable of being located in the subject matter of the criticism. In this sense the test of criticism is in its instrumental effect on the perception (Eisner 1985a: 238).

In order to present the culture of two schools, I describe, interpret and evaluate using narrative as well as discursive language and aiming 'at the vivid rendering of the qualities perceived in the situation...an understanding of what has been rendered...(and) to assess the educational import and significance' (Eisner 1985a: 238). I have deliberately created a narrative with 'fictions' in an attempt to convey to the reader details of the culture which is itself made up of stories conveying identity.

In a recent study of the development of sexual identity in school, Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson wrote of the 'cultural work that young people-as-school-students do in the production of their identities' that:

> narratives...allow people to tell themselves and others who they are and what kind of people they are becoming (Epstein & Johnson 1998: 152).

These stories may acquire collective significance and become part of the 'mythology' of the group (see for example Kehily & Nayak 1996). I will be recounting some of the stories which are told in my two case study schools as well as giving some student portraits, based largely on responses to the questionnaire, and some tales of events in which I have tried to capture something of the character of the culture in the school. They are intended to be 'persuasive' (Atkinson 1990: 33). As Paul Atkinson argued in *The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality*:

> A somewhat restricted set of features is selected in order to exemplify salient aspects which the reader may treat as symptomatic of a recognisable or plausible state of affairs (Atkinson 1990: 53).

One of the ways in which this is done is through 'hypotyposis' (Atkinson 1990: 71). This is a graphic piece of descriptive writing, a vignette, which portrays a scene in a vivid manner. He wrote:

> There is a close relationship between the 'authenticity' of these vivid accounts and the authority of the account - and hence of the author. Authenticity is warranted by virtue of the ethnographer's own first-hand attendance and participation. It is therefore mirrored in the 'presence' of the reader in the action that is reproduced through the text (Atkinson 1990:73).

This 'exemplar' contributes to the persuasiveness of the whole in so far as 'the reader concurs or acquiesces in the dialogue between the exemplar and the

commentary and draws on the exemplar so as to find the commentary adequately plausible' (Atkinson 1990: 83). I give both exemplars and quite extended commentary in the stories I tell in Chapter Four rather as Christopher Clark does in his discussion of 'What You Can Learn From Applesauce' (Clark 1990). These stories incorporate, in the form that they are presented in the dissertation, the threefold aspects of the process of qualitative data analysis which Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman identified and summarised as:

1. *Data reduction* - selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting the raw data from field notes
2. *Data display* - arraying reduced data in a compressed, organized form
3. *Conclusion-drawing/verification* - drawing meaning from reduced, organized data in the form of regularities, patterns, explanations, and testing them for plausibility, robustness, sturdiness, and validity (Miles & Huberman 1990: 349).

I am approaching the making and meanings of my text within the *constructivist* paradigm. Atkinson commented, 'Narrative order is an accomplishment of tellers, hearers, writers, readers' (Atkinson 1990: 105). A similar view informs what is known as 'narrative theology'. Meaning is only achieved when the individual story, the community's story and the scriptural story engage with one another. In a useful introductory text Stroup wrote:

To understand Christian narrative properly is to be able to reinterpret one's personal identity by means of the biblical texts, history of tradition and theological doctrines that make up the church's narrative (Stroup 1981: 96).

The approach of narrative theology involves understanding 'discourse about God in the setting of a story' (Fackre 1983: 343). As this Christian theologian, Gabriel Fackre, went on to argue, the narrative is both 'disclosive' and 'transformative' for the reader; in it 'reality "looks me in the eye", unveils itself, gives insight into the depths' and at the same time the story '"jars" and "jolts"' with its power to reorient (Fackre 1983: 345).[33] The Jewish writer, Gabriel Josipovici put it like this:

We are drawn to them (stories) because they seem to speak to our condition and we seek to make them more and more our own: but we are also drawn to them because they seem to be *other* than us, because they guide us out of ourselves into what we feel to be a truer, more real world (Josipovici 1988: 4).

This is a hermeneutic approach involving the individual in active dialogue with narratives. Josipovici commented near the end of his fine book on the Bible that 'to trust in narrative...is to give up the impossible desire for understanding' in a simplistic or literalistic way (Josipovici 1988: 293). He was directing attention to

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[33]This is surely parallel to the understanding of teaching as 'mimetic and transformative' discussed by Madeleine Grumet (1990).

the idea that while narratives may be, indeed have to be, interpreted there are always multiple readings and that it is important to note that re-tellings are also interpretations. Jewish biblical interpretation, *midrash*, has always kept both a very close focus on the exact wording of a text as well as being open to a range of imaginative 'readings' of the text (see for example Magonet 1991). It stresses the importance of seeing individual stories within the larger context rather than in isolation. This is surely relevant to the research question of how the various voices of researcher and researched 'are to be heard, with what authority and in what form' (Olesen 1994: 167). Narrative theology encourages these interpretive approaches, not only to Biblical stories but to the tradition.[34] It is a wrestling with *story* as Jacob wrestled with the angel (Josipovici 1988: 28). As a Christian I have learned a great deal from studying the Bible with Jews and it is the sense of disclosure and potential transformation which the open inclusivist inter-faith approach to the other seeks to make possible. I am arguing that this is as relevant in the study and writing of a culture as in a Jewish-Christian bible study.

In recent ethnographic writing and especially in feminist writing there has also been a concern to make more obvious the reader's role in constructing the meaning of a text. As Atkinson commented:

> An explicit concern for feminist discourse *can* include a commitment to alternative varieties of textual organisation that disrupt the taken-for-granted authority of the single viewpoint (Atkinson 1990: 147).

In a chapter on 'Feminism and Models of Qualitative Research', Virginia Olesen outlined the history of feminist research, current models of research and some of the issues which feminist researchers are exploring. Many of these involve new textual and presentational practices (Olesen 1994: 167). Laurel Richardson made many suggestions for experimental writing at various stages of research in which:

> we are freed to write material in a variety of ways: to tell and retell. There is no such thing as "getting it right", only "getting it" differently contoured and nuanced. When experimenting with form ethnographers learn about the topic and about themselves what is unknowable, unimaginable, using prescribed writing formats (Richardson 1994: 521).

She described a number of 'evocative representations' including the kind of mixed genre which I attempt, in a limited way, in Chapter Four to give the reader 'a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic' (Richardson 1994: 522). Examples of these genres can be found in the recent collection, *Women Writing Culture* (Behar & Gordon eds. 1995) and I will end this section

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[34] I have argued elsewhere that the tradition establishes boundaries which set limits to interpretation (Scholefield 1997). Tradition, however, is not fixed; it is a developing process. The denial that 'anything goes' is relevant to establishing the credibility of inter-faith research.

on the theoretical aspects of studying and writing culture by referring to a chapter in that book about the work of Barbara Myerhoff.

The chapter's subtitle, 'Anthropology, Feminism and the Politics of Jewish Identity' (Frank 1995) indicates the relevance to what I have been discussing. Myerhoff not only wrote books and articles, she produced two films both about Jewish groups. *Number Our Days* was both film and a book which, Gelya Frank wrote,

> was one of the first full-length ethnographies to integrate the reflexive, narrative, dialogic, processual and interpretive approaches that have now moved to the centre of anthropological discourse (Frank 1995: 207).

The subject matter was a Centre for elderly, and quite poor, Jews many of whom had been born in Eastern Europe and Myerhoff was interested in 'the importance of symbols, stories, and rituals in establishing and maintaining Jewish community' (Frank 1995: 208). Myerhoff was Jewish, of an age with the residents' own children and deeply affected by her experience at the Centre. Her use of herself as the research instrument was even more dramatic in the second film, *In Her Own Time*. She was dying of cancer and the film, originally intended to be of the varied Jewish communities in one part of Los Angeles, became a focused study of her own search for meaning and, perhaps healing, among a particular Chasidic group. She was both insider and outsider, able to film a *mikveh* (ritual bath) and a ritual where she received a *get* (bill of divorce) because she was in her own life entering the Chasidic world but unable to speak Yiddish or understand Hebrew. But even this assessment of her role(s) is too simple. Gelya Frank's judgement of her work in this last film which was completed shortly after her death is interesting:

> She must be seen also as a visual anthropologist in a trance of deep play, re-enacting one last time the role of anthropologist taking part in exotic rituals, an award-winning Ariadne adding precious weeks to her life by spinning one last tale (Frank 1995: 220).

I will return in later chapters to some of the themes with which Myerhoff's work engages: rituals and stories; values; identity; community; dying.

I have explained in this chapter how the research I undertook to answer my original questions about the culture of a Jewish and a Catholic school involved me in qualitative research and I have discussed what that entails. I have argued for an open inclusivist approach to dialogue and I have explained the background to the particular narrative form which I use to tell my tales. I have made some comments already about how such work should be evaluated. Finally, in this chapter, I will 'tie the threads together' with a brief discussion of the ways in which qualitative research establishes credibility.

Criteria for Qualitative Research

The criteria for evaluating any research depend on the type of research it is and the paradigm determining how it is to be understood. This thesis uses qualitative, interpretive research, based on case study, and a variety of narrative forms to convey something of the culture of two schools and to analyse the cultures in dialogue with concepts which are both 'experience near' and 'experience distant' (Geertz 1983: 57). To make sense of this sort of research the reader needs to have a clear account of the relationship between context, methods, researcher and researched and I have tried to provide this in the thesis and particularly in this chapter.

In their account of 'interpretive validity' David Altheide and John Johnson set out clearly five elements of the process of qualitative research and I quote in full what they say as a summary of the issues I have discussed in this chapter and as a focus for what follows:

> 1. the relationship between what is observed (behaviours, rituals, meanings) and the larger cultural, historical and organizational contexts within which the observations are made (the substance);
> 2. the relationships among the observer, the observed and the setting (the observer);
> 3. the issue of perspective (or point of view), whether the observer's or members', used to render an interpretation of the ethnographic data (the interpretation);
> 4. the role of the reader in the final product (the audience); and
> 5. the issues of representational, rhetorical, or authorial style used by the author(s) to render the description and/or interpretation (the style) (Altheide & Johnson 1994: 489).

Judgements about the findings can be made when a reflexive account is given of these processes because 'there is an intimate relationship between the research process and the findings it produces' (Altheide & Johnson 1994: 486). Within the *constructivist* paradigm the research is understood as partial or particular but it can be judged as 'malconstructed' if it is simplistic, uninformed, internally inconsistent or unreflexive and:

> constructions that issue from inquiry can be evaluated for their "fit" with the data and information they encompass; the extent to which they "work", that is provide a credible level of understanding; and the extent to which they have "relevance" and are "modifiable" (Schwandt 1994: 129).

The criteria of 'validity' and 'reliability' emerged from some accounts of *positivist* epistemology and ontology, and were particularly associated with testing; they are not the only criteria which can be applied. I was forcibly struck by a paper by Harry Wolcott which argued for 'understanding' rather than 'validity' as the goal of qualitative research. He defined understanding as 'the power to make experience intelligible by applying concepts and categories' (Wolcott 1990: 146).

Ten years earlier Ernie House defined validity in evaluation as 'worthiness of being recognised' (House 1980: 247) and he commented that what he termed 'subjectivists':

> also claim that their evaluations are true but they attempt to achieve insights within the frame of reference of the audience and participants themselves. Meaningfulness is important. The evaluation must be capable of being understood....A strength of these approaches is that they often communicate important insights. A weakness is that the conclusions may vary considerably, even be contradictory, and that there is not clear way to reconcile them (House 1980: 253).

In his paper Wolcott quoted Geertz (1973:29) saying that 'to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion...that you are not quite getting it right' but wanted to stress how important it is 'to go to considerable pains not to get it all wrong' (Wolcott 1990: 127). He gave nine points to try to name what he does in research to get it as right as possible:

1. talk little, listen a lot;
2. record accurately;
3. begin writing early;
4. let readers see for themselves;
5. report fully, including the bits which don't fit;
6. be candid;
7. seek feedback;
8. try to achieve balance;
9. write accurately (Wolcott 1990: 126-135).

We can see in this 'rigorous subjectivity' a strong set of research guidelines.[35] Philip Jackson, commenting on Wolcott's paper was rather dismissive of the list as reminiscent of a litany of Boy Scout virtues but he added that its length 'alone suffices to remind us that there remains a whole raft of things to think about once we have moved beyond the ancient bugaboos of reliability and validity' (Jackson 1990: 154). I have attempted to put these into practice in this research.

One of the methods which can be carefully used in a case study is 'triangulation'. Robert Stake defined triangulation as:

> a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen (Stake 1994: 241).

I have used the different methods of interviews, questionnaires, observation and documents to achieve triangulation and I have also returned the completed tales of the cultures and the analysis of the questionnaire responses to staff at the schools for their comments. The purpose of all this is to learn. In discussing the issue of

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[35] This way of working might also be called objectivity! See for example Haraway 1991; Walsh 1993.

typicality Stake argued that in the light of the 'foreshadowed problems', the interests which prompted the research in the first place, it is better to take the case from which most can be learnt rather than the one which is typical:

> That may mean taking the one that we can spend the most time with. Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. Often it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a magnificently typical case (Stake 1994: 243).

Similarly, within the case, it is necessary to sample and as Van Maanen wrote, 'stories are not made from common and routine occurrences....we learn more from the exceptional than from the typical' (Van Maanen 1988: 108). Of course it is not possible to generalise from a case in the same way as from a survey, for example. The case study may, in fact, help to provide limits to generalisability. It is particularly suited to refining theory, and suggesting and exploring complexities. I will not be making claims about Catholic or Jewish schools in general but I do attempt to paint a picture of particular people and places at a particular time and use that to throw some light on Catholic and Jewish ideas about education.

When the research provides rich data about one particular case the *reader* can make connections with other cases and with theories. Robert Donmoyer (1990) helpfully linked this process with Piaget's schema theory. New experience, whether direct or vicariously through a case study, has to be assimilated and then it is possible for accommodation, integration and differentiation to take place (Donmoyer 1990: 191). He added that when generalisation is thought of in this way, the diversity between school settings is an asset rather than a liability. What I have said about narrative theology is clearly relevant to the way the reader assesses the research, understood here as text. As Thomas Barone commented:

> The reader, a historically situated self, learns from the re-created other in the text to see features of a social reality that may have gone previously unnoticed. And if the reader, although cautious and wary, ultimately resonates with the interior vision of the text and is persuaded of its usefulness, he (sic) borrows it for his own (Barone 1990: 314).

The criteria to aim for in a case study, according to Helen Simons, are whether it is 'accurate, fair and relevant' (Simons 1987: 102). It was an attempt to involve my case study respondents in judging this which led me to ask several of the teachers in each school for their comments on what I had written. In this way I could check my 'story' with those in the schools and also get some explicit examples of their interpretations of the account.[36] Virgina Olesen commented that although taking the account back to respondents 'has been widely discussed...it has not been used as often as perhaps one might expect' (Olesen 1994: 166).

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[36] See Chapter Six for discussion of the responses from the schools.

In moving to discuss the narrative, the presentation of the findings, I am reminded of what Laurel Richardson had to say about writing as a way of 'knowing'. She referred to combining different forms of 'evocative representations' as 'postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation' (Richardson 1994: 522). I am not attempting much in the way of experimental deconstruction here. I am concerned to claim that narratives can be judged for their 'coherence, referential adequacy and instrumental utility' (Schwandt 1994: 129). As Eisner argued about qualitative research:

> What we can productively ask of a set of ideas is...whether it is useful, whether it allows one to do one's work more effectively, whether it allows one to perceive the phenomenon in more complex and subtle ways, whether it expands one's intelligence in dealing with important problems (Eisner 1985a: 241).

I have argued, that the research described here is best understood as text, designed to enhance perception and understanding. Paul Atkinson made a case that the credibility of the text 'depends on the internal coherence and plausibility of the overall product' (Atkinson 1990: 55). He went on:

> The ethnographic text conveys the authenticity of its account very largely through its persuasive force. The sociological message is conveyed through the use of descriptive writing in which implicit analysis and point of view are inscribed (Atkinson 1990: 57).

The various voices, the interpretive comments and the overall analytic framing of the text contribute to its rhetorical force.

In this chapter I have been establishing the analytical frame for the tales of the culture of a Jewish and a Catholic school and the discussions which follow. I have set the study of symbols, stories, rituals and values within the context of an open inclusivist dialogical, constructivist and interpretive, case study approach and explained the various research methods which I used. Finally, I have discussed aspects of the importance of narrative for this thesis and summarised the principles of qualitative research which I have sought to follow. In the next chapter I provide a reflexive account, a confessional tale, of the processes, issues and experiences involved in carrying out the case studies.

Chapter Three - Two Case Studies

My Role as the Researcher

I carried out field work in two schools in order to discover the symbols, rituals, stories and values which students encounter. In each school I used the same four different ways to gather the data but my experience as a researcher was different in the two schools for several reasons. Most obviously, of course, as a Catholic I am more 'at home' in a Catholic school than a Jewish one. Because my full time work includes the training of Catholic RE teachers I often visit Catholic schools as a trainer. It was a different role to visit as a researcher but I was talking to staff whom I already knew, in some cases very well, from previous work.

In the Jewish school, however, the relationships were not so straightforward. Firstly I was not Jewish and so not an insider. The headteacher welcomed the research proposal from the beginning and invited me to visit the school both to gain some initial impressions and to carry out the case study. He also gave me a copy of a dissertation he had written about the school (Falk 1996). I knew one of the teachers who had done a study of the school as part of her MA work and whom I had met on a course (Conway 1995). Because of the particular nature of the religious education in a Jewish school, not all of the teachers were qualified and I am not sure that they welcomed a teacher trainer researching into their work. I discuss below the implications of this for the case study. There were two other differences in the Jewish school: I had already had the experience of the work in the Catholic school and my time in the school was mainly in one continuous block rather than on isolated days.[1]

There has been much discussion in the literature of qualitative research about the role of the researcher in the field. Valerie Hey entitled a chapter of her book about a small scale participant observation study of girl's friendships, *Learning Your Place* (Hey 1997: 38). She discussed how she thought her work was seen in one of her schools as simultaneously non-serious and threatening to the male power relations. She wrote that this 'discourse of derision' meant that she occupied a place on the boundaries of the school, just like the disaffected girls she was studying (Hey 1997: 39). While access to lessons was made difficult for Hey by male teachers and the headteacher she received support from both female staff and from the girls. By contrast, I was pleasantly surprised in both my schools how willingly most staff and students shared their ideas with me and welcomed me into lessons and other events.

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[1] The two different uses of time had various advantages and disadvantages. Inevitably, as my experience of field work grew, I was dissatisfied with my earlier efforts.

My study was not a major ethnographic study of a school. Unlike Hey I did not spend many weeks in the schools and my research did not depend on establishing relationships with particular students. It does, however, share some of the characteristics of ethnography both in the field work I did and in the writing of the text. I have considered in the previous chapter how discussion about the study and writing of culture has influenced my own work. Paul Atkinson argued that the journey of discovery which the researcher takes has features of a *quest*:

> The narrative ... portrays him or her through key events and social encounters. He or she embarks on an exploration in which he or she moves from being 'outsider' to 'insider', from 'stranger' to 'member', from 'incompetent' to 'habitué' (Atkinson 1990: 106).

I was not at either school for long enough to become a *member* of the school but in the two different schools and in the process of writing about the meaning of the data I have collected I have been working at different points within a continuum of an insider-outsider role. I have much experience of teaching in and visiting schools. I have taught religious education in British schools since 1973 and have been more recently an adviser and a trainer of teachers. The other autobiographical element is the inter-faith one. As a recent convert to Catholicism I have a different experience from 'cradle Catholics'. I teach in a Catholic College but I did not have a Catholic education myself. As a lecturer in Religious Studies I know more about Judaism than many practising Jews but of course I do not *know* it in the same way. This particular background had an impact from the very beginning of the research including the selection of the two schools.

Choosing the Schools - St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai

Reflecting back on the process of choosing a Catholic and a Jewish secondary school to study I am aware that the circumstances surrounding the selections were very different. I could, in theory, have chosen any one of dozens of Catholic schools in and around London which I already knew as a result of visiting my students on school experience. I finally selected St. Margaret's because at the time there was a deputy head there who expressed considerable interest in the research and who had interesting things to say about Catholic education.[2] She made the practicalities of gaining access to the school very easy and also gave very willingly of her time in several ways. 'St. Margaret's' is not the school's real name. I have followed the convention in writing up research of disguising the actual identity of the schools. It is interesting to note that there are dissenting voices from this general practice. Ruth Linden discussed the issues of confidentiality and anonymity in her richly interwoven study of Holocaust survivors, drawing

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[2] This is an example of an 'opportunity to learn' (Stake 1994: 244f).

attention to the way in which anonymity is not the only way of reporting research but a 'representational strategy with political, historical, as well as psychological consequences for our respondents and us alike' (Linden 1993: 107). She argued:

Masking respondents' identities may be necessary in research that generates abstract principles about aggregates of people. However, in research designed to explore lived experience and life worlds, this practice ought to be questioned. A wish to be anonymous expresses secrets and silences that lie at the core of what it means to have - or be - a self. Researchers' *and* respondents' desires for anonymity reflect cultural constructions of privacy and power. As such they can be examined and probed. They can be grist for the ethnographic mill (Linden 1993: 111).

This is a powerful argument and has particular applicability in the case of Holocaust writing where one of the main aims is to 'remember' and 'retell' (Shapiro 1984: 4). It may also be relevant in other circumstances too. Not all case studies of a school mask the identity of the school; one of the earliest was Elizabeth Richardson's report on Nailsea School (Richardson 1973). However the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines say that informants and participants have a right to remain anonymous but that participants should be made aware that in certain situations anonymity cannot be achieved (BERA 1992). I am following these guidelines with both schools but it is not possible to really disguise the identity of the Jewish school.

There are very few maintained Jewish secondary schools in Britain and the one to which I was, eventually, able to gain access only opened in 1993. Anyone who seriously wished to identify the school would be able to but Mount Sinai's headteacher responded very warmly to my request to study their culture although he was aware that its identity could not be really disguised in my thesis. I shall argue that the school is very much the realisation of the head's vision for Jewish education and that its particular circumstances are significant for a discussion of the culture in a way which is not the case with St. Margaret's. In both schools the headteachers expressed a personal interest in the topic of my research and welcomed the presence of an 'outsider' focusing on symbols, stories, rituals and values. They both said that they would probably use the results of my analysis of the culture of their schools as part of their programme of on-going staff development.

The process of finding a Jewish school was quite different from the way I decided on St. Margaret's. Although I never intended to undertake a direct *comparison* between the two schools it seemed sensible to have two similar schools. Having selected St. Margaret's I wanted to do the Jewish case study in an 11-18 co-educational maintained school. I approached Laurie Rosenberg, the Director of Community Issues at the Board of Deputies of British Jews, for help

with gaining access to the school in London which obviously matches these criteria. I did not go directly to the school because I believed that as a non-Jewish researcher I might be viewed with considerable suspicion. It was important to establish myself as known and accepted within the tightly knit world of Jewish London.

Hammersley and Atkinson discussed the problems of gaining access in their introductory text, *Ethnography - Principles in Practice* (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983). They pointed out that difficulties of access are not just obstacles to overcome but can contribute to the researcher's understanding of what is considered to be sensitive within the field setting (p55). Two different roles of those able to grant access are considered: the sponsor and the gatekeeper. The sponsor vouches for the researcher and may introduce him or her directly to a group or organisation (p60). Because of his public role, relating to education within the main Orthodox Jewish organisation in Britain, I saw Laurie Rosenberg as a sponsor who could arrange initial access for me to the Jewish school. He had already arranged for me to visit a Jewish Primary school and had taken me to introduce me to the staff. The other role is that of the 'gatekeeper', the person whose 'permission needs to be obtained or whose good offices it might be advisable to secure' (p63).

> 'Whether or not they grant entry to the setting, gatekeepers will generally, and understandably, be concerned as to the picture of the organisation that the ethnographer will paint, and they will have practical interests in seeing themselves and their colleagues in a favourable light. At least, they will wish to safeguard what they perceive as their legitimate interests. Gatekeepers may therefore attempt to exercise some degree of surveillance and control, either by blocking off certain lines of inquiry or by shepherding the fieldworker in one direction or another (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 65).

Within any school the first gatekeeper is the headteacher and when my 'sponsor' approached the headteacher of the secondary school I was most interested to work in he was not able even to arrange an initial visit to the school to discuss the possibility of some research. There may have been all sorts of reasons for this. The Jewish community is sensitive to outsiders, especially if they might have any sort of critical agenda.[3] The headteacher was also relatively new to the school and there existed something of a tradition for the school not to publicise issues which were of concern to it. For whatever reason it was obvious I was not going to gain access to that school.

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[3] Fear of physical attack can be seen in the security arrangements for every Jewish school and for other community buildings and meetings.

When Laurie Rosenberg contacted the headteacher at Mount Sinai High School the response was very different and I was invited to visit the school to discuss the possibilities for the study. There exists a considerable research culture at the school and several staff, including the headteacher, are studying for higher degrees. The school, opened only in September 1993, is also well used to scrutiny from a variety of sources.

The Pattern of the Fieldwork

I set up the case study in a similar way in the two schools. I visited the school for an initial discussion with the headteacher. We agreed the focus of the research, the various times I would spend in the school and that I would interview both some staff and some students. Both heads also agreed to a formal interview. I offered to send a copy of the questionnaire to the heads for approval but neither wished to do that. We agreed that in the thesis I would use a pseudonym for each school and that I would also mask the identity of staff and students in various ways.[4] I discussed with both headteachers the fact that I would be interested, to some extent, in their leadership roles and that I would not disguise their identity in the same way as for others in the school.

At Mount Sinai I was immediately invited to attend an after school staff meeting where the Jewish staff were discussing the Jewish ethos of the school and the head gave me a copy of his M.Ed. dissertation (Falk 1996). At St. Margaret's I also had an initial meeting with the deputy head who looked after all the arrangements for my research and also with one of the teachers in the religious education department.

The majority of the field work at St. Margaret's was carried out in the spring and summer 1996 and at Mount Sinai in the autumn of both 1996 and 1997. I visited each school at agreed times, spread over several months, to administer the questionnaires, carry out the interviews, collect documents and also to spend time in each school and observe lessons, assemblies, parents' meetings and other school activities. In total I spent the equivalent of about eight full days in each school but I made far more than eight visits and they were also quite spread out.[5]

The staff in each school were told in a briefing that a researcher would be in the school exploring the culture and that while their co-operation would be appreciated, no-one was compelled to be involved. With the exception of some sixth formers at Mount Sinai whom I approached directly, all the students were

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[4] For example I do not use anybody's real name and I sometimes change their gender and role.
[5] One very obvious way of developing this research would be to carry out a fuller ethnographic study of the culture of a school. I was, however, struck by the huge amount of data I collected in a relatively short case study.

asked by a member of staff if they would be willing to be interviewed and I always interviewed them in a group. In the interviews I explained that I was studying the culture of the school and asked permission to tape record the interview and this was given, without any apparent hesitation, in every case.

St. Margaret's

Observations

It isn't easy to find the main entrance to St. Margaret's School; it is well hidden off the side of the building nearest the road. The school as a whole, though, sprawls across two sites separated by a short section of pavement and a public footpath and a private drive to another property. Because I had been to the school several times I was able to find the entrance on my first research-related visit. Two students were always on duty at a table just inside the main entrance and directed visitors to the appropriate place. Once the secretary knew who I wished to see I waited in a small reception area until Maria, the deputy head who was responsible for my visits, arrived. Because it is such an open site, with three entrances, there have been some problems with unwanted visitors and, as in all schools in the county, there is a tight procedure for signing in visitors. Sometimes I then went to Maria's office and sometimes to the staff room, along a corridor full of school photographs and out of bounds to most students. I spent some time here during my visits and was always offered a cup of coffee and sometimes cake! Several staff mentioned, in interviews, this friendliness and hospitality as characteristic of the school.

I was never just left to wander around the site. Maria arranged for Siobhan, a Year 8 student, to show me around the school. She had recently come to St. Margaret's, having been at school in New York before. She told me that it wasn't such hard work at St. Margaret's and gave me a good guided tour around the various buildings. Some of these date from the early 1950's and have been gradually added to. There is new science and technology accommodation and a recently opened Resource Centre including the library. Siobhan took me to the Sixth Form Centre, housed in an old mansion. It is now very dilapidated and behind it there is a rather inadequate canteen and some art rooms.

A variety of formal and informal opportunities were arranged for me to observe life at St. Margaret's. I attended several religious education lessons, a Year 9 assembly on the theme of 'conversion', a leavers' liturgy, and I spent a day with the Year 6 students who would be coming to the school in the following September. They were having a 'taster' day and later their parents came with their children to a meeting with the headteacher and form teachers. I trailed one of

these Year 6 classes during the day and also attended the evening meeting. I also spent some time in the school while I was administering the questionnaire and interviewing students and staff. At these times I would get a sandwich from the canteen and sit in the staffroom or talk to members of staff informally. On another occasion I visited the school for the school drama production which in 1996 was *42nd Street*. This is a major annual enterprise and I will discuss later how these occasions symbolise the school very well.

The Documents

A variety of documents were made available to me. The prospectus would be the first point of contact with the school for a new parent. St. Margaret's has one which is full of photographs of student activity. On the front there are four pictures of which the top one is of a group meeting in the chapel with a chaplain. There is a girl working on a computer, a tennis lesson and sixth formers studying. Inside there is a lot of text which deliberately sets out the vision and the philosophy behind the school. There are also sections headed 'academic life', 'school life', 'sixth form,' and 'spiritual life' as well as 'general information' and 'perceptions' which is a selection of quotations about the school from students and others. The section on philosophy states that 'our Christian purpose expresses the Gospel vision of Faith, Love and Service' and in the section on 'spiritual life' the links with the local parishes are made explicit. The brochure says that the school 'is a Christian School in the Roman Catholic tradition' and this phrase reflects the sometimes problematic attempt to be both a Catholic school and to fully include the many students and staff who are not Roman Catholics. There is a stress in the brochure on the value of liturgies, the residential retreat programmes and charitable work. The importance of being a community is stressed throughout the prospectus; the headteacher writes that the school is 'a living community with a structure of values and expectations'.

Another glossy folder produced each year, mainly by students, offers a summary of the previous year's highlights in the life of the school. The one produced in 1996 is entitled, 'Racing into the Future' and has a large picture of a boys' running race at a sports day. Sections inside describe an OFSTED inspection, the school production, sporting achievements, a sponsored walk, visits in Britain and abroad and a reflection by a Year 7 student about his expectations of the school. It is interesting that the culture of St. Margaret's is often described by staff and students in connection with student participation, drama productions, sport, visits and charity work and these are all discussed more fully in the next chapter. When the deputy head gave me the documents she thought would be relevant for

my research she included the sports' day brochure and the programme for an activities week.

St. Margaret's has produced many other documents about aspects of school life, some of which are included in the Staff handbook. This begins with a vision statement and a statement about shared values. These stress the individual value of each person as well as naming the essential nature of the school as a shared enterprise. A short but detailed section follows with dates, lists of staff and governors, subcommittees of the governing body and details of the management structures. There is an interesting diagram which places the school between a range of providers such as the Diocese and the LEA and a list of 'clients' (their term) including not only students and parents but also primary schools, parishes, industry and higher education. General information about the running of the school is followed by a series of sections about assembly, in-service training, the School Council, support for students with special educational needs and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These, too, emphasise both individual needs and gifts, and a view of the school as community. The largest section of the handbook contains eighteen policy statements on topics as diverse as sex education, homework, liturgy, anti-bullying and staff salaries. Maria told me that much discussion had gone on in staff meetings so that the statements would reflect shared ideas and values. More factual and legal information follows and there are maps of the two sites which the school occupies.

As the glossy folder indicated, St. Margaret's underwent an OFSTED inspection in January 1995; one of the first in the county and generally positive but showing poor results, particularly for boys, in several GCSE subjects. As a Voluntary Aided school there were two separate inspections, one under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 (Clements 1995) and a Section 13 Inspection of Religious Education and Worship (Castelli 1995). The report on religious education, produced for the Bishop who has responsibility for Roman Catholic schools in his diocese and for the Governors of the school, commented favourably on the school as a Catholic community, religious education in the classroom and across the school, worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues (Castelli 1995: 1). As well as the reports I was given a copy of the post-OFSTED school action plan.

In addition to these formal documents I was also given copies of two leavers' services which were held to celebrate the final day at the school for year 11 and Year 13. I would argue that, together with 'entrances', the way in which 'exits' are handled is quite revealing about the school's culture. The head of the religious education department who worked with students to prepare the services

said that they were 'moving, prayerful and enjoyable'. I collected the materials given to Year 6 parents at their meeting and I also have copies of other relevant documents which did not originate in the school. The first of these was written by the Diocesan Bishop of the school and issued while I was in the school. Called, *The Catholic School - the Church in the World*, this is a statement about Catholic schools which was intended to initiate a diocesan-wide consultation about how to build up partnership between parents, teachers and parish communities (Murphy-O'Connor 1996).

I am not the only person to do research at St. Margaret's. There are two relevant undergraduate dissertations which I have supervised. One of these explores *Equal opportunities for pupils from a variety of Christian backgrounds* (Terry 1996) and the second examines the implementation of the sex education policy at St Margaret's (Garvey 1998). The final document is also based on research. It is a short paper entitled *Religious Identity: Sixth Form Students at St. Margaret's RC School* (McNamara 1990). It was written by an American sociologist who was a Visiting Lecturer at a nearby College of Higher Education and is based on a questionnaire about their religious faith which was used with sixth formers. It offers an interesting point of comparison with my own findings and will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The Interviews

Like every other aspect of my research at St. Margaret's the interviews were organised for me by the deputy head, Maria. Looking back I am aware of how much she controlled what I did. At the time I was grateful for her help and I certainly learned a lot about her views of the school. She was a very effective 'gatekeeper' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 65) and 'informer' (Van Maanen 1988: 81).[6]

Maria organised a room for the interviews to take place in and they were on a fairly tight time table with only half an hour for each interview so I was able to do eight recorded interviews between 9.00 and 1.00 on a Monday in July 1996. This was an exhausting process for the interviewer and I don't think I made the most of the opportunities offered by year 7 and Year 12 students whom I interviewed at the end of the morning. I had a much more relaxed time with a Year 10 group whom I had interviewed the previous week before they went on work experience. I interviewed the head teacher, Maria, and four members of the staff, not all of whom were Roman Catholics, who were a head of department, the liturgy co-ordinator, a head of year and a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT). I also

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[6] Maria left the school shortly after my time spent there, to take up a headship of her own.

had several informal conversations with RE teachers and arranged to administer the questionnaire in a sixth form general RE lesson.

The Questionnaire

The process which I used to adapt an existing questionnaire was explained in Chapter Two. I had hoped to be able to get responses from everyone in Year 13 at St. Margaret's, giving me as large a number of students as possible who were the same age as those responding to Flynn (1993). These students would have been the ones who had spent the longest at the school. As often in field work, it didn't work out like that. There was a theatre studies visit on the appointed day which the RE teacher had not known about and many of the final year students were missing. Valerie Hey commented that 'research in the real world is lived as a series of rapidly unfolding and occasionally unpredictable events about which one has to make practical decisions' (Hey 1997: 41). The RE teacher rounded up all the members of the Lower Sixth she could find and with the 'remnant' of the year above they completed the questionnaire. I asked the students to write down the year they were in and out of 29 respondents, 11 were in Year 12 and 18 were in Year 13. Some students were studying for A Levels and others followed a more vocationally oriented course. They completed the questionnaire in about 45 minutes and most students answered all the questions including the final three open questions which required a discursive response. In responding to the question about what they had come to value and appreciate about their Catholic school a Year 12 boy wrote, 'I appreciate and value the sense of community and goodwill around our school. I also appreciate the freedom given to us to be an individual.' These two themes of 'individual freedom' and 'a sense of community' echo strongly the ideas identified earlier in the chapter about what St. Margaret's aims to be as a Catholic school.

Mount Sinai

Observations

When I arrived at the school on my first few visits I went to the reception area which is in part of the school used mainly for offices. I was able to observe many informal interactions there between secretarial and medical staff and students who were late or had other cause to go to the office. After the initial meeting with the headteacher the responsibility for organising my contacts with the school was given to the head of Jewish Studies. This is the name given to what in most British schools is now called 'religious education'. During my time in the school I was based with the Jewish Studies department. Like all the departments, they

have a large staff room in one of the teaching blocks and I was able carry out a lot of informal observations there. These included the preparation for lessons and marking, the organisation of charity work of various sorts, arrangements for a weekend away for students, frequent discussions between staff, phone calls, interactions between staff and students and students' work on a wide range of topics including a family history project. I sometimes went to the main staffroom at break times and I ate in a small dining room set aside for older students and staff. I was able to wander around the school freely, and I took photographs of the site.

In addition to these informal opportunities for observation I also attended lessons, trailed a year 7 class, attended a meeting for prospective parents, attended various activities related to *Chanukah* (the winter festival of lights), went to assemblies and prayer times, and accompanied some staff to a brief meeting with a bereavement counsellor.

The Documents

I was given a number of different documents while I was in the school. Mount Sinai, like most other schools now, produces a glossy brochure for prospective parents and it is interesting to see what is chosen to present as the ideal image of the school. The brochure is in the form of a printed folder containing photocopied sheets. On the front is a cleverly assembled collage of images showing the school logo, a boy and two girls using a computer, a girl hurdling and the brand new teaching block in the background. Also on the front cover is the phrase, 'A School for the Future with Traditional Values' and some Hebrew words printed in red. This is translated inside the brochure. It is a short extract from *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), the best known section of the *Mishnah*, a second century Rabbinic text. It says, 'The world rests on three things - study, worship and the doing of good deeds'. There are a number of these short extracts from classic Jewish texts used in the school's publications. This one provides a good summary of what Mount Sinai High School consciously tries to achieve. The inside of the folder has more photos and text and the inserts set out the details of the admissions policy and procedures and give some more information about the school.

This document, with its conscious use of Hebrew and a traditional Jewish text, raises what was a difficult issue for me as a non-Jewish researcher in the school. To what extent did I present myself as being knowledgeable about Judaism? Hammersley and Atkinson described the 'expert' as one of the models which hosts of any research may have for the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 75-76). I am aware now of wanting to appear to be familiar with most of

the explicit Jewish material which I encountered. My acceptance into a Jewish school to do research had not been automatic and I suppose I wanted the staff in the school to feel that I deserved their trust, that I had some credibility as a researcher into Jewish education. I didn't want to be too much of a nuisance and if I met resistance to something I did not push it as hard as perhaps I should have. For example I never managed to obtain a copy of the Jewish Studies syllabus or department handbook.[7]

I was given a staff handbook issued in September 1997 which is intended to help in the induction of new staff. It includes a statement of principles drawn up in May 1993 before the school opened. It is worth quoting these here because they set the agenda in some ways for the development of the school:

> At Mount Sinai High School we aim for the highest standards based on Jewish tradition and guided by the following principles:
> - learning as a lifelong experience;
> - the development of self confidence and self esteem;
> - respect and caring for one another;
> - a sense of community;
> - social responsibility (Mount Sinai High School 1997: 2).

More specific information is also given about the history of the Jewish community in the area and about Jewish aspects of the school's life. These will be discussed more fully in Chapter Four. The staff handbook continues with the kind of information to be found in any such document: staff names, titles, areas of responsibility, school policy statements, school uniform rules, school rules, timetable details and maps of the school.

The two other formal documents about the school which I have are the two reports on the inspection carried out at the school in April 1997 and they both reflect the fact that the school had, then, been open for less than four years. The Section 10 inspection (formerly Section 9) is the same in any maintained school but does not cover aspects of the school which are particular to the religious tradition of a voluntary aided school (see Oppenheim 1997). The Section 23 inspection (formerly Section 13) was done by *Pikuach*, an organisation set up under the auspices of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The name, *Pikuach*, was chosen because it contains the root word for 'inspector' but is also the word used in the phrase, *pikuach nefesh*, which means 'saving life' and carries the

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[7] Several of the Jewish Studies staff were also unavailable to be interviewed. They did not refuse outright but at the times which we arranged they found they had other, more urgent, matters to attend to. All the Jewish Studies staff, however, welcomed me into their classrooms very willingly.

positive idea of healing.[8]   The report covers the Jewish aspects of the school including Jewish Studies lessons, the ethos of the school and worship (Felsenstein 1997).

The other sources of documentary evidence about the school are newspaper reports and texts written by staff at the school. As I mentioned earlier I was given a copy of a dissertation by the headteacher called *Developing a Community School* (Falk 1996) and also a dissertation by one of the teachers (Conway 1995). I also read an essay written by one of the Jewish Studies teachers as part of a course leading to Qualified Teacher Status. This was about the way in which the Sixth Form Jewish Studies Programme at the school was designed. The head of Jewish Studies gave me a short explanation he had written about the Jewish perspective on community work. This is an organised activity within the school which all Year 9 students have to undertake. The headteacher wrote a document about the Jewish ethos of the school in preparation for the meeting of staff mentioned earlier. Although not in published form, there is one other formal source I was able to use about the school. This is a paper given at the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies held in Jerusalem in 1997 by Dr. Alex Pomson, head of Jewish Studies at Mount Sinai until 1996. His paper was called, *The 'Mount Sinai' High School: a Strong Example of 'Weak' Integration* and discussed the way in which they had attempted to integrate Jewish tradition and Jewish issues in a cross curricular way (Pomson 1997). This self-conscious reflection on what they had been trying to achieve at the school was obviously one of the things I hoped to draw out in the interviews that I did.

The interviews

In the interview situations the issue of my credibility as a researcher in a Jewish school was also a factor. I wanted my interviewees to feel that I understood what they were saying. In some ways this is parallel to the concerns expressed by feminist researchers about the characteristics of interviews in terms of power relations. It is clear that many women respond much more willingly and more fully when the interviewer is also a woman. It is not just a matter of gender, however. In an article arguing that class, and especially race, may be as much, if not more, influential in the interview process Ann Phoenix explained:

> The interview relationship is partly dependent on the relative positions of investigators and informants in the social formation....Secondly, and more instrumentally, rapport established in the interview situation may well have

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[8] This is deliberately different from the OFSTED approach. Hyam Maccoby drew attention recently to a New Testament example of *pikuach nefesh* in the story of the disciples plucking corn (Maccoby 1998: 17).

a direct impact on how forthcoming respondents are and hence the quantity (if not the quality) of the data collected (Phoenix 1994: 50).

This desire on my part to establish rapport does mean that I was sometimes too quick to say that I understood something, rather than asking them to explain what they meant, as this short extract from the transcript of an interview with Year 11 students shows:

> *David*   And when I came in I was scared of these people, meeting new people, I wasn't too sure about them, and then I heard this, the *shofar*, you know what that is?
> *Lynne*   Yes.
> *David*   Well I heard the *shofar* calling me, calling us in. I thought it was a bit strange.

Perhaps I would have received an interesting answer if I had asked David to explain.[9] However the question of my expertise was probably more of an issue for me than it was for the staff or students at Mount Sinai. There are a large number of non-Jewish teachers at the school so explaining Jewish things to non-Jews is a regular occurrence. I also, probably, over-estimated the knowledge students had of many aspects of Judaism. I was very surprised, for example that sixth form students, with whom I trialled my questionnaire, did not understand what *halakah* was. As I noted in the last chapter I replaced this with the English equivalent, 'Jewish law'.

And yet the staff and students I interviewed were 'experts' and that too affected the power relations in the interviews. I was not asking for personal opinions about the school so much as for information and descriptions of what it was like to be in the school.[10] I was obviously dependent on the interviewees for the data they were providing for me and I was very pleased when someone said that a particular question was an interesting one, or a good one. I hoped that the interviewees would find the interview interesting and several of them said that they had enjoyed it. This aspect of the interview process is very like *dialogue*. In a dialogue situation a great deal of time is spent talking about oneself to the other and listening to the other talk about themselves.

I interviewed both staff and students in November 1997. Some of the interviews were opportunistic. I went several times into the Sixth Form Common Room, for example, and asked for volunteers from the Upper Sixth. It was decided to set up a Sixth Form in 1995 and take students from other secondary schools. I was interested in what these sixth formers would say because they were old enough to be able to articulate their ideas clearly and also had experience of at

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[9] A *shofar* is a ram's horn blown at New Year and the Day of Atonement. I comment in more detail about the meaning of this ritual in Chapter Six.

[10] On only one occasion was I asked by a teacher I was interviewing to turn off the tape.

least one other secondary school which they could compare with Mount Sinai. I formally interviewed Year 11 students because they were the ones who had been at the school the longest. The headteacher selected four students, two girls and two boys, on the day when Year 11 had returned to school after being out on 'work experience'. I also interviewed a group of four Year 7 students. They were the new comers and were learning what it meant to be at the school. Two of them already had a lot of experience of Jewish education and two were much less knowledgeable. All these interviews were taped.

In interviewing the staff I wanted to hear from both Jewish and non-Jewish teachers and from those with different experiences of the school. I interviewed the headteacher and a deputy head and also two long standing Jewish members of staff. I also interviewed three younger teachers, one Jewish and two non-Jewish, who had joined the school in the last two years. I was able to have un-taped conversations with a head of year (called a 'Team Leader') and a parent who also works in the school.

The practical circumstances of these interviews varied considerably. Where the member of staff had an individual office the interviews were held there but there was no available room in the school which was convenient for me to use for the other interviews. I did one in the caretaker's storage room, several in empty classrooms and one in a cloakroom. These were not ideal conditions and some of the recordings are not very clear. I never intended to make a transcript of everything which was said which is a good thing because it would be impossible. The tapes do, though, have plenty of background school sounds which, I suppose, give them a certain authenticity. The questions which I asked are discussed in Chapter Two and I draw heavily on the information and ideas from the interviews for the 'tale' of life at Mount Sinai which forms the next chapter. All of these sources of information supplement the data from the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire.

The questionnaire which I used at Mount Sinai was quite heavily adapted from the original questionnaire for Catholic schools designed by Marcellin Flynn (1993). I have described and analysed the processes I used to make it suitable for a Jewish school in Chapter Two. Originally for use with seventeen to eighteen year olds in their final year of schooling, I used it with sixth formers at St. Margaret's, but it was not possible to do the same at Mount Sinai. I agreed with the headteacher that since Year 11 had the most experience of the school they would be the ones to whom I administered the questionnaire. The head of Jewish Studies agreed that the questionnaire could be completed when all the Year 11 students were

timetabled together for Jewish Studies and this was done on a Wednesday afternoon, last lesson, in November 1997. Each teacher took questionnaires for his class and 86 were returned. I do not know what was said about the questionnaires to the classes since I did not speak to any of the groups. Although my idea was that they should be completed individually, in silence, this isn't the way in which students in Jewish Studies normally work and as I went around the rooms I was aware of a great deal of noise.

The students took a long time filling in the questionnaires and the whole hour of the lesson was not really enough for all of them to finish. This was partly as a result of the lack of concentration on the task but partly, I suspect, because these students were younger than the ones for whom the questionnaire was originally designed and with a much wider ability range. There were a lot of questions, for example, about the meaning of words such as 'euthanasia'. The questionnaire was asking for their views about Jewish Studies, amongst many other things, and this provoked quite a lot of negative comment from students about the subject. GCSE Religious Studies is a compulsory subject for all students in the school and this makes a considerable demand on the staff. As the Section 23 Inspection Report said,

> The Head of Jewish Studies, a teacher of four years' experience, leads a team of young, enthusiastic, knowledgeable but inexperienced teachers. These teachers have considerable potential and are being trained to acquire qualified teacher status....Not surprisingly, what is lacking is experience in the arts of classroom management, particularly where there are pupils of lower attainment or pupils with special educational needs (Felsenstein 1997: 6).

One teacher came out of his class at the end very angry, saying that the students appeared to show no respect and had no self-awareness. Some of the responses on the questionnaire were very negative and he had, perhaps inevitably, taken this very personally. This is not the whole picture however. The Inspection Report noted that in all years the responses to Jewish Studies and Jewish values were positive (Felsenstein 1997: 10). In the interviews I did with Year 11 students they had nothing really to say about Jewish Studies. They valued very highly the way the school had made them proud of being Jewish and talked a lot about Jewish identity but not about Jewish learning. They had very warm feelings about the school and said that they wanted their children to come to the school where they would be 'in safe hands'.

However there are always some disaffected students in Year 11 and Jewish Studies will be very difficult, academically, for some students. Fifty five students completed the questionnaire at least as far as Question 169. Not all these students wrote a response to the last three open questions and those who did gave a very

wide range of responses to the question about changes they would make in the school. Only three students wrote that they would make Jewish Studies optional at GCSE although several others expressed the view that the school should stop pressurising students to be Jewish. Most of the questionnaire was not, of course, specifically about Jewish Studies and the responses which are analysed in detail in Chapter Five show a wide range of views. At the end of the lesson several of the students showed interest in the research I was doing and wanted to ensure I had good impressions of them and the school. Some students continued to complete the questionnaire long after the end of the lesson when everyone else had gone home.

If I were to repeat this sort of questionnaire with a Year 11 group I would want to be present with each of the groups so as to control, or at least to be aware of, the circumstances in which the questionnaire was completed and also to answer any questions which arose. The majority of the questionnaires were completed and I have used all the responses in the analysis since I did not want to exclude the views of students who were not so quick at, or not so well disposed to, the task. The results of the questionnaire are discussed fully in Chapter Five but I have used some of the data in the next chapter where I tell the tale of each of the two case study schools.

Chapter Four - The Culture of St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai

Introduction

In this chapter I tell the tales of the culture of St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai in a variety of different ways. I convey some factual information, describe various aspects of the schools, present vignettes of events which seem to evoke central elements of the culture, comment on some of the issues raised and give pen portraits of a variety of students and details of their views and values. I shall refer to symbols, stories and rituals as well as values and draw from all the different sorts of data I gathered by questionnaire, interview, observation and documents. The way in which the tales are told is a deliberate attempt to construct a 'thick' narrative where many different voices are heard.

St. Margaret's

St. Margaret's is a co-educational Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic comprehensive School in South England. There are about fifty staff and over seven hundred students who are mainly of average and above average ability. Forty students are eligible for free school meals and twenty have statements of special educational needs. Just over half the staff and students are Catholic. The school is on the edge of a small town in what is described in the prospectus as 'a delightful parkland campus' and is on two adjacent sites. The larger contains the main buildings and the other has a somewhat dilapidated Edwardian house which is the Sixth Form Centre and behind it a small canteen and rather inadequate art facilities. The main school buildings date from the nineteen-fifties and a new science block was built in the nineties. There is plenty of open space and access to the school is via several large gates through which cars can enter and leave. To go from one site to the other involves leaving through one gate, walking a few yards along the pavement and entering another gate. Students regularly move between sites both during curriculum time and at lunch time.

This is a campus, and a school, with fairly fluid boundaries. Low walls and fences separate the school from the pavement running alongside and there are many entry points. Anyone can enter and leave the grounds freely. Some of the students live in the town and walk to and from school. Many others are bussed to school from surrounding areas. There are many 'out of school' activities and according to one teacher, students are often glad to escape the loneliness in their lives and participate, "It's their school; they're at home"[1].

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[1] All direct quotations are taken from interviews, answers to the questionnaire or documents.

As I explained in the last chapter it is not easy to find the entrance to the school buildings. The school is built 'back to front'. However once the entrance is located there is a warm welcome. The doormat says 'Welcome to St. Margaret's'; there is a rota of students who greet visitors, get them to sign the visitor's book and give them a sticker to wear; the secretary, in an office behind glass, is always helpful and the waiting area has posters, photos of school activities and a file showing activities done by the departments. The Section 13 Report opened with the words, 'The school is a welcoming community with many strengths' (Castelli 1995: 3).

There are obvious visual signs that this is a Catholic school. In the hall there is a large crucifix on one wall and in the staff room there is an African cross. Various different cultural images of Mary can be found in the school including Eastern Orthodox, Chinese and European ones. In the area behind the main hall there are photos of the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes and notices giving details of the latest charity fund raising events. At the time I was there it was a 'penny race' where sixth formers collect pennies from the forms with each one trying to get as many as possible. The nearly two hundred pounds collected would help send a sick or handicapped child to Lourdes. One student commented that in her previous school, a county school, she'd been discouraged from doing charity work.

The beige Madonna

When I asked the headteacher about the beige Madonna he laughed loudly, relaxed and said, "Yes, well the beige Madonna absolutely pre-dates me. It variously appears (there's no challenge to Mother Church on the theology of this you know), on jolly jaunts, you know. It's been to Lourdes umpteen times and still managed to come back home. It's been on school trips and it's been on staff jolly jaunts. It's unusual at St. Margaret's to come across a group photograph without finding the beige Madonna somewhere. At the moment, in the last week or two, it appeared in the staffroom. It's a fun thing. I suspect that it's rooted in quite a long standing tradition in the school, both staff and senior students go as helpers to Lourdes and one thing we're very good at is poking fun at Lourdes. All right? But, but...there are symbols and there are meanings and I would not trivialise any of those things."

One teacher told me, "She is simply a woman; someone brought her back from Lourdes. She is currently in a home made shrine in one of the lockers in the staff room. It's awfully good humoured and it's not disrespectful at all. I would call her our mascot."

Another teacher said, "That's a good story. She appeared again recently, in the staffroom, she's now in one of the little cubby hole things that says 'Are we worthy enough to be blessed by the beige Madonna?' And you open it and there is the beige Madonna surrounded by bits of rubbish. I buried her actually, in a plant in the corner of the staff room. She was there for a couple of months 'cause no one noticed."

Although it is quite a small school there is no hall large enough for everyone to meet in together for any whole school event. The corridors are quite narrow and between lessons they are very congested. Year 7 students had a lot to say in their interview about the spaces in the school which give it an active, noisy and happy atmosphere. In their 'film of a day in the life of St. Margaret's' they would show people changing from one lesson to another, "It's jammed and very noisy"; the canteen, "You should see the dinner queue!"; the playground and the field, "A lot of people".

The staffroom is at the end of a long corridor not normally used by students. The headteacher's office and the administrative offices are above all this in a separate wing on an upper floor; some staff and students said that they thought the headteacher was rather out of touch with the rest of the school. The sixth formers occupy the old house which one young teacher described as "their territory". "Where things are is important", another teacher said in the interview, "and they express something of the identity, a fragmented identity, but the school is a friendly, comfortable sort of place."

This sense of both fragmentation and togetherness can be identified in other important aspects of the school. There are strong ties with the Catholic diocese but only just over half the students and staff are Catholics. Most of the rest are Anglicans and there is a link with the local Anglican parish. The students come from a very wide geographical area and there is little sense in which St. Margaret's is a local community school. There is a commitment to build an inclusive community within the school including "all the staff, office and ancillary staff as well as teachers" and all the students. In one RE class I attended there were Spanish, Greek and Bosnian students as well as one Indian who is a Hindu. The Shared Values statement says:

> In our school everyone is of equal worth. Everyone's uniqueness and dignity is valued. We speak and listen to each other with patience and understanding. No-one is a stranger in our school.

I was interested to see the programme for the liturgy on St Margaret's day when prayers were said in Portuguese, Hindi, Greek and Bosnian. The prayers were printed in each of the languages with a translation provided and one of the common responses used in Catholic liturgy followed each petition:

> Reader: Lord in your mercy
> All: Hear our prayer.

The details of the prayers express the way the school interprets what it means to be what the Vision Statement calls a "Christian Educating Community reflecting the Gospel values within the Roman Catholic tradition. Each person is valued as a unique individual with particular gifts and needs":

Help us, Lord, to respect one another, even when we do not always understand each other's point of view. (Portuguese)

We pray for all the students and teachers in the school. Help them to do their best in all that they try to do. (Hindi)

We pray for the students in Year 11 who are about to sit their mock exams. Help them to do their very best. (Greek)

Please, God, help everybody in Bosnia to peace. (Bosnian)

We unite our community prayers in the universal Christian prayer, Our Father...

This was followed by an "Act of Commitment":

The response is: We commit ourselves, to care for each other.

- We commit ourselves to building up St. Margaret's School into a loving community. *Response.*

- We commit ourselves to valuing everyone who is a member of the school. *Response.*

- We commit ourselves to giving equal opportunities for all to attain their full potential. *Response.*

- We commit ourselves to promote dignity, equality and respect in the school. *Response.*

- We commit ourselves to each other. *Response.*

- We commit ourselves to this Christian community, realising that we need each other's help to make our commitments come true. *Response.*

I asked everyone I interviewed to choose a symbol for the school and one teacher chose **the doormat** as her symbol, "It was quite funny when it was introduced. 'Welcome to St. Margaret's' it says and everyone wipes their feet on it. It was really nice and bright when it first came and now it is quite tatty. Like the school, quite friendly, small, a bit tatty but okay". The symbols which were chosen are expressive of the culture and themes can be detected, both from the chosen symbol itself and what people had to say about the symbol they chose. Maria, the deputy head, chose **a hand sheltering a flame**. This is a caring image, a kind of embrace which people in the school try to provide for all. There have been five attempted suicides by students in the recent past and so the view of education in the school, Maria says, means "preparing for death rather than life". While I was talking to her, on one occasion, there was a phone call from a parent with heart problems whose daughter has kidney failure and whose son has leukaemia. "Anything we can do", Maria said, "let us know". There is a tradition of St. Margaret's as a *nice* school but Maria thinks that perhaps it is over protective, not academically pushy enough.[2]

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[2] One of the main findings of the OFSTED report was, 'In several subjects, standards of achievement at GCSE are close to, or above, national averages but overall results are below national norms for maintained secondary schools. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving at levels commensurate with their capability but a significant number of more able pupils are underachieving' (Clements 1995: 9). Year 9 SATs results were satisfactory or better.

The staff and students share a lot together and support one another. There is a strong commitment in the school to prayer. When there was the massacre in Dunblane the school responded with special prayers and moments of silence in all the classrooms as well as a Mass to remember those who had lost their lives and to pray for the survivors. In the sixth form building students had put up pictures of the children who were killed. A sheet with appropriate prayers was circulated to all the tutor groups and included this ancient Christian prayer:

> Give them rest with the devout and the just, in the place of the pasture of rest and of refreshment, of waters in the paradise of delight, whence grief and pain and sighing have fled.

Jane is seventeen and hopes to go to University. She is the only sixth form questionnaire respondent who describes religion as 'very important' to her. Her parents are both practising Catholics but she only attends Mass outside school a few times a year. Like most of the other Catholics in the sixth from she rarely or never receives the sacrament of reconciliation but occasionally prays and reads the Bible.

Jane stayed on at school because she wants to go on to higher education and because her parents wanted her to. She likes the subjects she is studying but is a bit depressed and lonely at school and uncertain about her relationships with others. She is also uncertain whether the curriculum really meets her needs. It is dominated too much by examinations but it does emphasise cultural activities like music, art and drama. While Jane is enjoying the RE classes this year she says they have certainly not deepened her understanding of the Catholic tradition nor influenced her religious development. Neither the school nor parish has had much influence either. It is the example and lives of her parents which have mattered most. A youth group and retreat have also been very important, giving her a sense of self worth and an understanding of the views of others. She is developing her own religious convictions through times of questioning and confusion.

Jane believes in God as a loving and forgiving father and that Jesus is God and truly present in the Eucharist. Her relationship to the church is uncertain: she finds Mass rather boring and isn't sure whether she would go or not if she had the choice; Jane has rejected church teachings she once believed and is uncertain about some ethical issues although she is clear that drugs are wrong, that people should be respected whatever their race, nationality or religion and that the church does not need women priests.

Jane's goals for the future are clear. She isn't interested in making money. Most important for her, as for all the responding students at St. Margaret's, is to accept herself for who she is and to find personal happiness and satisfaction. Next come friendships and a happy marriage and family life. Of some importance for her are the religious goals of a relationship with God and following Christ in service to others.

Another symbol I was given was a **growing plant**. Jennifer had been in the school for more than ten years. When I interviewed her she was a head of department and had witnessed a lot of change and "movement towards growth".

She also said that despite some difficult changes there was a sense among the staff of underlying strength and camaraderie, an atmosphere that hasn't changed. That creative atmosphere had been noticeable from the first day Jennifer came to the school, "I experienced it the moment I walked in the place, not very tangible; I just sensed something different, there's a consciousness, there's a perspective, that simply adds something to the daily work". Jennifer sums this up as "duty, love and service, a sense of being there for others".

Jennifer: The way in which we deal with children's, uh difficulties, uh, traumas, a little lad whose dad died the other week and the way in which the school has contact with the home. I don't know, it might be normal everywhere, it's just, it's that awareness of need which I think is pretty important.
Lynne: Yes. I'm getting a sort of sense from quite a lot of people that the way in which the school handles dying and death
Jennifer: Oh Yes!
Lynne: is something really quite important
Jennifer: Oh Yes! Absolutely!
Lynne: for its identity.
Jennifer: Absolutely! When I was hauled in here, 'cause I mean my dad was ill for years, because dad had died very suddenly that morning, there was an absolute competence in the way it was handled. You know, compassion but competence. I got home and the head rang because he was out that day so hadn't been there. That sort of thing. You know. Colleagues very, uh, easy is not the right word, but easy when dealing with you. Which makes, so there's no fear or embarrassment. And then Mass is offered so, you know, important things.
Lynne: Because you've had pupils who've died?
Jennifer: Oh yes we have. Oh gosh, yes. We've had a very difficult couple of years when three or four pupils died; one through a car accident, two through terminal illness and again the home-school partnership was important, you know, representation at the funeral, participation in preparing choirs, that sort of thing. So, yes, very important.

The Year 10 students were not able to name an image for the school but they were agreed that whatever it was it would have to have lots of different parts to it to reflect the different aspects of the school. They mentioned the social life, clubs after school where they can achieve a lot, lessons and the idea of community. "This secondary school is quite small so everybody, sort of, not everyone knows each other but familiar with everyone...knowing what everybody is like...The symbol would have to be something to do with a family...where we're known...with the family tiffs."

Several staff were not able to name a symbol for the school either but the theme of community came through in what they said. As one teacher put it,

"something that would represent a big group, a big community, you know, people higher up in the school getting on with people lower in the school".

This aspect of community is exemplified in the drama production which forms an important ritual during the year and provides many of the school's stories. Productions involve a lot of people working together, co-operation between different year groups and between staff and students. They are secular productions, including recently 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Grease' and 'Bugsy Malone', but they develop a very strong sense of community and identity. They are a vital part of what it means to belong to St. Margaret's.

42nd Street[3]

On a Friday evening in March I sat at the end of the front row for a performance of 'Pretty Lady at the 42nd Street Theatre' based on the novel '42nd Street'. The small school hall was packed for the sell-out performance. I was glad I had ordered my ticket well in advance. So many students were involved in the production. I could see from the programme that there was a huge cast of twenty-three named parts, a speaking chorus, dozens of others singing and dancing, and a band. They were just the students we saw on stage. Behind the scenes there were as many again involved in all the elements of theatre production and helping to make the evening go smoothly by selling programmes and serving drinks in the interval. All together about a hundred and fifty students contributed. Several students who were in their GCSE or A Level year told me they were not taking such big parts as they had done in previous years.

Everyone, both in the cast and the audience, seemed to be enjoying themselves. The set was brilliant, done in black and gold with '42nd Street' in bright lights. The costumes were also gold and black, with polka dot shirts, trilby hats for the boys, and a gold lame dress for the leading lady. I was impressed by the evening. The standard of the performances was high despite the very limited physical circumstances and the story was easy to follow. Acting was confident and well paced, and the dancing and singing were energetic, powerful and attractive especially when all the cast were together on the stage. It is always a special moment in a theatre when the lights go down and the story begins to unfold. '42nd Street' did not disappoint. The whole thing was a terrific achievement both in its quality and in the number of people who were involved.

Lynne: The productions seem to be very important. I came to 42nd Street last winter and that seems to bring people together right through the school.

Jennifer: Oh absolutely... We had productions earlier on in my time here. Then there was a sort of lull and since N arrived there's been an enormous amount and they've developed because as children become more involved in them they become aware of the requirements and the uh, the ethics, if you like. They have a great

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[3] I wrote this account based on notes made shortly after the show.

impact on the school. They disturb the learning too much ...but that could be seen as dry and dusty.

Lynne: That is a tension, isn't it?

Jennifer: There is a tension there, yes, and...people do express that. They always start with the assumption that it is of enormous value to the school and they realise the value but in the Easter term, leading up to GCSE, really we need to be (silence) and then again they bring out so many talents. Some children discover it's the thing for them, which is great. A classic example: a little lad I teach, I taught, whose literacy skills were very, very poor. We were becoming very, very concerned and he discovered that he was very good on stage. Now that's so important. So, yes. They're very valuable.

All the students I spoke to referred to the productions very early on in our conversations about the school. They are highly valued by students despite the time commitments and the hard work. "It's the feelings, the buzz of the performance", one sixth former told me, "it's a big part of school life. There's a lot of lower school now getting trained to be on the lighting balcony and backstage." The stars of the show are heroes for younger students. Only one of the sixth formers responding to the questionnaire thought that the school did not place sufficient emphasis on cultural activities such as drama; Performing Arts has recently been added to the choice of A Level subjects available.

The drama production was mentioned by everyone when I asked them what they would choose to go into a 'film of a day in the life of St. Margaret's'. None of the students named anything explicitly religious to go in the film. They wanted to include sports, music and art, trips, lessons with teachers who are human (at least most of them) explaining things and trying to make everyone work hard. One Year 12 boy reflected that it would need to be true to life so it would have to show that not everyone wants to learn. The sixth form students I spoke with had enjoyed their academic work and the people they'd met at school, including the teachers.

The teachers' film would also stress "all the different activities that go on". "I'd want to include the students welcoming and caring for each other", Julie, the RE teacher with responsibility for liturgy, said to me. She would also film bits of every classroom, different subject areas, tutor time, the daily act of worship especially where excellent practice happens, good displays around the school and the grounds. "It's nice to work in...lots of class activities use the grounds like students measuring the stairs as I came up and it's nice to see and I've seen them outside doing things".

An older teacher, Robert, had a rather different film in mind which would show more about St. Margaret's as a faith-based community. It would include some aspects of teaching and extra-curricular activities which "teach children how to value themselves. It capitalises on their gifts, their strengths". Robert would

include "an edited slot from the staffroom. You'd see a lot of doughnuts because we celebrate each other's birthdays...a variety of cakes, shall we say? The way in which people mark events such as people leaving, or people's sickness, or people's new babies". All the teachers referred to the camaraderie which exists among the staff. Rather interestingly Robert would film a disciplinary incident to show "the emphasis on reconciliation, preserving the dignity of the individual...the high level of contact with parents". He argued that applying sanctions in a faith-based school is different and "that some children make genuine progress because of the way a situation is handled". A head of year echoed that when he said, "I definitely try to introduce an aspect of Christian reconciliation when I'm dealing with certain situations. I feel a confidence there...an assurance there that is the right thing to do, engineer some sort of forgiveness, reconciliation, that sort of thing. It influences what one does".

A young language teacher identified some similar points in what he picked for his film. First thing would be the staffroom. "The staff at St. Margaret's are very, very friendly", Peter said.

Peter: So, relationships in the staff room and obviously lessons, but more out of lessons. The school ticks by out of lessons; lunch times, the resources centre.
Lynne: What sort of things happen out of lessons?
Peter: Well for me, I'm a language teacher, there's trips abroad. We just came back from Madrid, there's going to be one going to France next week, things like that, there's also going to be sports day. Just relationships with pupils when you're outside the classroom are very good to build on. Also as a form tutor there's been away days. Perhaps video things like that just to show how pupils get on well with one another, as well as with the teachers, out of lesson time.
Lynne: So those away days, are they retreat days?
Peter: Retreats, yes.
Lynne: Where do you go?
Peter: Somewhere in Guildford, for two days. It was two forms. It was basically about team building and how to get on in a team. It was really good to see pupils out of, they don't see you so much as a teacher.
Lynne: Who organises that?
Peter: That's the thing. Every year does it...It was the head of year...
Lynne: That's quite a commitment of time and staff.
Peter: Yes. It has to be. For us it was three members of staff out for forty-eight hours.
Lynne: Obviously it is something that's valued very much in the school.
Peter: Yes. I think it is really good. You get on with them really well because you're out of the classroom situation, you're not making them do work.
Lynne: Do all the students go?
Peter: It's optional but everybody chose to go.

Susan is not typical of the sixth formers at St. Margaret's and most of her views would not be those the Catholic Church encourages. I have picked her out because of the impact on her of a school retreat. She says that it was inspiring and has had a lasting effect on her life. It was the most important religious experience she has had and gave her a sense of self-worth and a respect for the views of others.

Susan is not a Catholic and in school terms she is something of a rebel. She says that trying out drugs is all right if you don't go too far, euthanasia and abortion are not morally wrong and it is perfectly all right for people who are not married to live together. While she is very negative in her judgements about the school's curriculum generally she values RE highly. Unlike her A Levels, RE is related to real life and to her needs. Susan rates her teachers highly but I wonder if she has recently had a 'run in' with the head. She could not approach him for advice and help, and she says he certainly doesn't encourage a sense of community and belonging.

Seventeen students from lower and upper sixth combined answered questions on the questionnaire about retreats. While only three said that the retreat was the most important religious experience of their lives, the majority of students clearly valued it. Only one student failed to find that it gave him a sense of self worth and another boy didn't find it helped him to respect others' views more. The group was split about whether the retreat would have a lasting influence on their lives but more than half had felt close to God during their time away.

My name is Jan. I am sixteen and not a Catholic. We are Christians and read the Bible but we don't have religious objects like crosses and holy pictures at home. I stayed on at school because I want to go to University and get a good job even though neither of my parents had more than a few years of schooling.

I want to find God in my life and live up to the example of the teachings of Christ and serve others as well as being happy myself. I am concerned for others and the environment. RE classes have helped to form my own conscience and what I have learned in other school subjects has strengthened my Christian beliefs.

I have generally been happy at school. I feel quite proud to be a student at this school and most of the other students are friendly. The curriculum here meets my needs although there isn't enough sport in the school or enough out-of-school activities. I wouldn't send my children to a Catholic school though. Although there is Christian spirit and community feeling here I wish people weren't forced to attend Masses.

The view that being a Catholic, Christian school mainly influences the way people deal with one another came from many of the staff. None of the people I interviewed, except the head, said much about Christian practice such as liturgies although several people mentioned them as a taken-for-granted part of a Catholic school and Robert said that it would be important for his film to show the school as a faith-based community, especially the celebration of feast day liturgies. Peter described the different assemblies he had experienced. The most memorable was

one his form had done based on a poem to do with equality, "how everybody is different, but everybody is the same". His form are really keen to do assemblies for their year group. He told me they didn't have to be religious but "you try to link it up. You end with a prayer but it doesn't have to be explicitly religious". Sixth formers are also involved in reading or acting in sketches for upper and lower school assemblies. Depending on who is taking them, the sixth formers told me, they are enjoyed by students. The key values which they present are co-operation and communication. The sixth formers would attend some of them even if they didn't have to.

I attended a lower school assembly on the day dedicated to remembering St. Peter and St. Paul. These were the two great New Testament Christian leaders who went through conversion experiences after having denied or rejected Jesus in different ways. Every assembly which takes place in the school hall requires chairs to be moved and Year 9 classes take it in turns to do this. Music played on a very good sound system as students came into the hall. It was *Changes* by David Bowie. Lights were used to highlight the stage where the teacher in charge of the assembly was standing. His theme was that conversion necessarily involves change. There was a role play performed by Year 10 students. It showed how excellence in sport or a lot of money could isolate people from one another and from God. One of the students was left completely isolated. Each of the students was then called by God to go and befriend this person. When they responded positively it was with the words, "Good to know you, God". As the person was brought back into relationship again his words were, "It's great to be able to see again".

On the days when there isn't a year or half-school assembly, form tutors organise prayer time in their forms. Julie, the liturgy co-ordinator supports this, providing material and ideas. That this is a funded post indicates that worship is important in the school's organisation. The liturgy co-ordinator organises and monitors all the different forms of collective worship and also co-ordinates the retreat programme and displays reflecting the Christian Year. Julie told me that there is a weekly Mass which is voluntary and attended by about twenty staff and students. As a form of community service a practice was introduced of requiring students from a different form each week to prepare this liturgy. Julie does not have a form so she can work with all the forms to help them do this. The Mass takes place in the school chapel / prayer room which is quite small. The Section 13 Report said it 'provides a quiet, well established environment for prayer and reflection for both pupils and staff and is a valued provision to the school community' (Castelli 1995: 9). At lunch time there are often students in there.

Another form of liturgy which everyone experiences at St. Margaret's is the Feast Day Mass. Catholics are required to attend Mass on special days such as All Saints Day or Ascension Day which fall during the week rather than on a Sunday. These Masses are compulsory for all students and the lower and upper school Masses are held 'back-to-back' in the school hall so that the Catholic staff and students can fulfil their obligation to attend. The students and staff prepare the liturgies and a priest is asked to preside. Interestingly, relationships with nearby Catholic parishes are not very warm and none of the local priests are much involved in the life of the school. As the headteacher said, "Our relationships with our parish clergy and the assumptions one encounters are not always terribly helpful". So the priest has no part in the preparation of the liturgy; he just arrives, does his bit and leaves. In those circumstances it is perhaps difficult for students to have a sense of real integration of the wider Catholic church with their school lives.

The leavers' services for Year 11 and Year 13 are not Masses; they are very carefully prepared to make a connection between students' lives and Christian worship. They are significant too, because they are rituals marking a boundary; they express explicitly what belonging to St. Margaret's means. As they waited in the hall the Year 11 students signed one another's school shirts and there were some tears. Students from other years looked after the technical equipment: microphones, a video camera and the lights. The liturgy made explicit use of symbols to represent what the year group had come to value about St. Margaret's. These items were taken up "to offer to God the things that have made our time here memorable". They were:

     the subjects we are good at (textbooks);
     the sports we enjoy (a basketball);
     our friendships (two friends);
     the relationships that worked (big pink heart);
     our drama performances (song from Grease);
     our music (instrument);
     trip to Devon (a sunhat);
     artwork (palette and brush);
     house activities (trophy);
     retreat (tray of mugs);
     our teachers (member of staff).

At the centre of the circles of chairs was a large cross shape made with blue and yellow crepe paper and decorated with spring flowers. A large candle was in the centre and during the liturgy many other candles were lit and placed on the floor with all the symbols. This was to reflect "how in our lives Christ can burn gently within us" and thanks were given for 'memories', 'talents and skills' and 'friendships'. The students named their memories, their talents and skills as they offered the symbols of their life together. At one point a student got up from where we are all

sitting, went up onto the stage and did a Michael Jackson impression to loud applause and whistles. Finally there was a Gospel reading about peace and a prayer for peace "in our own lives and in the world" and everyone exchanged the "sign of peace" by shaking hands with or hugging those nearby. The words of the final blessing are open and inclusive of all who would be saying them:

We ask God's blessing on each one of us here, a blessing for today and for our future. We pray that we may know that He walks alongside us as we move forward on our journey. We ask for the blessing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

That evening the students would return to school for the 'prom' where in evening dress they would have a meal and disco.[4]

The theme for the sixth form leavers' liturgy was similar, 'Know that God walks with you'. There were songs and readings and prayers. The full text of the main prayer seems to sum up what many at St. Margaret's claimed it meant to be a Catholic school:

We thank you Lord for our happy years together at St. Margaret's. We ask you to continue to bless the students, staff and all who are connected with our school.

We thank you God for our many gifts and opportunities. Let us always use our skills and talents for the benefit of ourselves and others. We ask for the strength and wisdom to pursue the different goals we now set ourselves.

We reflect too on the sadder times of our school years. We think of those who have suffered physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually. We pray for God's healing.

We ask you God that as we leave behind an important stage in our lives you will guide our journey into adulthood. May we find friendship and joy, and courage in times that are difficult. May we be happy in our chosen way of life and find a sense of commitment.

We offer these and all our prayers in the confidence that God hears us.

The headteacher spoke to me about the importance of the liturgy connecting with students' lives.

Lynne: I've been asking everybody, if they had to pick something to symbolise the school, what they would choose to express what St. Margaret's is all about.
Headteacher: It is about recognising godliness and Godness and being convinced of that, and having the confidence to go forward. It's about trusting, it's about hope, it's about faith, it's about recognising who we are, absolutely, wonderfully unique and God's given you your identity, your purpose and we may not understand it but we know it's there...That is what I would hope would characterise the general attitude towards people because the rest of your philosophy and your Christian values commitment flows from that. If you are making meaning of liturgical

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[4] About 85% of students at St. Margaret's stay in full-time education after the age of 16 (Clements 1995: 2). Most go into the sixth form at St. Margaret's while some go to a sixth form college.

celebration, let's say the cycle of the liturgical year...you are celebrating their life story and the relevance of the Christian message to that life story. In time of course one hopes they move beyond the concrete operational to formal operations and own a personal faith commitment and a personal values commitment.

The headteacher holds a Monday briefing which all staff attend. While he always has something to say he describes it as a "collective sharing". "We can share our joys and there have been times when we've had to share our sorrows as well and I think that is hugely important". He went on, "fundamentally we start with prayer...praying for our own needs and the needs of our families, we remembered one of our colleagues today who actually is very ill. When you touch people at that fundamental level then, you know, a lot of the other things you do assume a relative unimportance."[5]

There are also staff liturgies at the beginning and ends of term often followed by a social event. In the liturgy for the opening of the year 1995-1996 the following was the reading.

If I could, I would teach each child to be positive,
to smile, to love and be loved.
I would teach each child to take time
to observe some miracle of nature -
the song of a bird,
the beauty of a snowflake,
the orange glow of a winter sunset.
I would teach each child to feel warmly
about those for whom the task of learning does not come easily.
I would teach each one to be kind to all living creatures
and to crowd out of their lives feelings of guilt, misunderstanding
and a lack of compassion.
I would teach each child that it is all right
to show their feelings by laughing,
crying, or touching someone they care about.
Everyday I would have a child feel special
and through my actions,
each one would know how much
I really care.[6]

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[5] The headteacher identified himself closely with other staff and some of the staff were very appreciative of his work. However, a number expressed concern that he wasn't really in touch with the difficulties they were experiencing in the school.

[6] This reading is unascribed and unfortunately I was unable to discover its source.

Simon is a Catholic in Year 13 and his responses to the questionnaire are interesting because of some of the contradictions they seem to contain. "I appreciate the Masses we have for these help to re-affirm my faith", Simon writes but he rarely or never goes to Mass outside school. He thinks the school should only be open to Catholics or it cannot claim to be Catholic but he also claims, "Teachers must be realistic and relate more to the everyday lives of students".

Simon spends time in personal prayer every day. He is certain that there is a God who is a loving and forgiving Father but he has developed his own way of relating to God apart from the Church. He writes, "I have come to value RE although they do somewhat preach on the 'moral high-ground'". He probably wouldn't attend RE if it were voluntary and he is sure that other students don't take it seriously.

Unlike most people at St. Margaret's, Simon does not recognise a happy atmosphere in the school. He says that other students are certainly not friendly and there is no spirit of community in the year. There is far too much emphasis on external conformity to rules and regulations he argues but he also writes, "I think the school should place more emphasis on academic achievement and discipline especially for the lower years. Many children have little respect and they are over-opinionated and obnoxious. Six year ago there was a proper hierarchical structure which no longer exists. Students can run riot now".

Just as leaving the school is an occasion for explicit statements about the culture of the school, so is entering it. In September there is a special liturgy for the new Year 7 and there is a day set aside in July when all the new intake of students and their parents come to the school. The headteacher's letter to the parents says:

Enrolment is in part celebration: a rite of passage; leaving the old and starting the new...Our tradition and commitment is to value all entrusted to our care. That endeavour embraces the spiritual and moral as well as the social and academic progress of students. That is a distinctive contribution. It is part of being a Roman Catholic school....This is an invitation to partnership because together we can achieve so much more.

During the day the students have lessons and in the evening they and their parents come for a meeting with the headteacher and with form staff. Throughout the day the phrase "at St. Margaret's ..." was used again and again by teachers and the students who were helping look after the newcomers. "You'll like coming to this school", one Year 11 student called out as she walked past a group. She was one of the stars of the drama productions and had come back for the day after finishing her GCSEs in order to help out. "It's good, this school, for drama", another older student told her small group. Throughout the day older students were saying "Hello" both to individuals they knew and to the whole group.

I followed one group to an IT lesson, to drama, science and RE. Older students accompanied the group too. It was an opportunity for the new students to meet each other. They come from over twenty different feeder schools. "I'm the only one from my school", Kirstie told me, "but I've met all the other girls in this

class now". In the IT lesson the students worked in pairs at the computers. "Just look at the awe on their faces", the teacher said to me.

In the RE lesson at the end of the day Sally Jones, who was also going to be their form tutor, concentrated on helping the students to reflect on the day and on what they would be bringing to their new school in terms of knowledge and experience of RE. "How did you feel this morning?" she asked and "How do you feel now?". They said they were relieved! They talked about the work they had done in their primary schools and what they would be learning about at St. Margaret's. There was a beautiful end to the lesson. Sally asked them to decide what had been the best thing about the day. She stood at the door and as each student went out they said what they had most enjoyed and Sally thanked them all by name.

By the time of the evening meeting at 7.30 the chairs in the hall had been moved endless times to accommodate the various activities going on there. Now they were arranged, sideways on, facing an icon on the wall. As well as the headteacher there was a deputy head, the head of year, the Special Needs Co-ordinator and a Sixth form student, very smartly dressed, who talked briefly about his first day. He reassured both the new students and their parents about "how friendly the other pupils and staff were, always willing to help". "The higher years", he said, "turned out to be very nice people." Then the headteacher spoke.

St. Margaret's

There may be some sensitivity, so I'll speak plainly to the parents and guardians. I'm talking about the delicate subject of financial support. This is 'begging bowl' time. Here at St. Margaret's we are special in a whole variety of ways with a church school foundation, a character and identity, an alternative radical experience of community and a liability to provide for capital structures, to find fifteen percent of the costs. So I'm making an invitation, and it is an invitation, to you to contribute. We ask for an amount per family, not per child. We have several major projects in mind such as an expressive arts area. This is the opportunity, and cost, of being able to run a school according to the values we hold. We celebrate our Christian values in the total life of the school.

Our vision is within a total values system. Partnership, that's a word which is often used and abused. The invitation, my dear friends, is to a real and meaningful partnership. We are committed to keeping communications open and to a real dialogue. Together we will achieve more; that is why we are inviting that commitment from you. We need to be of one mind, of one voice, using systems of communication to solve problems.

Then we can see them through the good times and also, sadly, the bad times. But that is the spirit of St. Margaret's. Welcome to St. Margaret's.

It is interesting to see that what students towards the end of their time at St. Margaret's had to say echoes much of what was being said to new students. There were really only three different categories of response from sixth formers to the questionnaire item asking what they had come to *appreciate* and *value* about their Catholic school and in some cases there is overlap between the categories. Some made explicit references to religion, Christianity and Catholicism, some mentioned community and others referred to their understanding of different views. I include here some examples of each.

1. Explicit reference to religion, Christianity and Catholicism
"Atmosphere of loving given in assemblies, Mass etc. I value the attitude to religion as it helps me in my work."
"It has given us many different views of how God would expect us to lead our lives."
"Being able to find out about Catholicism."
"Because the school is small and has this Catholic influence you find that people are nicer and more understanding to your needs. You are accepted more."
"This true belief in God and religion."
"This school places adequate attention to the Catholic Church."
"I appreciate that it's very much a Catholic oasis in an uncaring world."

2. Community and the friendly atmosphere.
"The importance of a community or team atmosphere."
"Sense of community throughout the school."
"The strong feeling of family within the year group."
"It is a happy, friendly place to be in."
"Everybody in the school is accepted for who they are and everyone is a part of the community."
"I value the friends that I have made and the experiences and knowledge it has given me."

3. Understanding different views.
"I have improved my appreciation of other people's values and beliefs."
"The knowledge through religious study of different religions and their attitudes to different things."
"I have come to appreciate that everyone has their own beliefs."
"That everyone is different within the school - sex, race, religion etc. and to listen and accept other people's beliefs and ideas."
"I have learnt about other people's religion and how important it is to them."
"I appreciate that people have different opinions of God."

The questionnaire also asked them to describe the *unique spirit* of their school. The key word is **friendly**. A story the headteacher told me illustrates this. He tries to spend the lunch time "on the ground". He is, he reminded me, "folically challenged" and after one very hot and sunny lunch time his head got very

sunburned; he was "feeling somewhat cooked!" So he went out the next day with a straw Panama hat on. "I remember walking out wearing this very dashing hat and I was totally and utterly bemused by the reaction of some of the students. My many friends out there, and I include most of my rogues in that category, were impish enough to venture a comment. Some were tactfully approving, others were being just that little bit cynical and none of them were outright rude, but it is a contact and I know a lot of those youngsters by name and I'd like to think they feel a confidence to approach me." A lovely photograph in the prospectus shows the headteacher, with arms outstretched towards a group of students and obviously telling them some story; everyone is smiling.

The prospectus has a whole section on "Spiritual Life" and the Section 13 report said that St. Margaret's places great importance on the spiritual development of all members of the school community (Castelli 1995: 3). In many ways St. Margaret's has a *spiritual* rather than a *Catholic* culture. The examples I have given of the liturgies show how open and inclusive they are. Funding for the post of liturgy co-ordinator reflects this school's commitment to this type of liturgy and so does the existence and the work of the Spiritual Life Working Party.

Lynne: And you've got this committee haven't you, this Spiritual Life Working Party?
Julie: The Spiritual Life Working Party. That's very good because that draws its membership from all areas of the school. It's an open meeting so anyone who is interested can come to it...Heads of Year go to it.
Lynne: And students. Are students involved in it?
Julie: Sixth formers. It's after school. Usually it's an opportunity for reflecting on what we've done and planning for the future. It's a very good opportunity to discuss what we're doing. It's very useful for a variety of people to give their opinions. It's not a decision making body more a time for reflecting on what's being done in the school.

The prospectus names the Gospel vision for the school as "Faith, Love and Service" and talks about the tradition in the school of "service to the wider community":

> Students give generous support to charities from, and about, which they learn a great deal. Older students engage directly in the local community working with the handicapped and elderly. This community effort is valued because it affirms the ideal of service which is fundamental to Christianity. Students support various initiatives, especially the annual sponsored walk...Staff and Sixth Form, past and present, care for the sick and handicapped on the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in July each year.

The sixth form put on a show each year to raise money for charity where they perform sketches, music, dance and drama and do take-offs of staff.

Lynne: Is charity big in this school?
Sixth formers: Yes. Yes it is. Definitely.
Lynne: What do you raise money for?
Sixth formers: To go to Lourdes, Terence Higgins Trust, CAFOD, HCPT.[7]
Lynne: There's the sponsored walk that you do. How else do you raise money?
Sixth formers: We have inter-house activities....It's not just the sixth form that does all these things. I mean the lower school organise cake sales. In their HE lessons they make all the cakes themselves, then at break time they sell them in the hall.
Lynne: It sounds like it's quite an important part of the school's life, that sort of charity work. Is this part of what it means to be a Catholic school?
Sixth formers: I think so yes. It is expected of us.

The Section 13 Report said that the school's "generous response to the needs of others in their local, national and global communities is identified as morality in action reflecting the school's commitment to Gospel values" (Castelli 1995: 10). Of all the charity work the trip to Lourdes is probably the most important. The school's Liturgy Policy names the Lourdes pilgrimage as one of the key ways provided for helping "each individual to grow in faith". The headteacher always goes and this is one of the main ways in which senior students get to know him. It is also a long standing tradition in a school which does not appear to have many well established traditions. I pressed one of the young teachers very hard in the interview about traditions or stories she might have heard about but she could think of nothing. An older teacher said to me:

> When we have a spare few minutes there are a lot of stories we recall, of who did what - fond memories of pupils who distinguished themselves, shall we say, in their own particular way. The job has changed and there is not enough time for that sort of remembrance.

I have discussed the symbols, stories, rituals and values which make up the culture of St. Margaret's. It is a small, friendly school, not always very academic in the past, as the OFSTED report showed, but beginning to try to develop that aspect of its work. It is a Catholic school but the students do not, perhaps, reflect a great deal on what that means. It certainly doesn't feature much in what the students I talked to said about St. Margaret's'. In the thinking of the staff the meaning of being a Catholic school seems more to do with developing the gifts of each individual than it is to do with traditional aspects of Catholic life and worship. The staff are a very strong group and, for example, none of the students is "in on the joke" of the beige Madonna. Charity work, especially to do with Lourdes is high profile, so is Sports' Day, activities week and the drama production. Most of the important occasions are celebrations of the school community. There are some

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[7]The Terence Higgins Trust supports people living with HIV and AIDS. The Catholic Fund for Overseas Development works mainly in the 'underdeveloped' world. The Handicapped Children's' Pilgrimage Trust raises money to send children to Lourdes.

lovely, inclusive liturgies which are creatively prepared to celebrate key events in the lives of staff and students. The Catholic tradition is there to be drawn on when it is helpful and it supports a strong RE department whose work is valued by students.

One of the comments on the questionnaire sums up the cultural aspirations, and to a significant extent the cultural achievement, of the school:

> I appreciate and value the sense of community and goodwill around our school. I also appreciate the freedom given to us to be individual.

Mount Sinai High School

Mount Sinai High School is a Voluntary Aided Jewish Technology College situated in an urban area of South England. There is quite heavy traffic on the road outside the school and trains pass very regularly on a raised track at the far end of the playing fields. There is a lot of open space on the campus with plenty of room for car parking, tarmac playground and grass fields. There are some benches, painted bright red, scattered around the site so that students can sit and talk during break and lunch times.

The school occupies a number of different buildings. They are all two storey and brick built. The old building was a small secondary modern school at one time and at present houses the reception area, all the administrative offices, the staff room, several halls and facilities for art and music. There are three other, newer, buildings of which one is the Sixth Form block. Two beautiful new 'wings' as they are called have been built since Mount Sinai opened in September 1993. They are named after the businesses who gave much of the money for their construction. The whole campus is named after the Chairman of Governors, a local and well known business man. One of the new buildings is a technology wing with wonderful facilities for electronics, food technology, graphic design, metals, wood and plastic, and textiles. The other 'wing' houses spacious classrooms and laboratories, staff preparation rooms for the various curriculum subjects and a Learning Resources Centre. As well as books this centre has excellent computing facilities including the Internet. According to the prospectus, 'By September 1998 the school will be networked with multi media computer access available to all parts of the school.'

On the walls outside the classrooms there are plaques naming families who donated money towards the building costs. This entrepreneurial skill in raising money is a part of Jewish culture in Britain. The Jewish Chronicle, Britain's leading Jewish newspaper, often contains invitations to events which have been organised to raise money for various charitable causes.

Access to the school site is controlled quite carefully. As well as security cameras, locked gates and a fence all around the school, Mount Sinai has a security guard situated near the barrier on the vehicle entrance who monitors the comings and goings of visitors to the site. Most students enter and leave by a smaller gate which has an entry phone system. The gate can be opened from the inside but not from the outside. There is a security rota and parents are asked to be around at the beginning or end of the school day at least once a term. This type of security is common in Jewish schools in Britain. The fear of terrorist attacks is a real one and schools are understood to be 'soft targets'. The physical boundaries of this school, then, are clear and well monitored. Clear boundaries to the school are reflected in a different way in the admissions policy of Mount Sinai. Students have to be *halakhically* Jewish[6] (according to Jewish law) to be admitted. The school prospectus says:

> Applications for admission to Mount Sinai High School will be considered only for children who are recognised as being Jewish by the Office of the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Commonwealth.

This basically means a child whose mother is Jewish. The parents are asked to provide details of the place and date of their marriage and to enclose a copy of the *ketubah* (Jewish marriage document) with their application. They are asked about their marital status and whether they attend a synagogue and, if so, which. The Jewish status of the mother has to be confirmed as either by birth or by conversion; in the latter case a certificate is also required[7].

The nearly eight hundred students are mainly above average in their academic achievement although the full range of attainment is represented; four students have statements of special educational need and fifty are eligible for free school meals (Oppenheim 1997: 8). Students come from a wide range of Jewish backgrounds. One of the questionnaire items asked about religious affiliation and in Year 11 out of eighty students who replied to this item nearly two thirds are Orthodox, one student is Masorti, four have no religion and the remaining twenty three are either Liberal or Reform. Synagogue attendance is not common for most of the students. Out of fifty eight, thirteen students, all of them Orthodox, said they went on most Sabbaths, a further eight go about once a month while the remainder attend on high holy days if at all. Most of the students were born and live locally. The exception to this are the dozen or so students either from Israel (usually temporarily) or from Russia. The Russian students speak Hebrew as their second language. English is their third language. The Section 10 report said, 'the school is

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[6] Hebrew and Yiddish words are italicised throughout this chapter as a way of emphasising their use within the school. This use is an aspect of the culture of the school.

[7] The full details of who is *halakhically* Jewish are complicated. A child whose mother converted under the auspices of Reform Judaism would not be admitted to the school under this policy.

very successful in providing an ethos which welcomes and accepts pupils from the whole Jewish community' (Oppenheim 1997: 4).

So, only Jewish students are allowed into the school and also, only *kosher* (permitted) food. Students cannot bring sweets, chocolate or a packed lunch to school; they have to eat in the Dining Hall and all the food for food technology lessons is supplied by the kitchen.

> 1. Kosher Food - Our dining hall is run strictly in accordance with Jewish dietary laws. Students and staff are therefore not permitted either to bring their own food into the Dining Hall or to remove trays and cutlery from the Dining Hall.
>
> The kitchen next to the staff room is not strictly kosher and staff may use it for preparing their own lunch etc. There is however a separate sink and microwave for kosher use - please do not use these for general foods since they are required by Jewish staff and by use of the kitchen outside school hours.
>
> Please note that we ask staff not to bring in any non kosher meat products...or any products containing crab or other shellfish (Staff Handbook: 11).

As one of the Year 7 students said, in the interview, about how he knew the school was a Jewish school, 'I don't think they have bagels and chicken soup and schnitzel in other schools'.

The boundaries I've discussed so far between what is Jewish and what is non-Jewish are quite clear but the ones between the Jewish school and the local Jewish community are very fluid. Students know each other outside school. A lot of the staff, especially the non-teaching staff, live locally and also know one another and many of the students outside school. The reception area, in the old building, marks an entry and exit point. While I was waiting there I noticed that most students who reported late or who were ill and needed to go home were addressed by name. The secretary often spoke to them about celebrations such as a *Bar Mitzvah* (coming of age ceremony) they'd shared in or about people they both knew at the local *shul* (synagogue).

A number of the staff I interviewed talked about the boundaries between aspects of school and community life. One of the Jewish Studies teachers said,

> there's a communal relationship here...a community feeling. People know each other outside school and people know, there are certain institutions...and certain synagogues, a common framework here...you can mention a Rabbi's name and they'll all know and are affected by the overall environment....When there is something done on the festivals here...often parents come in and there is a community feeling.

One of the non-Jewish teachers who has had a lot of experience of other schools talked about the involvement of parents at Mount Sinai.

Paul: Parental support is greater or parental involvement is greater, probably, than in most other schools.
Lynne: It's very much a community school, isn't it?
Paul: Yes, very much so.
Lynne: And parents come in a lot?
Paul: And also parents feel quite comfortable about coming in and they probably do come into school and contact the school more again than parents of schools elsewhere, and they feel it's their right to be involved with the school rather than that they're treading on anyone's toes if they do come in or complain or say something nice or whatever.

A Newly Qualified Teacher said that parents are very supportive of their children, always contacting him, phoning him about them. As well as this close contact between home and school he talked about the way the boundaries between staff and students, between classrooms and corridors, and between lesson time and lunch time aren't always very clear. For his symbol he chose a **play group**. This reflected the way students fool around a lot of the time. 'In the corridors around the school there's quite an ebullient, kind of playful atmosphere, with kids, in a way it's bad behaviour, they're rolling around, disrespect, and they come into lessons behaving like that.' Yet students, and their parents, expect they will do well academically. Relationships between staff and students seem to him to be very 'pally' and students expect a huge amount of help and support from teachers. Students are always knocking on the door of the department staff room at lunch time wanting to talk about a point from one of their lessons.

I will have more to say later about the Jewish approaches to learning at Mount Sinai but now I want to return to the physical environment of the school. There are obvious visual signs that this is a Jewish school. The main symbol is a *menorah*[8] (seven branched candlestick) which is used on the school badge and which has been built into the brickwork on one of the walls facing the main gate. This *menorah* is at least eight feet high and alongside it in big white letters is the name of the school. The campus is also named - after the chairman of governors who is also a major sponsor. Looking more closely it is easy to see the *mezuzah* (a small box containing words from the Bible) on the doorpost of each building and room. Just alongside the main hall there is a small synagogue area set aside for *tefillah* (prayer) with a very traditional looking *ark* containing the *Sefer Torah* (Torah scrolls).

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[8] There was once a *menorah* in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 C.E. A scene on an arch in Rome shows the *menorah* being carried away from Jerusalem to Rome as part of a triumphal procession. In modern times it is used as a symbol for Judaism and for the State of Israel.

Inside the school there are displays in most of the corridors and many of these reflect Jewish themes. There are photographs of the Year 9 visit to Israel; there are many signs of Hebrew in use, not only in the languages section where *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew) is taught but in the art rooms where Hebrew letters have been illuminated and in many of the classrooms where the date is written in both Hebrew and English. Photographs of the family history project trace connections between students and their relatives (often grandparents) who came to Britain from Eastern Europe. Posters of Jewish paintings and artefacts are on display and the Israeli flag is prominent. Students' work about the festivals reflect the importance of the Jewish year in the life of the school.

Lighting

At three o'clock each afternoon during Chanukah, the eight day festival of lights in December, the hundred or so students in Year 10 gather in a large classroom with their form teachers. They stand, in groups, around tables which have been covered in silver foil. On each table are five or six chanukiyot (candlesticks). This afternoon the third day of Chanukah begins so today the shamash (the servant candle, separate from the others in the candlestick) will be used to light three candles. Tomorrow it will be four.

It is already very warm in the room and dark outside. Most of the lights are already switched off. It is difficult for the Jewish Studies teacher leading the lighting to get quiet. The group with whom I am standing, all girls, are playing with the wax left on the chanukiyot from the previous day. Eventually, with much shouting, a lot of encouragement and a few threats there is a sort of hush and the blessings for the lighting of the candles are said in Hebrew. Everyone lights and the room glows. It becomes noticeably warmer and quite noisy as students enjoy this intimate occasion. They talk and laugh and there is a bit of 'messing about'. The girls I am with tell me that they have been doing this in one big group since they were in the first year. 'It's lovely. It's a nice feeling. It just gives you time to think. They turn off all the lights and all you can see is hundreds and hundreds of these candles. It's really pretty.'

Attempts to encourage everyone to sing a Chanukah song, accompanied by more shouting, eventually succeed. After the singing the candles are blown out, the candlesticks collected, the foil taken off the desks and students are slowly dismissed from the room to stream out into the cold winter evening.

These students, at the time I attended this *Chanukah* (Festival of Lights) lighting, were in Year 10. They are the school's first students and the majority of them have been at Mount Sinai since they were eleven although some have joined the school at various points since. They are the ones to whom I gave the

questionnaire the following autumn when they were in Year 11 and I also interviewed four of them.

I shall refer several times in this chapter and in Chapter Six to the Jewish festivals because they provide the school with many of its symbols, stories and rituals, and therefore with an affirmation of its values. Often the festivals are opportunities for integrating Jewish aspects of the school across the curriculum and they are always the focus of work in Jewish Studies at the relevant times.

The school calendar with term and holiday dates illustrates this particular dimension to life at Mount Sinai. The school year is built around Jewish festivals, not Christian ones as in the other schools in the Borough. It closes for major Jewish festivals. In the Autumn it is closed on *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year), *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) and for some of *Succot* (Tabernacles). In the Spring the major holiday coincides with *Pesach* (Passover) and there is also time off for *Shavuot* (Weeks).

Chanukah in December and *Purim* (related to the story of Esther) in February are less important occasions but very popular. Because the school is open at these times a lot of the school rituals which staff and students described are linked to these two festivals. Finally there are individual days remembering events such as the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.

At *Succot,* in the Autumn, there is a *succah* (temporary dwelling) constructed just outside the dining hall so that all those who wish to fulfil the *mitzvah* (commandment) about eating outside during the festival can do so. It is a permanent wooden construction with a criss crossed open roof from which decorations are hung. Sometimes the English department will focus on the topic of 'homelessness' during this time of year. Some staff dress deliberately smartly and in the staffroom there was discussion among Jewish staff about how the festival could be celebrated more fully as it is in Israel.

Rachel: There's a lot of festival based stuff which goes on quite regularly...eating in the *succah*....Again *Purim* in the school, that was very communally based. We had a *megillah* reading (story of Esther) and like it was a carnival kind of thing in the school. I suppose the best way to describe it is as a fete. There were lots of stalls and teachers are dressed up, parents came in which was done in conjunction with the local Jewish Primary school.
Lynne: So not during the day?
Rachel: It was on a Sunday. This year the festival happened to fall on a Sunday so...normally it is during the school day. So there is a tradition of doing something on the festivals, exactly what changes from year to year.

Purim was described to me by Jo, a Year 11 boy, as a time when 'the school gets together and has some fun'. Both students and staff dress up and there are prizes for the best costumes. The head of Jewish Studies came in a clown outfit one year and a secretary came dressed as the headteacher. For the *Purim* Fair, to which parents, brothers and sisters, and friends are invited, various items like cakes and badges are made in Technology classes to sell. The story behind the festival is retold in assemblies and there are quizzes and other activities during the day.

For *Chanukah* a variety of traditions have developed. Pupils make *chanukiyot* (*Chanukah* candlesticks) or *sevivon* (spinners used in a *Chanukah* game) from a variety of materials in Technology. The Jewish Studies classes are related to the festival. Year 8 study relevant *halakhah* (religious law) from a variety of traditional sources while Year 10 do a quick revision exercise on *Chanukah* related to their GCSE course. In the Jewish Studies staff room Hebrew songs play and staff discuss religious issues arising from the events behind the festival such as whether a miracle really happened and, if so, what it was.

A special effort is made to serve typical *Chanukah* food at lunch time. This might include *latkes* (potato pancakes) and other items cooked using oil. Year 7 eat together in a small hall and at the end of the meal the headteacher leads *benching* (grace after meals). There is a charity collection taken each day during the lunch hour. Each afternoon of the eight day festival there is a different programme for each year group. There are quizzes, stories, games and competitions such as groups of pupils making up songs and being judged on them and then, as the school day closes, each year gathers in a different place to light[9].

The school day itself points to Jewish culture. *Shabbat* (Sabbath) begins at sunset on Friday and for observant Jews that marks the end of all ordinary work until Saturday night. To allow Jewish staff and students to get home to prepare for *Shabbat* the school day finishes at 1.30 p.m. on Friday. In the summer, when it is light until quite late, there is a voluntary sports programme in the afternoon but in the winter there is a rush to get away. The other days are longer than in most schools from 8.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

The different holidays and the different timetable each day were two of the things the Year 7 students mentioned when I asked what they'd particularly noticed about Mount Sinai. None of the four had been to a Jewish primary school. Some of the things they referred to, like the lockers where they could put their books and the different subjects during the day, are aspects of most secondary schools. The particularly Jewish practices they named included Jewish Studies, Hebrew, the

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[9] This rather odd sounding use of language is common at *Chanukah*. I assume it reflects Hebrew usage transferred to English. Staff speak about going down 'to foil' and then getting everyone ready 'to light'.

succah, the *shul*, boys wearing *kappels* (skull caps) and *Minchah* (afternoon prayer).

Thursday's Minchah

It is ten past one on a rather grey and windy Thursday afternoon. The Year 7 class has returned to their form room after a kosher lunch eaten in the large dining hall. There was chicken, fish and chips, smoked salmon bagels, tuna rolls and much more but no meat. Everyone wears a newish navy blue uniform, the blazer with a menorah on the badge, and the boys all (just about) wear a kipah. The length (or rather the shortness) of the girls' skirts is rather a surprise.

At the front of the room is a short, dark haired teacher in her thirties. She speaks fluent English but it is not her first language. She welcomes me with a smile and I sit on a chair at the back of the room. There are also four older students to help with the singing and the Hebrew.

We all stand up and everyone gets out their bright blue school diaries. On the front, in Hebrew and English are words from Ecclesiastes, 'There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven'. Inside, also in Hebrew and English, are words from Hillel, a well known, first century, Rabbi, 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for me, what am I? And if not now, when?' The headteacher has written an explanation of this passage. He says, 'It teaches us that you must act to get the best out of your own life but that does not mean being selfish. You are also a member of a community and you must always consider the needs of others. Finally it tells us that the time to act is now.' The diary has Hebrew and English for dates and days of the week and room to write homework down.

At the end of the diary is the Minchah Siddur, the words of the daily afternoon prayer which Year 7 sings each day. Their form teacher, who is not Jewish, is absent; he will wait outside in the corridor until Minchah is over.

"Shalom Aleichem"[10] *says the teacher, and begins to sing the first part of the prayer, ashrei, joined immediately by some of the students. The older students go around the class singing loudly and helping those who cannot follow the Hebrew and are trying to look at the English translation or merely humming what is, by now, a familiar tune. I point out the place to the girl whose copy of the service I am sharing. The sound of the singing is loud and then softens. The second prayer, the Amidah, is the main Minchah prayer. It includes, today, a prayer for rain and wind and also several blessings (brachot). The students who are able to join in include both boys and girls. There is no sense of embarrassment among the students and the class is singing much more freely than in a music lesson earlier in the day. The last brachah is read in English and refers to knowledge which the teacher says is "important for us in school". It is over in three or four minutes and the teacher leaves, saying in Hebrew, "Toda raba. Shalom." (Thank you. Good-bye).*

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[10] Literally, 'Peace be with you.' The greeting is more formal than 'Hello'. 'Good afternoon' is the obvious equivalent.

The wearing of the *kipah* (skull cap) is perhaps the most immediately striking indicator of the Jewishness of the school. It is interesting, from a methodological perspective, just how quickly I ceased to notice this and yet how struck by it I was when I visited the school again after only a few days. Most of the boys wear their *kipah* quite willingly but boys who forget theirs are charged £2 for a replacement. A few boys personalise their *kipah*. I saw an interesting one made into a yin and yang symbol. There are lots of notices around the school reminding boys to wear their *kipah* and in every lesson the teacher has to nag someone to put his on. Although all the male Jewish teachers are required to wear a *kipah* during the school day only the Head of Jewish Studies wears *tzitzith* (tassels hanging out over the top of trousers). I only saw one boy with *tzitzith* although they would have been worn at the primary school attended by many of the students.

This very obvious symbol of the culture of the school, the *kipah*, is gender specific. Dress codes for women and girls are more subtle and Mount Sinai does not enforce modesty in dress with the same vigour as the wearing of the *kipah*. One of the local parents, Jenny, who works in the school and describes herself as 'the tap on the local community' is disappointed that there is no consistency in enforcing modesty. Girls in the sixth form are allowed to wear trousers and, in the rest of the school, they often have their skirts 'up round their backsides'. She described the approach to this matter as 'Israeli'. 'It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter and then bang!' A Year 13 student who had been at a highly Orthodox school before she came into the sixth form at Mount Sinai mentioned dress as the first difference between the schools. 'I think the way the school tries to run is by, you know, Orthodox, but with little differences, dress and stuff.'

Modesty in dress is also, traditionally, important for males but a Year 7 student was clearly not very familiar with this aspect of the school's culture:

Ben: Yesterday in PE we was playing a basketball match and one of the boys said to make a difference why doesn't one side be the 'skins' and one side be the 'shirts' and the teacher said you're not allowed to, cos it's something to do with Jewish Studies, if a girl sees you or something.
Lynne: What? If you take your shirt off?
Ben: I'm not really sure what it meant.

The daily *Minchah* with Year 7 is obviously a very distinctive ritual in the school. Its introduction was in response to the Section 23 report which drew attention both to the lack of a daily act of collective worship, required by law, and to 'the need to identify those symbols and practices of religious observance considered appropriate to meet the needs of all its pupils and to indicate its religious stance, and then consistently to implement them' (Felsenstein 1997: 13). Morning

and afternoon prayer has always been said in the *shul* but although all the Jewish Studies staff and the headteacher are normally there only a very few students attend and never any of the girls.[11] Twenty two out of eighty two students thought that senior students understand and accept the religious goals of the school. Of the rest, half rejected the idea that religious goals were understood and accepted by students and half were uncertain about it. Later in the questionnaire they were asked whether being Jewish necessarily means being religious. Only ten students said it did. Forty out of the sixty three rejected the idea. They divided equally, though, over whether they were more religious at school than at home.

Jonathan is an Orthodox Jew whose religion is very important to him. His father is ultra-Orthodox and Jonathan goes to synagogue every Sabbath, prays regularly and gives to charity occasionally. The most important influences on his religious development have been the example and lives of his parents and the effect of a visit to Israel. Israel is very important to Jonathan and he would like to live there at some time in his life. He has also been influenced by classes at his synagogue and by the school with its Jewish Studies programme and the opportunities for prayer and worship. Jonathan said that his friends, teachers and people at the synagogue hadn't influenced him at all.

He tries to follow the Jewish way of life without questioning it. He thinks synagogue services are boring but being Jewish means being religious. He said that all the traditional statements of Jewish belief are certainly true but at the same time, perhaps, he is sometimes uncertain what he believes, and he is unsure that God will always forgive him. He is clear, though, about his goals for the future. He intends to take a year off before going to University. Then, in order of priority, the goals are making a lot of money, being happily married, being important and successful in life, accepting himself as the person he is, furthering his Jewish education and being a fully observant Jew. He has no interest in making lifelong friendships with people, serving others or being honest in his dealings with them. He has been happy at Mount Sinai and is proud of the school, particularly because it is Jewish.

Paul: One of the things I have been impressed with, the vast majority of kids here come from what would be termed non-observant homes....We've had a difficult time recently with the child who died and there's a number of kids that have lost parents. The kids have actually rallied round in a religious way very well. They've attended special *davening* (prayer) and they've visited the homes for *davening*. That's interesting and I think that's credit to N and his team....I've seen people put off religion by what's happened at school whereas here the kids sort of tolerate it cheerfully, which is very good I think.

The closeness of the school and the local community, underpinned by religious practice, was particularly marked when the fourteen year old boy Paul

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[11] In Orthodox Judaism women and men are always separated during public prayer. While it is a commandment for men to pray women are not obligated to do so and in a service in an Orthodox synagogue there are usually more men than women.

mentioned suffered a heart attack during a gym lesson. The week he was in hospital I was told, 'you couldn't move at *tefillah* for children, parents and staff'. When he died more than fifty of the boy's year group went to the funeral. Ruth chose **a hand reaching out** to symbolise Mount Sinai because it was to do with the caring which had been shown at that time. 'I honestly believe', she said, 'there is no school that cares for an individual the way we do here'.

Ruth: It (the recent death) really did encapsulate everything. It really (long pause), I'm sure it would have been the same in every other school. No! Actually I know it wouldn't, I actually know it wouldn't because I've heard of examples when it isn't, so yes, okay, the head was brilliant, absolutely. I can't fault the way he handled that, so sensitively, so um, it was just right. And I don't know that there are many heads who could cope with that in such a good way and that I think is symbolic,....hands reaching out, a child's hand in an adult's hand, that's really how I see it.

Another teacher said that **the headteacher's enthusiasm** would be his symbol for the school especially on occasions when the school gets together such as at *Chanukah* or *Purim* or on Sports day when 'the atmosphere is very good'. The headteacher, himself, said, 'hopefully, on any one particular day, **the conversations** which you can overhear between students and staff and the tone of those conversations. For me it's that students will come up and talk to me. Yes. The conversations.' Year 11 students chose **a handshake** to symbolise friendship and unity. Their discussion about choosing a symbol is interesting:

Jo: I don't think you can really choose something to symbolise. It's more emotional, like within each other....There's so much you could choose.
Becky: You can't say it in words. It's a feeling, that special, that something, when you come into school. You just feel really comfortable.

One of the ways the school promotes this closeness in a year group is through trips. There are a lot of opportunities at Mount Sinai for students to go away together. The year 11 students named visits to Spain and Gibraltar, to Devon, Bushey and Israel as places they had been with other students from the school. In Years 7 and 8 the Jewish Studies department organises *shabbatonim*. These are weekends away celebrating Sabbath in traditional ways and having a good time. A non-Jewish teacher who had been away on a *shabbaton* with her Year 7 form told me about it.

Anne: It was fascinating. We went really quickly on Friday evening so we could get there for the entire *shabbos* (Sabbath). It was just like Christmas, we partied the whole weekend and, not every minute was organised, but every minute was to be spent together having fun together....The whole thing was, you know, where you

play all the time, have a joke, argue, have this game, that game to play and also the dinners, and singing between courses. It was fantastic.

In Year 9 there is a two week trip to Israel. Not everyone goes away on the school trips but fifty students responded to questions about them in the questionnaire. Only one said that going away with others was a bit uninspiring and boring while thirty five said it would have a lasting influence on their lives. Going away was seen as much more to do with a sense of self worth and understanding the views of others (twenty four students) than with a religious experience. Not all the visits were connected, explicitly, with religion and only eight students said they'd experienced times when they felt close to God while they were away. Fifty seven Year 11 students commented about the impact on their religious development of a visit to Israel (not necessarily with the school). Seventeen said it was of little or no importance while the rest said it had been important. Nine students claimed it was one of the most important influences for them.

Year 11 students told me this story about their time in Israel:

Jo: It's just an amazing country. You feel at home being Jewish.
Jane: A very good experience. It was lovely to be somewhere where you felt really comfortable. I couldn't tell you how many thing we went to see.
Sam: The thing which sticks in my mind is when this big tidal wave got us _
Jane: _ in this cave place and there are supposed to be very calm waves there but on this particular day a lot of people got injured and knocked down.
Sam: Most of us got completely drenched. I was completely soaked.
Jane: We asked people if this was a regular occurrence and they said, 'No'.
Lynne: A special treat for you?
(Laughter)
Jane: You wouldn't necessarily do a trip like that on your own; you couldn't organise it so to do that on an organised trip is the best way.

I also talked to one of the teachers about the visit:

Lynne: Did you go on the Israel trip?
Paul: Yes. I went last year.
Lynne: Is that going to be an annual thing for Year 9?
Paul: Yes.
Lynne: What did you do?
Paul: Basically they go all around Israel and get a historical and cultural perspective. and also built into that is, you know, religious observance in terms of *davening* and observing *Shabbos* and what have you, which again, not all of them do at home.
Lynne: Did they stay with families?
Paul: No. They stay in a mixture of hotels, youth hostels and on a *kibbutz* (collective village) as well. It was brilliant, very good. What's nice as well is that nobody is excluded.

Lynne: Did most of the year go?

Paul: The last, it's been running two years now, in the last two years about fifty percent of the year have gone. But ideally, they'd like everyone to go. But nobody is excluded on the basis that they can't pay or anything like that. It was very good. The programme that was organised was excellent.

Lynne: Do you have any idea about why the kids that didn't go, didn't go?

Paul: No. I don't really....It was quite interesting because there were a lot of "good kids", in inverted commas, who didn't go. Yes it would be interesting to know why.

Lynne: Because the importance of Israel within the school, the support for Israel, presumably does go wider than the one trip.

Paul: Ye-es. Again it's an interesting contrast with (another Jewish school) where interest in Israel is all-pervading and they're as interested, if not more interested, in Israel than in what happens in England. Here it's less so. I'd put it on the same level as I've got an interest in (name of country) because my mum came from (country) and if (country) are playing football I want (country) to win. It's that sort of level I think.

Sixty four students answered two other questions about Israel on the questionnaire and there is no overall consensus. The majority agree that Israel is very important to them, thirteen are not sure and fourteen disagree. The religious affiliation of students doesn't make any difference to this spread of views. Asked whether they would like to live in Israel at some point in their lives about half said they would. The Statement of Principles drawn up by the initial group of senior staff before the school opened and printed in the staff handbook names 'a sense of community' as one of the five principles and this means 'encouraging students to become active members of their communities, the Jewish community of Britain, a world Jewish community with Israel at its centre and a wider world' (p3). I had an interesting conversation about Israel with the Year 13 students I interviewed. Five or six of their year are planning to spend a year in Israel before they go to university. One girl and one boy intend to continue with Jewish study at a *seminary* and a *yeshivah*.[12] The other students will work on a kibbutz, tour all around the country, do some English teaching and spend three weeks in the army. I include a large extract from the interview here to give an idea of the range of views there are:

David: Some of us are more Zionist than others.[13]

Lynne: Is the school Zionist?

David: Not as much (hesitates) as I think it should be. I think it should be more but my view on it is probably different to a lot of other people's.

Melissa: But they do arrange trips, don't they?

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[12] These offer Jewish higher education studying texts, especially the *Talmud*, for women and men respectively.

[13] 'Zionism' is the term given to the movement to secure and maintain a Jewish homeland. While it has been mainly a political movement there are religious aspects too.

David: They arrange one trip but in Jewish Studies lessons and school assemblies they don't push Zionism. I think there are three levels of how Zionist people are in the school. Some people are not Zionist at all and have no wish to go to Israel. You've go the middle ones who feel, 'Yea, it's great, it's our homeland, it's good to go for a holiday. We're glad it's there because it's our homeland.' And you've got the more Zionist kind who think a lot of effort should be made towards Israel and hope to settle there one day. I feel I'm on that right. I know other schools put more emphasis on it, on Zionism.

Lynne: And when you're talking about Israel, that's obviously one of the issues you discuss, about whether you ought to want to go and live there or whether you ought to want to go and have a year there?

Melissa: A couple of my friends are going to go there for a year. They have already arranged it.

Emma: I'm so jealous.

Melissa: She's jealous. I'm sort of in the middle...It's nice to go for a holiday. I don't think I could settle down there.

Emma: Have you been there?

Melissa: No.

Emma: It's like, when you go to Israel, it's like you can't say how you'll feel before you go. It's not like going to Spain or something. Because you go there and you're like immediately drawn to it. It really is, it's like home from home, or it is home. You only feel the same way in your own home or your own bed or whatever.

David: You feel _ Rather than having a common history with people in Britain you feel more of a historical connection with people in Israel. They've been through it all.

Emma: It is an unexplainable feeling, it is, and the atmosphere there and you feel like one of them, don't you?

(Much laughter)...

Lynne: It's like you were saying about the sense of identity, the feeling that their history is somehow your history more than the British story. I mean would that be common for most of the sixth form?

David: It depends on the person. I feel half and half. I feel both patriotic to Britain and to Israel.

Melissa: Personally I feel more patriotic to Britain.

David: My grandfather, most of our grandfathers, fought in the First or Second World War. They fought to save this country. It's related, our patriotism to Israel and to here.

Becky, in Year 11 said, 'Jewish identity is emphasised in this school but I don't think we're allowed to forget that we are British really'. These differing views in the school about how important Israel is compared to Britain came into sharp focus when Princess Diana died. As one Jewish teacher said to me:

Hannah: I'm English before I'm, um. I'd be interested if you asked the students. Do they consider themselves English first or what feeling or alignment they have with Israel. I suspect it's a nice place to go on holiday and an obvious place to think about going on holiday but certainly England's their home. It was interesting, over

when Diana died. I got a lot of students very upset that the head didn't have two minutes silence because we're English too and we did have when Yitzak Rabin, you know, that was very obvious in the school....I did actually say to N, the head of Jewish Studies, if we don't do something it might offend staff as well because we're a school in an English environment....She was an icon, and as an icon, a British institutional whatever...she represented what they felt about being maybe English, I don't know, whatever. I just feel that in a way it was denying part of them not to recognise it. The head dealt with it, I thought, in a brilliant way, you know, set up a charity, again used the Jewish culture as a way in. I think, actually, he mishandled the immediate, um, when we returned, because we returned just after and I think there should have been a prayer or something. She is a human being whatever we think of the politics, the way the media made her a saint. That's not important.

The headteacher said that a definition of success for him would be if, in ten years time, a fair percentage of the students were going to live in Israel. I asked him about his ideal pupil. He said, 'A thoroughly decent person, and of course they'll be well educated...Jewishly knowledgeable and committed but I hope we'll produce...a fair proportion of thoroughly decent folk who actually gained from being in the school, who learnt about community and their heritage and are at ease with people and who have done well academically. In that sense the ideal pupil is everybody.'

Suzanne is not typical of Year 11 students at Mount Sinai. She and her family are Liberal Jews with no religious objects displayed at home. She doesn't want to stay into the sixth form although her work is about average. Suzanne isn't happy at school. 'Burn it down!', she wrote in large capital letters in response to the question about changes she would make to the school. 'It brings misery to many.' She feels lonely and worried at school. No one tried to make her feel at home although some students, she wrote, accept her as she is. Neither is the curriculum to her liking. She doesn't think it meets her present needs, it isn't relevant to real life and it doesn't prepare students adequately for future employment. She is particularly critical of the lack of emphasis on cultural activities like music, art and drama. She is, however, enjoying Jewish Studies. It is taught at a higher level than other subjects, she said, and even if it were voluntary she would still attend. She is uncertain about whether exams should be part of Jewish Studies but the course has helped her to understand more about Judaism and also to form her own conscience and to pray. Suzanne would like to continue her Jewish education.

Suzanne said that religion is of some importance to her. She definitely believes in God and, unlike nearly all the other students, she prays every day. But, being Jewish for Suzanne, does not mean being religious. She goes to synagogue a few times a year and gets some satisfaction from celebrating Sabbath and festivals. The most important influence on her religious development has been her friends. She hasn't been to Israel and it certainly isn't very important to her. What is important, and she emphasised this very heavily in her answers to the questionnaire is finding personal happiness and satisfaction in life.

Two thirds of the students said that what they had learned in school subjects other than Jewish Studies had made no difference to their lives as Jews. Only nineteen said that a Jewish way of understanding is presented in the other subjects and yet the school has deliberately tried to integrate Jewish Studies into the whole curriculum and also to foster a Jewish approach to learning. One teacher said, 'The Jewish nature of the school should be recognised in the way we teach, in the content of our lessons, in the way we treat one another'.

My name is Dan and my family is Orthodox. We don't go to *shul* very often but I am very glad I am at a Jewish school. I have made good friends and I appreciate learning about Judaism because if I had not attended Mount Sinai I might have nearly abandoned my religion. There is a close unity between the students here, perhaps because we are all Jews. Students and teachers are close and there is a relaxed, but formal, atmosphere. I feel I can approach the headteacher for advice. He stresses the religious nature of the school and encourages a sense of community and belonging. I would definitely send my children to a Jewish school.

I want to be happily married with a family. My parents have influenced me a lot and I think a Jew should always marry another Jew, but being Jewish doesn't necessarily mean being religious. I do believe in God, though, and I get some satisfaction from celebrating Sabbath and festivals. I want to be important and successful in life and to make a lot of money but I also want to be true to myself and honest in my dealings with others.

As a visitor to the school I noticed how confident the students are, especially orally. Hannah said to me, 'Children have a right to be heard. Their voice is as important as ours so children are taught in the Jewish culture to speak up, to voice their opinions.' Several teachers said that one of the things they enjoyed about teaching in the school was the willingness of students to discuss issues. There is a lot of debate in the classrooms 'which is very stimulating, very creative'. Anne told me, 'They are exceptionally good at justifying things, very aware of their rights, of who they are, what they're allowed to do and get away with and they're not scared to tell you'.

Mount Sinai is not a quiet school; the lessons which I saw, from Year 7 through to Year 13, were all mainly question and answer. The traditional way of learning in Judaism is through debate and argument with a partner and in Jewish Studies students are encouraged all the time to question and argue with the text, with one another and with the teacher in order to interpret. One teacher said, 'you want them to be argumentative in an oral subject, to respond personally and imaginatively to the text and to the issues it raises'. All the Jewish Studies teachers encourage a personal response: what does this mean to you, what does this mean in the 1990s? One of the aims of the Jewish Studies programme for the sixth form is:

- to enable students to make the language of Judaism relevant to their everyday life experiences through radical interpretation.

I attended an A Level class where students were studying a passage from Exodus 5. "Why do the Jews want to leave Egypt?" asked the teacher. "Did they only want to go for three days? Prove it to me from the text." There was a deliberate attempt to narrow the distance between now and then, "We just gave back Sinai to the Egyptians" and "Is Pharaoh anti-Semitic?"

This approach isn't just for the sixth form. A Year 10 class was studying the book of Jonah. The teacher referred several times to the visit to Israel some of the class had made the year before when they went to the place mentioned in the text. The whole lesson was question and answer, trying to get students to support their answers by very close reference to the text. The teacher referred to words in Hebrew a lot and at one point some Yiddish crept in, "They *schlepped* (dragged) boxes onto and off the boat". A Year 8 class were asked to discuss an extract from the *Mishnah* (a second century Rabbinic text). The teacher asked, "Is the *Mishnah* always right? (various answers from students) It tells you what Jewish law has always been, then you can decide. You need to know what Jewish law is. Who disagrees?"

This approach to Jewish learning is not without its class management problems. I asked one of the young teachers in Jewish Studies how he managed with a noisy class. 'That's a brilliant question', he replied. The Section 23 report said:

> Speaking and writing skills were generally good and often were better than listening ones. Thus pupils were generally able to answer questions intelligently, but some were not always willing to listen to the answer or views of others....In Year 10 there were some sophisticated pupil discussions on the subject of freedom, which involved moral judgements to do with the topic of Pesach. Pupils' behaviour and attention in class were generally satisfactory, except where listening to other pupils was concerned, and except in two Year 7 classes observed (Felsenstein 1997: 9-10).

While the classroom management problems arising from this interactive approach to learning is particularly noticeable in Jewish Studies, perhaps because all but one of the teachers had had no formal teacher training before they started at Mount Sinai, other young teachers also find it a challenge. One NQT, who is not Jewish, said, 'The children are very noisy, the teachers are very tolerant of back chat, debate, argument...The children tend to, if one person says something, then it's like wildfire. Three or four other children will respond from across the classroom. You've instantly got to stop that.'

Hannah, an experienced teacher and Jewish, was much more positive:

Hannah: Teaching is a negotiation between students and teachers, a sort of unwritten contract. You both have responsibilities towards each other and I think that is very much part of the Jewish culture, its responsibility as a community. You need to know where the boundaries are and I think sometimes here the students find it difficult to know where the boundaries are and that's symptomatic of their age. I don't know how good we are at teaching that....Reflection matters; they have to evaluate what they've learned.

Lynne: So what's important in Jewish culture has a spin off for learning?

Hannah: Yes, definitely. That culture underpins everything...very much engaging children in the whole learning process...Confidence is absolutely everything. They must feel very comfortable, whatever point on the ability range they are, within our classrooms and they can express any ideas whatsoever and that will be accepted.

Lynne: In Jewish Studies there's a huge amount of positive feedback to students.

Hannah: It's very much a style of the school. A valuing each person as an individual. It's an enabling. You have to make them feel they have something to contribute and starting with where they are makes them own the lesson. Then you can take it, run with it...The children don't decide where it's going, the teacher does.

Not only is the process of teaching and learning at Mount Sinai distinctive, so, in many ways, is the content, the curriculum. In the year the school opened there were only seven teachers and one year group. A great deal of discussion went on among the staff which resulted in a curriculum planned together. A good example of this was the preparation for a production based on the story of Ruth. The students told me they were all involved in this project and in fact it was so successful as a production it was chosen to compete in a national competition. The starting point was the Biblical book. This was studied in Jewish Studies, English and History. The set design and production were done in Art and Technology. This was probably the most integrated piece of work done in the school.

There are still many occasions where a topic is shared by Jewish Studies and another department. Examples include the design of a *succah* or making a *chanukiyah* or *challah* (bread for the Sabbath) in Technology. Several departments may be involved, for example, in the setting up of a charity campaign. I will discuss one other piece of cross-curricular work in some detail but before I do I will mention other examples of the impact of being a Jewish school on the curriculum. In History there is study of Romans and Jews, slavery and the Holocaust, and in Geography there is an Israel project. In English they teach the history of language beginning with the Hebrew alphabet and focusing on Semitic languages. Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* is deliberately chosen for study in Year 7 and the last school drama production was Jack Rosenthal's *Bar Mitzvah Boy*. Ivrit (modern Hebrew) is taught alongside French and Spanish and when the school went on a Spanish trip they went to be with the Jewish community in Gibraltar. One science teacher told me that he has to be very careful with 'touchy scientific topics' such as

evolution or contraception.[14] A music teacher told me that since music is culturally determined a lot of western music is Christian and students have to be taught to understand the background to it. A lot of the music they use is Israeli and they study klezmer music too.

The Jewish Studies Room

Around the edge of the large carpeted room are five desks. There are also bookshelves, a computer and a phone. On the floor are the remains of a lulav and there are several original chanukiyot, made in wood and metal, on the shelves. Boxes full of Year 9 projects are stacked under a table and Israeli songs are playing in the background. It is lunch time and at one of the desks a local Rabbi is studying. Students come in and out with forms for their community project to give to Chloe who is organising it. On one of the desks a copy of The Sun is lying. It was confiscated this morning as papers like The Sun are banned in school because of the nudity and the other sexualised reports.

Ben, one of the Jewish Studies teachers is on the 'phone; someone always is. The culture here is very verbal and people talk fast. He hangs up and calls out of the window, "Hello Romeo and Juliet!" to a boy and girl outside. Then he checks his e-mail for a new batch of messages. The head of department comes in to phone. He is trying to find someone who could help the school with Jewish music for prizegiving. Three students come in collecting money for Camp Simchah, where children with cancer can go on holiday. This is a whole school fund raising effort.

Ben and the Rabbi are discussing questions from a quiz: what four blessings do you say only once a year? What three mitzvot do you need your whole body for? They tick off the answers on their fingers, almost shouting as they compete with one another. Other teachers come in to collect their books for the next class. There are no bells. Everyone leaves except the Rabbi, still studying.

For students, one of the most obviously Jewish aspects of the curriculum is the family history project begun at the end of Year 8 and completed in Year 9. The majority of students are descended from immigrants from Eastern Europe, mainly Russia and Poland, who came to Britain at the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century. Most immigrants lived in the East End of London before moving out to the suburbs. Students go on a visit to the East End and they interview grandparents and other relatives about their lives, collect documents and photographs and construct a family tree. The resulting projects are very impressive and tell fascinating stories. The themes which come through strongly are the importance of families sticking together, the number of relatives

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[14] These are touchy because Judaism has traditionally maintained that since the early chapters of Genesis are the Word of God they are reliable explanations of the beginning of the world. Issues of sexual morality have to be put within a Jewish ethical and *halachic* context.

who changed their names[15], the small family businesses, the links with Israel and of course the Holocaust. One of the Jewish Studies teachers wrote the following on the feedback sheet to a student:

> You, like me are a second generation Holocaust survivor. It means we have little or no evidence of our grandparents or great grandparents. We have no pictures at all. What we do have is the honour and duty of listening and recording the tragic events that occurred to our families - so that we can tell others in the future about what happened to our people. It is very painful but very important.

There is one other, very striking, aspect to the family history project which affirms and expresses the continuity between Jews of the past and their descendants, the students at Mount Sinai. Students choose a photograph of a grandparent or relation of their own sex. They find or make clothes which are similar to the ones in the photo and then they pose, in those clothes and with their hair arranged just as in the original, and they are photographed. The similarities between the old and new photos are striking and very poignant. A display with both the photographs also includes the story of the person in the original.

Not only does being a Jewish school impact on the curriculum, it also affects the extra curricular activities. This is most noticeable with the *Tzedekah* (righteousness - in this case 'charity') project. One of the five principles in the Statement of Principles is 'Social Responsibility' which includes 'understanding we all have obligations to be involved in positive commitment to helping others'. The headteacher wrote this in the staff handbook:

> The Jewish community has always maintained a very strong network of welfare, youth and social agencies. Charitable action - *tzedekah* - is as central a Jewish concept as study and prayer and it is one which has most often characterised Jewish communities regardless of religious commitment (p9).

Year 9 are required to be involved in an 'Award in Jewish Community Service'. A person has been appointed part-time to set this up and also to develop Jewish art across the curriculum. Students have to spend a certain amount of time during the year doing one of six possible activities in the wider Jewish community:

- direct care of elderly people;

- educational support either of people learning Hebrew or helping primary school children with their reading;

- youth leadership training;

- working with young people who are hearing-impaired, visually-impaired or have physical disability;

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[15] For example Sophie's project reported how her grandfather, Hyman Berkowitz, changed his name to Henry Birkett and announced it in the London Gazette of the 7th June 1940.

- community support doing first aid or working in hospital shops or residential homes;

- creating a fund-raising project and raising money.

The students attend workshops in their chosen area so that they can become more skilful and understand better the nature of what they are doing.

When they are out in the community during this *Tzedekah* project students will be involved in typical Jewish activity but there are times when the activities of Mount Sinai students outside the school raises a sharp question about their Jewish identity. I am referring to McDonald's. This is not a *kosher* establishment but students go there, especially on Friday afternoons when school finishes early. Some parents of the school and the Jewish staff would like this not to happen but the reasons, I learned from a meeting of Jewish staff to discuss the school's Jewish ethos, are different for each group. The parents normally don't mind their children going to McDonald's but they are embarrassed that the school uniform makes it clear that the students are Jewish and therefore should not, strictly, be going to a *non-kosher* place. The Orthodox Jewish staff are concerned that students are not keeping *kosher* whether it is in, or out, of uniform. This illustrates a quite fundamental difference in attitude to Jewish practice between the local Jewish community and many of the Jewish staff at Mount Sinai.[16]

Now I want to finish this chapter with something which is likely to become part of the tradition at Mount Sinai, the story of King Hussein's visit[17]. Here is the story as Ruth, a teacher, told it to me and then as the Year 13 and Year 11 students saw it.

Ruth: King Hussein? That was the head's idea, just a brilliant idea, just cheek, *chutzpah*[18], total *chutzpah*. They were discussing who they'd ask (to open the technology wing) and one of them said, 'Let's ask King Hussein. Ha! Ha! Ha!'. So they did and he said, 'Yes' and it was wonderful, it was absolutely wonderful. I mean I was proud to be there.
Lynne: What did you do?
Ruth: Cried. (loud laughter)
Lynne: What happened?

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[16] I discuss the issue of McDonald's further in Chapter Six.

[17] King Hussein is King of Jordan, one of Israel's Arab neighbours. The visit was hardly reported in the Jewish press although both Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi and Moshe Raviv, the Israeli ambassador were there.

[18] In his book *The Joys of Yiddish* Leo Rosten defines *chutzpah* as 'gall, brazen nerve, effrontery, incredible 'guts'; presumption -plus-arrogance such as no other word, and no other language, can do justice to. The classic definition of *chutzpah* is, of course, this: *chutzpah* is that quality enshrined in a man who, having killed his mother and father, throws himself on the mercy of the court because he is an orphan' (Rosten 1968: 94).

Ruth: He came, we had a song; he came and spoke. Actually the worst thing about that whole time was the sound system. He spoke to the kids very movingly and you couldn't hear it.

Lynne: Did you meet in the Sports Hall?

Ruth: Yes we all came down there, assembled in the Sports Hall. He marched on; the usual school things, songs and a presentation and then he spoke to the children for a long time without notes. I would say for quite a length of time and it appeared to be from the heart. It was obviously to do with children, they are all children wherever they come from and we should be working towards harmony and peace for the children and it was just lovely, the whole thing, the whole idea. What it did was to make, you know, Arabs human, more than anything else.

Lynne: Was there a lot of conversation among students about it?

Ruth: Oh yes. And some of the parents objected very strongly to the visit going ahead. Some parents claimed that it was a threat to the children because of the security aspect, very practical things, hot air going around. But the children were very much involved. It's something I don't think they will ever forget. Certainly I won't and I don't think any staff will. It was a privilege to be there.

David: Who would have thought, four or five years ago that an Arab, I mean a Muslim Arab, would come to a Jewish school. It would have been unthinkable, you know. In that way I thought it was very special. It was a shame that nobody could hear him.

(Laughter)

Melissa: I couldn't see him, to be honest. He flew himself in, in his helicopter, landed in the playground, in the field over there. We all waited in the hallway and there was, like, special pupils were chosen to stand in front of him or open doors or whatever. He is very, very tiny. I never expected him to be so short. I couldn't see him at first, all I could see was pupils walking round and then there was this little guy and it was him.

Lynne: And he spoke to you?

David: He spoke; we could hear a few lines but nobody could tell what he was saying, not the details. I never actually got to speak to him but it was just nice to think he made the effort to come to the school.

Emma: There were a lot of mixed feelings about it though, weren't there?...

David: I know a lot of people outside the school, more religious, you know, not extremist, but more religiously inclined people. They thought this bloke, you know, like (pause) he started war, you know, twenty years, thirty years ago and now, look how many Jews he killed then but now he wants to (words unclear). A lot of people were anti. I thought it was great....

Lynne: There are very few photographs up anywhere of the visit.

David: It was very short and sweet....There was a video, they taped it all but I don't know where it's gone...There wasn't much opportunity to take pictures of him because he was only here half an hour. He literally came down, came out, made his speech and went straight back up again.

Jane: I met him. He arrived from a helicopter and we had to show him around the technology wing and he came in and the press were just taking photos and he came over to see what I was doing and I was about to put something in the kiln and it was just an amazing atmosphere, just all of a sudden.

Jo: I think it was really good because not many people get a chance to meet a king of any country. I think it was brilliant that the school had something like that.

The headteacher commented to me about the visit, 'It encapsulated the idea that almost anything is possible, that's what was exciting about it, so it kind of summed up what the school is trying to be about.'

It is, perhaps, worthwhile at the end of this account of the culture at Mount Sinai to say something about what isn't there in the school. I noticed two things in particular and they are probably related. Despite a few times when everyone at Mount Sinai is together in one place, there is little sense of the 'school as a whole' and neither is there any sense of the staff as a group. The geography of the site and the history of the school mean that there are hardly any whole school occasions. The first day of the year in the Sports Hall when the *shofar* (ram's horn) is blown is the only one the school has established so far. The sixth form are in a block on their own and have not, so far, been very active in the wider life of the school. Year 7 students could not name a single Year 11 or sixth former whom they knew about in school. When the students who have been in the school since the beginning reach the sixth form in September 1998 this may change. A Jewish teacher who has been at the school since the beginning said, 'We're still working through what we are going to be', and this is also quite a good summary of where Mount Sinai was in its cultural aspirations and achievements at the time of the case study.

Each subject area has an excellent staff preparation room adjacent to its teaching rooms and very few staff go to the main, but tiny, staff room in the old block at break times. A few more go at lunch time. This not only keeps the departments separate from one another but it means there is no central focus for staff. One young teacher told me he had no time to make good relationships with other members of staff. There is a morning briefing for all the staff but there were no signs of social events. I am speculating here, but while there are strong social Jewish networks among the administrative staff in the school who live locally, most of the Orthodox Jewish teachers live elsewhere and, of course, many of the staff are not Jewish. The area of the school cannot support a *kosher* restaurant so where would the staff go?

Although the headteacher claimed that there was an emerging sense of the school as community, I would argue that it is not yet fully in place for all the staff and students. For the first intake who are now in Year 11 the school is like a family. I don't think I have ever heard students of this age speak so warmly about school as the four I interviewed did. To begin with they were 'the school' and they perhaps still have a very strong sense of this. Yet, when I asked them for a symbol of the school even they talked about *their year group*. Other years also have a strong

sense of their year group but not of the school as a whole. Students are happy at Mount Sinai and value, to some extent, the fact that the school is Jewish and that they belong. The headteacher has succeeded in building a well subscribed school to serve the *local community* which is not just a school for Jews but a Jewish school. As Jo, in Year 11 said, 'Since I've been to Mount Sinai I've felt more Jewish, more relaxed, comfortable with my religion than I had before I came to this school. It makes you proud of being Jewish.'

Chapter Five - the Data from the Questionnaires

Introduction

After the 'tale' of each school, this chapter examines in more detail the findings from the two questionnaires. As Monica Taylor commented at the beginning of a fascinating chapter, 'Voicing their Values':

> Notably little attention...has been paid to the true clients of education - the pupils themselves - and to their part in affective empowerment. What values do they take from the school, its ethos and the informal curriculum of relationships with teachers and peers? What do pupils perceive as the main influence on their values? What do pupils' values appear to be in the school context? (Taylor 1996: 124).

In responding to the questionnaire, students gave their views about their school, the curriculum, religious education, values, beliefs and faith, the influences on their religious development and their personal goals for the future. In analysing these I discuss the connections with the existing research described in the first chapter and some of the similarities and differences between the two schools and in this way I begin to bring each culture into wider dialogue. The main purpose of the thesis is not to compare, but I will be making some limited comparisons in this chapter.

Although the questionnaires used in St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai were not identical, I have used them as part of one overall study and I draw attention to points which are significant when they are looked at together. I also make comparisons between St. Margaret's and Flynn's large scale survey of Catholic schools in New South Wales, in Australia, despite obvious differences between his study and mine. Flynn's figures are averages across many schools rather than depicting a particular school and, of course, they come from a different continent and society. He used a larger number of questions and is also able to draw on previous studies to make comparisons over time. However, I found that many of the issues which emerged in my data, were discussed by Flynn and I refer to his findings throughout the chapter.

In comparing St. Margaret's with Paddy Walsh's case study of a Jesuit High School in America I am using data collected using the same instrument but the two schools are different in many ways including the numbers of Catholic students attending. About half of the students at St. Margaret's are Catholic which is a much lower percentage than in the Jesuit school. I have not given separate figures for the Catholic and non-Catholic students at St. Margaret's, except for the items which were specifically about Catholic belief or practice and the catholicity of the school. At St. Margaret's, the Catholic and non-Catholic students are not separated and I did not want to divide them in this study. The total sample of twenty nine is already

small and there is little difference between the views of the fifteen Catholics and fourteen non-Catholics on most issues. For example about 60% of both groups believe in God, five Catholics and four non-Catholics believe that Jesus Christ is truly God, an equal number in both groups stayed on at school in order to go on to higher education and while more Catholic students found that a retreat had given them a sense of self-worth, more non-Catholic students were enjoying RE.

There are no parallel studies of Jewish schools with which I can closely compare Mount Sinai. In analysing the data I refer to some research by one of the teachers at Mount Sinai (Conway 1985) and to other studies which have some relevance to a particular issue.

Finally it is worth noting that no comparable data exists for non-denominational schools either in this country or elsewhere. It would be very interesting to adapt parts of the questionnaire to suit county school sixth forms[1], just as it would be to carry out a large-scale survey as Flynn was able to do. In a small way, my own results begin to answer Monica Taylor's questions, quoted at the beginning of the chapter.

In this chapter I give a detailed breakdown of the figures in some places and more generalised summaries where there is no particular point to make about the individual scores and their relevance to the culture. All the scores are given as percentages rounded to the nearest half percent. The total number of replies is not always the same because, as I explained in Chapter Three, not all the students at Mount Sinai completed the questionnaire. In all cases the percentages are those of the students answering the question. A five point scale was used in the questionnaire in one or other of these forms:

1	and	2
A. no importance		A. certainly false
B. little importance		B. probably false
C. some importance		C. uncertain
D. very important		D. probably true
E. most important.		E. certainly true

A and B can be combined to form the category 'not important' or 'false' and D and E form 'very important' or 'true'. Flynn, himself often displayed his results in this broader form (Flynn 1993:162). He also calculated the mean for each item.[2] A combination of these two values is used to give a rank order for the items. I have followed this procedure but at times I also comment on the percentage of students ranking something as 'most important' or of 'some importance'.

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[1] My own M.Ed. dissertation used a questionnaire to explore religious experience among students in a county school (Scholefield 1987).

[2] The mean or average of all students is obtained by allocating 1 for A, 2 for B, 3 for C, 4 for D, 5 for E, and then adding the scores and dividing by the number of respondents.

Students' expectations of their school

Students were asked about their expectations of their Catholic or Jewish school. St. Margaret's students ranked most highly what Flynn called academic and vocational expectations (p162). Then come personal, social, and finally religious, goals. The following table lists the expectations in rank order:

Table 1 - Expectations of Catholic schools

	Catholic schools should:	% very important	% not important	mean
1=	Assist students to achieve a high standard in school work	93%	0%	4.46
1=	Provide advice on careers and further education	96%	0%	4.39
3=	Prepare students for their future careers	86%	4%	4.39
3=	Give all students a chance of success in some aspect of school life[3]	86%	4%	4.21
5	Prepare students for higher education	82%	4%	3.75
6	Prepare students to become good citizens	68%	11%	3.86
7	Help students to discover and fulfil themselves as persons	56%	11%	3.64
8	Help students understand the society in which they live	50%	4%	3.64
9	Provide an atmosphere of Christian community where people are concerned for one another	39%	7%	3.43
10	Provide an environment in which students' faith in God can develop	32%	32%	3.03
11	Integrate religious education with other subjects where possible	18%	43%	2.64

I am not convinced that students were really saying what they thought about *Catholic* schools here. My hunch is that they are stating their expectations of *schools.*[4] When I wrote the Jewish version of the questionnaire I rewrote the statement listed as 9 in the table above, missing out the words 'of Christian community', so that it was no longer necessarily a religious expectation. A much higher percentage of students (58%) said it was very important.[5] Religious

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[3] Flynn categorises this as 'personal expectation' (p164) but it seems to me that it is also an academic goal.

[4] When I interviewed students at St. Margaret's they appeared to have given little or no thought to the category 'Catholic school'. In contrast, at Mount Sinai, all the students had views ready about what a Jewish school should be like.

[5] See Table 2 for the full details of students' response at Mount Sinai.

expectations rank lowest for St. Margaret's students as they do in Flynn's results (p165).

It is not surprising that students approaching their A levels and crucial decisions about their future, with over two thirds hoping to go on to higher education, should want their school to meet their academic and vocational needs. The Australian picture is the same but what is interesting is that Flynn found that parents and especially teachers, had different expectations. Parents rated 'personal development' most highly as did the teachers, and the teachers put academic expectations lower than social ones and vocational goals last (p168-179).

Further research would be needed to discover the expectations of parents and teachers in Britain but it wouldn't be surprising to discover that tensions exist here too, between the three groups, about the purpose of the Catholic (and the Jewish) school. It is interesting that at St. Margaret's virtually nobody talked about the academic life of the school during the interviews and in response to questions about the curriculum at St. Margaret's only half of the students said the curriculum met their needs.[6] The shared activities such as the drama productions, sports day or retreats which are highly valued are much more to do with personal and social goals. When students wrote about what they would describe as the unique spirit of their Catholic school many of them referred to the sense of community and the friendliness which existed.

The students at Mount Sinai used the image of the family to express what they saw as their Jewish school's unique spirit. The following table shows the way in which they ranked their expectations for their school:

Table 2 - Expectations of Jewish schools

	Jewish schools should:	% very important	% not important	mean
1=	Prepare students for their future careers	83%	8.5%	4.13
1=	Assist students to achieve a high standard in school work	82%	7%	4.26
1=	Give all students a chance of success in some aspect of school life	82%	4%	4.13
1=	Provide advice on careers and further education	81%	4%	4.12
5	Prepare students for higher education	76%	6%	3.98
6	Help students understand the society in which they live	70%	12%	3.70

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[6] See the next section for full details of responses to these questions.

7	Provide an atmosphere where people are concerned for one another	58%	13%	3.54
8	Prepare students to become good citizens	53%	8%	3.66
9	Help students to discover and fulfil themselves as persons	49%	7%	3.52
10	Provide an environment in which students' practice of Judaism can develop	34%	16%	3.20
11	Integrate Jewish Studies with other subjects where possible	17%	43%	2.57

The same academic and vocational expectations clearly outscore the others and I have ranked them all as equal first. These students are one or two years younger than those at St. Margaret's and more of them (85%) hope to go on to higher education. They are also very positive about the school's role in helping them to develop socially. Less than half rate personal fulfilment as a very important goal for a Jewish school and as in all the other studies the expectations for religious development are weaker than for other goals.

I think that the question about the integration of religious education was probably the wrong one to choose when Cairns and Walsh reduced the original list of 40 expectations to 11 (Cairns & Walsh forthcoming). I am not sure that students in either school shared any understanding of what it means and it might have been better to include a statement such as 'teach religious education at a level comparable with other subjects' or 'provide opportunities for worship'. The issue of integration is, however, a very important one which I discuss in the following chapters. Far more students at Mount Sinai think it of some importance for a Jewish school to promote the development of Jewish practice than at St. Margaret's, where thirty percent do not think it important for a Catholic school to develop students' faith in God. This may be, as I suggested earlier, because the Jewish students have given more thought to the faith-based nature of their school. As we will see they are not enthusiastic about this aspect of Mount Sinai.

David Resnick (1992) reported various studies which tried to assess what parents and others wanted from their Jewish school. Not all of the schools were day schools but the findings are still interesting. Identity featured very strongly and Jewish observance least well (Resnick 1992: 50-52). When one of the teachers at Mount Sinai investigated the reasons why parents chose the school she discovered that academic and pastoral factors were most important (Conway 1995: 68). Parents also wanted a school where their children would mix with other Jews while Jewish Studies and Ivrit (modern Hebrew) ranked 12 and 14 out of 15 possible reasons for choosing Mount Sinai (p68). About half the parents said that Jewish

Studies was a subject like any other while most of the rest thought it was more than a subject. A small minority (10%) thought that Jewish Studies was the price to be paid for their child attending Mount Sinai (p70). When parents were asked about the content of Jewish Studies they rated Jewish history and Jewish practice as most important; the study of texts was seen as slightly less important and the study of other major world faiths ranked above *Ivrit* (p73). Interestingly less than 25% thought the teaching of subjects other than Jewish Studies should be affected by the school's faith (p75).

When the students were asked whether what they had learned in subjects other than Jewish Studies had influenced their lives as Jews a quarter said it had supported or strengthened them. Nearly all the rest said it had made no difference while a small number (7%) found it had made it more difficult.[7] The next section gives details of what students think of their school.

School Life and Climate, Curriculum

Flynn found that students were generally very positive in their judgements about their Catholic schools (Flynn 1993: 188). His questionnaires included very many more items than I used and he divided his data up into a large number of different categories which would be unwieldy here. I prefer to follow Paddy Walsh (forthcoming: 16) in his five separate categories although I have subdivided the category, 'evaluation of the school' into two, 'evaluation of the school' and 'evaluation of the curriculum', and I have added a category 'relationships in the school'. Each category has six to eight items and the categories are 'community spirit', 'perception of students' own feelings', 'evaluation of the school', 'evaluation of the curriculum', 'discipline', 'relationships in the school' and 'catholicity' Walsh discovered what he called 'formidably positive' findings (p16) on most of the items in the American Jesuit school which are not reflected in the views of students from either of my two schools.

At St. Margaret's there is a great deal of uncertainty expressed by students. On some items over half said they were uncertain about the issue. Sometimes the students are more positive than their Australian counterparts in Flynn's study but there are also some quite negative views expressed. I give a summary of these views here using round figures.

Community spirit: The 'highest' overall scores are for this section where 80% said that teachers know final year students as individuals and 70% thought that a good spirit of community existed among their year and that most other students were

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[7] At St. Margaret's, students were asked about the impact of other subjects on their Christian beliefs. 80% said it had not affected them. Only one students said it had contradicted his Christian beliefs while the rest (17%) said it had supported or strengthened theirs.

friendly. Over half said that the headteacher encouraged a sense of community and belonging to the school, there was a happy atmosphere and everyone tried to make you feel at home in the school. 50% thought teachers showed a good deal of school spirit.

Perception of students' own feelings: The vast majority have been happy in the school (80% with only 7% disagreeing). School isn't a place where they feel lonely (70)% or worried (60%) although 35% sometimes feel depressed. Most feel they are treated with respect by other people (60%) and that other students accept them (55%). They were asked whether adequate counselling help was available to students and while half were uncertain only 15% said it was. I think there is probably some ambiguity about what 'counselling help' means. St. Margaret's does not employ a school counsellor but there is a great deal of pastoral provision and students also get extensive academic counselling.

Evaluation of the school: This section includes comments about both the formal and informal life of the school. Not surprisingly, in the light of the tradition of the drama productions, 75% said that the school places sufficient emphasis on cultural activities. Half think there is a good sports programme and 40% that the out-of school activities have sufficient variety and scope. Half feel proud to be a student at St. Margaret's and 70% said the teachers are well qualified although only a quarter felt that teachers carried out their work with energy and pleasure. When it comes to the judgements of others, only 25% said that other students think a lot of the school or that the school has a good name in the local community. These views suggest rather low morale .

Evaluation of the curriculum: Students are more positive about the formal curriculum of the school. The subjects taught offer useful knowledge and skills (75%) and the things that are taught are worthwhile learning (70%). Half the students said that the curriculum meets their present needs, there is a good range of subjects for older students, the subjects develop the capacity for independent and critical thinking, and they prepare students for future employment. The degree of uncertainty or disagreement about these things varies. 40% are unsure about the independent and critical thinking while 30% disagree that there is a good range of subjects on offer. The responses to the question whether the subjects taught were relevant to real life and students' needs produced the greatest disagreement. Half were uncertain while the remainder were equally split on the positive and negative sides.

Discipline: There are widely differing views in this category too. 70% said that students knew the standard of conduct expected of them and 60% said that school rules encouraged self-discipline and responsibility. There was less certainty over

whether final year students were given enough freedom (40%) and whether there was too much emphasis on external conformity to rules and regulations (20%). Only 20% said that there were ways to have school rules changed if most students disagree with them and that discipline presents no real problem in the school. I guess that many of these students will have thought about discipline partly, at least, in terms of their responsibility for the behaviour of younger students. As sixth formers in an eleven to eighteen school these students have jobs assigned to them, such as keeping the dinner queue in order, which may not be part of the experience of high school students in Australia or America.

Relationships in the school: There is a good deal of uncertainty expressed here. 60% said that if students have difficulty with school work, most teachers take time to help them and 50% that teachers go out of their way to help. 45% think that relationships between parents and staff are friendly and 40% that most teachers show that people are more important than rules. Only a quarter of students said that teachers usually explained why they asked people to do something and only one in five of the students said they could approach the headteacher for advice and help or that there were opportunities for students to get to know teachers outside the classroom.

Catholicity: Finally there are items about St. Margaret's as a Catholic school. I give the details for all the students with the percentages for the Catholic students in italics. Most clearly expressed is the view that the headteacher places importance on the religious nature of the school (80% *87%*) while 50% *47%* think that Catholic teachers set an example of what it means to be a practising Catholic. 60% *54%* of students would attend a Catholic school if they had to do it all over again and 45% *40%* would send their children to a Catholic school. 42% *47%* think that the RE programme is an important part of the curriculum while 25% *20%* said that a Christian way of thinking is presented in the subjects taught. Only 25% *13%* believe that senior students understand and accept the religious goals of the school.

Flynn analysed his findings for these items under the heading of the schools' traditions which provide a 'strong affective culture and sense of community' (Flynn 1993:185). At St. Margaret's there is a strong sense of community spirit and most students are happy but they do not rate St. Margaret's particularly highly. However, one of the interesting things to emerge from all these figures is that the students are often more positive about the school and its curriculum than they think other students are. So, for example, half are proud to be a student in the school but only a quarter believe other students think a lot of the school. [8]

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[8] I am grateful to Paddy Walsh for drawing my attention to this phenomenon in his data. Another example of this in my findings would be that while 60% are enjoying RE classes and half think the RE programme is good, only 15% think other students take RE seriously.

It is also intriguing that the Catholic students are slightly less convinced of the value of a Catholic school than the students as a whole. This reflects what Leslie Francis and Josephine Egan (1993) reported, that what they call 'non-practising Catholic pupils' in Catholic schools are more disaffected than 'non-Catholic pupils'. Flynn described Catholic schools as 'intensely relational environments' and very few students took a negative view of their teachers' work (Flynn 1993: 195) but at St. Margaret's the students are not sure about their relationships with teachers. Although teachers were seen as well qualified and willing to help students having difficulty with their work, there were few opportunities for students to get to know teachers outside lessons. When I interviewed Year 12 students they told me about a social evening they had arranged to which all the staff had been invited but as one of them said, 'It was okay but I wish there'd been more teachers'. It may be the case that the very strong social bond which the staff share excludes students.

At Mount Sinai the students responded to identical questions except in the last section which I have named 'the Jewish nature of the school'. Here students were asked about Jewish Studies, Jewish teachers and a Jewish understanding across the curriculum. The students are less uncertain than at St. Margaret's but there are few items where the nature of their responses is particularly different.

Community Spirit: A good spirit of community exists (65%) and most other students are friendly (75%). There is a happy atmosphere (65%), teachers know students as individuals (65%) and show a good deal of school spirit (60%). Half said that the headteacher encourages a sense of community and belonging to the school and 40% that everyone tries to make you feel at home.

Perception of students' own feelings: Students don't feel lonely (80%), worried (65%) or depressed (65%) at school. Most have been happy (75%) since other students accept them as they are (75%) and they are treated with respect (60%). These are very positive views, especially for Year 11 students in their final year of compulsory schooling. They were the original cohort of students so for the first year they were the only students in the school. The students I interviewed spoke very warmly about the closeness of their year group.

Evaluation of the school: This is something of a contrast to the last section. Students think their teachers are well qualified (65%) and that there is a good sports programme (65%) but less than half feel proud to be a student at Mount Sinai (45%) or that there is enough emphasis on cultural activities (45%). 40% said that the school has a good name in the community and slightly less than a third thought that students think a lot of the school. Just over a third said that teachers work with energy and pleasure, and that out-of-school activities are varied enough.

Evaluation of the curriculum: Students are more positive here except for the item which asks whether the subjects develop the capacity for independent and critical thinking. 55% were uncertain with only 35% in agreement and this may reflect the difference between the demands of GCSE and A Level. Students said that what they are taught is worthwhile (65%) and offers useful knowledge and skills (60%). Half said that the curriculum meets their needs, offers a good range of subjects to older students, is relevant to real life and students' real needs, and prepares them for future employment.

Discipline: 60% said that students know the standard of conduct expected of them and 45% that the school rules encourage self-discipline and responsibility. The same number think the school places too much emphasis on rules and regulations and that discipline presents a problem at Mount Sinai. Half the students said that students in Year 11 are not given enough real freedom and that there are no ways to change rules even though most students disagree with them.

Relationships in the school: Teachers take time to help students having difficulty with work (75%) and they go out of their way to help (55%). Parents and staff are friendly (50%) but most students are not sure they can approach the headteacher for advice and help (30% said they could). Only a third agreed that teachers usually explained why they ask people to do things, a quarter that there were opportunities to get to know teachers outside the classroom and only 15% that teachers show that people are more important than rules.

The Jewish nature of the school: The headteacher places importance on the religious nature of the school (80%), Jewish teachers set an example of what it means to be a practising Jew (60%) and most students would attend a Jewish school if they had to do it again (55%). Slightly fewer would send their children to a Jewish school (50%) and the same number think the Jewish Studies programme is an important part of the curriculum. A quarter said that a Jewish way of understanding is presented in the other subjects and that senior students understand and accept the religious goals of the school.

What comes through from these results are some apparent tensions. Most students have enjoyed school and the relationships with other students which they have. They are also positive about the formal curriculum but much less so about the way they judge the school as a whole. Only half would send their children to a Jewish school and this suggests that many of the students are not committed to the explicitly Jewish aims of the school. As we saw earlier (Table 2), most students agree that providing for the development of Jewish practice should be of some importance for a Jewish school. Only a quarter said that senior students accept the religious goals of the school. Even accepting the point I made earlier, that students

tend to think other students are more negative in their views than they are themselves, this does suggest considerable difference between these students and the headteacher and staff promoting Mount Sinai as a Jewish school. What may be in dispute here is the relationship between being Jewish, religious practice and education.[9] These issues are further explored in the next section which reports the findings about religious practice among students and their perception of the factors which have influenced their religious development.

Religious practice and development

Although most of the students at Mount Sinai are of Orthodox affiliation[10], most do not attend synagogue regularly. About half do go on the High Holy Days but of the remainder another third never attend and most do not get much satisfaction from celebrating Sabbath or festivals. The pattern of giving to charity is different. Half the students give to charity occasionally and over a third give regularly. Only 14% never give. 15% say they pray regularly, about half occasionally and a third never pray. Even fewer students study Torah. Four study regularly and about a quarter from time to time; 70% never do.

Most of the students' families do not keep strictly to other forms of Jewish practice either although there are religious objects displayed in nearly all the homes.[11] However, because they are not very observant, that does not mean that being Jewish is not important for them. Two thirds of the students agree that being Jewish does not necessarily mean being religious and most students said that religion has some importance in their lives. The school is deliberately trying to develop the students' sense of their Jewish identity while recognising that this will take different forms. Jewish education is understood to be critical in developing Jewish identity and ensuring Jewish continuity.[12]

As we have seen the school pays particular attention to the Jewish festivals, to providing weekends away following Sabbath traditions, to the students' family history and to the importance of Israel. The students are divided about whether they are more religious at school than at home but at school they have to eat *kosher* food and the boys have to wear a *kipah* (skull cap). The responses of the Year 11 students about the influences on their religious developments are shown here:

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[9] The views of the parents which I reported earlier also showed a stress on the academic and the relational aspects of the school rather than its religious nature.

[10] Of the Year 11 students, 65% are Orthodox while nearly 30% are Reform or Liberal.

[11] Strict Jewish practice would include keeping the rules of *kashrut* which govern what can and cannot be eaten, and not doing anything on the Sabbath which counts as work, such as driving.

[12] See for example the book by the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, (1994) where he wrote, 'Jewish continuity in the diaspora depends on Jewish education' (p41). The slogan of the Scopus Jewish Educational Trust is 'Education Today - Commitment Tomorrow' (SJET 1995: back cover).

Table 3 - Influence on Religious Development at Mount Sinai

		% very important	% not important	mean
1	Example and lives of parents	57%	8%	3.76
2	The effect of a visit to Israel	37%	30%	2.85
3	Influence of friends and peers	34%	28%	2.96
4	Influence of Jewish school	19%	42%	2.50
5	Jewish Studies at school	13%	42%	2.40
6	Example and lives of teachers	12%	52%	2.28
7	Influence of people at the synagogue	12%	58%	2.26
8	Influence of classes at the synagogue	7%	62%	2.01
9	Prayer and worship at school	5%	64%	1.90

The influence of parents is not surprising. School experiences are said to be important by just over half the students but that they matter more than synagogue ones is also no surprise given that few students go to synagogue regularly. However, opportunities for prayer and worship at school have not influenced most of the students.[13] What has been influential in their religious development is a visit to Israel. For 70% of the students it was important and 16% said it was most important. The part played by Israel in the school's culture was discussed in the previous chapter.

In the questionnaire students were asked about the impact on them of times away with other students. Only one said that such times had, perhaps, been uninspiring or boring. Respecting others' views more and gaining a sense of self worth were the outcomes most said they had gained from an experience which would, for most, have a lasting effect on their lives. A fifth of students said that going away with other students was the most important religious experience of their lives and a small number (16%) said they had experienced times when they felt close to God.

Religion is of at least some importance to over two thirds of the students at St. Margaret's although only one would say that it is very important to her. Weekly

[13] It may be that this finding, which is echoed in the responses from St. Margaret's is relevant to the debate currently building up again about collective worship in the majority of Britain's schools which are not faith-based.

mass attendance is often the criterion given for someone to be a 'practising' Roman Catholic and according to this only about a third of the Catholic students are practising their faith. Another third go to church a few times a year, probably for major festivals, while the remaining students say they rarely or never go to mass outside school. Marcellin Flynn found that over the past two decades Sunday mass attendance by seventeen year olds in New South Wales 'has declined by 31%, from 69% in 1972 to 38% in 1990' (Flynn 1993: 298). Paddy Walsh found that 60% of the students in the Jesuit school attended regularly, if not every week (Walsh forthcoming: 14).

That pattern is reflected at St. Margaret's for prayer. Over half the students say they regularly spend time in personal prayer and few believe that saying prayers does no good. Daily prayers, liturgies and occasional masses are part of the school experience for these students but, as at Mount Sinai, very few students rate them as important for their religious development. The questionnaire included a question about the sacrament of reconciliation.[14] It is not a popular practice either in the school or more generally. Of the Roman Catholic students a third go a few times a year while the remaining two thirds never attend. Flynn noted that the number of students who were never involved in this sacrament has risen dramatically since 1972 (Flynn 1993: 301). The pattern for reading the Bible across the whole cohort of students was similar to Flynn's findings too with a third occasionally studying the Bible and two thirds never doing so (p303). Following this background information about students religious practice it is interesting to see what they said about the influences on their religious development:

Table 4 - Influence on Religious Development at St. Margaret's

	% very important	% not important	mean
1 Example and lives of parents	66%	3.5%	3.96
2 Influence of friends and peers	52%	7%	3.52
3 School retreat	31%	45%	2.62
4 Influence of Catholic school	21%	38%	2.69
5 Example and lives of teachers	17%	62%	2.27
6 Influence of a youth group	17%	59%	2.10

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[14] This used to be known as 'confession'.

7 Influence of the parish	14%	72%	2.17
8 Religious education at school	7%	52%	2.38
9 School liturgies	7%	59%	1.96

If the ranking had been done according to the mean then religious education at school would have come much higher in the list. Nearly half said it was of *some* importance to their religious development. Then the order would have been almost the same as Flynn recorded although the level of importance of the school-related activities was much higher in his findings (Flynn 1993: 290). He was surprised at the strength of the peer group influence (43% in his sample) which has doubled over the past two decades (p291). At St. Margaret's more than half of the students said that the influence of friends and peer group has been very important to them. I do not find this unexpected although it is not clear from this evidence just what the nature of the influence has been. As I noted earlier it is apparent from the responses elsewhere in the questionnaire that the students are more positive in their own judgements about RE and their Catholic school than they think other students are.

The school seems to have had a good deal more influence than the parish but as we have seen, church attendance is not high amongst these young people and for many their school is the place where they encounter the church as a living reality. At St. Margaret's the example and lives of teachers comes quite high in the rankings and the level of influence is about the same as in Flynn's findings (p290). Since the quality of liturgies at St. Margaret's is very high, with active and creative participation by many of the young people, I would have expected them to rate them more highly as the students in Australia do (Flynn 1993: 290), but Walsh also found that the school liturgies, although very impressive, were of minor influence (Walsh forthcoming: 12). More than half the students at St. Margaret's have found retreats of some importance for their development despite the fact that retreats only happen occasionally. They are held annually for each year group and although they are voluntary, attendance is very high.

When the sixth formers responded to questions about their most recent retreat they were particularly positive about its impact on their sense of self-worth and their respect for the views of others. Only one student denied this impact. About half said it had given them the opportunity to feel close to God and that it might have a lasting influence on their lives. Paddy Walsh found that the retreats at the Jesuit school he studied, largely based on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, were even more influential in students' lives than their peers (Walsh forthcoming: 14).

These retreats were for three days in groups of six and could include parents, siblings, teachers and older students.

If we take the results from Mount Sinai and St. Margaret's together there is a consistent pattern. Times away with other students on retreat or on a visit are important for the religious development of students. About 60% rate their faith-based school as of some importance too. Neither parish nor synagogue has had this influence, partly, at least because students rarely go. In the next section I examine what they said about their religious beliefs.

Religious beliefs

I will begin with the findings from St. Margaret's. I have divided the section up into five categories: beliefs about God, Jesus Christ, the church and prayer, church teaching, and faith development. Within each category the items are listed according to agreement over the answer with the items where there is more agreement coming first. In some cases there is agreement over a view which would not reflect Christian beliefs.

Table 5 - Religious Beliefs at St. Margaret's
Belief in God
1. God is a loving father

True[15]	Uncertain	False
66%	17%	17%

2. God always forgives me

True	Uncertain	False
64%	25%	11%

3. I believe in God

True[16]	Uncertain	False
59%	24%	17%

Belief in Jesus Christ
1. The Gospel of Jesus influences the way I lead my life

True	Uncertain	False
14%	10%	76%

2. Jesus does not mean anything to me

True	Uncertain	False[17]
10%	21%	69%

3. I know that Jesus is very close to me

True	Uncertain	False
35%	41%	24%

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[15] 'True' is the category produced by adding 'certainly true' and 'probably true' together. The category 'False' is a combination of 'probably false' and 'certainly false'.

[16] It is odd that this figure is lower than for the other two items.

[17] This second item appears to contradict the first. Students are saying that Jesus does mean something to them but they are not going to base their lives on his teaching.

4. Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist

True	Uncertain	False
33% (47%)[18]	46% (33%)	21% (20%)

5. Jesus Christ is truly God

True	Uncertain	False
31% (33%)	45% (53%)	24% (14%)

The Church and prayer

1. Church services are boring

True	Uncertain	False
76%	17%	7%

2. I would go to mass on Sundays even if I were free to stay away

True	Uncertain	False
10% (20%)	28% (20%)	62% (60%)

3. It is important for me to spend some time in prayer each day

True	Uncertain	False
24%	17%	59%

4. I think that saying prayers does no good

True	Uncertain	False
21%	24%	55%

5. The church is very important to me

True	Uncertain	False
14%	31%	55%

Church teaching

1. I try to follow the Catholic way of life without questioning it

True	Uncertain	False
17% (7%)	14% (27%)	69% (66%)

2. I accept the church's teaching on birth control

True	Uncertain	False
14% (20%)	24% (27%)	62% (53%)

3. The church needs women priests

True	Uncertain	False
59% (67%)	24% (20%)	17% (13%)

4. I have rejected aspects of the teaching of the church in which I once believed

True	Uncertain	False
28% (20%)	41% (40%)	31% (40%)

Faith development

1. The trust and love of my parents influence my approach to life

True	Uncertain	False
64%	32%	4%

2. I am disturbed at times by my lack of faith

True	Uncertain	False
34%	7%	59%

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[18] Figures given in italics are the percentages for the Catholic students.

3. I have developed my own way of relating to God apart from the church

True	Uncertain	False
50%	29%	21%

4. I experience times of questioning when I am uncertain and confused about my faith

True	Uncertain	False
50%	32%	18%

5. I am coming to believe because of my own convictions rather than the beliefs of others

True	Uncertain	False
50%	39%	11%

6. My faith helps me be a better person

True	Uncertain	False
29%	50%	21%

There is little here to gladden the heart of church leaders. It is a fairly sweeping rejection of institutional religion and church teaching. The majority believe in God and find some significance in Jesus but there is much less explicit Christian belief among these students than among those studied by Flynn (1993) and Walsh (forthcoming). The pattern at St. Margaret's doesn't seem to have changed much, though, since Patrick McNamara carried out his research in the school (McNamara 1990). He asked students, how 'being a Catholic' differed in meaning for them compared with their parents and he commented:

Few are the young men and women who 'are Catholic', as they see it, in ways similar to their parents. Many more, whether one or both parents is Catholic, exhibit the primacy of personal conscience or 'selectivity' characteristic of large proportions of post-Vatican 11 American Catholic teenagers. In this sense, little direct continuity of Catholic identity between parents and offspring is visible. The authority of the institutional Church, in and of itself, is not persuasive to them. So it is at St. Margaret's. In fact, denominational membership seems to many an unimportant matter. A concern for inner authenticity that transcends church membership comes through time and again in these essays (McNamara 1990: 3).

The sociologist, Grace Davie, made a case that many of the large number of people in Britain who no longer belong to any religious group retain some religious beliefs (Davie 1994: 2).[19] Similarly, reporting on the 1990 European Values Systems Study, Jan Kerkhofs noted:

First of all, many 'Christians' are only marginal believers or even agnostics in practice. The churches appear less and less the laboratories of the spirituality of the future. The gap between them and the younger generations is widening. Christianity, as a community of believers, and Christendom, as the historic expression of Christian values in culture and in institutions, are becoming increasingly alienated from one another (Kerkhofs 1991: 7).

[19] Her book, Religion in Britain is subtitled Believing without Belonging.

In the case of students at St. Margaret's they are neither committed to the institutions of Christianity nor to many of its central beliefs. Paddy Walsh's students, nearly all with a Catholic background, were much more 'orthodox' in some of their views (Walsh forthcoming: 13). Nearly all believed in God and over half said that Jesus was truly God and present in the Eucharist (p14). However in neither group do many try to follow the Catholic way of life without questioning it or accept the church's teaching on birth control (p11).

The views of students about other values issues are discussed below but now I want to turn to the religious beliefs of the Jewish students. There are four categories here: beliefs about God, Jewish observance, Jewish identity and personal views. Again I list them according to the level of agreement over the issue.

Table 6 - Religious Beliefs at Mount Sinai
Belief in God
1. I believe in God

True	Uncertain	False
55%	32%	13%

2. God is a loving father

True	Uncertain	False
32%	51%	17%

3. It is hard to believe in God after the Holocaust

True	Uncertain	False
30%	39%	31%

4. God always forgives me

True	Uncertain	False
21%	62%	17%

Jewish Observance
1. It is important for me to pray each day

True	Uncertain	False
18%	23%	59%

2. Synagogue services are boring

True	Uncertain	False
55%	25%	20%

3. Being an observant Jew help me to be a better person

True	Uncertain	False
28%	28%	44%

4. Jewish law influences the way I lead my life

True	Uncertain	False
28%	29%	43%

5. I am more religious at school than at home

True	Uncertain	False
43%	14%	43%

6. Saying prayers does no good

True	Uncertain	False
16%	42%	42%

7. I get great satisfaction from celebrating Sabbath and Festivals

True	Uncertain	False
33%	26%	41%

8. I am disturbed at times by my lack of Jewish observance

True	Uncertain	False
27%	33%	40%

9. I accept the traditional understanding of the role of women in Judaism

True	Uncertain	False
34%	43%	23%

10. The Torah is truly the word of God

True	Uncertain	False
31%	47%	22%

Jewish identity

1. Being Jewish doesn't necessarily mean being religious

True	Uncertain	False
63%	21%	16%

2. Israel is very important to me

True	Uncertain	False
58%	20%	22%

3. I would like to live in Israel at some time in my life

True	Uncertain	False
47%	19%	34%

4. A Jew should always marry another Jew

True	Uncertain	False
42%	20%	38%

Personal views

1. The trust and love of my parents influences my approach to life

True	Uncertain	False
65%	23%	12%

2. I experience times of questioning when I am uncertain and confused about what I believe

True	Uncertain	False
50%	38%	12%

3. I try to follow the Jewish way of life without questioning it

True	Uncertain	False
28%	22%	50%

4. I have rejected aspects of Jewish life which I once followed

True	Uncertain	False
28%	29%	43%

5. I know that I will live a different kind of Jewish life from my parents

True	Uncertain	False
26%	41%	33%

One notices immediately the high levels of uncertainty about many of these issues and in terms of traditional Judaism there is not a lot of comfort. About a third of students believe that the Torah is the word of God and try to follow Jewish

law but as we have seen most students don't agree that being Jewish means being religious. Many of the students are not at all sure about God but much clearer about Israel and about the influence of their parents. In the light of the importance of Jewish continuity it is interesting to see support for the view that a Jew should always marry another Jew[20] and that only a quarter of students expect to lead a different kind of Jewish life from their parents. Jonathan Sacks wrote:

> We had grown used to a situation in which Jewish identity was passed on through the generations by habit, memory, external events and an inescapable sense that being Jewish is *what we are*. Belatedly we have discovered that for our children, being Jewish is no more than a matter of choice. They know that they can choose otherwise....They will choose to be Jewish for one reason only, that knowing the drama of Jewish history, the richness of Jewish life, the grandeur of Jewish ethics and the majesty of Jewish faith, they are *proud to be Jews* (Sacks 1994a: 102).

I will report my findings on the views of students about their Jewish education later but, having examined students' religious beliefs, I now want to consider their responses to questions about values which were answered in both schools and do not refer explicitly to Christianity or Judaism. Again I give them in rank order for agreement over the answer. The responses to the higher ranking issues are more clear cut; towards the end the students are most divided in their views. I will begin with St. Margaret's.

Values and Beliefs

Table 7 - Values at St. Margaret's

1. People today should respect the environment

True	Uncertain	False
97%	0%	3%

2. People should be respected whatever their race, nationality or religion

True	Uncertain	False
93%	0%	7%

3. It is all right to take a small item from a large department store if everyone else does it

True	Uncertain	False
10%	4%	86%

4. It is all right for people who are not married to live together

True	Uncertain	False
83%	14%	3%

5. The homeless and disadvantaged people in society don't concern me at all

True	Uncertain	False
10%	14%	76%

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[20] The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey in America showed that 57% of the Jewish population was marrying out (Sacks 1994a: 21).

6. I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely

True	Uncertain	False
69%	24%	7%

7. Trying out drugs is all right, as long as you don't go too far.

True	Uncertain	False
38%	14%	48%

8. Abortion is a worse evil than the birth of an unwanted child

True	Uncertain	False
34%	28%	38%

9. Euthanasia is morally wrong

True	Uncertain	False
24%	41%	35%

The item about drugs is interesting. Students are more certain about this issue than about some items, that is most have a definite opinion on the issue, but they are divided over what that opinion should be.[21] Half take the view which I am sure most parents and teachers would endorse but a sizeable number agree that trying out drugs can be all right. I guess that many of these students are speaking here from their own experience. This item raises an important question about what the desirable values are which schools should be trying to develop.[22] Drug use is a highly controversial issue in Britain; over a matter such as sex before marriage or couples living together without being married (no. 4), the teaching of the Catholic church is at variance with common practice in the late 1990s. Students at St. Margaret's are, as Paddy Walsh discovered in his American school, 'massively in favour of respect for the environment, and respect for people whatever their race, nationality or religion, and strongly against stealing small items from large department stores, (but) they are anything but pushovers when it comes to more specifically Catholic moral teachings' (Walsh forthcoming: 10).

In a recent article in *Resource* Marion Talbot argued that although young people appear to reject any sort of moral absolutism the reason they give for not wanting to condemn a particular belief is that *everyone's views should be respected* (Talbot 1998: 18). She went on to say, 'Young people are horrified at the idea of exclusion; they want an inclusive society in which everyone, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, age or sexuality counts' (p18). The St. Margaret's Shared Values statement begins:

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[21] They are also split over abortion where the teaching of the Catholic Church is very explicit.
[22] The Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority set up a National Forum for Values in Education and the Community which reported in 1996. Values which were deemed to have a high level of agreement among the British public were in four specific contexts: the self, relationships, society and the environment (SCAA 1996). There is on-going work to develop specific programmes which would help schools promote these values (SCAA 1997). Adrian Thatcher (1998) has taken a very critical view of this process.

In our school, everyone is of equal worth. Everyone's uniqueness and dignity is valued. We speak and listen to each other with patience and understanding. No-one is a stranger in our school.

It is clear that students endorse these spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. Most try to reach out to those who are rejected or lonely and they are concerned for the homeless and disadvantaged in society. The Church's teaching on social justice receives much more positive response from students than its teaching on sexual morality. Flynn found that the importance given to social justice values by his Australian students has increased since the early 1980's (Flynn 1993: 314)[23]. At St. Margaret's fund raising and other charity work is very important and this may well make an impact on students' social values.

What values do the Jewish students endorse?

Table 8 - Values at Mount Sinai

1. People should be respected whatever their race, nationality or religion

True	Uncertain	False
88%	9%	3%

2. It is all right to take a small item from a large department store if everyone else does it

True	Uncertain	False
4.5%	10%	85.5%

3. It is all right for people who are not married to live together

True	Uncertain	False
77%	13%	10%

4. People today should respect the environment

True	Uncertain	False
76%	18%	6%

5. The homeless and disadvantaged people in society don't concern me at all

True	Uncertain	False
16%	14%	70%

6. I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely

True	Uncertain	False
61%	32%	7%

7. Trying out drugs is all right, as long as you don't go too far.

True	Uncertain	False
25%	15%	60%

8. Abortion is a worse evil than the birth of an unwanted child

True	Uncertain	False
23%	34%	43%

9. Euthanasia is morally wrong

True	Uncertain	False
33%	27%	40%

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[23] Flynn found a significant impact of the Catholic school on students' social justice values, independent of the home influence and greater than the impact on explicit religious faith and practice (Flynn 1993: 81). Robert Coles (1993) discussed how young people in America were moved to serve others.

The first thing to notice about these results is a higher level of uncertainty for many items compared to the older students at St. Margaret's. Students at Mount Sinai are also much more willing to condemn all drug use and this, too, may be due to their younger age. The values which they hold most strongly are to do with respect for the individual and for property. Respect for the environment comes lower in the list than at St. Margaret's, with only three quarters agreeing instead of the virtually unanimous agreement in the other school. Perhaps this reflects a difference in the location of the two schools; one is in a very built up area of a large city whereas the other is on the edge of a small town in very picturesque countryside. Perhaps, also, this topic features less often than some of the other issues within the Jewish Studies programme.[24] The school, as we have seen, promotes community service very strongly and this may contribute to the greater certainty about social issues rather than those of personal morality where students are more split in their views. Since many of these topics occur in the religious education or Jewish Studies programme it is interesting, now, to examine attitudes to these.

Religious Education / Jewish Studies

I have divided the responses in this section into four categories: students' attitudes, judgements of quality, links with understanding or practice, links with moral development. The first set of results are for St. Margaret's.

Attitudes to RE: Students are quite positive in their attitudes to RE with 60% saying they are enjoying it this year. The difference in perspective about students' own views and their perceptions of the views of others means that three quarters said that RE was not taken seriously by students. They are divided (40% each way) about whether RE takes up too much time but only 30% said RE was a waste of time. However half said they would not attend if it were voluntary. These results are similar to the ones which Flynn recorded (Flynn 1993: 232) and may reflect the efforts put in by staff to what is the only non-examined subject for many students.

Quality of RE: RE classes are not poorly prepared and taught (only 15% said they were). Half think there is a good RE programme for older students but it is not taught at a comparable level with other subjects and it is right that formal assessment should not play a part in RE. Only a quarter think that RE is not related

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[24] This is a guess. The topic of 'homelessness' is studied in connection with the festival of *Succot*; persecution of people, because of their race or nationality, is prominent in the stories of *Chanukah* and *Purim* (two other festivals) as well as in study of the Holocaust and the family history projects; matters to do with property frequently feature in discussion of the *Mishnah* (a key legal text in Judaism); sexual morality is part of the sex education programme; prayer and God are common topics.

to real life and needs. 40% said that it was and this is much more than the number who answered positively to the same question about the curriculum as a whole.

Understanding and practice: RE has not helped students pray (70%) but over half said it helped them understand religious and non-religious points of view. Half said that they knew enough about Catholicism and a third that RE had deepened their understanding. 40% said that they had been helped to understand the Gospels and that the study of other religions had helped them appreciate their own. About half denied RE had helped their understanding of the Eucharist or the meaning of life.

RE and moral development: In the light of what students said about some moral questions it is interesting to see how RE might have influenced those views. There was sufficient time for discussion in RE (80%), moral issues are given emphasis in class (70%) and basic Catholic values and teaching are taught (60%). A quarter of students denied that RE had helped them form their own conscience and a quarter said that the specific topic of Christian marriage had not been treated in enough depth.

These results parallel those which Flynn found. With reference to New South Wales Catholic secondary schools, he concluded that 'students today appear to enjoy classes more and be allowed more time for discussion of religious issues than in 1982' (Flynn 1993: 232). Catholic schools usually allocate a fair amount of time to RE for all sixth form students and at St. Margaret's this is seen quite positively by them.

The Jewish Studies programme at Mount Sinai is rather different from sixth form religious education at St. Margaret's. The Year 11 students are studying for GCSE in Jewish Studies which includes knowledge of some Jewish biblical and Rabbinic texts and of festivals, rites of passage and worship, and contemporary issues. The questions asked were essentially the same and I present the results under the same headings, commenting where the pattern is different from St. Margaret's.

Attitudes to Jewish Studies: There is no obvious sign here of the difference in perception between students own enjoyment of Jewish Studies (50%) and their judgement that others don't take it seriously (55%). A third of students said that Jewish Studies takes up too much time and 20% that it is a waste of time and only one in five said they would attend if it were voluntary. As we saw earlier (Table 3), over half the students said that Jewish Studies had been of some importance in their religious development but, although they have learned from it, there is not overwhelming support here for Jewish Studies as an important part of the school's curriculum.

Quality of Jewish Studies: Classes are not poorly prepared or taught (15% said they were) and half thought they were taught at a comparable level with other

subjects. 40% said it was a good programme and related to real life and needs. Over the question of assessment there was a good deal of uncertainty (45%) with 30% saying that examinations and other assessment should play a part in Jewish Studies.[25]

Understanding and Practice: The more content laden GCSE course seems to have added significantly to students' understanding about Judaism. Jewish Studies has deepened students' understanding of the Jewish tradition (65%) and helped them understand the Torah (60%) and the role of the synagogue (50%). 60% said they knew enough about living a Jewish life but Jewish Studies hadn't helped them pray (only 13% said it had). 45% disagreed that the study of other religions had helped them appreciate Judaism[26] and a third said that Jewish Studies had not helped them understand other religious and non-religious views of life or understand the meaning of life.

Jewish Studies and moral development: Students at Mount Sinai were also more positive about the role of Jewish Studies in helping them form their own conscience (over 60% against 40% at St. Margaret's). There is enough time for discussion (60%), contemporary moral issues are emphasised enough for half the students, with Jewish values and moral teaching being taught (50%). Over 70% said that Jewish marriage had been treated in sufficient depth in Jewish Studies classes.

Whether this form of Jewish education will prove to be sufficient to ensure that students do *choose* to be Jewish in the future remains to be seen but they were asked about their goals for the future.

Personal Goals for the Future

Table 9 - Personal Goals for the Future at Mount Sinai

		% very important	% not important	mean
1	To find personal happiness and satisfaction in life	93%	0%	4.62
2=	To be important and successful in life	90%	2%	4.45
2=	To be happily married and have a happy family life	89%	0%	4.56
2=	To accept myself as I am	89%	0%	4.47
5	To make lifelong friendships with other people	79%	4%	4.07

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[25] The recent introduction of the GCSE Religious Education short course, nationally, was mainly an attempt to increase student motivation by providing certification for an already compulsory subject.

[26] The Jewish Studies programme does not include formal study of other religious traditions. The different approaches of Orthodox and Reform Judaism are covered in the GCSE course.

6	To make a lot of money	76%	2%	4.14
7	To be honest in my dealings with others	59%	11%	3.75
8	To serve other people	23%	30%	2.83
9	To further my Jewish education	13%	45%	2.66
10	To be a fully observant Jew	13%	49%	2.30

The responses to items 2, 3 and 4 are so similar that I have ranked them all as coming after the goal of personal happiness and satisfaction. It is interesting that none of the Jewish students rejected the goal of a happy marriage and family. If Jewish continuity depends on having Jewish grandchildren, then this positive valuing of marriage and the family is important. The last chapter illustrated the stress on families within the school.

The table does not give the percentage responding that an item was 'of some importance' but just over half of the students indicated that to continue with their Jewish education was of, at least, some importance to them as it was to practise their Judaism. This level of commitment parallels the students' attitudes to the religious goals of the school. It does not provide evidence that attending a Jewish school has ensured that students will make the choice to be Jewish, at least in a religious sense. Nearly all will try to be honest with others and most wish to be of service. All the students, except one, recognise the importance for them of being important and successful in life and making a lot of money. These students are ambitious and one of the aims of the school was to raise the educational expectations of its students, less than a quarter of whose parents have had any sort of higher education. In the last chapter I noted the comment of the headteacher about King Hussein's visit, 'It encapsulated the idea that almost anything is possible. That's what was exciting about it, so it kind of summed up what the school was trying to be about.'

The personal goals at St. Margaret's are a bit different.

Table 10 - Personal Goals for the Future at St. Margaret's

		% very important	% not important	mean
1=	To find personal happiness and satisfaction in life	100%	0%	4.71
1=	To accept myself as the person I am	100%	0%	4.46
3	To be happily married and have a happy family life	86%	11%	4.28
4	To make lifelong friendships with other people	71%	4%	3.89

5	To be honest in my dealings with others	64%	4%	3,39
6	To be important and successful in life	61%	7%	3.92
7	To make a lot of money	46%	18%	3.46
8	To serve other people	29%	14%	3.07
9	To find God in my life and grow in faith in Him	21%	32%	2.64
10	To live up to the example and teachings of Christ	18%	46%	2.46

These students do not see material success or status as their prime goal. They value their own integrity and their relationships much more although marriage may not be essential for some. In addition, as we saw earlier, the vast majority (86%) view the service of others as, at least, of some importance in their personal ambitions. The rank order is almost exactly the same as the one Flynn found, with 3 and 4 reversed in importance (Flynn 1993: 102). The majority of these young people are concerned about their spiritual development, their relationship with God, but this is not necessarily going to be as committed Christians. Attending a church school has certainly not ensured that the church will play a part in students' lives. However, I don't think the head teacher at St. Margaret's would be too disappointed with his students' goals in life. They could, perhaps, be described as 'community values' and when I asked him what he was most proud of about St. Margaret's he said:

> People have a sense of belonging to a community, that is caring despite human frailties....it is a good community to be part of. There is a lot of life, there is a lot of care, there is a gospel vision.

Conclusions

What can be said, then, about the culture of the two schools from these questionnaire results? Firstly, the students in both schools are diverse in their backgrounds and in their views. Some, including students with Catholic or Orthodox Jewish backgrounds, do not appreciate being on the receiving end of Jewish or Catholic education although most of them have been happy at their school. Not all the students share willingly in the symbols, stories, rituals and values of St. Margaret's or Mount Sinai, and Catholic or Jewish schooling will not guarantee that these students go on to live as practising Christians or observant Jews. On the other hand, the schools are having much more impact than churches or synagogues.

Secondly, I would argue that the opportunities and encouragement which these students have received at school, to be involved in fund raising and community work, may well make an impact on their future lives as citizens in a democracy. I think that there is also strong evidence here that the opportunities for time away together, even where this is only an occasional occurrence and may be of short duration, has had a real impact on students' development. These opportunities are an important part of the specific cultures of the two schools and the impact that they have needs to be taken into account in analysing what Catholic or Jewish education means in the two schools.

I have already referred to the apparently poor showing that school worship has in the influences on students' religious development. This is the finding from two faith-based schools where, at least, the very idea of 'collective worship' is not so problematic. I'm not convinced that students would have been any more positive about the impact of assemblies on their spiritual or moral development. Where the students' experience of collective worship did come into its own, as we saw in the last chapter, was in the cases where someone had died or to mark key events such as students leaving the school In both schools the symbols, rituals and stories could express a shared identity which is, to some extent, Jewish or Christian.

Finally, I think these findings suggest the cultural openness of the two faith-based schools; the students have not learned bigoted or intolerant views. As a student at St. Margaret's said about what she valued about her Catholic school, 'I have come to appreciate that everyone has their own beliefs'. Students generally value the sense of community which they have experienced at school and also, within both schools, there is a recognition, even a positive valuation, of diversity which goes alongside a sense of identity. Getting that balance right might be a good way forward for any faith-based school to contribute to the common good of our society.

Chapter Six - The Cultures of the Schools in Dialogue

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to work with the 'tales' which I have told of the cultures of the two schools. In the last chapter I began to bring material from the schools into closer dialogue. Now I want to step back from the narratives to bring other 'voices' into play. In a recent book called *Clashing Symbols - An introduction to Faith-and-Culture* Michael Paul Gallagher claimed the following:

> Culture involves, therefore, the interaction of two dimensions: more hidden sets of assumptions (meanings and values) and the more manifest field of observable social patterns (common ways of life) (Gallagher 1997: 18).

I have been discussing the latter, the more observable elements of the culture. I now turn to the more hidden: the possible meanings and significance of the cultures.

First I discuss theoretical voices about the significance of symbols, stories, rituals and values. These theoretical ideas are useful in deepening an understanding of these elements, which Flynn named as key dimensions of the culture of schools (Flynn 1993: 40). My aim here is not to contribute to theoretical development as such, but the relevance of the theories to the examples from the case studies of the schools does provide confirmation of their utility.

I then return briefly to voices from the two schools with the responses of some of the teachers to the 'tales' I wrote about their schools. This continued, in an important way, the dialogue between the staff at St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai and the researcher.

The final section of this 'portmanteau' chapter introduces dialogues about issues in Jewish and Christian schooling that were on-going in the schools but which included significant voices from the wider community. We hear from the headteachers, from others who have an interest in Mount Sinai and St. Margaret's and from other researchers into Jewish and Catholic schools.[1] The dialogues are about what it means to be a Jewish or a Catholic school, given the specific circumstances each operates in and the diversity of the students in both schools.

However, the chapter is not simply a collection of the bits and pieces which don't quite fit elsewhere; there is common thread running through it. At each stage the dialogue is widened and deepened in some way, by comments and reflections that were not part of the original case studies. These dialogues still relate to the

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[1] The other researchers are indirect participants in the dialogue; the issues they are addressing are being discussed at St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai even though their voices are not heard there directly.

cultures of the two schools, however. Only in the next, and final, chapter will I widen the dialogue beyond the schools to ideas of Jewish and Christian education.

I Dimensions of culture: theoretical voices
Symbols

The symbols of a school express, powerfully, its culture. Clifford Geertz wrote that culture:

> denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men (sic) communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (Geertz 1973: 89).

This is a 'semiotic view' (p5) concerned with the webs of significance within a culture which require interpretation in search of their meaning. Signs are a good deal simpler than symbols. The board outside the school which gives its name and that of the headteacher is a sign. It yields its meaning in a straightforward way and does not, usually, evoke the imagination, emotions or memories. Symbols do, often, have these powers of evocation and they connect, in some way, with what they signify. As Michael Lawler put it:

> Symbols offer not just a set of cognitive meanings for ordering the human world. They offer also, and perhaps more importantly, a set of evocative instruments for arousing and channelling powerful feelings. Whole persons and not just their intellects, are involved in symbols (Lawler 1987: 18).

What is more, symbols are public, belonging to a community, and they must be 'lived into' (p19)[2]. Eisner argued that schools need lively symbol systems:

> If education has as one of its major aims the development of each child's ability to create meaning from experience, and if the construction of meaning requires the use of skills within a symbol system, then the absence of such systems within the curriculum is an impoverishment of the quality of education children receive (Eisner 1985b: 128).

Since religions are particularly rich in symbols, a faith-based school is in a good position to provide a vibrant symbol system and both St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai have many expressive symbols drawn from their religious traditions. Flynn wrote that such 'symbols point to a world of meaning and reality beyond themselves and are visible expressions of what the school stands for' (Flynn 1993: 43).

For a Catholic school the most obvious signs might be a cross or crucifix and statues of Mary. In the Prologue to *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Bryk et al. 1993) there is a description of St. Madeline's Academy as it was in 1955. In each classroom there was a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and girls

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[2]Symbols also operate powerfully in dreams, for example, and in visual art and film. See Jung, C. G. ed. 1964.

often put a vase of flowers in front of it. A crucifix hung on the wall at the front of every room and religious phrases such as 'To Jesus through Mary' adorned the black board (p3-4). By 1985 the school which the researchers visited had less obviously religious symbols. There were displays of student artwork everywhere, plants and carpeted floors. The crucifix remained in each classroom but it was the human warmth which was displayed in many ways which struck the observers (p6-7) and which also signifies a Christian commitment to 'love your neighbour as you love yourself' (Luke 10: 27).[3]

St. Margaret's, too, has moved with the times. There are images of Mary throughout the school but these come from very different cultures; the cross in the staff room is African. Lourdes is a powerful symbol in various ways, although only the staff know about the beige Madonna. The crucifix in the hall is sometimes removed or replaced by an icon. The photographs around the school show pictures of Lourdes, charity efforts, sports day, visits and, of course, the school production. Students' work is also displayed in every corridor and it is students who greet the visitor. Bryk et al. remarked that Catholic schools direct attention to the social basis for human engagement:

> For students, the school constitutes a network of caring relations that binds them to the place, its people and its programs. For teachers, meaning is found in the lives they touch (Bryk et al. 1993: 306).

At Mount Sinai the huge *menorah* (seven branched candlestick) built into the wall facing the well-regulated entrance leaves the visitor in no doubt that this is a Jewish school. Boys wear a *kipah* (skull cap) and there are many other symbols of Jewish practice such as the synagogue area or the *succah* (temporary dwelling). The food served in the Dining Hall, the organisation of the timetable and the school year, the use of Hebrew and Yiddish, and the prominence of the Israeli flag are all expressive Jewish symbols. Equally symbolic, if not so directly visual, is the way in which students are known to one another, and to the staff who are local, because of contacts outside the school. The interactions in the reception area show this very clearly. They express an important aspect of what it means for Mount Sinai to be a community school.

At this point it is worth introducing some distinctions in the meaning of the word 'community' in the context of a school. David Hargreaves identified four different senses in which a school could be a community school. The first sense, which very much operates at Mount Sinai and at St. Margaret's, is the promotion of a community within the school (Hargreaves 1982: 114). The second use, which does not apply to St. Margaret's but is critical for the way in which Mount Sinai is

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[3] Joseph McCann (1998) used the symbol of the crucifix to indicate what he saw as the distinctiveness of the Catholic school.

understood, is the development of ways in which there is participation in the school by the local community especially where the school is a neighbourhood school (p115). In a third, and related, use the school is a community centre (p115) and finally, and of most interest to Hargreaves, there can be a community-centred curriculum (p117).

At Mount Sinai there is a commitment to service in the local community which symbolises the interactive relationship envisioned between the school and the local Jewish community.

> The school's aim which is supported by parents and governors, is to take its intake, and create from and for them a community school, within an Orthodox setting, able to enhance and enrich the...Jewish community (Section 23 report, Felsenstein 1997: 3).

The inspection found that the school had succeeded to a remarkable degree in achieving the aim of establishing a community school to serve the local Jewish community but the report said:

> The evidence is less convincing that the complementary aim of the school of establishing this community within an Orthodox setting has yet been achieved, for the symbols and practices of observance are not as yet clearly defined (Felsenstein 1997: 6).

The kinds of things the inspector had in mind included facilities for washing hands before meals and the practice of saying Grace after Meals, regular prayer and enforcing the wearing of the *kipah* (p11). When I spent time in the school the following autumn Year 7 were having daily *Minchah* (afternoon prayer) and boys were being constantly reminded to wear their *kipah*.[4]

Mount Sinai operates, to some extent, as a community school in all four of the ways which Hargreaves named. The symbols which staff and students chose to convey the meaning of the school reflect the warm relationships which exist. There was a hand reaching out, a handshake, conversations between students and staff, and the headteacher's enthusiasm. But these are not the only ways of reading the relationships; it may be recalled that one teacher chose 'a play group' to symbolise the often noisy and rather chaotic atmosphere which he was encountering.

Other differences of understanding, relating to the religious nature of the school, are also evident, as the Section 23 report and the responses from students to the questionnaire showed. The headteacher and the Jewish Studies staff do not live in the local Jewish community. They are *frum* (Yiddish for 'religious' or 'orthodox' or 'observant') and some of the local people, including staff, governors and parents who are not *frum*, find that their Jewish lives do not correspond to the messages

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[4] Yehuda Wurtzel (1983) wrote that it was vital to find ways in which Jewishly unaware or disaffected children could be helped to assimilate Jewish symbols. While he identified this as a key problem for Jewish education he was unable to suggest very realistic solutions.

being given by the school that Jews should be observant. A parent who works in the school told me that she felt 'the *frummers* tend to look down on us'. She keeps *kosher* at home but not when eating out.[5] She goes to *shul* (synagogue) every week but she might drive there if it is wet.

This tension is symbolised by "McDonald's" which has itself become a symbol of a common, global, culture (Surin 1992). A Jewish teacher said to me:

> It isn't part of the school ethos to approve the non Jewish things they get up to such as going to McDonald's on a Friday afternoon. Of course we can talk about it but it is a game that is played, "You shouldn't be going to McDonald's but we know you do." Really they know I don't give a damn. That isn't what is important to me about being Jewish, but I've never said that and I wouldn't ever dream of saying it. If I was asked, "Do you keep *kosher*?", I would say, "No", but they never have; they wouldn't put me on the spot....I think (in this area) its much more relaxed, much more open, much more accepting of variety, much more tolerant and wants to see that tolerance reflected in the school but some of the structures in place don't reflect that...."Our Judaism isn't good enough" that is the subtext.

At St. Margaret's tensions might have been expected between the students who are not, in the main, practising Roman Catholics and explicit Catholic practice but this had been dealt with, to some extent, by reducing the number of compulsory Masses to a minimum and using other forms of worship.[6] The Year 11 leavers' liturgy described in Chapter Four is a good example of this. The service, although Christian, was not a Mass, the central Catholic act of worship. Everyone could be fully involved and the symbols which were used expressed the meanings of the students' lives rather than being traditional religious symbols. There was a priest there, but his only part was to give a final blessing after the various activities, readings and prayers which were planned and carried out by staff and students. There were no crosses or crucifixes on the wall.

According to Flynn (1993: 159) the school itself can also be an expressive symbol. The creation of a new Jewish school in 1993 was expressing a commitment to Jewish continuity based on extending the opportunity for Jewish education in a way which might also change the local community. St. Margaret's, while not an explicitly ecumenical school[7] is expressing the belief that a Catholic school can be good news for all the students who attend. Unlike many Catholic schools in England and Wales which are over-subscribed, but like Catholic high schools in

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[5] Although the local Jewish community is one of the largest in Britain it can not support a *kosher* restaurant because it is not a particularly observant Jewish population.

[6] In the next section there are comments by teachers about this aspect of the culture of St. Margaret's. At the time that I carried out the case study the school was described in the brochure as 'a Christian school in the Catholic tradition'.

[7] Priscilla Chadwick discussed the experience of ecumenical schools in *Schools of Reconciliation* (Chadwick 1994).

America (Bryk et al. 1993: 128), St. Margaret's does not have a highly selective admissions policy and religious affiliation is not the key consideration. Nevertheless, parents who choose the school might well be making a deliberate decision to opt for a faith-based school rather than a county school. As Bryk et al. commented:

> The voluntary nature of this action is important, because it signifies a willingness to join the community and to accept its values (Bryk et al. 1993: 128).

The symbols which staff and students at St. Margaret's chose to express how they saw the school reflect the importance for them of being a community in the first of Hargreaves' usages. Their symbols included a hand sheltering a flame, a welcome doormat and a growing plant. Students described the unique spirit of the school as 'friendly' and while about a third referred explicitly to Christianity or Catholicism to express what they had come to appreciate about the school, they mainly wrote about the valuing of diversity and the sense of community. The theme of community will feature again but I return now to the stories which make up the cultures.

Stories

Stories tell us who we are.[8] In their prologue to *Stories Lives Tell*, Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings wrote, 'Like many writers on narrative, we acknowledge the central role that narrative structure plays in the formation of the self and in the construction, transmission and transformation of cultures' (Witherell & Noddings eds. 1991: 3). Flynn named stories as one of the key elements of culture and he was referring both to religious stories which he named 'myths', and to stories of the schools' traditions (Flynn 1993: 45-49). When these stories are told they communicate group culture and they also help to establish and communicate individual identity and make meanings of our experience.[9]

In Chapter Two I discussed ideas about story and interpretation from narrative theology and feminist theory and I use the genre of a 'tale' in the thesis. In Chapter Four I told a number of stories about the schools and recounted stories I had been told by students or staff. This section draws on some theoretical ideas to throw light on the role of stories within the culture at Mount Sinai and St. Margaret's. Since the study is dialogical I will also refer to the role of story within dialogue.

One of the key stories from St. Margaret's is the story of the Beige Madonna, told on page 87. I told this story to a Benedictine nun recently. Sr.

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[8] Barbara Myerhoff was claiming that telling stories is a key human activity when she referred to *homo narrans*, humankind as storyteller, on the final page of her study of a centre for elderly Jews (Myerhoff 1978: 272).

[9] Judith Butler (1991) suggested that when we tell our stories we 'perform' our identity.

Deborah used to be a teacher in a tough primary school in London and the best word to use to describe her reaction to the story is 'shocked'. She made me retell the story to Mother Prioress later that day. I don't think she could believe it. She wasn't upset that a hallowed image was being misused; she was shocked that anyone would want anything to do with a pietistic symbol of Marian devotion let alone adopt it as a school mascot.

I feel quite differently. Hearing about the Beige Madonna was part of the reason why I selected this school for my case study. As a fairly recent convert to Catholicism I don't have any of the antagonism which some of my students express about things like the rosary or statues of Mary. Neither have I ever been or wanted to go to Lourdes but it seemed to me that here was an image of traditional Catholic practice which had been used, or perhaps re-invented, to express something of the identity of a teacher at St. Margaret's.

It was the headteacher who laughed loudest when I asked about her and he used the phrase about the Beige Madonna accompanying them on staff 'jolly japes'. He was more relaxed talking about her than at any other time in the interview. As they retell stories about her the staff forge a collective memory. Only teachers know about her; the students don't, even those who go to Lourdes, and that reflects the very strong staff culture at St. Margaret's. They often talk about the 'camaraderie' existing amongst the staff and claim that this characterises what it means to work in a Catholic school.

I am deliberately moving around between levels of interpretation here. The original story, as you have read it, is my construction based on what I was told; I refer to what the people who told me about the Beige Madonna said about its meaning; I tell something of my own story both as a convert to Catholicism and as the researcher choosing a case study school; I locate the story in connection with elements of wider Catholic culture involving Mary and Lourdes; I include the reactions of an interested listener. You will have had your own reaction to the story and begun your own interpretation as you read it.

Stories are powerful, partly because they are necessarily particular; they are precisely located in time and space and therefore partial. For dialogue to be creative I think it is critical that we speak as, and for, ourselves; in order to spell out our identity we tell stories. There are stories about our own lives and there are the stories with which we make sense of our lives. As we hear the other's story so our story is transformed. Robert Coles in *The Call of Stories* (1989) discussed the importance of stories in treating psychiatric patients and then, at more length, the impact on high school students, medical students and others of novels and short stories. He wrote:

Novels and stories are renderings of life; they can not only keep us company, but admonish us, point us in new directions, or give us courage to stay a given course. They can offer us kinsmen, kinswomen, comrades, advisers - offer us other eyes through which we might see, other ears with which we might make soundings (Coles 1989: 159-160).

There is much about the interplay between 'my story' and 'other stories' in feminist writing[10] and this is also central to much Jewish and Christian writing about story.[11] At St. Margaret's biblical stories are often told in assemblies (see p96) and in liturgies and masses the 'Christian story' is told and retold in readings, prayers and actions. At the end of his concluding remarks about gospel, mission and culture Andrew Walker wrote:

In postmodernity, most people will not live in community, but we Christians must if we are to show the way home....This is a reminder to us that the story is not a set of propositional truths, or a manual of systematic theology. It is the story of Christ, that, once written in our hearts, shows us how we should treat each other, how to live together, how to become persons (Walker 1996: 200-201).

As I showed in Chapter Four there are many references by staff to the gospel, to reconciliation, to prayer for others, to understanding their own role as mission and to the development of community.[12] The headteacher said about liturgy, 'you are celebrating their life story and the relevance of the Christian message to that life story'. There are significant stories about Lourdes told in pictures as well as words and many students are involved in the Lourdes story through fund raising, listening and looking, although not all go on pilgrimage. In religious education the Christian story is told and studied with all Year 10 and 11 students taking a GCSE course which requires them to connect Christian teaching to contemporary issues.

The stories which are told about St. Margaret's are mainly about aspects of community. There are the stories about the productions, sports days, the visits and retreats. These stories are told, often, in pictures around the school and in newspaper articles about the school and a theme which is often heard is about how these activities help students find and develop their gifts.

At Mount Sinai there is a very conscious awareness that the school is enabling students to encounter the Jewish story because Jewish education centres

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[10] See, for example. Behar & Gordon eds. 1995; Linden 1993; Pui-Lan & Schussler Fiorenza eds. 1998.

[11] For example Bausch 1984; Deitcher & Tannenbaum 1990.

[12] In her fascinating article about hospitality to strangers as the key Christian approach to the 'Other' in a multi cultural world. Susanne Johnson tells a powerful story called 'The Unexpected Lunch Date' (Johnson 1993: 344-346). I have found that students have referred back to that story frequently once they have heard it. I will come back to the idea of hospitality in the final section of the thesis.

on study of texts.[13] The texts are both biblical and rabbinic and there is a very interesting way of understanding their function. They provide a *language* which students can learn and with which they can 'write' their lives. This language is not Hebrew, although that will be needed for any detailed study of the texts.[14] The language is Jewish culture, its values, its forms of expression, its patterns of community, its stories. The *literature* is not produced in a book but lived out by those who have made the Jewish culture their own. Michael Rosenak wrote:

> For education, as a cultural activity, is the teaching of a language and helping learners to see it as their home. It is, at the same time, cultivating an appreciation of its literature and enabling the next generation to make literature in the language (Rosenak 1995: 22).

This way of understanding story which I am arguing for depends, in the Jewish context, on a certain approach to *midrash* (way of interpreting a text) which could be called 'dialogue'.[15] Avivah Zornberg wrote:

> The aim of interpretation is...to make the reader aware, in the current that runs between his/her lived situation and the text of the way in which we are, at key instants, strangers to ourselves....On the one hand we are reassured to find ourselves, with our most radical dilemmas, reflected in these ancient texts. On the other hand, the midrashic strategy will not allow us to rest in a formalized, serenely fixed image of human life (Zornberg 1995: xv).

Midrash is not only a method of interpretation; it is the whole collection of rabbinic interpretations, particularly about the Bible. Howard Deitcher (1992) explored how this literature could draw students into stories which connected with their experience. At Mount Sinai texts are studied in Jewish Studies through out the school. The sixth form programme is intended 'to enable students to make the language of Judaism relevant to their everyday life experiences through radical interpretation'.[16] Stories are told and retold in connection with the festivals. There are also key stories about Israel and about the students' own families. Rabbinic sayings are found in the prospectus, the diaries and other documents the school produces. These often refer to the kind of behaviour or action which Judaism advocates and this is identified as key to Jewish identity and Jewish community.

The most significant story told about the school at the moment is probably the one about King Hussein's visit. As in St. Margaret's the staff at Mount Sinai told stories about recent deaths and the way people had rallied round. Other stories

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[13] I chose the pseudonym 'Mount Sinai' for the school because the key Jewish text, the Torah, was given at Sinai.

[14] Moshe Greenberg (1990) made a powerful case for the importance of studying the Bible in Hebrew.

[15] In a recent article Bonna Haberman (1998) argued that the correct relationship between text and action (or as I named it earlier, 'performance') is that action is text interpretation proper.

[16] This is how the Jewish Studies teacher who developed the sixth form programme explained it.

which emerged were about visits to Israel, drama productions, weekends away and festival activities like the *Chanukah* lighting and the *Purim* fair.

In these last examples it is easy to see how stories, and symbols, are often enacted in rituals.

Rituals

Rituals obviously include prayer and worship but they also include daily activities of the school. These come to be accepted as 'the way things are done round here' (Flynn 1993: 49). The links between symbols, stories, rituals and values can be clearly illustrated in the *seder* meal at Passover. There is an order for what happens set out in a *haggadah*[17] and the ritual includes symbolic items such as unleavened bread, wine and salt water. There are prayers and blessings, songs and activities all of which are intended to engage the interest of people attending the *seder* and encourage them to ask questions. The *haggadah* includes four questions to be asked by the youngest child present. In some way rituals make real what they are about; they re-present the events and meanings they tell. So the *seder* proclaims and makes personally real the presence and action of God who led Israel from slavery to freedom. The Eucharist makes Jesus present for the community called Church (Lawler 1987: 28). 'It symbolizes...proclaims, realizes and celebrates the presence of Jesus of Nazareth offering himself for the salvation of all humankind' (p147).

> Clifford Geertz put it like this:
> In ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world (Geertz 1973: 112).

For the observer, rituals provide a rich source for identifying how the participants understand their reality and the significant elements within it. Barbara Meyerhoff noted how a particular ritual, devised and performed by the elderly Jewish residents at the day centre she studied was:

> a totally unique event, blending the sacred and secular, and successfully linking two entirely distinct realms of meaning and experience into a strong, convincing ritual drama. It was an occasion that transcended many contradictions, fused disparate elements, glossed conflicts, and provided a sense of individual and collective continuity in the course of mounting a bold and original fiction (Myerhoff 1978: 105).

At St. Margaret's there are liturgical rituals to mark the entry and exit of students. As one teacher said to me about the leavers' liturgy, 'In Year 7 they have a welcoming liturgy with candles symbolising the parents bringing the students and entrusting them to the school. Now they're taking their own light out into the

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[17] *Haggadah* means 'telling' and what is told is a story. *Seder* means 'order'.

world.' There are no leaving rituals yet at Mount Sinai but the blowing of the *shofar* (ram's horn) at the beginning of the new school year is a powerful joining ritual. David, in Year 11, described what happened on his first day:

> I remember that I was very scared on the first day because most people...came from the Jewish primary school. And when I came in I was scared of these people, meeting new people. I wasn't too sure about them, and then I heard this, the *shofar*....Well I heard the *shofar* calling me, calling us in. I thought it was a bit strange. I was okay. I said good-bye to my mum and I went inside.

Blowing the *shofar* has continued each year as a way of marking the new school year. It echoes the religious ritual at *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). A ram's horn is used because of the substitution of a ram for Isaac at the *Akedah* (the binding of Isaac)[18]. There are many other rituals carried out at Mount Sinai which are part of Jewish life such as the lighting of the *chanukiyot*, eating in the *succah* and the *Purim* fair. The school is also introducing educational rituals like a prize giving ceremony each year and carefully staged occasions such as King Hussein's visit.

In Peter McLaren's interesting study of a Catholic school in Toronto, to which I have referred several times, he focused particularly on the classroom 'in order to locate the dynamics of the ritual process both in the performative characteristics of daily lessons and in various resistances to instruction' (McLaren 1993: xiii). He found instructional rituals which 'functioned mainly to sanctify the workplace' (p218) and which emphasised the class differences between the teachers and the students who were mainly Portuguese immigrants (p226). Much of the Catholic ritual was used for control but as McLaren commented:

> In the final analysis, however, it must be admitted that St Ryan did function beyond the maintenance of its own institutional power - especially during religion class when students were provided with the opportunity to question the social order (McLaren 1993: 227).

In St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai many of the rituals are linked to Christian or Jewish practices, taken over and adapted to suit the particular school situation. As Chris Harris wrote:

> The glory, and the weakness, of official liturgy is that it carries the deepest meanings a community can give to religion. These meanings are the very essence of people's lives and, as such, they are often taken for granted. But self-generated ritual requires us to reflect. What do we really feel about *this* death, *this* birth, *this* homecoming, *this* going away? Ritual grows naturally out of reflection, it articulates what reflection gropes

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[18] See Genesis 22. The Torah gives no reason for the command to blow the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* found in Leviticus 23: 23-25 and Numbers 19: 1-6. But as, Louis Jacobs remarked, 'the strange, fascinating ritual has encouraged later teachers to suggest reasons of their own' (Jacobs 1995: 465). He went on to quote Maimonides' remarks that the *shofar* is a call to repentance.

towards. It helps us to say who we are at this moment in this web of circumstances (Harris 1992: 97).

The rituals at Mount Sinai and St. Margaret's, which were developed and maintained by staff, express what they believe it means to belong to this particular school.[19] Like symbols and stories, the rituals signify certain values.

Values

The beliefs and values which I am going to consider here are those expressed in the culture in each school. They concern the nature of persons, the meanings given to education and the role of religion (Flynn 1993: 40-43).[20] In both schools there is a commitment to go beyond individual rational autonomy as the goal of education and to see students as being most fully themselves only in relationship, in community. David Hay and Rebecca Nye have argued, on the basis of a three year empirical study, that the key element of children's spirituality is *relational consciousness* (Hay & Nye forthcoming). What both St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai embody is a commitment to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development based on community and relational values. The relevant findings of the OFSTED reports are as follows:

> In the short time the school (Mount Sinai) has been in existence it has been very successful in creating a vibrant, positive and flourishing institution for learning where pupils are happy and sociable. Relationships are often very good and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum....Most importantly the school is very successful in providing an ethos that welcomes and accepts pupils from the whole Jewish community (Oppenheim 1997: 4).

> (St. Margaret's) is a good school with many strengths. It has a clear Christian philosophy in the Roman Catholic tradition which is evident in the everyday life of the school and is supported by staff, governors, pupils, parents and parish communities....The expressed aims are promoted very well through the pastoral system, religious education, assemblies, the personal and social education programme, retreats, and the liturgical life of the school (Clements 1995: 9).

Thomas Groome insisted that the distinctiveness of a Catholic school must be found in the way in which it reflects the characteristics of Catholicism (Groome 1996). He identified five particular ones:

1 its *positive anthropology* of the person;
2 its *sacramentality* of life;

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[19] Bernstein, Elvin and Peters wrote an interesting article on consensual and differentiating rituals in schools (1966). They noted that with increasing diversity of values the school's rituals may not express such a full expressive culture as in the past (p435). The relationships between faith based schools, county schools and shared values are discussed further in the next chapter.

[20] The excellent collection of articles on values in education (Halstead & Taylor 1996) contains a few minor references to faith based schools (for example pp. 28, 144, 158-160) but no sustained exploration.

3 its *communal emphasis* regarding human and Christian existence;

4 its *commitment to tradition* as source of its Story and Vision; and

5 its appreciation of *rationality* and learning, epitomised in its commitment to education (Groome 1996: 108).

These are theological characteristics and, according to Groome, there are three other 'pervading commitments that are particularly relevant for Catholic education' (p109). These are commitments to people's 'personhood', to who they become and their ethic of life, commitment to 'basic justice', and to 'catholicity' or inclusiveness (p109). Groome noted (p124) that these characteristics are echoed in the empirical findings reported by Bryk et al. (1993). As I explained in Chapter One, this research identified characteristics that are widely shared by Catholic schools:

> an unwavering commitment to an academic programme for all students...;a pervasive sense, shared by both teachers and students, of the school as a caring environment...;and an inspirational ideology that directs institutional action toward social justice (Bryk et al. 1993: 10).

At St. Margaret's the second of these can be seen most clearly. There are also strong social justice values held by both staff and students. Unlike many Catholic schools, St. Margaret's does not achieve particularly strong academic results although it does make good provision for access to the curriculum for all and this is part of its concern for equal opportunities.

This approach to Catholic education could be summed up as an attempt to form persons rather than merely to develop knowledge, skills and understanding. The school is helping students to form an identity which will operate within a pluralistic society. Thus, both St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai deliberately try to foster a strong sense of personal worth within a shared community framework which does not, and cannot, predetermine exactly what it will mean to be a Christian or a Jew. When I discussed the students' values, in the last chapter, I commented in some detail on these points.

As a Jewish school, Mount Sinai makes explicit the values on which it is based which were agreed by the initial group of senior staff in May 1993. The staff handbook (p2) begins:

> At (Mount Sinai) we aim for the highest standards based on Jewish tradition and guided by the following principles:
> learning as a lifelong experience;
> the development of self confidence and self esteem;
> respect and caring for one another;
> a sense of community;
> social responsibility.

The handbook goes on to provide a kind of challenge: 'we need to be concerned with the kind of people we are producing and not simply with the skills and qualifications they may possess. We need to strive for excellence in human relations

as well as human achievement' (p4). I discussed in Chapter Four how Jewish values inform approaches to processes of learning as well as to the curriculum and to the school's ethos. Jewish tradition provides the language with which the values are expressed and which, as it is learned and put into practice, enables Jewish students to 'make good literature' (Rosenak 1995: 185).

II Reflections of staff at St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai

I asked several teachers at the two schools and the headteacher at Mount Sinai[21] to read Chapters Four and Five and then I discussed with them, by phone or in person, their reactions to what I had written. One teacher also sent me e-mail comments. This was a very important way of checking that the account was 'accurate, fair and relevant' (Simons 1987: 102) with 'coherence and referential adequacy' (Schwandt 1994:129). Beyond that a teacher at St Margaret's said it had 'captured the heart of "St. Margaret's"' and the headteacher at Mount Sinai said that it was 'fascinating and instructive'. He went on to comment that it had 'already sparked a debate in the school about some of the issues you raised'.

The main concern in the feedback from Mount Sinai was about the meaning of the word 'Orthodox'. The teachers thought that it was not explicit enough that I had used the term to refer to affiliation rather than any degree or level of practice.[22] For example when I gave the student portrait of Dan on page 120 I used the word 'Orthodox' about his family and then said they didn't go to *shul* very often, which appears to be a contradiction.[23] What lies behind the concern over the use of the word 'Orthodox' is the issue I raised on page 160 about desirable levels of observance. The headteacher and Jewish Studies staff are deliberately trying to encourage students to be more observant, to be more fully Orthodox, but just what that means is a sensitive issue.

The school was criticised by the Section 23 Inspection report for not providing a fully Orthodox environment (Felsenstein 1997) There is now more stress on some things, such as boys wearing the *kipah* (skull cap), but the headteacher did not like the comment I had included from a parent criticising what she saw as the lack of consistency over girls' modesty.[24] The headteacher said:

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[21] The headteacher at St Margaret's retired last year.

[22] When I piloted the questionnaire at Mount Sinai the Rabbi in charge of the sixth form class suggested I asked about 'affiliation' rather than 'religion' (see p54).

[23] Questions 3-5 asked about the student's affiliation and that of both parents. Question 156 asked about synagogue attendance. 65% of the students claimed Orthodox affiliation while just over 20% said they went to synagogue on most Sabbaths. See Appendix B for the full questionnaire.

[24] See page 113. In Orthodox Judaism men and women should not look alike so in a strictly Orthodox school one would not expect girls to wear trousers but to wear skirts below the knee and blouses below the elbow.

The only comment I actually disliked was 'One of the local parents ...etc.' I understand this was said to you and so could well be included but personally I found it difficult to read. It also presupposes a view of modesty in dress - e.g. wearing trousers - which is, I think, inaccurate. I thought your student comment was more perceptive when she talked about 'little differences'. Gradations are, I think, important in trying to understand Jewish behaviour and this is, in fact, apparent in dress.

I have more to say about the tensions over Orthodoxy in the next section because 'gradations', the small differences in observance between different groups of Jews, affect issues of Jewish education more generally. That the headteacher should dislike what someone else in the school said is a reminder that one would expect there to be differing views of the culture of a school among its many members.

The comments from St. Margaret's emphasised another aspect of case study: its particular location in time. I was repeatedly told that comments I had made about the school were fair but that things have changed a lot in two years and that if I was to repeat the study now it would not be the same. For example there is a new headteacher, there are two new deputy heads, and the efforts to recruit more Catholic students have been quite successful, so the profile of students and staff is changing.

The RE teachers thought my accounts had not conveyed the atmosphere of the liturgies and they also wanted to stress improvements they had made in liturgy and in relations with local parishes. One teacher said that she thought they had over compensated for the large number of non-Catholics in the school. Another told me that she thought there had been a lot of uncertainty about the catholicity of the school and that it was now much clearer that it was a Catholic school rather than a Christian school. Everyone at St. Margaret's who commented on what I had written agreed that the essential thing about the school was the way everyone was valued. One teacher, who had been on maternity leave when I carried out the case study, said she would choose, as her symbol of St. Margaret's, hands joined around a candle to signify hope and a sense of togetherness despite the differences and disagreements between people.

I have not made any changes to the tale of the cultures as a result of the feedback from the schools but some of the issues which have been raised are more fully discussed in the next section.

III Beginning the wider dialogue

The remainder of this chapter begins, in a more focused way, to bring more theoretical ideas to bear on the two cultures. From each school it is the headteacher's voice to which I give most attention because of his significant role.

Research on effective schools has emphasised the importance of the leadership given by the headteacher (e.g. Grace 1995). Flynn (1993) is one of many to note that this leadership is not only concerned with managing the people, the curriculum, the buildings and so on, but also concerned with the vision of what the school could be and the culture through which this was expressed (p56).

The headteacher at Mount Sinai has written a dissertation about developing Mount Sinai as a community school (Falk 1996) which would not only serve the local Jewish community but influence and affect it, and perhaps also help ensure its survival; the school would be a 'compelling community' (pviii). He discussed three views of the relationship between the school and Judaism. The first, which was advocated by the chairman of governors at Mount Sinai, is that the school should reflect the local community and not be 'too religious' (pxxxvi). Students would learn enough to function in an adequate manner in the synagogue and in the home but would not need modern Hebrew or a study of texts. The second view, which we have previously encountered, reflected what Jonathan Sacks termed an 'inclusivist' approach (Sacks 1993: 219). Jewish education allows students to 'learn the language' of Judaism and so make a positive choice to identify as Jewish. The school would have an impact on the local community, not just reflect it. On this view, students would need to spend considerable time studying texts, not just ritual practice. The headteacher went on:

> My own view was that an even more radical viewpoint could be taken so that the school indeed became a 'pacemaker' for the community. It was a view that the school had to take a lead in raising the educational expectations of the community in both general and Jewish terms....Rather than socialising pupils for a society that no longer existed the attempt would be to socialise them towards a society that did not yet exist (Falk 1996: xlvi-xlvii).[25]

In the interview he said, 'The issue for us was trying to create a school where success was more prevalent than failure.' How far has this been achieved? The SATs scores are promising (Oppenheim 1997: 8-9) and the first GCSE results, in August 1998, showed 75% of the students achieving 5 or more A* - C grade passes, but as far as Jewish learning is concerned the vision has not yet been realised. Students are not fluent in reading or speaking Hebrew (Felsenstein 1997: 9) and while there is some study of texts at various levels the students are not necessarily convinced of its value (see Chapter Five).

This reminds us that students attending Jewish schools often come from families which do not value traditional Judaism. In his dissertation, the headteacher noted that the Director of Jewish Studies when the school opened was influenced by

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[25] In some ways this is like the educational ideology Denis Lawton called 'reconstructionism' (Lawton 1989: 6).

the work of Nechama Leibowitz, the great modern teacher of Bible (Falk 1996: xlvi). She always argued that the biblical text would work its own magic regardless of the students' background although different approaches were needed depending on the understanding of the class (Leibowitz 1995: 23).

Research in a Melbourne day school does not bear out her claim (Gillis 1992).[26] The school is very like Mount Sinai in that, 'while there is no real expectation of *halakhic* observation on the part of the students and their families, all school-based religious life is run on Orthodox lines' (Gillis 1992: 203). They tried to teach texts but found that 'students were resistant to text study. To make matters worse they seemed reluctant and/or unable to engage in the discussion of ideas. As these two activities comprised just about the entire programme, inability to do them constituted a serious obstacle' (p209). Students said the programme was not relevant and so teachers substituted teaching about festivals and the Jewish life cycle. Wishing to return to the idea of teaching texts, they tried to focus on what were the existential questions which caused students concern and introduce texts which dealt with them. In that way there was something of a bridge between the culture of the students and the 'language' of Judaism. [27]

At Mount Sinai, as we have seen, this issue is not yet resolved. It is reflected in tension between the happy school atmosphere, often described as a family (Falk 1996: lii) and valued by students, and the religious goals of the school, a tension which came through clearly in students' responses to the questionnaire. It is not unique to Mount Sinai. In his ethnographic study of American schools Samuel Heilman vividly described how 'flooding out' happened when what was being learned or discussed was in tension with students lives outside school (Heilman 1992: 309). When a teacher tried to get his students to recite *minchah* (afternoon prayers) they kept putting their hands up to ask to go to the bathroom (p307). I described a Year 7 *minchah* at Mount Sinai and it was not an occasion for 'flooding out' but there has been no attempt to introduce daily *minchah* for other years. As students get older they may become more aware of the tensions between the culture of the school and the rest of their lives. The headteacher said that the governors wanted an ethos which in Jewish terms was as inclusivist as possible and 'being able to hold that balance...is one of the most precious things about the school'.

I have identified McDonald's as a useful example of tension and the headteacher's comments are interesting:

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[26] There is more information about the Teaching Jewish Values project, of which this was a part, in the next chapter.

[27] Asher Shkedi (1997) carried out some interesting research into the way teachers viewed both the value of texts and the barriers students face in studying texts.

Was there a difference between eating in McDonald's with your family at the weekend or on Friday after school while still wearing school uniform? ...Pupils in Year 8 felt strongly that the school had little right to a say in their lives outside school. All the Governors were of the opinion that the school clearly did have a right to react and that it should if pupils were eating non kosher meat while in school uniform. This view was even shared by Governors who themselves were in no way religiously orthodox. When the question was whether the school should therefore react to eating non kosher generally, there was however a different response. Outside school and outside uniform, some Governors, most noticeable the Parent Governors, felt that it was not the school's business. When presented with the dilemma that the school's message would then be, "eating non kosher is forbidden only as long as you are wearing school uniform" they admitted the absurdity of this argument but none the less did not change their position! (Falk 1996: lv).

So there is some resistance among students, parents and governors to the idea that Jewish values and learning should permeate all aspects of life. Let us now consider the same issue in its curricular form. Although it was not official school policy, the teachers at Mount Sinai originally tried to integrate Jewish Studies across the whole life of the school (Pomson 1997). When there were only one or two year groups it was easier and all students and teachers could focus on a single topic such as preparing a Purim meal for local elderly people or developing and performing a drama production based on the Book of Ruth. Students and teachers were then, to some extent, co-learners and all curriculum areas could be involved. More recently the integration attempted has been on a smaller scale with Jewish Studies combining with another department to explore a Jewish issue.[28]

It is doubtful whether most students have enough Jewish knowledge to enable them to bring Jewish perspectives to bear on secular issues, without considerable help, although a quarter of Year 11 students said that, 'what they had learned in subjects other than Jewish Studies had influenced their lives as Jews'. David Resnick has commented that attempts to integrate secular and Jewish values have often resulted in the Jewish values losing out because teachers and students concentrate on the easier, more obviously relevant, secular material (Resnick 1992: 59). In the interview, the headteacher commented that now the school is bigger they need to plan more deliberately for cross curricular developments.

Because of the hope that the school will influence the community there are many occasions when school and local Jewish community meet as I described in Chapter Four. As one Jewish teacher said, 'The philosophy here is to look at the individual...and to understand that what goes on outside the school gates does impact on students' lives.' An evening organised by parents about teenage

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[28] See p122 for more details of the ways in which the curriculum at Mount Sinai is distinctive.

magazines showed, the headteacher said, 'we'd managed to 'grow' a group of parents who are taking responsibility for serious issues...and gone some way to achieve...the idea of empowering parents.' School community and wider community were brought together very clearly when four girls had their *Bat Mitzvah* (literally 'daughter of the commandment', a coming of age ceremony) in school.

For a Jewish school, in England as elsewhere, the 'wider community' also includes Israel. The headteacher had suggested to Year 11 that they should seriously consider going to live in Israel. He said in the interview, 'This is a debate...whether it is the role of the school to suggest that they go and live in Israel'. Chazan (1992a) discussed some of the issues arising over 'the teaching of Israel' and concluded that 'the best "text" we have for teaching Israel is the experience of actually visiting it' (p250) but, at Mount Sinai, it is not only a matter of a visit to Israel. *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew) is taught and Israeli history, culture and politics are discussed. The 'language' being taught includes these elements of Israeli culture. Zvi Adar (1977) discussed how *Tarbut* (culture) schools in Poland between the wars prepared children to live in *Eretz Yisrael* (the promised land) and can be seen as an important precedent for contemporary Diaspora Jewish education (p33). He wrote:

> It was concerned with the transmission and inculcation of Hebrew culture as the national culture of the Jewish people. The Hebrew language was regarded as the symbol of that culture, and Hebrew literary creations from the Bible to the present occupied a central place in the curriculum (Adar 1977: 32).

The *Tarbut* schools were secular and Zionist but Israeli life and culture are also significant in schools with a religious understanding of Jewish life, such as Mount Sinai, and an important part of what being a Jewish school is taken to mean.

Dialogue at St. Margaret's, on what it means to be a Catholic school, was stimulated by a letter from the local Bishop, received in the school while I was doing the case study. He asked 'how we might focus afresh on and build up the partnership which must exist between parents, teachers and parish communities in the education of our children' (Murphy-O'Connor 1996:2). At the end of the interview the headteacher at St. Margaret's said:

> I've found a sense of my own ministry within the context of school, a profound sense of touching the hearts and minds of young people....The potential is huge and the responsibility is great but it's a wonderful responsibility none the less and schools are mission territories. While our students may be part of us they are not in all cases necessarily part of their faith communities and therefore how we support, how we create that experience of church is hugely important.

Within a school it is the teachers who occupy the central position between students, their parents, the parishes with their priests, and the rest of the

institutional church. The headteacher talked about his role in terms of managing the boundaries between the school and the wider world. At St. Margaret's, as we have seen, the school is often the only contact which students (and their parents) have with the church (Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 7).

The headteachers in the diocese have met to consider their response to the Bishop, 'to think afresh', as the headteacher said, 'and to begin to articulate anew our theology of Catholic education.' He went on,

> Part of this is a pragmatic response to our own perceived need. The need has more to do with our relationships with our parish clergy and the assumptions which one sometimes encounters which are not always terribly helpful.

Immediately we are into tensions again. Partly because many of the students are not Catholics the school has had to find ways to be inclusive of all rather than to be exclusively Catholic.[29] The relationship with local Catholic clergy has not been an easy one and the school only holds large scale masses on 'holy days of obligation' when Catholics are required to attend mass. One teacher told me that it was difficult to get a priest who wanted to be in the school, whether to celebrate mass or to talk to students during classroom RE. Within the school, a culture of imaginative and carefully constructed non-eucharistic liturgies has developed. In Chapter Four I suggested that, at the time I was carrying out the case study, St. Margaret's had a *spiritual* rather than a *Catholic* culture.[30]

Three years after she had left the school I talked to Jessica, a student who had been given the role of student chaplain when she was in the sixth from. She was very involved in the worshipping life of the school, described earlier, as well as in retreats, trips to Lourdes and the Spiritual Life Working Party. All this, she argued, contributed to 'a brilliant community spirit' which characterised the school. It had its explicit Catholic elements but these were 'sort of taken for granted' and otherwise the school was 'very open'. The community which Jessica referred to is one *within* the school, shared especially in the year group but also expressed in warm relations between staff and students, and in the service which sixth form students gave to the school. Worship, organised and celebrated by the young people expressed this sense of community but she thought that it sometimes made it harder for students to put up with their local parish. 'Parish worship seems very drab and dull compared with school worship'.

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[29] John Sullivan (1998) has made a very strong case for an understanding of Catholic schools which is both distinctive and inclusive.

[30] Andrew Wright has argued persuasively that 'the current fascination with spirituality has developed in a form in which spiritual experience has been effectively divorced ...from religious tradition' (Wright 1996: 22). This is a post-modern trap which can be countered or avoided by careful attention to hermeneutical principles such as those in the work of Gadamer and Habermas (Wright 1997a; 1997b; 1998).

Many of the students wrote about the sense of community which they experienced at St. Margaret's and it seems to be the concept which teachers and students thought best fitted the school. This is not surprising since *community* has featured in many church documents about schools and many schools have used the idea to express their distinctive identity (Harrison 1994).[31] The word can mean several different things: the relationships within the school perhaps extending to parents and governors; the local Christian or Catholic community; the 'one, holy, Catholic and apostolic church'.[32] In the context of a Catholic school, *community* doesn't often refer to the neighbourhood or locality of the school as it does in Anglican thinking about church schools (Chadwick 1994: 8) although there is an idea developing that Catholic schools do contribute to the common good of society (see for example Bryk et al. 1993).[33]

There are many Christian sources for understanding *community* in the Bible and in theological reflection on the church. Jessica was drawing on this tradition when she described the Year 13 leavers liturgy she organised as exemplifying the verse, 'We, being many, are one body in Christ and individually we are members one of another' (Romans 12: 5). Christian community is not understood as inward looking and the commitment to serve others outside the school, which is noticeable in the culture of St. Margaret's and in the values and goals of the students, is an expression of *community*.[34] Gerald Grace summarised the views of the thirty-four Catholic headteachers he interviewed:

> The predominant view was that the special mission of Catholic schools was expressed in three interrelated features, i.e., Gospel values, the teachings of Christ and the nurture of community....In addition...many of the participants saw a social ethic of 'serving others' as central to the mission of the Catholic school. In many accounts this social ethic was implicit in the strong discourse and imagery of educational community and wider community (Grace 1995: 162-163).

[31] Bishop David Konstant said this about community: 'By community I mean what Martin Buber called a "thou place", a place where people know and trust each other, and can draw strength from and support one another. A community provides a ground or platform for faith and commitment, where, in other words it should be an easy place to believe and to live out one's faith (Konstant 1996b: 38).

[32] This is the belief expressed in the Nicene creed recited by Catholics during some masses.

[33] I consider this claim in the final chapter. The Catholic Bishops issued *The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching* before the general election in 1997 (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1996b). The Catholic Education Service then published *The Common Good in Education* (CES 1997).

[34] Matthew 25 is the obvious biblical reference for this. Many of the religious orders which have grown up in the Catholic church have been deliberately focused on the needs of those outside the religious community. I was struck by the comment, in a recent article in the Australian journal *Catholic School Studies*, about the three Christian virtues which St Paul named as faith, hope and love. The attention of the Catholic church, and Catholic schools, seems to be on 'faith development' What about, asked Damien Brennan, 'hope development' or, perhaps even more important, 'love development'? (Brennan 1998: 25).

Jessica said most of the students in the sixth form gave a lot of their time to working with others:

> The school made a difference to me and to the outlook of many of my friends. It made them value life more and the value of friendships....It made them find that money isn't the source of all.[35]

However the students at St. Margaret's are not committed to a life lived within the church as an institution and while they respond warmly to the church's social teaching, as we saw in Chapter Five, they reject much of its teaching on sexual morality. What Jessica said about this is interesting. She responded to a question about the school as a Catholic school and I quote it at length even though the language is odd in places as she struggled to find words for what she wanted to say:

> The problem about a Catholic school is that it assumes you know a lot about Catholicism and in all reality you don't....People who aren't Catholics are able to question more about the Catholic faith whereas Catholics don't, they just sort of, like, take it all in, if you see what I mean....There were certain issues, which looking back now, you could see it's got a very Catholic basing, on subjects of abortion and contraception, but, other than funny issues like that, it was very very open to new ideas and stuff....(On a retreat with year 9) it was about friendship, love and it was all to do with sex before marriage and stuff, but it was done in such a way that it was hidden with the Catholic teaching, if you see what I mean.

In the field of sex education the school is again in a mediating position between the Catholic church with its official teaching and the students. When a university student tried to carry out some research at St. Margaret's into their sex education policy she discovered that many of the teachers, whom she asked about their work with their forms, did not want to speak to her (Garvey 1998: 17). She concluded that although the sex education policy looked good on paper it was not being carried out as planned (p27). The RE department had a detailed scheme of work and understood both government recommendations and church teaching clearly (p27) but the form teachers and the heads of year were avoiding the issue (p28). In St. Margaret's sexual morality seems to be 'hidden with the Catholic teaching' as Jessica phrased it and these 'funny issues' were being left strictly to the RE department. There seems to be a tension between the way that Catholic values or the Catholic ethos of the school are generally explained as inclusive openness to all and what is perceived as the role of the Catholic school in transmitting the teaching of the church about sexuality.

Gerald Grace found that as well as dilemmas which 'arose from a disjuncture between official Catholic moral teaching and the mores of contemporary society' (Grace 1995: 164), there were other issues which caused clashes of values.

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[35] As I noted in Chapter Five the responses to the questionnaire would support this judgement.

These were difficulties with admissions and exclusions, market values and grant-maintained (GM) status (p166-177).[36] St. Margaret's has a fairly open admissions policy because it is undersubscribed. A lot of the headteacher's time is spent making contacts with potential feeder primary schools and persuading parents to send their children to the school. He had also been dealing with staff redundancies recently and said of the staff Policy Review Committee where they had been discussed, 'I'd like to think that we've come through the year, at least with an understanding of our problems even if we don't altogether delight in their conclusions'. Very few students are excluded (Clements 1995: 3). It is ironic that should the school become more successful it would, perhaps, encounter the dilemmas, such as those mentioned by Grace, which are facing many other Catholic schools.

These issues cause a particular dilemma for Catholic schools because it is not always easy for them to see how, in the circumstances, to apply the gospel values they proclaim, what Bryk et al (1993) termed their 'inspirational ideology' (p301). The Second Vatican Council had said:

> It is, however, the special function of the Catholic school to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the gospels (Gravissimum Educationis, Paragraph 8, in Flannery 1992: 732).

The Bishop wrote:

> I am confident that the Catholic schools in our Diocese will be places where gospel values will be proclaimed and lived and will offer to our fragmented society examples of integrity, compassion and commitment to social justice (Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 14).

Chapter Four gave many examples of the inspirational ideology as it was expressed by staff and students at St. Margaret's and the headteacher, at the beginning of the interview, used the phrase 'a gospel vision'. He referred to the team of people he had built up in senior management roles with whom he could share 'a depth of vision and perception who had a wonderful integrity' so that together they could articulate a mission for the school. 'The ideal is always somewhere further on', he said, 'but colleagues here do a good job and have a sense of belonging to a community that is caring, despite its human frailties.'

The OFSTED report found that this philosophy was evident in the everyday life of the school but academically 'overall results are below national norms for maintained secondary schools' (Clements 1995: 9). This finding was despite the fact that the ability profile of students 'is considered to be weighted towards average and above average' (p2). The Bishop wrote:

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[36] The Catholic community was very divided in its response to the possibilities of GM status (Grace 1995: 170). The issues are complex but did not directly affect St. Margaret's.

Our schools must combine the highest academic standards with opportunities for all children, whatever their abilities, to develop their potential to the highest possible degree and be valued as unique individuals for what they are rather than for what they can do (Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 12).

St. Margaret's was much better at the second part of this than the first. A key finding from the American study (Bryk et al. 1993) was that Catholic High schools enabled students to perform better academically than they would have if they had attended a non Catholic, public school. Andrew Morris noted that, in Britain too, Catholic schools 'appear to be particularly successful compared with similar schools in the maintained sector' (Morris 1998: 83).[37] In the light of their OFSTED report St. Margaret's is trying to improve its academic performance but in the interviews I carried out I was surprised that no one really talked about the academic life of the school. When I asked students and staff about their 'film of a day in the life of St. Margaret's' hardly any mention was made of lessons, study or examination results; there was little sense that being a student or a teacher at St. Margaret's was essentially about academic achievement.

Underlying the previous paragraph is research which compares Catholic schools with other schools. The existence, in Britain of faith-based schools which are partly or fully maintained has given rise to a good deal of debate about their role. Opponents of faith-based schools suggest that they are divisive while their advocates claim that they can contribute to a fairer, more equal, society.[38] I have presented evidence in Chapter Five that the students at St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai have an open and accepting attitude to diversity but one of the arguments of this dissertation is that there is much to be gained in thinking about education in Britain from the experiences of Jewish and Catholic schools. It is to the possibility of that wider dialogue that I turn in the final chapter.

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[37] This is the case at GCSE. Morris's article is concerned mainly with the evidence that standards at A Level seem to be lower for students at Catholic schools and colleges than the average. There is also some evidence that Catholic students achieve even poorer results if they move outside the Catholic system for their post-16 education rather than staying in a Catholic school or college (see Morris 1995 for more detail on this). The reasons for the change between GCSE and A Level results are not clear (Morris 1998: 89).

[38] See for example McAndrew & Lemire 1996; Leicester, M & Taylor, M. eds. 1992.

Chapter Seven - The Wider Dialogue

Introduction

Part of the argument of this thesis is that dialogue between two people or two traditions has to go on *before* understanding of, or insight into, their relationship can be reached. In dialogue there is often a movement between what is familiar and what is strange, between a sense of being an insider and a sense of being an outsider. I have brought together tales of the culture of a Jewish school and a Catholic school in a way which enables each to be heard in its own particularity but in the presence of 'the other': the researcher, the other culture, the voices beyond the schools and the reader who is also invited into the dialogue.

The common subject matter about which the two tales 'speak' differently is the 'symbols, stories, rituals and values' of an English maintained school. At Mount Sinai some of these cultural elements are drawn from Jewish tradition and at St. Margaret's some come from Christianity. The case studies, the tales I have constructed and the theoretical analysis of each culture contribute to dialogue within Jewish and within Catholic education.

To hear from actual faith-based schools is an essential part of intra-Jewish and of intra-Christian educational dialogue but these are the smaller voices, the less easily or less often heard and understood partners. Much that is written about both Jewish and Catholic education is theoretical or prescriptive and it may seem out of touch with actual school experience. In addition, in contemporary Britain, most educational writing is secular and does not consider faith-based education. The tensions both between 'aggressive assertion' (Hornsby-Smith 1978: 116) and the lived experience of schools, and between religious and secular values are already present in the tales which this thesis tells. It was to amplify the sound of the little-heard, faith-based school, voices that the more theoretical and prescriptive voices were held over until now.

In this final chapter I am giving voice to some theoretical ideas about education within Judaism and Catholicism, including ideas about Jewish and Catholic schools. Some of these ideas are explicitly theological, applying to education the insights of reflection on the central beliefs and practices of Judaism and Christianity. Other discourse is more philosophical, trying to probe the meaning of education from a Christian or Jewish point of view. Some is intended to inspire and some of the documents I discuss are policy documents.

Bryk et al. also came to explore the Catholic intellectual traditions of education and schooling after their empirical work, to try to make better sense of their findings. However, they put the theoretical section first in their book so that

the reader would recognise the importance of the distinctive culture and traditions of Catholic schools (Bryk et al. 1993: 17). My different purpose in this thesis has been to contribute to a dialogue about the culture of a Catholic and a Jewish school mainly by discovering the details and telling the tale of the culture at St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai.

Theoretical voices are introduced, then, at the end of the thesis so that they can be heard in the light of what has gone before. The ideas are not being introduced because they are taken to be normative. I am not 'laying them' on the schools to provide the context for interpreting and understanding what happens, or does not happen, at St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai although they may, of course, illuminate elements from the case study.[1] Both schools have made use of ideas of Catholic and Jewish education to some extent in their literature but staff made very little reference to theoretical ideas in either the interviews or their reflections on what I had written. It is important to stress that until now this thesis has focused on the *cultures* of two schools, not on the wider ranging subject of 'a Catholic school' or 'a Jewish school'. There are many issues, such as the impact of the religious character of the school on the whole curriculum or on staff development, for which I did not seek out information. In this final chapter, Jewish and Catholic ideas about schools and the even wider topic of 'education' are admitted but, consistent with the dialogical approach of the thesis, they are offered as a kind of coal seam, a rich resource of ideas, images, challenges and aspirations which can be mined, heard and used in dialogues about education within, and between, Judaism and Catholicism.

I present the Jewish and the Catholic ideas separately, but side by side (or face to face) as I have presented all the Jewish and Catholic material in the thesis, in anticipation of the emergence of Jewish-Christian dialogue about education.[2] If Jews and Christians could come together to talk about education both 'tales' from schools and theoretical ideas would be resources.

It would also be possible to use Jewish and Catholic visions of education, beyond the context of Jewish and Catholic schools, to dialogue with other schools, other experiences of teaching and learning, and other views of education. That too would go beyond the scope of this thesis which has concentrated on a dialogical approach to the study of the culture of one particular Jewish school and one particular Catholic school. However, to indicate a point of fruitful future dialogue,

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[1] It may also work the other way. For example, I think I understand Buber's ideas about education better after my time at Mount Sinai.

[2] The differences in Jewish and Catholic approaches to thinking about education can be clearly seen. There is also diversity within each tradition.

I end the chapter with some reflections about the significance of what has been heard from these two faith-based schools for the common good.

Jewish Education and Jewish Schools

The disjunction (Resnick 1992: 57) between Jewish and secular culture has been the issue which Jewish educators have tried to resolve both in Israel and in the diaspora, and I have shown some of the ways it is evident at Mount Sinai. The Jewish Values Project (Shkedi ed. 1992), mentioned before, was developed to try to find a Jewish educational response to the problem of 'how to teach texts and concepts of the Jewish tradition honestly and authentically to those who had no *a priori* commitment to their value and authority (Rosenak 1992: 25).[3] This has to be done in a context where diversity of belief and practice among Jews is accepted and where the desired outcome is not, necessarily, more observant Jews but Jews who understand 'the language'. Rosenak summarised it in this way:

> We have also had recourse to the conceptual distinction...between *language* and *literature*, that is, between the basic structures and patterns of a culture on the one hand, and the ways in which individuals express things and themselves within that language-culture, on the other. The Jewish tradition has - or rather, is - a language in which certain words, actions and attitudes make distinctive sense, inviting and making possible the specific fellowship of Jewishness by building particular modes of communication. The "language" both says distinct things and states universal sentiments and ideas in its own way....And, of course, there are many ways of "doing" Torah and "growing" in it - many *literatures* through which individuals may articulate, affirm and establish the language (Rosenak 1992:32).

The Jewish Values project was designed to find ways of teaching the *language* to students whose families are not particularly observant and who are in danger of assimilating completely to the surrounding secular culture in which they live.[4] In a study of Jews in London, Stephen Miller (1994) demonstrated the diversity of belief and practice and argued that observance of Jewish practice is more closely connected with a sense of Jewish identity than with belief (p198, 201). He concluded:

> The transformation of religious ritual into more loosely defined, ethnically based ceremony is a well-documented feature of American Jewish life and may be seen as a constructive adaptation to modernism....There remains,

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[3] Rosenak also discussed *whether* this is possible at all. There is a parallel discussion in a Christian context about the possibility of those without faith being involved in theology (Hull 1990a). John Hull distinguished between *doing* theology and *studying* theology (p12).

[4] The latest demographic evidence suggests that in Britain the decline of Jewish marriages and births is continuing (Schmool 1998: 6). Sergio Dellapergola has noted that this pattern is found throughout Europe and 'must be seen against the background of the changing norms and aspirations of contemporary young adults in a post-industrial European society that is primarily individualistic and secular in outlook' (Dellapergola 1994: 71).

however, a new form of dissonance. If ritual...is replaced by ceremony...what is the essential value and meaning of that ceremony? (Miller 1994: 203-204)

What those concerned with the future of Jews and Judaism are concerned about is not merely Jewish survival, although that is an issue, but with ensuring that Jewish life has meaning and value. Jewish education is designed to develop Jewish identity and to enable students to grasp the meaning and value of the 'language'. It has to tackle the question not just of how to be Jewish but 'why be Jewish?' :

Taking up this challenge, it is hoped will enable us to address such vital questions as why Jewish education might be valued, what its purposes might be, and how thinking clearly about it can influence not only the transmission of Jewish culture, but transmission of culture in general (Chazan 1992b: 152).

Jonathan Sacks wrote that this contemporary challenge is one of 'continuity' which begins 'with the realisation that the transmission of Jewish identity across the generations has become fragile and altogether fallible' (Sacks 1994b: 115). Michael Goldberg's work (1995) is interesting in this context because it links with the vision of Jewish education at Mount Sinai. Goldberg argued forcefully that the Jewish future requires the recognition that the Exodus story continues to be the 'master story'[5]. He wrote:

In Hebrew, the word Torah means 'teaching' and it stems from a root which means 'direction'....If there is any overall instruction or command coming out of the Exodus master story it is that we Jews are to *become the story*. Jews are not simply enjoined to study Torah but to be Torah (Goldberg 1995: 102).

Goldberg argued that a Jewish community which is not based on Torah, prayer and acts of faithful love[6] will not be *Jewish* even if it manages, somehow, to be a community. He termed the three practices as 'indispensable' and wrote:

Jews must realise that a school, any school, only works when it exists within the context of a community whose commitments and practices it passes on so that community will live on (Goldberg 1995: 140).

The headteacher of Mount Sinai, who often refers to the three pillars of Judaism, is aiming to put into practice just such a community when he tries to make the school a 'pacemaker'. He is aiming at 'reconstruction' rather than 'continuity', intending to affect not only the students in the school but the wider Jewish community. My research into the culture at Mount Sinai suggests that these wider

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[5] The alternative master story, he argued, which does not answer the question, 'Why be Jewish?' is the Holocaust. For a similar view see Cohen 1997: 134.

[6] "Simon the Just was one of the last survivors of the Great Synagogue. He used to say: 'Upon three things the world stands, upon the Torah, upon the Divine Service and upon acts of faithful love'." This extract from the Mishnah (Pirkei Avot 1.2) is very well known. Jonathan Wittenberg used it for his recent account of Jewish values which he called *The Three Pillars of Judaism* (Wittenberg 1996).

goals of Jewish education are shared by the headteacher and some of the staff. Many of the parents and students, governors and other Jewish staff do not, perhaps, either fully understand or support them and would resent the kind of argument which Goldberg made. However, Goldberg is drawing directly on Jewish traditions which are important sources for thinking about Jewish education.

Within the context of Jewish-Christian dialogue, Jewish approaches to education within the tradition may also do more than this. I said at the beginning of the thesis that when I was in the Warsaw ghetto museum, looking at the exercise books used by children whose destiny was Auschwitz, I was forcibly struck by the comment of one of our party that the commitment to go on teaching those children, who had no prospect of ever growing up and leading an adult life, was 'the distilled essence' of teaching. Just why learning might be so important to the human spirit seems worth considering by all of us who try to educate ourselves and others.[7]

Right at the heart of Judaism is the idea of 'study'. In the Torah, parents are told to 'teach them (the words of the *Shema*)[8] to your children' (Deuteronomy 6: 7).[9] Exodus 24: 7 contains the response of the people to God's commands, 'We shall do and we shall hear'. In the light of the earlier discussion about whether those who do not already accept the authority of the Torah can or should study it, this is a particularly interesting verse.[10] It implies that obeying the Torah comes before understanding or studying it.

The way in which Jewish study proceeds is to explore what has been said within the rabbinic tradition about a verse and this guides and stimulates contemporary reflection, interpretation and commentary. An example of this would be in a discussion by Emmanuel Levinas (1990). He was reflecting on a passage about Exodus 24 from the Talmud which begins with the image of God holding Mount Sinai over the heads of the Israelites and saying that if they do not accept the Torah 'here will be your grave' (p30). Levinas' commentary depends on the view that the Torah demands an ethical response to *the other*.[11] By *the other*, here, is

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[7] The suggestion here, of course, is that there are ideas in Jewish education which would contribute to the common good. Goldberg concluded the book I have referred to several times in this chapter with reference to *Kaddish*, the mourners' prayer recited immediately following a death and at other times throughout the year. It doesn't mention death; rather it asserts God's living presence and hope for the future. Goldberg wrote, '*Kaddish* gives voice to why Jews *should* survive: They are the hope of the world. They embody such hope' (Goldberg 1995: 175).
[8] The *Shema*, often recited in prayer, is 'Hear O Israel: The Lord our God. the Lord is One. You shall love the Lord our God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might' (Deuteronomy 6: 4-5).
[9] Meir Shoresh (1989) argued that the command is to the whole Jewish people and not just to parents.
[10] I am including this discussion about the text both because it is relevant to the key issue in Jewish theology of education but also because it illustrates the nature of study within Judaism. It involves entering a world of interpretation and debate which is the 'language' of Judaism.
[11] By, for example, entering into dialogue.

meant both other people and God. In doing Torah people are truly free and freely know the truth.[12]

The Biblical demand that Israel receive the Torah before they understand its teaching does not mean that Israel are being treated like children or that this is a good pedagogic method for children. Rather, this is the nature of revelation:

> The teaching, which the Torah is, cannot come to the human being as a result of choice. That which must be received in order to make freedom of choice possible cannot have been chosen, unless after the fact (Levinas 1990: 37).

This is an adult effort and the Talmudic text goes on to refer to it as the secret of angels and also requiring great study:

> Rabbi Eleazar has said: When the Israelites committed to doing before hearing, a voice from heaven cried out: Who has revealed to my children this secret the angels make use of, for it is written (Psalm 103:20): "Bless the Lord, Oh, His angels, you mighty ones, who do His word, hearkening to the voice of His word." ...A Sadducee saw Raba buried in study, holding his fingers beneath his foot so tightly that blood spurted from it. (Shabbat 88a and 88b in Levinas 1990: 31)

Levinas commented that to rub in such a way that blood spurts out is the way one must 'rub' the text to arrive at the life it conceals (p46). This violent image reflects how the meaning must be torn from the text.[13]

In counter-position to this is a well known Talmudic story about Hillel.[14] When a man came to him to be converted he asked that Hillel teach him the whole of Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel said, 'That which is hateful to you, do not do unto your fellow. That is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary - go and learn it'.[15] Once again, study and moral action go together and this is why education and study are so important in Jewish theology of education. But so is the importance of meeting people where they are. Hillel gave the man what he asked for and then demanded more; that is that the man study and so learn the 'language' in order to be able to make Jewish 'literature' in his life. It is possible, according to this, to teach Torah to those who are not already committed and, of course, that includes the students in Jewish schools.

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[12] Levinas said, 'the direct relation with the true...can only be the relation with a person, with another. The Torah is given in the Light of a face. The epiphany of the other person is *ipso facto* my responsibility toward him: seeing the other is already an obligation toward him' (Levinas 1990: 47).

[13] There are many other metaphors for the efforts which are necessary to express what study of Torah involves. Rosenak referred to two of them as 'turn it (the Torah) over and over again for everything is in it' and 'as the hammer splits the rock, so will a scriptural verse yield its many meanings' (Rosenak 1995: 15). He went on to say, 'But if there is no hammer. no rocks and no sparks, there cannot be meaningful Jewish education' (p17).

[14] This is often quoted at Mount Sinai.

[15] See Rosenak 1995: 196 for his comments on this story.

There is a long history of schooling, and thinking about schooling, in Judaism. Jonathan Sacks expressed this very succinctly when he wrote:

> Already in the late Second Temple period, according to the Talmud (Baba Batra 21a), Joshua ben Gamla had ordained that teachers be appointed to each district and town and that children should enter school at the age of six or seven. In a discussion elsewhere (Shabbat 119a) the Talmud gives voice to a series of remarkable statements about education. The world only exists for the sake of the breath of school-children. Children may not interrupt their lessons even for the building of the Temple. Every town in which there are no school-children will be laid desolate (Sacks 1988: 32).

The schools which developed between 100 B.C. E. and 100 C.E. were for boys and they focused on the Torah (Anderson 1997: 217). Although in the first century C.E. there was an attempt at compulsory schooling, not every one would have attended (Aberbach 1988: 294). However, by the fourth century C.E. 'every male child would have attended school and learned something' (p300). Some students would have progressed to study of the oral law and of midrash (Anderson 1997: 219) and love of learning is a theme of much rabbinical writing. The Mishnah and the Talmud contain many comments about education; two of these convey something of their flavour:

> He who teaches Torah to the child of his friend is regarded as though he gave birth to him (Sanhedrin 19b in Donin 1977: 220).

and:

> Judah ben Tama used to say:
> At five years old (one is fit) for Scripture; at ten years old for the Mishnah; at thirteen for the fulfilling of the Commandments; at fifteen for the Talmud; at eighteen for the bride-chamber (Mishnah Avot 5:21 in Neusner trans. 1988: 689)

The Jewish passion for education continues. In America Jews are a very well educated population with a far higher percentage involved in higher education than for the population as a whole (Liebman & Cohen 1990: 41). That pattern is repeated in Britain (Schmool & Miller 1997: 7). In addition, enrolment in Jewish schools, both primary and secondary, in Britain rose by 39% from 1991 to 1996 according to the recent report from the Board of Deputies (Schmool & Cohen 1998: 22). More day schools are being opened and a higher percentage of Jewish children are receiving a full time Jewish education than in the past.

As well as practical developments there has been much interesting writing, in this century, which further resources thinking about Jewish education. Martin Buber (1878-1965), best known for *I and Thou*, published in 1923, lectured and wrote extensively about education during the 1920s and 1930s. For example he gave a lecture in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1925 just called, "Education" and in

1939, in Tel Aviv, Palestine, he spoke about, "The Education of Character".[16]

He was also active as an educator, especially of adults, first in Germany and then in Palestine and the State of Israel. Buber rejected the two opposing views of education common at the time, where the teacher either imposes on the pupil, through the use of authority, pre-determined and fixed knowledge, or stands back and merely allows what is already present in the pupil to blossom. Instead, not unexpectedly for the author of *I and Thou*, he stressed the need for *relationship* between teacher and student. 'The relation in education', wrote Buber, 'is one of pure dialogue' (Buber 165: 98). The educator, through understanding the student, selects what will be educational for the student and also acts as the means through which the student encounters what is to be learned.

Buber called this process 'inclusion' (Buber 1965: 97) and it is one-sided because:

> However intense the mutuality of giving and taking with which he (sic) is bound to his pupil...he experiences the pupil's being educated, but the pupil cannot experience the educating of the educator. The educator stands at both ends of the common situation....The educator gathers in the constructive forces of the world. He distinguishes, rejects, and confirms in himself, in his self which is filled with the world. The constructive forces are eternally the same: they are the world bound up in community, turned to God. The educator educates himself to be their vehicle (Buber 1965: 100-101).

Commenting on Buber's ideas Maurice Friedman wrote:

> Through discovering the "otherness" of the pupil, the teacher discovers his own real limits; but through this discovery he also recognizes the forces of the world which the pupil needs in order to grow, and he draws these forces into himself. Thus he makes himself the living selection of the world which comes in his person to meet, draw out, and form the pupil (Friedman 1963: 205).

This educational dialogue is described by Buber as birth-giving (Buber 1963: 138) and also as enabling the student to remain open to new possibilities, including spiritual and religious ones (Buber 1963: 42ff).

In all that he wrote about education Buber affirmed the importance of tradition. 'We Jews are a community based on memory', he wrote in the introduction to a syllabus for a school in Berlin in 1932 (Buber 1963: 146). The goals of education are not individual freedom but communion or community (Buber 1965: 91), which is not the coming together of like-minded people but the overcoming of otherness in living unity.

Buber, in the 1920s in Germany, had good reason to reject the idea that there was one single, satisfactory or desirable way of being human, one "figure"

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[16] Both were included in *Between Man and Man* (Buber 1965).

which could be formed in all individuals. 'But', he argued, 'when all figures are shattered, when no figure is able any more to dominate and shape the present human material, what is there left to form? Nothing but the image of God' (Buber 1965: 102).

Perhaps, in the 1990s in multi-cultural and pluralistic Britain, the goal of Jewish education could be the formation by teachers who are able to draw on and transform tradition, of persons, who in all their diversity, are the image of God. 'Only when the older generation time and again stakes its existence on the act of trying to teach, waken and shape the young, does the holy spark leap across the gap' (Friedman 1993: 225). These ideas are present, I think, at Mount Sinai, especially in the stress on the importance of the relationships between teachers and students.

Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), like Buber, was a German Jew.[17] He was actively involved in Jewish education as the founder and director of the Lehrhaus (the free Jewish House of Learning) in Frankfurt from 1920 until his death (Glatzer 1955: 16).[18] He wrote several essays about Jewish learning where he tried to connect, or re-connect, the traditions of Judaism with the contemporary culture. In a letter written in 1917, and published as *It Is Time* (Rosenzweig 1955: 27-54), he set out a programme of study for secondary school students relating to worship and festivals, Hebrew, Bible and Talmud which bears strong resemblances to the programme at Mount Sinai.[19] He argued for teachers who were also scholars, who through their lives and through the texts they studied could help young people live out the tradition in a contemporary way. He hoped that an Academy set up after the First World War would achieve this synthesis but although the Academy did much scholarly work until its closure in 1934 this did not go hand in hand with a popular teaching programme (Glatzer 1955: 15).

Rosenzweig wanted to develop an approach to teaching and learning which did not ignore content but which focused on people. In an inspirational essay written in 1920, called *Towards a Renaissance of Jewish Learning* (Rosenzweig 1955: 55-71), he emphasised that both the means and the end of Jewish learning are human beings, Jewish human beings. To be a Jewish human being could not be

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[17] The two men knew each other well and co-operated on a major undertaking: the translation of the Bible into German. Their translation reflected both modern scholarship and the style and spirit of the Hebrew original (Glatzer 1963: 170). Given some of the key themes in this thesis it is interesting to note that Rosenzweig believed that 'biblical narratives...seek to alter theological perspectives by inviting dialogical exchanges between reader and text' (Cohen forthcoming: 3).

[18] Buber reopened the Lehrhaus in 1933 and it was a focus for spiritual resistance to the Nazis (Friedman 1993: 216).

[19] The *Curriculum Directory* (Bishop's Conference of England and Wales 1996a) could be seen as a contemporary, Roman Catholic, attempt to achieve a similar task.

understood, he argued, on nationalist lines or as an aspect of a person's private life (p56). It is a way of being human, or rather a whole multitude of ways of being human for those who:

> once quietly say, "we Jews," and by that expression commit ourselves for the first time to the pledge that, according to an old saying, makes every Jew responsible for every other Jew (Rosenzweig 1955: 65).

Jewish learning, then can, in an important sense, only be lived; it cannot be read passively. Books exist to transmit that which has been achieved to those who are still developing (p58). Although he referred briefly to children needing this development, he was really writing about the education of adults. It is like the idea of education enabling human beings to become more fully human. A person is a human being, with or without education, but it is as if, without education, the human potential which a person has, might not even be recognised, let alone achieved. So with a Jewish human being; Jewish learning would open up the *possibility* of being a Jewish human being as well as enable someone to *be* a Jewish human being. Rosenzweig wrote:

> For life stands between two periods of time, in the moment between the past and the future. The living moment itself puts an end to the making of books. Only right next to it are the realms of book-writing, that is, the two realms of culture....No end is ever reached in the exploration of the past....And there is no end to the teaching of the future generation....There is no end to learning, no end to education. Between these two burns the flame of the day, nourished by the limited fuel of the moment; but without its fire the future would remain sealed and without its illumination the past would remain invisible (Rosenzweig 1955: 59).

Rosenzweig urged his readers to have confidence that if the opportunities were provided, people would come to learn, proving that 'the Jewish human being is alive in them' (p69). These opportunities were not needed in the past when the Jewish law, the Jewish home and synagogue worship made up a full and self-contained Jewish life. Those elements still existed but as discrete components within a larger culture and unable fully to sustain Jewish living and Jewish learning.[20] What was needed was confidence that people would come to learn and then there had to be teachers who would listen to the desires, the wishes of those who came and not provide a ready-made programme.

> For the teacher able to satisfy such spontaneous desires cannot be a teacher according to a plan; he must be much more and much less, a master and at the same time a pupil. It will not be enough that he himself knows or that he himself can teach. He must be capable of something

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[20] Rosenzweig made a very interesting comment that *halakhah* (Jewish law) 'brings out more conspicuously the difference between Jew and Jew than between Jew and Gentile' (Rosenzweig 1955: 61). He had a major disagreement with Martin Buber over *halakhah*, wanting to re-establish the centrality of the *halakhah* in understanding the revelation of God and therefore in Jewish life (Glatzer 1955: 21).

quite different - he himself must be able to "desire" (Rosenzweig 1955: 69).

Only a community of Jewish human beings such as these can lead from the past to a living future (p63) and enable individuals to become links in the chain of tradition. As Michael Rosenak put it more recently, '"Learning" must be seen as a community-delineating activity' (Rosenak 1987: 255) and perhaps what a Jewish school might hope to develop in the student would be the desire to be a Jewish human being and to continue learning.[21] For both writers Jewish education is about the formation of persons as part of a community, 'turned to God'.

In the light of what Rosenzweig (1955:57) said about a Jew only being able to measure himself or herself against an alternative way of being human, and because of the background to the whole of this study in Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is interesting to hear briefly what he and Buber said about Christians and Christianity. Rosenzweig seriously considered converting to Christianity but argued that he would have to do so as a Jew and not a pagan. His exploration of the two faiths led him to conclude that they were intimately connected. He did not need to *come* to the Father through Jesus since he was already *with* the Father (Rosenzweig 1996: 169f). Truth, which is one only in God, is imparted in both Jews and Christians, and both are needed. Although they are very different they are also closely connected (p225). As Bernhard Casper commented in his introduction to Rosenzweig's writings:

> The aim is not to incorporate the other one, but, while maintaining the otherness of the other one, and even clearing some misunderstandings out of the way, to provide the opportunity of learning from the other's lived reply to revelation and promise (Casper 1996: 164).

Martin Buber is much better known to Christians than Rosenzweig, especially for his ideas about dialogue, but he was more critical of Christianity in the many things he wrote throughout his life. He identified Jesus with biblical Judaism but saw Paul as marking a decisive break with Jewish tradition in an uncreative way which led later to Christian triumphalism (Buber 1996). Buber's writings continue to challenge Christians about the Jewishness of Jesus and the origins of Christianity (Stegemann 1996: 119). Both Buber and Rosenzweig remind us that all theological thinking goes on in a particular historical context[22].

Their ideas about Jewish education may help to develop the self-understanding of Jewish schools in the English maintained system. As well as promoting Jewish goals a maintained Jewish school must achieve success in the

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[21] 70% of students at Mount Sinai said that it was of some importance to them to serve other people in the future; 55% intended to continue their Jewish education.

[22] Stegemann commented that Buber's interpretation of the Paulinian concept of faith should be seen against the background of the New Testament scholarship of his time (Stegemann 1996: 120).

National Curriculum, league tables, examination results, SATs scores, OFSTED inspections and so on. It is not clear that there is, yet, in either theory or practice a unified vision for a maintained British Jewish day school. Or, to put it another way, it is not clear that the question of how to integrate Jewish education and secular education has been successfully answered, either in the literature or at Mount Sinai.[23] Rosenzweig and Buber, by the breadth of their educational vision, offer a resource for further dialogue.

The task of integrating a religious and a secular approach to education is not restricted to Jewish schools; it affects all maintained faith-based schools. In the next section I discuss the vision which has developed of Catholic education.

Catholic education and Catholic schools

Unlike Judaism, Christianity does not make a fundamental link between study and moral action, but focuses on faith, and teaching or instructing in the faith.[24] Jesus was, perhaps above all, a teacher[25] and the Pauline epistles were written to instruct the new church communities. Adult converts to Christianity, called catechumens, were taught about the mysteries of the faith before they were admitted to the eucharist. From the fourth century on, when Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, instruction in the faith, called catechesis, was needed on a larger scale for people of all ages (Devitt 1992).

It was only in the Middle Ages that the Catholic church began to provide education for significant numbers of children (Domenech, Dunn & Tulasiewicz 1993: 87). The Protestant Reformation provoked a Catholic response which included schooling as a vehicle for the propagation and consolidation of the faith (p90). Many religious orders, especially the Jesuits, opened schools, developed curricula and wrote about education. Each order has had its own vision of education and these, of course, have also changed over time, but no one of them can really be seen as a general description of Catholic education.

As ideas of universal education developed in various countries the Catholic church maintained that it had both the responsibility and the right to educate

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[23] The Jewish maintained schools in England achieve excellent examination results as the *Jewish Chronicle* reports each year (see for example September 4th 1998, p11). The problem raised at several points in the thesis, however. remains critical: how can schools raise the level of Jewish understanding of students beyond that of their parents and the surrounding Jewish community?

[24] For example the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) has no entry for 'education'. 'study' or 'school' although it does have a section on the teaching ministry of the church. The Catechism is arranged in four parts: the profession of faith; the sacraments of faith; the life of faith; the prayer of the believer.

[25] In the Gospels the title 'teacher' is used forty-eight times about Jesus (Devitt 1992: 15).

Catholic children[26] and around the world there are a range of different arrangements in place for its involvement. In late twentieth century Britain most Catholic schools are mainly or entirely state maintained.[27]

One of the main sources for understanding contemporary Catholic thinking about education is the official documentation of the church, especially from the Second Vatican Council, and particularly *Gravissimum Educationis*, The Declaration on Christian Education (Flannery 1992: 725-737). This named the aim of education as the formation of persons who have both an eternal and a social destiny. 'They should be open to dialogue with others and should willingly devote themselves to the promotion of the common good' (par.1). Their education should include moral and religious formation as well as intellectual and cultural development. Parents are 'primarily and principally responsible' for their children's education and the family has an educative role (par.3) alongside the school (par.5). 'It is the special function of the Catholic school to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel' (par.8). The document is also clear that everything which students learn in school will be 'illuminated by faith' (par.8) because faith and reason combine to form one truth.

These are general principles which, in different ways, affirm the need for wholeness in education. Other important documents from Vatican II for Catholic schools in a pluralist society were *Dignitatis Humanae*, Declaration on Religious Liberty (Flannery 1992: 799-812) and *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Flannery 1992: 738-742). Later documents from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1977; 1982; 1988) and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (1981; 1988) have applied the principles particularly to schools and emphasised that the task of the school is to synthesise secular culture and faith. The school should not only provide a sense of community for students but also reach out to the wider society 'adding essential Christian witness to the cultivation of traditional civic virtues' (McLelland 1991: 173).

The staff at St. Margaret's have reflected on how the school embodies the ideas in these church documents and they are often quoted in school statements especially about whole school issues such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or pastoral care. Little attention, on the other hand, has been given at

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[26] The encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI in 1929 stated that education is 'first and supereminently the function of the Church' (Domenech et al. 1993: 92). The later document which I discuss in detail was based on this encyclical.

[27] Some of the history of Catholic schools in Britain was given in Chapter One.

St. Margaret's to the relationship between faith and reason; this is the issue I raised earlier of integrating the secular and the religious.

The most recent policy documents on education from the Catholic church in England and Wales have continued to develop the themes:

* A pamphlet published in 1996 set out five goals which should be promoted in Catholic education:
  - the search for excellence;
  - the uniqueness of the individual;
  - the education of the whole person;
  - education of all especially the poor and those who are disadvantaged;
  - life in a community based on Gospel values.
  (Bishop's Conference of England and Wales 1996c: 3)

* Religious Education - Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools set out a curriculum for 'handing on the faith to future generations' which is currently being developed in schools and provided this useful summary:

> The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity, and freedom of every person as created in the image of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1996a: 10).

* The Common Good in Education applied the social teaching of the church to education:

> Education is, primarily, about "human flourishing", it is concerned with the development of the whole person....For a Christian, the aim of education is, literally, to draw out of young people their God-given potential, to enable them to fulfil their unique role in creation within the human community (Catholic Education Service 1997: 7).

* A Struggle for Excellence (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1997a) reported on how Catholic secondary schools in urban poverty areas tried to offer young people the opportunity for a full life and a place in society.

All these documents, which set out policy and aim to inspire, stress a holistic idea of education which values individuals in their diversity, builds community and is influential in society. Church leaders have also spoken about education. For example, Cardinal Basil Hume ended a talk on 'The Church's Mission in Education' with these words:

> "The glory of God", St Irenaeus wrote in the 2nd century, "is a human being fully alive" (Irenaeus: Against the Heresies, Book 4: 20). This is the goal of Catholic education, to draw out the potential in each person to the full, in a community which recognises the centrality of Christ as our guide and inspiration (Hume 1995: 33).

Bishop David Konstant, in a recent speech about Catholic independent schools, referred to the 1981 report *Signposts and Homecomings* (Bishop's Conference of England and Wales 1981) which spoke of people's mission in the church being 'to embody Christ's presence, to continue his work and so to transform the world' (p142). He went on:

> This is a bold statement, but a vision should always make us reach beyond what we can immediately grasp and stretch our minds and hearts. And indeed, tacitly, it is surely the hope of all those involved in education that their pupils will in time change the world for the better (Konstant 1996a: 62).

The influences of Vatican II can be clearly seen in all these statements.[28]

Bryk et al.'s study of American Catholic ideas of education found such Conciliar ideas and inspirations to be complementary with earlier theological principles derived from Thomas Aquinas and explicitly applied to education by Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) (Bryk et al. 1993: 37).

Maritain's main work on education, *Education at the Crossroads*, was published in 1943 and more than fifty years later four Catholic philosophers have commented that it was now virtually unheard of (Carr, Haldane, McLaughlin & Pring 1995: 163). They noted that while there has been plenty written about Catholic education there was very little Catholic philosophy of education which is what Maritain attempted.[29]

According to Maritain, education needs to based on an understanding of what it means to be human and what best promotes full humanity. At the heart of the person are two virtues: love and wisdom. He identified the following basic dispositions which educationalists should foster: a love of truth; a love of goodness and justice; a simplicity and openness to existence; faithfulness and responsibility to work; a sense of co-operation (Maritain 1943: 36-38). Truth is of primary importance because 'at the beginning of human action, in so far as it is human, there is truth, grasped or believed to be grasped for the sake of truth. Without trust in truth there is no human effectiveness' (p47).[30]

It is interesting that Maritain argued that at each stage of a person's development the knowledge involved should not be adult knowledge, but the sort

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[28] John Sullivan (1998) wrote a powerful account of the changes in Catholic theology during the last century and their impact on thinking about Catholic education.

[29] Maritain was arguing against Dewey's pragmatic account of education.

[30] Bryk et al. commented that because of the influence of these neoscholastic principles, American Catholic schools 'maintain a steadfast belief in the capacity of human reason to arrive at ethical truth. Developing each student's intellectual capacities to ascertain such truth and honing a critical disposition in pursuing it constitutes the central academic purpose of these schools -- a purpose common for all students, regardless of their origins or vocational plans' (Bryk et al. 1993: 54).

fitted to the learner. What matters most in the life of reason, Maritain argued, is intellectual insight and intuition. The teacher is of critical importance:[31]

> If a teacher himself (sic) is concerned with discerning and seeing, with getting vision, rather than with collecting facts and opinions, and if he handles his burden of knowledge so as to see through it into the reality of things, then in the mind of the student the power of intuition will be awakened and strengthened (Maritain 1943: 45).

The individual would find his or her good in participation in the life of a community and education would promote a sense of civil responsibility. 'Education must...develop both the sense of freedom and the sense of responsibility, human rights and human obligations, the courage to take risks and exert authority for the general welfare and the respect for the humanity of each individual person' (p89). However, true morality would require nurturing, rather than merely formal instruction, with moral reason seen as integral but not foundational to moral life.

It is interesting to briefly note Maritain's importance in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Scholars disagree about the exact nature of his views on anti-Semitism which, of course, changed during his lifetime (see Royal ed. 1994). His wife, Raissa, was Jewish; her family left Russia when she was only a child and the family was not religious. Both she and her sister, Vera, converted to Catholicism, with Maritain in 1906 and Maritain wrote both about the Jews and about anti-Semitism. Michael Novak summed up the importance of Maritain for Catholic theology on these words:

> The debt Catholics owe to Jacques Maritain for his reflections on Judaism is enormous. As teacher to a whole generation of bishops and theologians, his contribution to the statement of Vatican II on the Jews was significant, perhaps philosophically indispensable (Novak 1994: 128-129).

Maritain wrote as a Catholic and rejected both racist and Christian forms of anti-Semitism, arguing that God did not break his covenant with the Jews. Nevertheless, according to Hellman (1994), he endorsed the views of other French writers that some social and political restrictions on Jews were necessary. Reading his work is a reminder that we have to think about educational, social and religious questions in the light of the Holocaust and I will make further comments on this in the final section.

Recent writing about Catholic education has mainly focused on the Catholic school[32]; there has also been some sustained theological writing about adult

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[31] In both the Jewish and Christian theologies of education which I have referred to there is an analysis of the importance of the teacher in the process of education. The current secular understanding of what it means to be a teacher has focused on measurable competencies or standards and has neglected the person of the teacher.

[32] See for example Arthur 1995; Conference of Major Religious Superiors 1991; Grace 1998; McLauglin et al. eds. 1996.

education and about religious education.[33] Terry McLaughlin summarised neatly the themes which have emerged:

> Catholic education, and the Catholic school, is therefore distinctive in virtue of its embodiment of a particular view about the meaning of human persons and of human life, its aspiration to engage in a certain kind of holistic influence, and its concern with the formation of its students in its own religious and moral tradition (McLaughlin 1996: 145).

Rationality and the intellectual search for truth are important in the Catholic vision of education, but are not enough for a full understanding of human flourishing. The concern for religious and moral formation means that Catholic schools stress the importance of religious education. At St. Margaret's the RE department is large, well-resourced and the standard of achievement is good (Castelli 1995: 6). All students take GCSE Religious Studies and RE in the Sixth Form.

In Britain, where religious education is compulsory in all schools, there has been an on-going debate since the 1970s, among Catholics, about religious education and catechesis. This centres on the educational and theological nature of classroom RE learning and has concerned both appropriate content and methodology.

Kevin Nichols, the first national adviser to the Bishops on catechesis, clearly recognised that not all students in Catholic schools were practising Catholics but he argued that catechesis 'can take an educational form which respects freedom, encourages growth and personal development' (Nichols 1978: 26).[34] Nichols' successor, Paddy Purnell, wanted to separate classroom RE and catechesis (Purnell 1985: 75) and the publications of the National Project of Catechesis and Religious Education which he co-ordinated, put that into practice.[35]

At the same time as these changes were happening more conservative Catholics voiced concern that true Catholic doctrine was no longer being taught in RE and the Bishops have published several documents setting out what should be taught. I referred to the latest one earlier (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1996), where a theologically coherent programme of teaching about Catholic faith and life is set out, but the way in which that will be made educationally

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[33] See Elias 1986; Jarvis & Walters eds. 1993 and Boys 1989; Groome 1991. In Britain there has also been a growing and well argued case made by evangelical Christians for a distinctively Christian view of education (Cooling 1994; Hughes 1992; Shortt 1991).

[34] Kevin Nichols (1992) has continued to maintain the distinctiveness and the compatibility of catechesis and education.

[35] See for example Gallagher 1988; Lohan & McClure 1988. There has been extensive debate about the tensions between nurture and education in county schools (for example Slee 1989) in a Protestant Christian context (British Council of Churches 1981) and in evangelical Christian circles (Thiessen 1992). The Australian Catholic philosopher, Michael Leahy (1990), has argued for the autonomy of the classroom so that RE does not assume faith, or try, primarily, to nurture it.

relevant for the wide variety of students in Catholic schools is left to others to implement. This final point is illustrative of the possible gap between official pronouncements and school based experiences, which come from a hierarchically organised structure, and which the dialogical approach in this thesis has attempted to close a little.

Faith-based schools and the common good

Within faith-based schools there is on-going dialogue with their particular tradition. As we have seen, the approaches taken to thinking about education are different in Judaism and Catholicism and the key issues are also different but both Catholic and Jewish schools are part of the maintained system of education in England and Wales and also have to relate to a wider educational debate. It is not the intention, in this last section, to enter into detailed argument about the rights and wrongs of maintained faith-based schools.[36] Rather, by taking up the idea that the distinctive educational visions of human flourishing at work in Jewish and Catholic schools can, and should, contribute significantly to contemporary debate and decision making I indicate a further potential area for dialogue.[37]

The idea of the common good was used by Jacques Maritain as a key social principle. 'Society in the proper sense, human society, is a society of persons. A city worthy of the name is a city of human persons. The social unit is the person' (Maritain 1943: 47). In the case of common good, the 'good flows back over all persons by virtue of their membership in the common' (Bryk et al. 1993: 38).[38] I want to suggest briefly five possible implications for the common good arising not from theories of Jewish and Catholic education, but out of the case studies of Mount Sinai and St. Margaret's. These are:

* the active involvement of students as caring citizens;

* the need for all schools to articulate the vision of humanity on which they are based;

* the importance of sustaining community and tradition;

* recognition of the importance of pluralism;

* provision of ways of relating to the 'other'.

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[36] As for example the writers do in *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education* (Leicester & Taylor eds. 1992).

[37] The 1988 Education Reform Act expected schools to promote the development, not only of pupils, but of society (Department of Education and Science 1989). Graham Haydon (1994) has argued that religious schools may be better than secular schools in preparing students for life in a democratic and pluralist society.

[38] This is distinguished sharply from a view where the individual is subservient to society or where the individual is the primary and significant unit.

Bryk et al. claimed that, 'the Catholic school contends that education means forming the conscience of all students towards an awareness of the stake they share in common' (Bryk et al. 1993: 320). Students are to be competent in modern society, but never totally at ease (p317), and therefore able to play a key role as critical citizens in a democracy. I have discussed evidence from St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai that students are not cut off from wider society; on the contrary they show a commitment to social justice. They are already involved in a variety of charitable activities which provide now, and may provide in the future if the students continue with such endeavours, genuine benefit for others.

The schools' involvement in such activities means that attention is focused, in the schools, on questions about what it means to be human and how people should live together. These are important questions about human flourishing and they relate to the second possibility I see for faith-based schools contributing to the common good. The very existence of Catholic and Jewish schools, which take these issues seriously, is a reminder that all schools have both an anthropological and a social philosophy, an understanding of the human person and a view of what society should be like, even if it is not clearly understood or articulated. Faith-based schools, by their very existence, may perhaps stimulate a debate about what the nature of the philosophy underlying schools which are not faith-based should be.[39]

Faith-based schools embody a view that education has more than academic and vocational significance; it is about the formation of persons with spiritual, ethical, social and cultural aspects. The cultural analysis of the case-study schools permits an identification of two elements which have wide educational significance. These, the third and fourth possible benefits for the common good, are both needed and so are considered together. They are the emphasis that education must be rooted in community, including tradition, and the view that the common good requires genuine pluralism with an education which fosters both a strong sense of identity and a valuing of diversity.

Not only in Jewish education do we get an understanding that, in the present moment, knowledge of the past becomes the language in which the future can be thought and lived.[40] As Alastair MacIntyre argued:

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[39] Maritain believed that education should be based on a Christian anthropology because that is the true one. But he argued, as do Carr et al (1995: 176), that it is possible for a Christian philosophy of education, 'if it is well founded and rationally developed, to play an inspiring part in the concert, even for those who do not share in the creed of its supporters' (Maritain 1943: 7).

[40] In his television broadcast for *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year) on September 17th 1998, 11.10-11.25 p.m. BBC1, Jonathan Sacks spoke to a Jewish teacher outside the Millennium Dome. 'What is time?', he asked. 'Is it something which just passes or is it something from which we can learn? In Judaism the real guardians of time are our teachers. They're the ones who join our past to our future by teaching our children where we came from and where we are going to.' When he was

> Living traditions, just because they continue a not-yet-completed narrative, confront a future whose determinate and determinable character, so far as it possesses any, derives from the past (MacIntyre 1981: 207).

Education for the future has to enable students to be part of a living tradition, although not necessarily a religious tradition, but a community, with values which can be articulated and shared:

> Education cannot function in a vacuum. It requires a community and a culture to nurture and sustain it with more than the provision of material and financial resources, though they are surely important. Education also requires a community and a culture from which to draw its mandate and its goals (Woocher 1992: 64).

In September 1997 there was an international Jewish-Christian symposium 'Good and Evil after Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today'. David Blumenthal spoke about the social and educational possibilities for teaching resistance to evil and the cultivation of doing good (Blumenthal 1998: 16). A community must:

> admit the failure of many of the previous efforts to discourage antisocial attitudes and behaviours and to encourage prosocial attitudes and behaviours. They must identify and actively teach prosocial texts and traditions. They must identify and actively inculcate prosocial value-concepts. They must recognize that it is not only what one teaches but how it is taught that makes the difference (Blumenthal 1998: 17).

One of the prosocial attitudes identified is the teaching of inclusiveness, the common humanness of the other. This is one of the underlying themes of dialogue which has informed the whole of this study. It takes explicit form in the final paragraph of a recent article about narrative:

> The genius of the gospel vision is its 'catholicity' - its willingness to embrace and celebrate communion-within-diversity and equality-within-difference. What if we were to take seriously John XXIII's prophetic challenge and reclaim Galatians 3:26-27[41] as the contemporary 'mission statement' for our Church? What kind of impact might this have in our families, parishes, schools and seminaries...? (Ferder & Heagle 1998: 121).

The common good will require both identity and diversity.[42] 'We will have either real pluralism or cultural hegemony by the few' (Eisen 1992: 253).[43] A key ethical principle in both Judaism and Christianity is hospitality to the stranger[44] and

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asked what education meant to him, the teacher, Daniel Rynhold said that it included learning values 'through a sense of community with the past and through placing ourselves within a narrative that continues from the past which we can carry through to the future.'

[41] 'For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith'.

[42] David Resnick (1996) argued that maintaining Jewish otherness does not conflict with multiculturalism and that, 'the palace of universalism is entered through the courtyard of particularism' (p219).

[43] Alan Peshkin, a Jew who has studied fundamentalist Christian schools, concluded that although these schools reject pluralism totally and seek to impose their values on all, a democratic and pluralistic society should not deny their right to operate (Peshkin 1993: 312).

[44] The Torah speaks often about hospitality to the stranger. See for example Genesis 18: 1-15; Leviticus 19: 11-14. John Koenig (1985) identified hospitality as the key New Testament ethic.

the principle is being applied in a variety of contemporary contexts.[45] In some Jewish and Christian schools there is a culture of reaching out to the other, as part of a transformative learning process (Boys, Lee & Bass 1995: 261), which could be models for other schools. St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai are both schools grappling seriously with identity and diversity, within understandings of community drawn from strong traditions.

Finally, it is worthy of note that in neither school are the students entirely convinced about the religious goals of the school, especially about the relevance, for their future, of institutional religion. In a way these students are also 'other', with all that that implies within a context of dialogue. There may be much for other schools and the wider society to learn from the way in which faith-based schools relate with their own students who are sceptical or ill-at ease.

That, as the saying goes, is another story. I will end this thesis with the final reflection that not only has dialogue been, for me, a creative and productive way to approach a study of a Jewish and a Catholic school but dialogue, understood as the attempt to transform the 'I' through inter-subjective encounter with the 'Thou' of another person, with the world of objects and ideas or with God, is also a very helpful way of understanding the process of education itself.

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[45] Mitiku Habte (1998) argued that hospitality has pride of place among Christian virtues in Ethiopia and understood his work with the homeless in London as hospitality. Jane McAvoy (1998) has described the importance of hospitality for 'a feminist theology of education'; Susanne Johnson (1993) has identified hospitality as the hermeneutical key for Catholic religious education in a pluralist society.

Conclusions

At the centre of the thesis is the multi-layered tale of the symbols, stories, rituals and values at Mount Sinai and St. Margaret's. Throughout, I have maintained a context of Jewish-Christian inter-faith dialogue with the stress on hearing the voices from the two schools. I have been concerned to answer three questions:

- what is the culture of St. Margaret's, a Catholic secondary school?
- what is the culture of Mount Sinai, a Jewish secondary school?
- what happens to the study of each school culture when it is undertaken in a dialogical way?

In this conclusion I will summarise the answers that the thesis as a whole has given to these questions and indicate how the research could be developed in the future.

The culture at St. Margaret's is, in many ways, more spiritual than Catholic.[1] It affirms that everyone is valued in the school and that everyone belongs to, and can contribute to, the community which has been built up. The school 'celebrates' well and in many different ways. The quality of the liturgies is high. Drama productions, sports events, the pilgrimage to Lourdes and charitable fund raising are highlights of the school year. Within the culture, service to others is important. The intellectual, or academic, side of life at St Margaret's is not particularly stressed, unlike in many Catholic schools in Britain and elsewhere.

There is little sense of a culture clash between the school and wider society, perhaps, because the school does not push explicit or exclusive Catholic identity or faith very hard. Tradition isn't strong in the culture and the majority of the traditions which do exist are school community events rather than Catholic or Christian ones. Connections with the wider church are slight. For many of the staff and students the church is encountered through the culture at St. Margaret's.

The culture at Mount Sinai is very explicitly Jewish and concerned to develop the students' Jewish identity and so ensure continuity. Jewish festivals, Jewish worship, Jewish ways of studying and the texts which are studied, what people wear and what they eat, all contribute to the culture. In addition, the importance of Israel, of family life and of service to others within the wider Jewish community, are all values which are expressed in symbols, stories and rituals in the school.

The wider Jewish community is important in the school. Although its diversity is recognised in some ways, there are serious tensions or clashes between the kind of observant Jewish life which the school promotes and the actual

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[1] I use the present tense to describe more immediately the culture of each school.

experiences of the students' own lives outside school. These tensions mirror the diversity within British Jewry and raise sharply the question as to whether students who are not already committed to the tradition can, nevertheless, learn from it. Mount Sinai, like other Jewish schools, is producing very good academic results. What the school's impact will be on the students' Jewish lives is not certain.

As well as the culture of each school, I have been concerned with dialogue and the potential for dialogue at a number of different levels: between researcher and researched, between the two cultures, between the schools and their wider communities, within Judaism, within Catholicism, between Jews and Catholics discussing education, and between faith-based schools and other schools or those interested in education. I have also invited the reader into the dialogue, hopefully to hear something new and to make connections with his or her own experience. By moving backwards and forwards between Jewish and Christian material throughout the thesis I have tried to maintain a fruitful tension and dialogue between insider and outsider perspectives, never letting the cases become too familiar or too strange.

In undertaking the two case studies my own understanding of Catholicism and Judaism, of Catholic schools, and particularly of Jewish schools, developed. I was aware of the openness to the 'other' which was expressed in different ways in both schools and at the same time the fainter sense of *Catholic* at St. Margaret's and the very strong sense of *Jewish* at Mount Sinai. The Jewish idea that what we learn is a language with which we write the literature of our lives has become an important way for me to think about education. The Catholic stress on the potential of education to develop the intellectual capacity of all students and enable them to pursue truth has stimulated my interest in distinctive approaches to the curriculum in faith-based schools.

The analysis of the questionnaires showed that in many ways the students at both schools shared similar perspectives, values and goals, though with the students at St. Margaret's rather more concerned about personal fulfilment than the slightly younger and often more uncertain students at Mount Sinai. Expectations of school were primarily academic and vocational. The vast majority have been happy at their school. Most acknowledge its influence on their religious development. More than half include religious practice among their personal goals for the future. They are concerned about others and about the world they live in. However, not all would choose to attend a Catholic or a Jewish school if they had to do it all over again and most are sceptical about whether their peers understand and accept the religious goals of the school. The student bodies at the two schools

are broadly similar in their views despite the difference in the degree to which religious identity is stressed in the two cultures.

The voices of the headteachers and some of the staff at both schools are heard describing the symbols, stories, rituals and values at their school and discussing different views of what it means to be a Jewish or a Catholic school. A number of voices from beyond the two schools widen and deepen the dialogue. They come from the wider Jewish and Catholic community and from relevant theory and research. Collectively, these voices intimate the subtle and sometimes complex links between the cultures in the two particular schools and more general religious and educational viewpoints.

Writing about Jewish education stresses the value of tradition, texts, dialogue and community, and the importance of relationships between teacher and student. Catholic writing focuses on the education of the whole person, the pursuit of truth which will achieve a synthesis of faith and wider culture, and the importance of service to others. In both religions there is an understanding that education is essentially about forming persons. These philosophical and policy texts offer a resource for the on-going self-identification of faith-based schools like St. Margaret's and Mount Sinai.

I have illustrated the potential, within Judaism and within Catholicism, for dialogue between people in school, with their actual experiences of the culture, and those with more theoretical ideas. I have also suggested the possibility of dialogue about education as a significant part of Jewish-Christian dialogue. I have completed the thesis by naming some of the ways in which the culture of the two faith-based schools I have studied could have wider implications for the common good. Their stress on community and identity which is hospitable to the 'other', like the open inclusivist approach to inter-faith dialogue which I have used throughout the thesis, offers an approach to schooling in our pluralist society which could now be part of wider educational discussion.

The research which the thesis has presented could go on in a number of ways. I still consider culture to be a fruitful focus for research and would like to see more studies of particular schools in Britain. For example, full ethnographic studies of schools would enable more observation of the minutiae of school life, of classroom interactions, subgroups within the school and so on, which are not possible in the limited case studies discussed here. Longitudinal studies, both quantitative and qualitative, could enable some insight into the long term impact of a Catholic or a Jewish school, not only on religious belief and practice but also on, for example, aspects of citizenship. Overlapping with both the previous possibilities, would be studies which focus on identity. I am particularly interested

in the way in which students in a faith-based school perform their identity in a variety of different cultures or groups and in understanding in more detail how students have developed the particular, complex, identity which they have.[2] All these suggestions are concerned, as I have been throughout the thesis, with 'the stories lives tell'.

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[2] The Warwick Religious Education and Community Project has being doing work of this kind with 8-13 year old children who are members of religious communities (Jackson 1993: 98).

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Appendix A - Questionnaire used at St. Margaret's

RESEARCH INTO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

February 1996

Dear Student at St. Margaret's

As Catholic Schools approach the year 2000, quite a lot of research into them is being carried out. I am doing a 'case study' of St. Margaret's over the coming months and the first part of the study is this questionnaire which final year students in Catholic schools in many parts of the world are being asked to complete.

It attempts to discover what you think about certain issues and to explore your experience of your Catholic School and its influences on your life. **I would really like to hear from you about your hopes, aspirations, uncertainties, beliefs.** In the questions which follow, therefore, the best answer is your honest, personal opinion .

The replies which you make are **strictly confidential.** No attempt will be made at any stage to identify individual students. **So, please do not sign your name anywhere.** Your replies will not be shown to any of your teachers or to any one else. I will be the only person to see them.

Thank you very much for your help with my research. I shall be in school from time to time and perhaps I shall be able to talk with some of you about your experiences at St. Margaret's. I wish you all the very best for the rest of this year and in your future life.

St Mary's University College,   Yours sincerely,
Strawberry Hill,
Twickenham   Lynne Scholefield
TW1 4SX

SECTION 1 - Background

1. Please indicate whether you are:
    A.   Male
    B.   Female

2. Are you a day student or a boarder?
    A.   Day student
    B.   Boarder

3. What is your religion?
    A.   Catholic
    B.   Other Christian faith
    C.   Non-Christian religion
    D.   No religion

4. What is your mother's religion?
    A.   Practising Catholic
    B.   Non-practising Catholic
    C.   Other Christian faith
    D.   Non-Christian religion
    E.   No religion

5. What is your father's religion?
    A.   Practising Catholic
    B.   Non-practising Catholic
    C.   Other Christian faith
    D.   Non-Christian religion
    E.   No religion

6. What is the final level of your father's formal education?
    A.   Attended primary school
    B.   Completed some secondary education
    C.   Finished secondary education
    D.   Completed a degree or a diploma

7. What is the final level of your mother's formal education?
    A.   Attended primary school
    B.   Completed some secondary education
    C.   Finished secondary education
    D.   Completed a degree or a diploma

8. With regard to your parents:
    A.   One of my parents has died
    B.   Both of my parents have died
    C.   Both of my parents are living at home
    D.   My parents are divorced
    E.   My parents have separated

9.   Are there any religious pictures or objects (e.g. cross, holy picture, book) displayed at home?

     A.   Yes

     B.   No

10.   Are your parents interested in your progress at school this year?

     A.   No

     B.   Uncertain

     C.   Yes

11.   Compared with the majority of students in your Year, how well are you doing in your school work?

     A.   Very poorly

     B.   Not very well

     C.   About average

     D.   Better than average

     E.   Very well

12.   What do you intend to do next year after leaving school?

     A.   Take a year off

     B.   Take up an apprenticeship

     C.   Get a full time job

     D.   Begin a technical course in further education

     E.   Go to full time university

13.   How important would you say religion is in your life?

     A.   Not important at all

     B.   Not very important

     C.   Of some importance

     D.   Fairly important

     E.   Very important

SECTION 2 - Staying on at School

HOW IMPORTANT WERE THE FOLLOWING REASONS IN YOUR DECISION TO STAY ON AT SCHOOL UNTIL THIS FINAL YEAR?

Please read each answer carefully and decide on the degree of importance of each. Put the letter that indicates your answer beside each number.

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

14.   I do well in my school work

15.   My parents wanted me to stay at school

16.   I enjoy school

17.   My teachers thought I should stay at school

18.   Most of my friends decided to stay at school

19.   I want to go on to higher education

20.   I like the subjects I am studying at school

21.   I feel at home in this school

22.   I would get a better job later

23.   I had no other plans

SECTION 3 - Expectations

THIS SECTION REFERS TO THE GOALS WHICH YOU CONSIDER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SHOULD HAVE. EACH QUESTION BEGINS: 'CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SHOULD ...'

Please record the degree of importance which you consider should be given to each:

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SHOULD:

24. Help students to discover and fulfil themselves as persons

25. Prepare students for their future careers

26. Help students understand the society in which they live

27. Provide an atmosphere of Christian community where people are

concerned for one another

28. Prepare students for higher education (university etc.)

29. Provide students with advice on careers and further education

30. Give all students a chance of success in some aspect of school life

31. Integrate Religious Education with other subjects where possible

32. Assist students to achieve a high standard of performance in their

school work

33. Prepare students to become good citizens

34. Provide an environment in which students' faith in God can develop

SECTION 4 - School Life and Climate

THIS SECTION CONTAINS STATEMENTS ABOUT ASPECTS OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL YOU ARE ATTENDING THIS YEAR.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with each statement as follows:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

35. The relationships between parents and staff are very friendly

36. Students here think a lot of their school

37. Most teachers are well qualified and have good teaching skills

38. Students here know the standard of conduct expected of them

39. Most teachers in the school show a good deal of school spirit

40. Final year students are not given enough real freedom

41. Most teachers know their final year students as individual persons

42. This school has a good name in the local community

43. I can approach the Headteacher for advice and help

44. I feel depressed at school

45. Senior students understand and accept the religious goals of the school

46. Most teachers carry out their work with energy and pleasure

47. Discipline presents no real problem in this school

48. Adequate counselling help is available to students

49. This school is a place where I feel lonely

50. This school places too much emphasis on external conformity to rules and regulations

51. Everyone tries to make you feel at home in this school

52. I am treated with respect by other people at school

53. The things I am taught are worthwhile learning

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

54. This school is a place where I feel worried

55. Other students accept me as I am

56. A good spirit of community exists among final year students

57. Most teachers go out of their way to help you

58. The Headteacher places importance on the religious nature of the school

59. There is a happy atmosphere in the school

60. Catholic teachers here set an example of what it means to be a practising

Catholic

61. Most teachers show that people are more important than rules

62. Most other students are very friendly

63. I feel proud to be a student of this school

64. There are ways to have school rules changed if most students disagree with

them

65. The Headteacher encourages a sense of community and belonging to

the school

66. I have been happy at school

67. I would send my children to a Catholic school

68. Most teachers never explain why they ask you to do things around here

69. If I had to do it all over again, I would attend a Catholic school

70. If students have difficulty with school work, most teachers take time to help

them

71. School rules here encourage self-discipline and responsibility

SECTION 5 - Curriculum

THIS SECTION REFERS TO VARIOUS ISSUES RELATED TO THE CURRICULUM i.e. ALL THE SUBJECTS, ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROVIDED BY YOUR SCHOOL.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with each statement as follows:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

72.   The curriculum of this school meets my present needs

73.   There are opportunities for students to get to know teachers outside the

classroom

74.   The out-of-school activities of the school have sufficient variety and scope

75.   There is a good sports programme in the school

76.   The school offers a good range of subjects to older students

77.   The subjects offered develop the capacity for independent and critical

thinking

78.   The subjects taught offer useful knowledge and skills

79.   The Religious Education programme is an important part of the curriculum

80.   The subjects taught in the school are relevant to real life and to students'

needs

81.   The subjects taught here prepare students adequately for future employment

82.   The Curriculum of the school is dominated too much by examinations

83.   A Christian way of thinking is presented in the subjects taught here

84.   The school places sufficient emphasis on cultural activities (music, art,

drama, etc.)

85. **Have you found that what you learnt in school subjects other than R.E. has had any influence on your Christian beliefs? Select ONE of the following answers only:**

What I have learned in my other school subjects has:

A. **contradictied** my Christian beliefs;

B. **weakened** my Christian beliefs;

C. **not affected** my Christian beliefs;

D. **supported** my Christian beliefs;

E. **strengthened** my Christian beliefs.

SECTION 6 - Religious Education

THIS SECTION REFERS TO YOUR EXPERIENCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT THIS SCHOOL IN THE PRESENT AND THE PREVIOUS YEARS

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with each of statement as follows:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

86. I am enjoying R.E. classes this year

87. The study of other religions has helped me appreciate my own religion

88. R.E. classes are largely a waste of time

89. R.E. classes are related to real life and to my needs

90. R.E. classes are not taken seriously by students

91. If R.E. classes were voluntary, I would still attend them

92. R.E. classes are poorly prepared and taught

93. R.E. classes allow sufficient time for discussion

94. This school has a good R.E. programme for older students

95. R.E. is taught at a level comparable with that of other subjects

96. R.E. classes have helped me to understand the Gospels

97. R.E. classes have shown me the place of the Eucharist in Catholic life

98. R.E. classes have deepened my understanding of the Catholic tradition

99. Basic Catholic values and moral teaching are not taught in R.E. classes

100. Contemporary moral issues are given emphasis in R.E. classes

101. Christian marriage has been treated in sufficient depth in R.E. classes

102. R.E. classes help me to form my own conscience

103. Assessment through assignments or examinations should form part of R.E.

104. R.E. classes have helped me to pray

105. I do not know my Catholic faith well enough

106. R.E. classes have helped me understand other religious and non-religious points of view

107. R.E. classes take up too much time which should be devoted to other subjects

108. R.E. classes help me to understand the meaning of life

SECTION 7 - Values, Beliefs and Faith

THIS SECTION REFERS TO CERTAIN ISSUES OR TO STATEMENTS WHICH PEOPLE MAKE.

Please consider each carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree, or disagree, with them:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

109.   It is all right to take a small item from a large department store if everyone else does it

110.   Homeless and disadvantaged people in society don't concern me at all

111.   I believe in God

112.   Euthanasia, or the mercy killing of the sick or dying, is morally wrong

113.   I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely

114.   It is all right for people who are not married to live together

115.   People today should respect the environment

116.   I would go to Mass on Sundays even if I were free to stay away

117.   People should be respected whatever their race, nationality or religion

118.   Abortion is a worse evil than the birth of an unwanted child

119.   God is a loving Father

120.   Trying out drugs is all right, as long as you don't go too far

121.   I experience times of questioning when I am uncertain and confused about my faith

122.   It is important for me to spend some time in prayer each day

123.   I accept the church's teaching on birth control

124.   The trust and love of my parents influence my approach to life

125.   My faith helps me to be a better person

126.   The Gospel of Jesus influences the way I lead my life

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

127. I have rejected aspects of the teaching of the Church in which I once believed

128. Jesus Christ is truly God

129. I am disturbed at times by my lack of faith

130. I believe that God will always forgive me

131. I try to follow the Catholic way of life without questioning it

132. Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist

133. I have developed my own way of relating to God apart from the Church

134. The Church needs women priests

135. The Church is very important to me

136. Jesus does not mean anything to me

137. I think that Church services are boring

138. I know that Jesus is very close to me

139. I think that saying prayers does no good

140. I am coming to believe because of my own convictions rather than the beliefs of others

SECTION 8 - Influences on your Religious Development

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO VARIOUS INFLUENCES ON YOUR RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS.

How important have been the following influences?

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

141.   The example and lives of your parents

142.   The influence of people at your Parish

143.   The influence of your friends and peers

144.   The example and lives of your teachers

145.   The Religious Education provided by your school

146.   The effect of a school Retreat, Christian Living Camp, or similar

147.   The influence of a youth group

148.   The influence of your Catholic school

149.   School liturgies (Masses, prayer sessions, etc.)

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO RETREATS (Omit if you have not made a retreat in this or the previous year. Go on to question 156.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with the following statements:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

150.   The Retreat was uninspiring and boring

151.   The Retreat has had a lasting influence on my life

152.   During the Retreat I came to respect the views of others more

153.   The Retreat helped to give me a sense of self-worth

154.   The Retreat was the most important religious experience of my life

155.   During the Retreat I experienced times when I felt close to God

SECTION 9 - Practices

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS REFER TO VARIOUS PRACTICES. Please choose the appropriate answer.

156.   **I normally attend Mass** (excluding School Masses)
   A.   Every Sunday at least
   B.   On a few Sundays a month
   C.   Once a month
   D.   A few times a year
   E.   Rarely or never

157.   **I normally receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation** (Confession)
   A.   More than once a month
   B.   About once a month
   C.   About once in three months
   D.   A few times a year
   E.   Rarely or never

158.   **I normally spend some time in personal prayer to God**
   A.   Each day
   B.   Regularly; several times a week
   C.   Sometimes; a few times a month
   D.   A few times a year
   E.   Rarely or never

159.   **I normally read some part of the Scriptures** (Bible)
   A.   Each day
   B.   Regularly; several times a week
   C.   Sometimes; a few times a month
   D.   A few times a year
   E.   Rarely or never

SECTION 10 - Knowledge of Catholic Teachings and Terms

EACH QUESTION IN THIS SECTION IS FOLLOWED BY FOUR ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS. In each case mark the answer which you think correctly represents the Catholic position.

160.   The gift by which God shares his life with us is called:
A. Grace   B. Merit   C. Indulgence   D. Sacramental

161.   God reveals himself most to people through:
A. The person of Jesus   B. Men and womenC. Nature   D. Wonder of life

162.   God's telling us about himself through the life of Jesus is called:
A. Faith   B. Belief   C. Revelation   D. Infallibility

163.   The movement to restore unity among Christian people is called:
A. Missionary work   B. Prophecy   C. Ecumenism   D. Evangelism

164.   The freeing people from sin and its effects through Jesus is called:
A. Salvation   B. Revelation   C. Inspiration   D. Incarnation

165.   The Sacrament that helps us to be witnesses and followers of Jesus in our lives is:
A. Penance   B. Holy Orders   C. Marriage   D. Confirmation

166.   Our free response to God revealing himself to us is called:
A. Insight   B. Revelation   C. Justice   D. Faith

167.   The Church honours Mary, the Mother of Jesus, primarily because of her:
A.Immaculate conception   B.Virginity   C.Motherhood of God
D. Assumption

168.   The Bible is best described as:
A.   History book which describes important religious events
B.   Collection of many books written at different times under God's inspiration
C.   Book written by the early Church about God's plan for all people
D.   Collection of books about the life of Jesus and his Apostles

169.   Several Gospels were written instead of only one because:
A.   Gospel writers were not able to agree on details
B.   Writers worked without knowledge of other Gospel accounts
C.   Different Gospels were written for different Christian communities
D.   Several Gospels were needed to ensure accuracy of detail

170. **A proper Catholic attitude towards the world is:**
A. The world is an evil place which we avoid as much as possible
B. The world is our proper environment capable of meeting all our needs
C. The world is our present home, made good by God and to be improved by the lives of good people
D. The world is not important as people were made for happiness in heaven

171. **Christian marriage exists principally for husbands and wives to:**
A. Enjoy sexual pleasure in a sinless manner
B. Offer support and love to one another
C. Preserve family names and traditions
D. Share love and create families

172. **Conscience is best described as:**
A. A feeling of guilt after a person has done something wrong
B. A personal judgement that something is right or wrong
C. The law of God which is contained in the Ten Commandments
D. All the laws of God and the Church

173. **What is the most important implication of the biblical story of creation?**
A. The world was created in a brief period of time
B. Good and evil were created by God
C. Adam and Eve were the first human beings
D. Everything depends on God for its existence

SECTION 11 - Personal Goals for the Future

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING GOALS FOR YOUR FUTURE LIFE?

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

174.   To make a lot of money

175.   To find personal happiness and satisfaction in life

176.   To serve other people

177.   To be honest in my dealings with others

178.   To be happily married and have a happy family life

179.   To accept myself as the person I am

180.   To be important and successful in life

181.   To find God in my life and grow in faith in Him

182.   To make lifelong friendships with other people

183.   To live up to the example and teachings of Christ

(i)   What have you come to APPRECIATE and VALUE about the CATHOLIC SCHOOL you attend?

(ii).   Are there any CHANGES which you would make at your school?

(iii)   How would you describe the UNIQUE SPIRIT which exists in your school?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CARE IN ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix B - Questionnaire used at Mount Sinai

RESEARCH INTO JEWISH SCHOOLS

November 1997

Dear Student at Mount Sinai High School,

As schools approach the Year 2000, quite a lot of research into them is being carried out. I am doing a 'case study' of Mount Sinai this year and part of the study is this questionnaire. Students in schools in many parts of the world are being asked to complete one like it.

It attempts to discover what you think about certain issues and to explore your experience of your Jewish school and its influences on your life. **I would really like to hear from you about your hopes, aspirations, uncertainties, ideas.** In the questions which follow, therefore, the best answer is your honest, personal opinion.

The replies which you make are **strictly confidential.** No attempt will be made at any stage to identify individual students. **So, please do not sign your name anywhere.** Your replies will not be shown to any of your teachers or to anyone else. I will be the only person to see them.

Thank you very much for your help with my research. I shall be in school from time to time and perhaps I shall be able to talk with some of you about your experiences at Mount Sinai High School. I wish you all the very best for the rest of this year and in your future life.

St Mary's University College,   Yours sincerely,
Strawberry Hill
Twickenham   Lynne Scholefield
TW1 4SX

SECTION 1 - Background

1. Please indicate whether you are:
   A. Male
   B. Female

2. Are you a day student or a boarder?
   A. Day student
   B. Boarder

3. What is your affiliation?
   A. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism
   B. Orthodox Judaism
   C. Masorti Judaism
   D. Reform Judaism
   E. Liberal Judaism
   F. No religion

4. What is your mother's affiliation?
   A. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism
   B. Orthodox Judaism
   C. Masorti Judaism
   D. Reform Judaism
   E. Liberal Judaism
   F. No religion

5. What is your father's affiliation?
   A. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism
   B. Orthodox Judaism
   C. Masorti Judaism
   D. Reform Judaism
   E. Liberal Judaism
   F. No religion

6. What is the final level of your father's formal education?
   A. Attended primary school
   B. Completed some secondary education
   C. Finished secondary education
   D. Completed a degree or a diploma

7. What is the final level of your mother's formal education?
   A. Attended primary school
   B. Completed some secondary education
   C. Finished secondary education
   D. Completed a degree or a diploma

8.   With regard to your parents:
- A.   One of my parents has died
- B.   Both of my parents have died
- C.   Both of my parents are living at home
- D.   My parents are divorced
- E.   My parents have separated

9.   Are there any religious objects (e.g.mezuzah, seder plate, chanukkiyah) displayed at home?
- A.   Yes
- B.   No

10.   Are your parents interested in your progress at school this year?
- A.   No
- B.   Uncertain
- C.   Yes

11.   Compared with the majority of students in your Year, how well are you doing in your school work?
- A.   Very poorly
- B.   Not very well
- C.   About average
- D.   Better than average
- E.   Very well

12.   What do you hope to do when you leave school?
- A.   Get a full time job
- B.   Take up an apprenticeship
- C.   Begin a technical course in further education
- D.   Begin a degree course at university
- E.   Take a year off and then go to university

13.   How important would you say religion is in your life?
- A.   Not important at all
- B.   Not very important
- C.   Of some importance
- D.   Fairly important
- E.   Very important

SECTION 2 - Staying on at School

ANSWER THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU WANT TO STAY ON AT SCHOOL NEXT YEAR

How important are the following reasons in your decision to stay on at school next year? Please read each answer carefully and decide on the degree of importance of each. Put the letter that indicates your answer beside each number.

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

14. I do well in my school work

15. my parents want me to stay at school

16. I enjoy school

17. My teachers think I should stay at school

18. Most of my friends want to stay at school

19. I want to go on to higher education

20. I like the subjects I will be studying

21. I feel at home in this school

22. I will get a better job later

23. I have no other plans

SECTION 3 - Expectations

THIS SECTION REFERS TO THE GOALS WHICH YOU CONSIDER JEWISH SCHOOLS SHOULD HAVE. EACH QUESTION BEGINS: 'JEWISH SCHOOLS SHOULD ...'

Please record the degree of importance which you consider should be given to each:

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

JEWISH SCHOOLS SHOULD:

24. Help students to discover and fulfil themselves as persons

25. Prepare students for their future careers

26. Help students understand the society in which they live

27. Provide an atmosphere where people are concerned for one another

28. Prepare students for higher education (university etc.)

29. Provide students with advice on careers and further education

30. Give all students a chance of success in some aspect of school life

31. Integrate Jewish Studies with other subjects where possible

32. Assist students to achieve a high standard of performance in their school work

33. Prepare students to become good citizens

34. Provide an environment in which students' practice of Judaism can develop

SECTION 4 - School Life and Climate

THIS SECTION CONTAINS STATEMENTS ABOUT ASPECTS OF THE JEWISH SCHOOL YOU ARE ATTENDING THIS YEAR.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with each statement as follows:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

35.   The relationships between parents and staff are very friendly

36.   Students here think a lot of their school

37.   Most teachers are well qualified and have good teaching skills

38.   Students here know the standard of conduct expected of them

39.   Most teachers in the school show a good deal of school spirit

40.   Students in our year are not given enough real freedom

41.   Most teachers know their students as individual persons

42.   This school has a good name in the local community

43.   I can approach the Headteacher for advice and help

44.   I feel depressed at school

45.   Senior students understand and accept the religious goals of the school

46.   Most teachers carry out their work with energy and pleasure

47.   Discipline presents no real problem in this school

48.   Adequate counselling help is available to students

49.   This school is a place where I feel lonely

50.   This school places too much emphasis on external conformity to rules

and regulations

51.   Everyone tries to make you feel at home in this school

52.   I am treated with respect by other people at school

53.   The things I am taught are worthwhile learning

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

54. This school is a place where I feel worried

55. Other students accept me as I am

56. A good spirit of community exists among students in our year

57. Most teachers go out of their way to help you

58. The Headteacher places importance on the religious nature of the school

59. There is a happy atmosphere in the school

60. Jewish teachers here set an example of what it means to be a practising Jew

61. Most teachers show that people are more important than rules

62. Most other students are friendly

63. I feel proud to be a student of this school

64. There are ways to have school rules changed if most students disagree with them

65. The Headteacher encourages a sense of community and belonging to the school

66. I have been happy at school

67. I would send my children to a Jewish school

68. Most teachers never explain why they ask you to do things around here

69. If I had to do it all over again, I would attend a Jewish school

70. If students have difficulty with school work, most teachers take time to help them

71. School rules here encourage self-discipline and responsibility

SECTION 5 - Curriculum

THIS SECTION REFERS TO VARIOUS ISSUES RELATED TO THE CURRICULUM i.e. ALL THE SUBJECTS, ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROVIDED BY YOUR SCHOOL.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with each statement as follows:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

72. The curriculum of this school meets my present needs

73. There are opportunities for students to get to know teachers outside the classroom

74. The out-of-school activities of the school have sufficient variety and scope

75. There is a good sports programme in the school

76. The school offers a good range of subjects to older students

77. The subjects offered develop the capacity for independent and critical thinking

78. The subjects taught offer useful knowledge and skills

79. The Jewish Studies programme is an important part of the curriculum

80. The subjects taught in the school are relevant to real life and to students' needs

81. The subjects taught here prepare students adequately for future employment

82. The Curriculum of the school is dominated too much by examinations

83. A Jewish way of understanding is presented in the subjects taught here

84. The school places sufficient emphasis on cultural activities (music, art, drama, etc.)

85. **Have you found that what you learnt in school subjects other than Jewish Studies has had any influence on your life as a Jew? Select ONE of the following answers only:**

What I have learned in my other school subjects has:

A.   **made it impossible** to live as a Jew;

B.   **made it difficult** to live as a Jew;

C.   **made no difference** to my life as a Jew;

D.   **supported me** in my life as a Jew;

E.   **strengthened me** in my life as a Jew.

_____

SECTION 6 - Jewish Studies

THIS SECTION REFERS TO YOUR EXPERIENCE OF JEWISH STUDIES AT THIS SCHOOL IN THE PRESENT AND THE PREVIOUS YEARS

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with each of statement as follows:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

86.   I am enjoying Jewish Studies this year

87.   The study of other religions has helped me appreciate my own religion

88.   Jewish Studies classes are largely a waste of time

89.   Jewish Studies classes are related to real life and to my needs

90.   Jewish Studies classes are not taken seriously by students

91.   If Jewish Studies classes were voluntary, I would still attend them

92.   Jewish Studies classes are poorly prepared and taught

93.   Jewish Studies classes allow sufficient time for discussion

94.   This school has a good Jewish Studies programme for older students

95.   Jewish Studies is taught at a level comparable with that of other subjects

96.   Jewish Studies classes have helped me to understand the Torah

97.   Jewish Studies classes have shown me the place of the Synagogue in Jewish life

98.   Jewish Studies classes have deepened my understanding of the Jewish tradition

99.   Basic Jewish values and moral teaching are not taught in Jewish Studies classes

100.   Contemporary moral issues are given emphasis in Jewish Studies classes

101. Jewish marriage has been treated in sufficient depth in Jewish Studies classes

102. Jewish Studies classes help me to form my own conscience

103. Assessment through assignments or examinations should form part of Jewish Studies

104. Jewish Studies classes have helped me to pray

105. I do not know enough about living a Jewish life

106. Jewish Studies classes have helped me understand other religious and non-religious points of view

107. Jewish Studies classes take up too much time which should be devoted to other subjects

108. Jewish Studies classes help me to understand the meaning of life

SECTION 7 - Values, Beliefs and Faith

THIS SECTION REFERS TO CERTAIN ISSUES OR TO STATEMENTS WHICH PEOPLE MAKE.

Please consider each carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree, or disagree, with them:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

109.   It is all right to take a small item from a large department store if everyone else does it

110.   Homeless and disadvantaged people in society don't concern me at all

111.   I believe in God

112.   Euthanasia, or the mercy killing of the sick or dying, is morally wrong

113.   I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely

114.   It is all right for people who are not married to live together

115.   People today should respect the environment

116.   A Jew should always marry another Jew

117.   People should be respected whatever their race, nationality or religion

118.   Abortion is a worse evil than the birth of an unwanted child

119.   God is a loving Father

120.   Trying out drugs is all right, as long as you don't go too far

121.   I experience times of questioning when I am uncertain and confused about what I believe

122.   It is important for me to pray each day

123.   I accept the traditional understanding of the role of women in Judaism

124.   The trust and love of my parents influence my approach to life

125.   Being an observant Jew helps me to be a better person

126.   Jewish law influences the way I lead my life

127.   I have rejected aspects of Jewish life which I once followed

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

128. Israel is very important to me

129. I am disturbed at times by my lack of Jewish observance

130. I believe that God will always forgive me

131. I try to follow the Jewish way of life without questioning it

132. I am more religious at school than at home

133. Being Jewish to me does not necessarily mean being religious

134. I would like to live in Israel at some time in my life

135. The Torah is truly the word of God

136. It is hard to believe in God after the Holocaust

137. I think that synagogue services are boring

138. I get great satisfaction from celebrating Sabbath and Festivals

139. I think that saying prayers does no good

140. I know that I will live a different kind of Jewish life from my parents

SECTION 8 - Influences on your Religious Development

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO VARIOUS INFLUENCES ON YOUR RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS.

How important have been the following influences?

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

141.   The example and lives of your parents

142.   The influence of people at your synagogue

143.   The influence of your friends and peers

144.   The example and lives of your teachers

145.   The Jewish Studies provided by your school

146.   The effect of a visit to Israel

147.   The influence of classes at your synagogue

148.   The influence of your Jewish school

149.   Opportunities for prayer and worship at school

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO OCCASIONS WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN AWAY TOGETHER WITH OTHER STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL.

Please state when you have been away with other students, how old you were, where you went and how long you were away for. If you have never done this please say so and go straight on to question 156.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree, or disagree, with the following statements:

A. Certainly false
B. Probably false
C. Uncertain
D. Probably true
E. Certainly true

150. Going away with other students was uninspiring and boring

151. Going away with other students has had a lasting influence on my life

152. While I was away with others I came to respect their views more

153. Going away with others helped to give me a sense of self-worth

154. Going away with others was the most important religious experience of my life

155. While I was away with others I experienced times when I felt close to God

SECTION 9 - Practices

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS REFER TO VARIOUS PRACTICES. Please choose the appropriate answer.

156. **I normally go to synagogue**
   A. Every Sabbath at least
   B. On most Sabbaths
   C. Once a month
   D. A few times a year
   E. Rarely or never

157. **I normally give to charity**
   A. More than once a month
   B. About once a month
   C. About once in three months
   D. A few times a year
   E. Rarely or never

158. **I normally pray**
   A. Each day
   B. Regularly; several times a week
   C. Sometimes; a few times a month
   D. A few times a year
   E. Rarely or never

159. **I normally study Torah**
   A. Each day
   B. Regularly; several times a week
   C. Sometimes; a few times a month
   D. A few times a year
   E. Rarely or never

SECTION 10 - Personal Goals for the Future

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING GOALS FOR YOUR FUTURE LIFE?

A. No importance
B. Little importance
C. Some importance
D. Very important
E. Most important

160.   To make a lot of money

161.   To find personal happiness and satisfaction in life

162.   To serve other people

163.   To be honest in my dealings with others

164.   To be happily married and have a happy family life

165.   To accept myself as the person I am

166.   To be important and successful in life

167.   To further my Jewish education

168.   To make lifelong friendships with other people

169.   To be a fully observant Jew

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170.   **What have you come to APPRECIATE and VALUE about the JEWISH SCHOOL you attend?**

171. **Are there any CHANGES which you would make at your school?**

172. **How would you describe the UNIQUE SPIRIT which exists in your school?**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CARE IN ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix C - Interview Questions

I selected from the following list of questions during each interview:

If you had to choose something to symbolise the school, what would you choose?

If you were making a film about 'a day in the life of Mount Sinai / St. Margaret's', what would you want to include?

Who are the heroes in the school?

Can you describe the ideal student?

Can you describe a typical day at Mount Sinai / St. Margaret's?

How would someone know that this was a Jewish / Catholic school?

What do you do here because you are a Jewish / Catholic school?

What have been the outstanding events in the last year?

Are there any school traditions?

What do you like about this school?

How does this school differ from other schools you have been in?

How does the school relate to the local community?

Where are the tensions in the school?

Are there many people who don't fit in? What happens to them?

What are the serious crimes here?

Is there anything else you'd like to add, which I ought to know about, to help me understand what being at Mount Sinai / St. Margaret's is like?