

# **A Study of the Concept of Prejudice with Particular Reference to Geography Education**

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**A PhD thesis**

**Submitted September 1995**

**University of London Institute of Education**



## **- Acknowledgements -**

I thank the Headmaster, the staff and former colleagues and pupils of Greenfields School who were encouraging through their cooperation and openness. I also thank colleagues and students at the Institute of Education for their generosity and willingness to take part in 'research conversations'. I am indebted to Crispin Jones and Frances Slater for their critical friendship. Finally, I am so very grateful to those close to me, to whom I can now say 'it's done'.

## **- Geography, and Education -**

*The function of geography in school is to train future citizens to imagine accurately the conditions of the great world stage and so to help them to think sanely about political and social problems in the world around.*

(James Fairgrieve, 1926)

*(Cultural geography) has shifted towards recognising that society comprises a plurality of groups, each with their own "ways of seeing" and experiencing the world....Culture is defined by groups who cohere around shared visions, languages and codes of practice. Such definitions enable many different groups to be recognised - class, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, voting behaviour, environmental disposition (peace activists, conservationists)...The challenge for geography is to disentangle the shared subjectivities of place in order to make sense of these alternative visions of the future.*

(Anderson and Gale, 1992)

*I am the victim of a concentration camp...*

*...So I am suspicious of education.*

*My request is: help your students become more human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.*

*Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.*

*From the annual letter of a Boston Head to new teachers.*

*(Cited in Pring, 1992)*

# **A Study of the Concept of Prejudice with Particular Reference to Geography Education**

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to clarify the concept of prejudice largely, though not exclusively, through the medium of geography education. This is done by combining the results of a literature-based conceptual analysis with an empirical enquiry of the pupils and teachers of one all-white suburban comprehensive school (given the name of Greenfields School). Chapter 1 introduces the broad contextual features of the research and identifies the research question which drives the thesis: can an exploration of the concept of prejudice assist in the analysis of educational goals in geography?

Following a discussion of prejudice, prejudice in education and a survey of prejudice in the geographical education literature, a methodology for the study is discussed fully in Chapter 4: the approach adopted is pluralistic under a qualitative research design. This yields a multilayered account of the School (Chapter 5) and the analysis of conversational interview data derived from both pupils and teachers at the school (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

A synthesis of both the conceptual and the empirical analyses provides the basis for reporting the 'results' of the work, in the form of the creation of a conceptual map of prejudice. The map consists of seven 'dimensions' which are arranged to show the 'structural foundations' and the basic 'parameters' of the concept of prejudice. The utility of the derived map is then examined (Chapter 11), with particular emphasis on an eighth 'subject specific' dimension, namely 'place'.

Conversation is an important component of this thesis, not only as an element of the research methodology, but as a pedagogical device equated with the notion of an educational goal. This relates closely to what Jones (1987) called "education for conversation"; what this thesis takes us towards is the identification of conversation as a possible educational goal for geography. Identifying a conceptual map, the principal concrete aim of this research, leads us to a simple model approach to handling geographical knowledge with older pupils - one way in which conversation may be realised as a means to prepare young people for a form of effective intercultural communication. The map is also intended to form the basis for reflective conversation between geography teachers concerning the aims and purposes of geography education.



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This thesis seeks, through mainly the medium of geography education, to clarify the concept of prejudice in education. This is done by combining a literature based conceptual and interpretive analysis of prejudice (Chapters 2 and 3) with an empirical analysis of prejudice at one predominantly white, suburban, comprehensive school (which has been given the name 'Greenfields School'). The purpose of this chapter is to provide context and orientation for the thesis; to describe its origins and an outline of the directions that the research has taken. There is, inevitably, an autobiographical element to this account.

Greenfields School (see Chapter 5), or more precisely the geography department of that school, was where this research began<sup>1</sup>, stimulated by a number of questions and difficulties arising out of my concern to 'tackle racism' effectively. Tackling racism was, in my view, a responsibility that fell to all teachers, but was also one that was particularly important for teachers of geography to accept, owing to the special role of that subject introducing pupils to information and images of human diversity and inequality. Before considering the subject dimension, however, the broader contextual features of this study are identified.

Greenfields School had, by the mid-1980s, reached a point in its development when a thorough 'curriculum review', involving the whole staff, was thought desirable. This was conducted during the years 1984-1986, and although not forming an component of this research, it is worth noting that the staff readily endorsed the broad educational aims published by the government (DES/WO 1981), including, for example, that which encouraged schools to produce children with "lively, enquiring minds" (*ibid*). Like Walford (1981), I met such aims with some scepticism:

*Such a statement says everything, and it says nothing - it gives little clue about what is really going to happen in geography lessons... (ibid p217).*

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<sup>1</sup>I worked at Greenfields as Head of Geography (1979-1986), Senior Teacher (1982-1985) and as acting Deputy Headteacher (1985-1986). Although I had various 'whole school' responsibilities, I saw myself, in line with the majority of teachers at the school, primarily as a subject teacher.

The problem Walford identified is only partly to do with specificity. It is equally to do with the consistently challenging issue of *how* to translate worthy educational aims into effective practice. At around the same time, the education service as a whole had entered an interesting and distinctive period in relation to equal opportunities. During this period there was a burgeoning professional and political interest in issues of equality in education. This took a variety of forms; for instance,

forms of inequality, such as racism and sexism, were being researched and written about in a manner which produced new perspectives and fresh theorising to challenge existing practice (for example Gundara *et al* 1986; Jackson 1987);

political discourse on matters such as 'race' had become more urgent since the urban unrest in the early 1980s, which may partly have explained why an increasing number of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), including many outside the major metropolitan areas, had appointed advisors with special responsibilities for equal opportunities issues (for example, Hertfordshire in 1986);

authors and publishers had begun to produce materials for learning and teaching designed for a variety of audiences and contexts including, specifically for the non-urban setting (for example, Gaine 1987, Twitchin 1987); the dedicated journal *Multicultural Teaching* was launched in 1982;

the *Swann Report* (DES1985) was published and, under its title, *Education for All*, placed issues of equality on a national agenda, at least encouraging serious discussion and action on racism in all schools.

LEAs, perhaps taking the lead from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), began to develop policies, and encouraged schools to do likewise. In the spirit of demanding change, some of the advice that was available at the time of the mid-1980s, however, became somewhat strident: for example, ILEA (1983) argued that "most white people dismiss the view that Britain is a racist society" (p6) and that schools need to be involved in the "work of unlearning and dismantling racism" (p7). In a school such as Greenfields, the kind of approach to 'tackling racism' and developing practice indicated by these short quotes, may have raised awareness of some of the contemporary arguments, but it also raised obstacles<sup>2</sup> and resistances to change. The usage of the

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<sup>2</sup>It is pertinent to note that one obstacle to effective *whole school* action at Greenfields was the danger some perceived in singling out racism. On the subject of recording the incidence of racism at the school, I recorded (January 1988) that the Headteacher expressed the opinion that pupils in the Y9 and Y10 year retain comparably little about isolated incidents and that such occasions were "isolated moments in the whole play". The Head was unenthusiastic about recording 'racist incidents' and such a policy was never implemented fully.

word 'unlearning', unhelpfully suggests a form of authoritarian righteousness and majority guilt; as Roberts (1988) noted in relation to some early groundbreaking work in Hampshire schools, "a stranger coming into your school who tells *your* colleagues they are all racist is bound to be threatening" (*ibid* p 56).

A further episode is worth recording for its significance in contributing to the general background circumstances for this research. In September 1986 the murder of Ahmed Ullah took place in the playground of Burnage High School, Manchester. This was an event which captured the national headlines, not only for the seriousness of the event itself but for the nature of its aftermath. The report of the Burnage Enquiry, *Murder in the Playground* (Macdonald *et al* 1989), though establishing the racist circumstances of the murder, was nevertheless initially taken by much of the national press as evidence to sustain an attack on anti-racist education and anti-racist policies as the 'cause' of the murder (*ibid* p xix): anti-racist education, as far as the *Independent* was concerned, "...had proved 'A disaster'" (*ibid* p xx). Judging the specific impact of the Burnage aftermath on Greenfields School was not the purpose of this current research, though it is likely that the general impression left with teachers at the school was one in which the obstacles to venturing too deeply into issues of racism with staff and pupils had been reinforced.

In other words, the *full* message of the Burnage Enquiry was one that many teachers would have preferred to resist; for example, in urging schools to abandon 'colourblind' approaches and to confront racism in the lives of pupils, teachers and parents, black and white, Macdonald *et al* argued.

*We further emphasise that this is not only a task facing schools in inner cities or in what some people still insist on calling "immigrant areas". It is incumbent upon schools and colleges everywhere to tackle the issue of racism in the same way as they recognise the need to accept the technological revolution and propose students to be technologically competent in an age of new technology. (ibid p xxiv).*

There is a sense in which this thesis is an exploration into how to operationalise such a sentiment (in the context of a school like Greenfields) which, in essence, concerns how the education service can best prepare young people for successfully living in a pluricultural society.

The Burnage Enquiry emphasised the dangers of tackling racism inappropriately. Describing a tutor group lesson at Burnage High School a little time after the murder, in

which pupils were led by the prepared materials to accept some logical progression from racial insults to racial harassment to racial violence to racial murder, the Report stated,

*(The) tutor discussion totally misses the point. By the terms in which it is expressed it encouraged each side to see everything in partial terms and put everything in a racial context. It thus helps to polarise the school along racial lines - whites to take the guilt of what Darren Coulburn has done, and Asians to feel victimised and further afraid. But there is more. The tone of the document is complacent and self-congratulatory... It implies that Ahmed's death legitimises (the anti-racist) policies. (ibid p 46)*

The above quotation expresses part of the reasons for reservations that many teachers at Greenfields held about anti-racism. Though individually strongly motivated by concerns for 'fairness' and 'justice', most teachers at a school like Greenfields were not readily attracted to anti-racism: there were questions over what it could achieve and anxieties over how to enact it.

The late 1980s, then, formed a particular moment which I have briefly tried to identify. I have taken great care to describe the school setting and its response to the 'moment' in some detail (Chapter 5). It is worth stating that the high level of cooperation from teachers who contributed to my data might also be partly a result of the spirit of the 'moment': there was much interest in 'philosophising' about issues of prejudice which were seen to be important at Greenfields, a school proud of its comprehensive ethos and identity.

The main part of this thesis is a multilayered, qualitative empirical analysis based on data derived from both pupils and teachers at Greenfields School over a period of time from the late 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s. The analysis of these data, which aimed to describe the 'dimensions' of prejudice from the way in which discussants (pupils and teachers) talked about it, is contained in Chapters 6,7 and 8. Further conversational interviews were conducted with colleagues at the Institute of Education after the main period of research contact with the school had finished. The purpose of these was to provide further purchase (or perspective) on my data analysis and this episode is reported in Chapter 9.

The outcomes, or 'results' of the research are to be found in Chapters 10 and 11, in the form of the conceptual map of prejudice which I am able to shape from a synthesis of the conceptual and empirical work. Though arising initially from a particular 'moment', as I have described above, this map of the concept of prejudice aims to provide the basis



for a greater understanding of prejudice, and thus to carry us forward to a potentially more effective educational response to prejudice.

The methodology which guides this work (Chapter 4), like the work as a whole, has evolved over a period. The thesis has adopted a pluralistic approach which argues for flexible, qualitative methods guided (mainly) by the principle of 'fitness for purpose'. The methods, in particular the conversational interviews, in which subjects were encouraged to 'deliberate' and indeed, speculate during the interview, also evolved during the research process and were a direct response to the application of the 'fitness' principle. Conversation is believed to hold potential, not only as an unusual method of data collection, but in the field of continuing teacher education, a point which is briefly made in the conclusion, and, as Jones (1987) argued, an *education for conversation* is perhaps a key pedagogical strategy with which to address prejudice in the classroom. Identifying a conceptual map is seen in this thesis as a stage in the development of more specific guidance on what form an education for conversation might take.

## 1.2 Identifying a Research Question

As a geography department committed to engaging the maximum number of pupils in 'field work' in contrasting environments (which for Greenfields pupils often meant urban settings) the geography staff were well placed to observe at first hand the discontinuity (reported in the analysis of teachers discussions in Chapter 8) between classroom attitudes and those displayed by some of the pupils when their 'guard' was down, that is outside the school environment<sup>3</sup>. As a result of these experiences, I became less concerned at the *existence* of racism and prejudice than the thought that no matter what techniques or inspired lesson content a teacher might employ, pupils remained relatively 'untouched' intellectually in their every day lives. It was possible, I thought, that teachers were in effect 'missing the target', and that the reason for this was that the target had been falsely identified.

This judgement increasingly led me to re-evaluate the role and the potential of the *subject teacher* in effectively tackling racism and other manifestations of prejudice. Even in the circumstances of a fully worked out and agreed whole school policy on racism (which Greenfields did *not* have) and an operational and effective tutoring and/or personal and social education programme (which Greenfields did have), pupils and teachers spend most of their time at secondary school in subject lessons. It falls inescapably to subject

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<sup>3</sup> Pupils who in classroom settings would be seen as reasonable and open minded, would suddenly revert to some astonishingly open and animated name calling when, for example, driving through Stamford Hill in north London, a district of Jewish occupation.

teachers, individually or collectively to make a difference, if any such thing is possible. The question to which teachers or departments must make a response, therefore, remains: in what ways does the subject contribute to reducing prejudice or to tackling racism?

The difficulty with this question lies not in identifying a response but in the type or quality of the response (see Lambert and Matthews, forthcoming). It is all too easy when faced with a question like this to make claims for geography which are over ambitious or perhaps ill-targetted. Partly, one senses, this is a result of geography having almost constantly to fight a curriculum turf battle, a battle which intensified considerably during the 1980s: geographers in these circumstances were keen to establish the subject's credentials, both in terms of its unique essence (see for example, Bailey and Binns 1987) and its radical, progressive pedigree (see, for example, Fien and Gerber 1987).

The type of question posed above, in other words, invites rhetoric. No matter how serious and well meaning the intent, rhetoric concerning the subject's capacity, say, to 'eradicate' racism is open to misinterpretation and misrepresentation, even ridicule. This can result in careful analysis of geography's potential in furthering education for international understanding, for example (Graves 1985), or detailed consideration of particular teaching strategies designed to "clarify" and "probe" pupils' attitudes and values (for example, Slater 1993) being sidelined and devalued. There is a sense in which the identification and implementation of the National Curriculum in the years following the 1988 Education Reform Act had precisely this effect, signified perhaps by the extraordinary success of one particular course book at Key Stage 3 (Waugh and Bushell 1991), described by Ofsted (1995) as "limited and sometimes limiting" (*ibid* p14). In his review of this otherwise "undoubtedly excellent" series, Bailey wrote:

*The authors' method of construction does, however, raise an important, worrying educational question: how satisfactory is it to build your whole course around questions which you and not the pupils have thought out, and then to set out the main teaching points relating to each question in a way that almost suggests to the GCSE candidate, ever keen to memorise "right answers" that all you need to know is here? (Bailey 1994 p x).*

Bailey's criticism alludes to wider issues concerning the goals of geography in education. He confirms the view that the contents of a geography education, by which I mean not only the 'knowledge' component but also the way it is learned, used and applied, requires critical evaluation in relation to its goals. I also suspected, during my time at the Greenfields School and the years after, that it was the content of the

geography curriculum that was and remains the key issue in 'tackling' racism and prejudice. What children are taught is important, and the way they are taught it equally so.

The more appropriate question, then, is not what can geography contribute to reducing prejudice but *how may understanding prejudice* improve the processes and outcomes of geography lessons? Articulating geography as a systematic field of enquiry in relation to educational goals could force a clarification of concepts such as prejudice, but the clarification of the concept of prejudice is essential, I argue, *in the first place* to help specify the educational goals. This in turn may help teachers select and more successfully incorporate various techniques and strategies from both within the discipline and outside, such as World Studies (Hicks and Fisher 1985) and Global Education (Pike and Selby 1986). Such materials probably lack power if taken on a piecemeal basis, but gain utility and purpose when integrated as part of a whole strategy which itself is a response to clearly articulated goals.

In other words, this thesis had its origins in the day to day experience of a geography teacher who had concluded that to develop effective practice in relation to the cognitive and affective growth of pupils learning about human diversity, a number of fundamental questions would need to be asked. Essentially this involved shifting focus away from ideas like 'tackling racism'. This is a notion which may express nothing more than laudable intent because in the final analysis it lacks a sense of the positive, or of something to be achieved: is it appropriate, or effective, to teach through one's subject only to be *against* such and such?

It was my concern with the positive which led to my interest in goals and my hypothesis that working for an *understanding* of prejudice may hold a key for developing practice in geography education. This in turn might help establish a clearer identity for geography which was able to go beyond the limited vision of (merely) an information rich subject, manifest in the 1991 National Curriculum (DES/WO 1991). Take, for example, Lee (1991) who has written of history:

*The reason for teaching history is not that it changes society, but that it changes pupils; it changes what they see in the world and how they see it. ...Handing on knowledge of the past only makes educational sense if what is handed on is real historical knowledge. Acceptance of this proposition can lead in two different directions, culminating at their extremes in very different points of view. In the first view, genuine historical knowledge is no more and no less than the certified facts: certified, that is by historians. Learning about the past at school means learning a selection of these facts. The second view insists that real historical*

*knowledge involves knowing what constitutes "good grounds" for claims to knowledge in history. This means that learning about the past means learning about the discipline too. (Lee 1991 p43-44)*

It is difficult to imagine a similar passage being written equally convincingly for geography. Whilst it is certainly not uncommon to find school geography understood as an exercise in learning from a selection of the certified facts (at one extreme), the epistemology of an alternative view of geography is by no means as readily expressed as is the case for history in the above passage. Such a vision of history is mainstream, acceptable to most historians and understood by pupils and parents. One feels that Lee's pupils would have a good concept of what it is a historian does - and how an understanding of the historical method can help us appreciate contrasting views about the past. This is not the case in geography and it is in this arena that this thesis may have utility.

Leading on from the position outlined in the previous paragraph lies the question "what is learning in geography?" This I call the 'knowledge question' and it inevitably takes us to the heart of an 'information/thinking' dualism, alternatively expressed as 'content/process' or 'facts/skills'. Better understanding the concept of prejudice, which we can assume is a condition associated with both sides such dualisms, might help contribute a response to the question posed.

The overarching research question which provides this thesis with its general trajectory, is, therefore, stated as follows:

***Can an exploration of the concept of prejudice assist in the analysis of educational goals in geography?***

The following sections of this chapter outline the principal aims and outcomes of the research within this broad question.

### 1.3 Main Aims

The principal aim of this research is to 'unpack' prejudice. In his account of developments in geography since the 1960s, Walford (1989) is correct in asserting that

*The concerns of gender and multicultural and anti-racist policies are now a good deal more explicit in all geography publishing (ibid p318).*

Teachers, too, are more aware of sources of bias in teaching and learning and sensitive to the ways in which mediated images can mislead as well as inform. But as I will show throughout this thesis, this progress has to be measured against the magnitude of the educational challenge which lies below the surface; indeed, without attempting to go further and penetrate the true complexity of prejudice, we can be left with 'equal opportunities' resembling no more than an irritating game of 'political correctness', with pupils and their teachers failing to understand its goals.

This thesis reaches below the surface by identifying the 'dimensions' of prejudice. The dimensions are then put together to provide the 'broad parameters' of the concept and then its 'structural foundations', the latter giving us a new definition of what could be meant by 'perspective'. These constructs, the broad parameters and the structural foundations, form the components of a composite conceptual map of the concept of prejudice which, I argue, help us imagine the nature of coming to what Gadamer (1975) calls "perspectival understanding" (see Chapter 10, section 10.4).

Finally, I attempt to translate a complex, multidimensional map into a relatively simple classroom oriented 'model' (Chapter 11) to be used *explicitly* with older pupils to demonstrate a means of handling 'geographical information'. It goes some way to meet de Bass' (1993) demand that

*... the white pupils have to learn to give up space and leave room for perspectives (my emphasis) other than the prevailing one. Translated into the context of education this process is strongly furthered by taking the theme from the historical or actual frame of reference of one or more ethnic minority groups (de Bass 1993 p20).*

This quote is representative of an approach to interculturalism (which, with its emphasis on interactivity, is distinct from multiculturalism) and leads me to my final introductory heading concerning the significance of conversation in this research.

#### 1.4 Main Components

The elements which make up this thesis, outlined in this introduction and also listed on the contents page provide a sequence of pieces that make up a whole 'story'. The purpose of this section is to emphasise the components of this research to which *conversation* has made a key contribution.

De Bass, in the previous section, seems to be urging teachers to make a pedagogic response to the needs of intercultural education, and to encourage their pupils to understand the significance of conversation. This is very much in accordance with my conclusions, having been inspired by Malcolm Jones' (1987) notion of 'education for conversation'. McManus (1993), writing in quite a different context, has described conversation as follows:

*I personally experienced the importance of the concept of conversation...an unspoken motto hung over each exchange of ideas: seek first to understand, then to be understood... Empowerment, collaboration, vision and community are products of effective communication. Conversation is its most powerful tool (ibid p17).*

This gives us a glimpse of a powerful device, not only for continuing teacher education (the context in which she writes), but for general secondary education too. This notion has been the underlying motive in the quest to disaggregate the dimensions of prejudice in order to construct a conceptual map: the map should become a stimulus for teacher conversation (or 'deliberation' as I have alternatively stated) in order to help gain new insights about the complex educational issues entailed in addressing prejudice.

But as we have seen, the map is also intended to become the inspiration for developing practical strategies for helping pupils engage in a form of meta-cognition about their learning (Chapter 11).

In addition, conversation has been the principal data gathering method: so-called 'conversational interviews', particularly those with the teachers, were intended to become, and became, genuinely interactive with each party able to challenge the other, to speculate and to share vision, a process which is discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

Finally, conversation formed a significant part of the analysis stage of this work, most notably during what I have called the Institute 'experiment' (Chapter 9). Conversation, then, can be described as a *research method* employed in this thesis. It has also become a *curriculum goal* and this thesis shows how and in what manner it can be considered in these ways.

To begin with, and in advance of the conversational stages of the thesis, we need to consider the nature of prejudice, and prejudice in education, by means of a literature based discussion which commences in the next Chapter.

## Chapter 2

### Prejudice: reviewing the conceptual landscape

#### Part 1: The concept of prejudice

##### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided a preliminary sketch of the terrain of this research and in so doing made some initial comments on the concept 'prejudice'. I indicated that it was unlikely that educators in possession of widely agreed and reasonable liberal broad educational aims could tolerate an education system which was ineffective in countering narrowmindedness or bigotry in its pupils.<sup>4</sup> I went on to describe that a prevalent idea at the time of the initiation of this research interest, namely racism, a form of prejudice (and the 'hook' on which I was to hang most of my research conversations that form the evidence base to this thesis), was socially learned and should be tackled by overt anti-racist policies and practices. Finally I noted that, even at that time, I and members of the school in which I was working harboured some serious doubts as to whether 'anti-racism' (in the manner it was commonly manifest at the time) did not cause additional problems to those it was purporting to resolve. It looked increasingly that racism was, so to speak, a sub-set of the much larger and less well defined conceptual terrain of prejudice which piecemeal or uncoordinated efforts to tackle racism barely touched.

In this Chapter, I aim to pursue and enlarge considerably on the points above in order to clarify as far as possible the conceptual landscape of prejudice. Parts of my argument, particularly those relating to prejudice in the context of education and, more specifically, geography in education, are in relatively uncharted territory, for although there is a long tradition in geography education of research and writing in perception, images, bias and

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<sup>4</sup>Although the 'facts' for some commentators speak otherwise: the Commission for Racial Equality stated that "Racial harassment is widespread and persistent - and in most areas little is done about it" (CRE 1987 foreword). More recently Doyle reports the British based Campaign against Racism and Facism (CARF) finding that in 1993 "there were at least 75 racially motivated killings in Europe, an increase of 13% on the previous year (Doyle 1994 p 16). Alibhai-Brown gloomily describes racism in Britain as "rife and immutable" (1992 p 19).



equal opportunities (see Chapter 3), none of these in my view directly tackles the nature of prejudice, commonly assuming, for instance, that it is a widespread, negative human condition which, as a result of appropriate 'treatment' can be eradicated or substantially reduced. Fry *et al* (1991), in the context of the school history curriculum, describe a similar position focussing their research on "ethnocentrism" rather than racism and in so doing identify a concept (like prejudice) that cannot simply be condemned (as can racism) and which in research terms needs "an exploratory rather than a crusading attitude" (*ibid* p 7).

There is, on the other hand, a large literature on prejudice outside geography education and I aim, like Lynch's authors to build "on the work of others, stretching back almost 50 years" (Lynch, Mogdil and Mogdil 1992 p385). Despite this pedigree, (and, perhaps, despite appearances to the contrary<sup>5</sup> as Lynch *et al* point out, prejudice is not a theme that stirs passions on the world educational scene and "it cannot be said that there is any individual country which has taken seriously the need to address issues of prejudice reduction through the medium of its educational system" (*ibid* p385). This assertion may be open to debate, although even if we could accept that governments have no interest in "prejudice reduction", educators certainly do. As Lynch *et al* go on to argue:

*...educators do not need to continue to sit on the sidelines while the game of prejudice is played to the same rules from one generation to the next. ...educators are not omnipotent, but they can make a difference and have done so in the past. First, however, they must learn. ...*

*We do not know everything about combatting prejudice, nor do we know nothing. ...(Teachers) have to learn from the experiences, research and pioneer development work of others, as well as relying on the accumulated wisdom of their own and their colleagues' folk intuition. (Lynch et al 1992 p395)*

This neatly summarises the intentions of this research (though I attempt further focus through the lens of geographical education) and the purpose of this chapter is to identify what it is I believe "we know" in advance of clarifying and describing the "accumulated wisdom" from the Greenfields School in Chapters 5 - 8.

In other words, I aim to establish what in effect is my *a priori* knowledge and understanding of prejudice. This leads me to some very difficult questions, the sort that do not readily lend themselves to empirical study - certainly not the kind from which we

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<sup>5</sup> There has, of course, been much effort expended on concrete forms of prejudice such as racism resulting, incidentally, in what Miles calls the "conceptual inflation" of the term and his attempt to at clarification of that concept (Miles 1989 p69-98)

hope for clear cut answers. As I have discussed in Chapter 1, recent trends in the social sciences include an increasing analytical awareness which has taken the form of a growing distrust of the 'metanarrative', the all-embracing solution or explanation which resolves the issues in question. Some (for example Lyotard 1989) have referred to this as part of what is meant by the condition of post-modernity and in this sense I would support a post-modernist approach to understanding prejudice. Even if prejudice were to be artificially (and wrongly) tied down exclusively to racism, it is such a fickle and dynamic human disposition we would be foolish to suppose that one explanation, however sophisticated, could adequately meet the needs of policy makers and practitioners in the educational setting. Recent research and commentaries substantiate this view<sup>6</sup> and in the introduction to *Cultural Diversity and the Schools*, which involved over one hundred scholars from around the world, Lynch *et al* write that it is important;

*...to avoid the impression of a false convergence as much as the claim of some academics in the field to have found the holy grail of final resolution. Such utopian and millenium pretensions do not assist discussion of what is likely to be the major political and cultural topic of the last decade of the twentieth century: equity and diversity on a global stage. Contrary imaginations may exist about which factors should carry the heaviest weighting,... but not about the multidimensionality of cultural diversity itself. (Lynch et al 1992 op cit p5)*

I find this way of reading the issues entirely helpful. First, it reminds us of the complexities, or the human-ness, of such matters and secondly, it encourages practical educators, who may not naturally approach problems by considering critically the *a priori* conditions, to turn more quickly to the fundamental questions. It is, as I hope to demonstrate in what follows, unproductive (possibly counterproductive) to adopt attractive looking strategies, under the guise maybe of 'successful prejudice reduction', without having a clear overall view of the educational goals guiding our practice. Wilson (1992 p294) has argued that sooner or later thoughts of a fundamental nature begin to enter most teachers' heads and "if he (*sic*) has the time and energy to pursue them (they lead him) straight back to the basic questions." All too often this is too late and any hard thinking is devoted to explaining the almost inevitable performance gap in recent teaching rather than clarifying and communicating the educational purpose or the strategy to be adopted over the whole curriculum plan. It is partially this weakness (for which teachers are not entirely culpable) that leads Wilson to adjudge the education system to be feeble and ineffective: he writes "thinking hard about concepts is not a

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<sup>6</sup>See especially Ellsworth's (1989) critique "Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy" [referred to obliquely in Chapter 1] in which she notes the highly abstract and abstracted lines along which 'critical pedagogy' has developed; it is difficult to connect with a pedagogy which appears so divorced from the day-to-day reality of classrooms.

popular activity" not of teachers but of the polity (Wilson *ibid* p306). Educators apparently are the sole guardians of education, though with little time or invested confidence, as the system exerts what Lawton calls "the tightening grip" (Lawton 1984), to fully take up the responsibility. Nevertheless, I shall now turn to a reasoned discussion of prejudice in education.

## 2.2 Definitions of prejudice

Definitions of prejudice vary a little in how rigid preconceptions are presumed to be, but generally agree that prejudice is essentially negative. Allport (1954) defines prejudice as

*an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalisations. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed towards a group as a whole, or towards an individual member of that group (ibid p 9).*

This definition links to Milner's (1983) view that prejudices are "irrational, unjust or intolerant dispositions towards other groups" (*ibid* p 3). Milner is careful to point out, however, that early attempts to "cure" this "social problem" were at best naive, seeking the cause of complex social processes in the aggregate of individual behaviours (*ibid* p 25), and in consequence seems to steer clear of prejudice, which he sees as "reified... as a psychological phenomenon with a life of its own" (*ibid* p 2). My thesis attempts to show that it was not the focus on the individual that was perhaps misguided but the search for a "cure": what I shall go on to argue (in Chapter 10 and 11) is that individuals can be helped to a better understanding of prejudice.

In the Swann Report (DES 1985) prejudice was seen as "a preconceived opinion or bias for or against someone or something", and is "rigid, immutable and irreversible" (chapter 2 para, 2.1). Prejudices are contrasted with preferences which are described as "generally open to reason and thus to change" (*ibid*). As Jones (1987 p39) comments,

*At this point some confusion appears. In the main text of the report the asserted rigidity of prejudice is explained by reference to prejudgements. ...*

*Prejudgement is represented as approaching the world with a rigidly pre-set way of looking which remains unmodified and unmodifiable in the light of experience and hence appears irrational. But a footnote (p13)... distinguishes between prejudgement and prejudice by saying: "Prejudgements become prejudices only if they are not subject to modification in the light of experience (Jones *ibid*)*

We will return to this matter below but the point I wish to make at the moment is that, notwithstanding the progress noted by Milner and others, the concept of prejudice is still far from clearly delineated. The confusion Jones notes above is not the only difficulty of this kind. In addition to asking whether or not prejudices are immutable - a fundamental distinction to make insofar as any discussion concerning the potential of *education* is concerned- Jones also raises the question of value: are prejudices necessarily negative; is the term by definition perjorative? As we shall see, Jones is of the view that accepting either of these assumptions results in a substantially reduced potential for educational impact. But if we can contemplate positive prejudices, in what way are they to be distinguished from 'preferences'?

Perhaps there are dangers in semantics. But for Allport (above) the matter of prejudice was fairly clear cut. Ashmore (1970) similarly shows no hint of allowing for prejudices to be mistaken for anything other than an undesirable human condition: prejudice is "a negative attitude toward a socially defined group and toward any person perceived to be a member of that group" (Ashmore 1970 p253). What combines these definitions, apart from their agreement about the negative aspect of prejudice, is that both strongly imply a sense of *action*; that is to say people are described as prejudiced through their behaviour. This could result in further confusion between *prejudice* and *discrimination* (which of course itself is the subject of some debate, though it is now widely held that discrimination can be for or against, and is therefore not by definition harmful).

Eysenck (1992), who also quotes Allport and Ashmore not entirely approvingly, links prejudice to stereotyping and then goes on to state:

*Two assumptions are often made in the definition of 'prejudice' and 'stereotypes', namely that prejudices are always negative, ie disfavour a particular group, and that 'stereotypes' are always incorrect. Both these assumptions are false. ....Prejudice against a given group normally implies a prejudice favourable to another group, and both should be considered. (Eysenck 1992 p21-22)*

He continues:

*...the fact that an attitude is stereotyped in a given group does not say anything about its truth or falsity. We have a stereotype of Japanese as hard workers, and it seems that this stereotype is perfectly valid. To act on this assumption would, therefore, not be evidence of prejudice, although the assumption that every Japanese is more hardworking than any American or European would of course be absurd." (ibid)*

While this fails to clear up the distinction between prejudices and preferences, the broader concept of prejudice which Eysenck urges is to be welcomed. Not only is this in recognition of the realisation that "the whole field is very much more complex than is often assumed" (*ibid*) it allows for the issues to be discussed in an atmosphere freer of guilt and defensiveness; after all, if prejudices are not necessarily negative and prejudgements we hold not necessarily "wrong", it is easier to admit to having them. Jones, too, would concur:

*This transforms the notion of prejudice. It grants that it is rational for us, being the sort of animal we are, to allow ourselves prejudices. In particular it is rational for us to remain prejudiced in favour of the traditions of our home form of life for so long as we acknowledge those prejudices to be no more (and no less) than historically explicable features of our emotional lives. What is not rational is the 'forgetfulness of Being' which leads us to assert our prejudices to be unquestionably true and hence leads to ideological conflict. Which is to say that with prejudices, as with prejudgements, the rational attitude is one of, 'why not?' (Jones 1987 p50).*

This passage indirectly helps resolve the question of distinction between preferences and prejudice. Preferences can be rationally held and they are often likely to be based upon prejudgement. They can be argued for and defended. People may continue to hold on to them even in the face of reasoned evidence (the 'facts'), and at this stage we may say they are hardening into prejudices.

For Jones, the potential that is released by *allowing* people the chance openly to accept their own prejudices is that they can then talk about them, thus shrugging off the propensity for double think or hypocrisy described, for example, on a features page of the *London Evening Standard*: "Officially we're all against discrimination and prejudice. Privately, most of us practice it every day of our lives" (*Evening Standard* 9.2.94 p17)<sup>7</sup>. This leads him to the suggestion of 'educating for conversation', a theme to which we shall return often in this thesis. But he also raises *en passant* two further points which we need to address now. First, the claim that prejudice, under the phrase "forgetfulness of Being", is a universal human condition and secondly, that they are "historically explicable". These closely connected issues are explored further in the following sections.

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<sup>7</sup> Possibly this view is confined to journalists. Melvyn Bragg in conversation with *The Times* columnist Simon Jenkins suggested that a columnist must have a particularly difficult task in writing a regular piece which is fresh and interesting but which contains and propagates the same consistent prejudices. (*Start the Week* 2.1.95 BBC Radio 4)

### 2.3 The Origins of Prejudice: the environmental and the genetic

Tanner (1994), quoting from Parini's biography of John Steinbeck, argues for what he calls the "tainted and contingent nature of truth" (p 9):

*We know that what we see and record and construct would be warped; first, by the collective pressure and stream of our time and race, second by the thrust of our individual personalities* (Parini 1994, cited in Tanner 1994 p9).

This is reminiscent of Hanson's (1958) phrase, "there's more to seeing than meets the eyeball" and eloquently suggests that the way people make sense of the world inevitably gives rise to prejudice; not irrational nor immutable, but certainly contingent upon further information or influence. It is a universal phenomenon predicated on the straightforward understanding that human beings cannot and do not have perfect objective knowledge and that they have to construct their understanding of the world using what resources they have at their disposal.

Essentially these can be divided between what is inherited and genetically their own, and influences from outside their being - variously referred to as environmental, social, historical or cultural. The difficulty here, in our quest to clarify the concept of prejudice, is the question of balance: is prejudice largely genetic or mainly 'environmental', or are both these factors significant? It is a pertinent question because we might presume that if the former is the case then only those people with the culpable gene(s) are likely to be markedly prejudiced (and, we might think, are going to be very difficult to change if this was thought to be desirable). If, on the other hand, people *become* prejudiced as a result of 'environmental' factors then we might conclude that all are at risk (but that the condition is preventable or treatable).

The problems that this issue bequeaths are plain to see. For example, in his analysis of the 1984 British Social Attitudes Survey, Robinson concludes that the raw data reveal

*that certain groups are more prone to prejudice than others. At a simple level the people most likely to be prejudiced are the elderly, unskilled, unemployed, those with little formal education, Tory voters and those pre-disposed to social conformity.* (Robinson, 1985 p388)

The descriptive categories Robinson uses take us no closer to the causes of the prejudiced attitudes the data identify, but perhaps perilously close to making assumptions which themselves may very likely be evidence of stereotypical thinking and of prejudice. For later in his article Robinson claims to identify what he calls "situational prejudice":

*There is a sharp spatial difference between areas of prejudice and areas of tolerance. This variability does not result from social class or structural factors but, rather, from the presence or absence of Black people. ...*

*It seems clear then, that whilst prejudice might well be caused by deep-seated and universal forces such as Britain's colonial heritage or the desire to restrict access to scarce societal resources, these national and even international causes have to be firmly placed within the context of particular regions or cities. (ibid p394)*

It has to be said that Robinson is, here, adopting the narrow view of prejudice (as negative attitude) that both Eysenck and Jones have begun to show is unhelpful. But my reason for citing this piece of 'geographical analysis' is to show the confusion over the *universality* issue. The implication of the analysis is that there are people (white people) who are without prejudice (or who at least are "tolerant"), and that it is a function of where they live as to whether they can resist the "universal forces" which might excuse their being prejudiced. Unfortunately, little other recent analysis in geography attempts the direct examination of prejudice as distinct from racism (for example, Jackson 1987; Smith 1993) and most has been guided by what Jackson calls the "radical critique of 'race relations' research (Jackson *op cit* p3). This is to be regretted for certain *a priori* assumptions and definitions need challenging as perhaps Robinson's account amply demonstrates.

At the school level, when prejudice is explored with children, it seems that given definitions are required by teachers on behalf of their students<sup>8</sup>. Such definitions are often grossly oversimplified as a result of the teachers' attempts to 'drive the point home'. At Greenfields, one teacher (not in geography) designed a unit called "prejudice" which was taught in 1990. It contained a mix of resources and exercises designed to stimulate discussion and involvement. Under the section *How prejudice develops* the text read:

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<sup>8</sup> a. This was vividly brought home to me during an Inset meeting I ran in 1988 with geography teachers from Hull. On using some short, provocative clips from a published source (Team Video 1987) in which young Black people question the assumptions (indeed prejudices) contained in terms such as "Third World", the teachers rounded on me, arguing in effect that "before you can have a discussion on images of the Third World we have to teach the kids what the Third World is."

b. This urge for clear cut definition might itself be an impediment to progress in understanding and tackling prejudice. Robin Richardson argues that

*A school staff cannot sensibly discuss...unless there is agreement to use certain basic terms the same way...racism, equality, justice, prejudice, discrimination, culture, ethnicity, positive action and so on.* (Richardson 1986 p13)

Whilst I can understand what he means, I am concerned that the importance he appears to attach to 'agreement' is an encouragement to over-hasty consensus or, worse, imposed meaning.

*A small child has no prejudices. Often our prejudices are formed by our environment; by our parents and friends, by television, magazines and by our general culture.*

Though apparently carefully written (the word 'often' is significant), there is no doubt about the impression that was meant to be deposited with the pupils. This would support Eysenck's assertion that nearly all approaches to the study of prejudice take the assumption that its cause is environmental (Eysenck 1992 p22). He rejects this, presenting research that indicates its genetic roots, but concludes that

*while genetic factors are important, they do not preclude changes being produced by suitable methodology....(that is) it is possible to alter prejudice and ethnocentrism to a very marked extent by suitable environmental interventions in people displaying extreme forms of prejudice (ibid p35)*

The educational relevance of these findings has yet to be demonstrated; the hours of intensive treatment which yielded the results on which these conclusions are based may exclude them in any practical sense from mainstream education. But the findings are helpful in disabusing us from the simple (perhaps simplistic) notions of 'environmental' cause: we can expect to find prejudice potentially in anyone (and wherever they live). The findings also offer some reassurance that prejudices are not totally fixed, and that, as a result of appropriate intervention, the way people see the world, or perhaps the way they can be taught to think about the information they receive about the world, can be changed.

#### 2.4 The Origins of Prejudice: the historical

There are other ways to account for non-genetic prejudice than the crudely 'environmental'. Referring back once again to Jones, we remarked on his reference to "historical" explanation. This, so I understand, is his shorthand for a complex emotional, yet rational, response to 'home' and the familiar; the unavoidable human need, explained along a 'feelings' axes of fear and pleasure, which results in a strong prejudice for the home culture. At one end of the axis is the anxiety people feel encountering complex circumstances and their subsequent retreat from reflective intellectual activity (people are said to 'react from habit', 'to be on auto-pilot' or to respond defensively to "culture shock"). At the other end of the axis is to be found the comfort and joy of sensing the familiar: music, food, faces, smells. I am arguing that this more than a matter of "preference" (as designated in the Swann Report [DES 1985]), because these feelings for the familiar are driven by deep and fundamental



human needs. The problem of prejudice, then, is that it is not only or simply that which is *against* others, but that which is rationally held by people *for* what is familiar.<sup>9</sup>

People derive "culturally vouched for" prejudgements which literally help them survive within the "one big, blooming, buzzing confusion" (James 1905) of their universe. What is vital to understand is that much (but perhaps not all) of the assertions of what makes the good life for people in a particular culture is, in fact, *contingent* (a key word, picked up several times in this thesis but most especially in Chapter 11). In Jones' words, "to assert the prejudgements of 'this' or 'that' culture's traditions to be unquestionably (by all virtuous and right minded people) true, is to retreat from reason into a rigid mentality which transforms living and 'evolving' traditions into static and stagnant ideologies" (Jones 1987 p48). What makes some people unwilling to yield to this position of reason is prejudice: prejudgement, therefore, is seen as carrying entirely epistemological significance, whereas prejudice appears, in addition, to possess a psychological dimension. Milner (1983) warns us about reifying the "psychological dimension" (p 2) but the distinction Jones makes seems to me both helpful and suggestive of the need to find ways of engaging both teachers and pupils in the sort of deliberative activity which will enable them to make such distinctions for themselves.

## 2.5 A Conceptual Map: towards identifying its dimensions

At this point we can move closer to the idea, or hypothesis, that a 'map' of the concept of prejudice may help underpin or guide the 'deliberations' mentioned above. The form of the map is not a heavily detailed 'route map'. *Precisely* when prejudgements become prejudices, for example, is a question which would seriously impede the present work, for my aim is not to show precise (and perhaps rather misleading) definitions and distinctions of this sort. It would also be a somewhat reductive perversion or distraction from the fundamental point Jones wishes to make, which is to say that the emotional barriers to 'negotiate' on one's prejudices for the traditions of home need to be acknowledged on an individual level: having such barriers

*...is a central aspect of human Being. We cannot abandon such prejudices without making very painful and disquieting changes within ourselves (ibid p50).*

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<sup>9</sup>Jones (1987) provides some detailed argument justifying this claim to rationality and the origins of this prejudice in what he terms "foundational prejudgements" which have their basis in influential traditional cosmologies which provide basic categories and concepts of thought combined in form sets of metaphysical and ontological prejudgements, the pre-understandings which are further interpreted and elaborated as we seek to extend our understanding. These are the foundational prejudgements of various cultures, ways of looking at, and ways of making sense of the world. (ibid p 43)

In Finkelkraut's (1987) analysis we can recognise a similar line of thought, but the perils of failing to acknowledge the point is translated graphically : "Free from prejudice, cut off from the influence of national idiom, the subject was not free but shrivelled and devitalised, like a tree deprived of sap."<sup>10</sup> This argument derives in part from the Romantic Movement which, in Coulby and Jones' view, formed the closest manifestation to a "Counter Reformation for the Enlightenment project" (Coulby and Jones, forthcoming, ch 3)

However, with Finkelkraut we have (not so inadvertently) introduced a fresh twist to the discussion. His argument is a difficult one which requires us to take stock. I have contended that prejudice is a "complex idea", a construct that Locke (1947) identified at some length (*ibid* p64) and which has been taken up by others since, notably C S Peirce who in his theory of meaning distinguishes "clear ideas" and "distinct ideas" from "complex" ones (see Wennerberg 1962 p116). In the terms I have adopted in this thesis the complexity of prejudice avails itself in the 'shape' it adopts, that is, the conceptual map of the individual dimensions which make up the whole. I have, in fact, already begun to identify a rudimentary 'geometry' of the concept (though not yet explicitly) in, for example, referring to a 'feelings axis' of fear and pleasure. We have also uncovered the useful axes of '*mutability*' (the ability to change) '*value*' and '*universality*', the latter being linked to another possible dimension, namely '*cause*' (or as Eysenck (1992) would have it, "roots").

What Finkelkraut contributes to this putative map is a further dimension which we can designate as '*purpose*'. Failing to grasp that prejudice serves a positive purpose, which is beneficial both to the intellectual and emotional health of individuals *and of nations* (this is where he parts company with Jones), has resulted (Finkelkraut argues) in Europe, and the West in general, to fall into a muddled and weakened state. When he rounds on the "barbarism" which "has finally taken over culture...which reduces the works of the spirit to shoddy goods or, as the Americans say, to entertainment" (*ibid* p133) one is left to wonder where his main interest lies; he reveals clearly enough some of his prejudices, but (to use equally lurid terms) who or what is threatened by EuroDisney? *la France* or the people who enjoy its services?

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<sup>10</sup> At this point I need to acknowledge the link that connects the ideas being presented here and those of the philosopher Finkelkraut. But there is a qualitative difference between the "comfort of home" being described by Jones (1987) and the idea described by Finkelkraut as the "maternal warmth of prejudice" (Finkelkraut 1987 p24). Finkelkraut is more apocalyptic concerning the post-Enlightenment modern tendency not to recognise the truth of these human instincts and needs: *For the traditionalists the Enlightenment boiled down to a fatal misunderstanding. The philosophes had been wrong about the nature and also, if one could put it this way, about the sex of prejudice. They had mistaken an earth mother who sustained and inspired her children, for a veritable bogey-man father. Then, seeking to overthrow this father, they had in reality done away with the mother-figure. This dismissal, whose intention was to liberate, had plunged mankind into misery and confusion, as the revolutionary cataclysm showed.* (*ibid* p26)

The point that is initially being made here is that there is an issue of substance in Finkelkraut's view, one to which we must return in our consideration of prejudice and education, when the axis of *purpose* can be understood in broader terms, for example to do with the school curriculum. Essentially the issue is to do with the expressed goals of education: is education to serve the interests of the nation (in which case certain prejudices - those perceived to underpin 'national cohesion', for example - may be acceptable, propagated through educational mechanisms such as school organisation and curriculum arrangements and through learning materials written within the prevailing ideology) or is it to serve the intellectual and moral needs of the individual? This is a very old question, the broad nature of which is summarised, for example, by Walford (1981 p 215-222)<sup>11</sup>.

One of the objectives of this thesis, then, is to provide a fresh means to establish whether such aims as these, apparently in tension, can be accommodated; we might ask, for example, in what ways serving the needs of individuals is at the same time in the interests of the nation, an issue which educationalists such as Hirsch (1987) have offered a certain perspective which may have indirectly exerted considerable influence on the thinking which culminated in the 1991 version of geography in the national curriculum (see Lambert 1994 ; Dowgill and Lambert 1992). Whilst Hirst claims to be interested in providing the means for effective intercultural communication through a standardised identification of a 'national' culture, what interests me in this connection is the possible educational importance of *allowing* certain prejudices which themselves may be articulated in terms of national consciousness or pride. The empirical analysis contained in Chapters 6 - 8, and also Chapter 9, are particularly useful in carrying this point forward.

## 2.6 Interim Summary and Conclusion

In summary this section has argued that prejudice can be conceptualised as possessing a number of 'dimensions' or 'axes'. Those identified have been labelled as (in alphabetical order):

*cause* (the origins of prejudice)

*feelings* (an axis spanning a range of emotions, eg fear and pleasure)

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<sup>11</sup>It is interesting to note that in his discussion, Rex Walford opined that geography should "return to a moderate informational tradition" (Walford 1981 p 222), an opinion that turned out to have predictive quality: the national curriculum launched nine years later was said by the Secretary of State for Education "to have put the content back into geography" (Hansard, 8th April 1991, p65).

*mutability* (the ability to change)

*purpose* (the intellectual or mental function of holding prejudices)

*universality* (the degree to which prejudice is a normal human condition)

*value* (the axis of positive and negative value charge)

This list is not yet complete, for it is anticipated that a closer examination of the particular characteristics of geography in education will require a 'subject specific' addition to this list. It is also not yet possible to conceptualise how these dimensions relate to each other (this is attempted in Chapter 10), though my discussion has begun to show three features of their probable relationship:

firstly, the dimensions, or axes, each have a 'field' though not necessarily expressed in the same form. For example, *value* can be thought of as a continuum from negative to positive; *purpose* is not bi-polar in the same way but happens still to have been characterised so far as consisting of two nodes, namely the purpose of having prejudices (for the individual) and the purposes to which prejudice may be put (such as the "nationalistic"<sup>12</sup>);

secondly, the dimensions are not 'water tight' entities. Each is distinctive but they are not totally discrete and we can expect overlaps. For example, *universality* and *cause* clearly occupy much of the same ground, even though from an educational point of view, it is helpful to distinguish between them;

thirdly, it is unreasonable to expect that it will be possible to 'map' these axes and dimensions in a clear cut, precise and 'final' manner in the sense that the arrangement of the map will be beyond dispute. Precise locations, directions and distances, let alone the overall shape, or relief, of the map are not possible to specify. The map metaphor is nonetheless attractive; my intention *is* in a sense to map out the concept of prejudice and the metaphor has been used effectively in this way by others, though not necessarily for a single concept (for example, Slater 1995). However, given the complexities already beginning to emerge, and the uncertainties already alluded to, I am not able to produce a precise euclidean-like figure (which would suggest wholly spurious precision in my view). If however we relax the rules of 'geometry', a topological configuration may be possible.

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<sup>12</sup>Jagdish Gundara discusses what he perceives to be the "nationalistic" national curriculum (see also Andrews 1994 for a subject by subject account) and observes "While prejudice seems to exist in all cultures, the intensity and pervasiveness of north European, American and other colonial racisms since the seventeenth century has been much greater" (Gundara 1991 p13)

Such a view is supported by Walsh (1994), who begins his book *Education and Meaning* with an original linguistic analysis of 'education' in which he proposes a geometry of education based on a "triple dialectic": (1) formal education and education in its widest sense; (2) normative and descriptive uses of 'education'; and (3) open and loaded uses of 'education'. He concludes:

*We can see now how other multi-use words may exhibit part or all of this triple pattern. There will be normative and descriptive uses of the names of all practices and products with regard to which there is a serious question of coming up to a standard; there will be a contrast between nominal and loaded uses of the names of practices to the extent that their constitutive standards are differently conceived and theorized; and there will be institutionalized and wider senses of the names of those practices for which there are institutions which formalize (and heighten the profile of) the practice but without exhausting it. In fact all three distinctions appear in the uses of 'justice' and of 'art' for example (ibid p32).*

I propose that this model may well serve as an initial device with which to 'read' prejudice. It is possible to conceive my intention as being the construction of a topological map of prejudice, an "*elementary map* based on some set of simple distinctions" (Walsh 1994 p120). Walsh demonstrates the use of maps, such as the Aristotelian division of thought into 'science', 'art' and 'politics' in measuring up the school curriculum and its appropriateness in meeting certain types of educational aim. My proposed map of prejudice may find utility in a similar kind of way, in helping to analyse curriculum goals in geography education. This discussion is once more picked up in Chapters 10 and 11.

This chapter continues with Part 2, which takes the discussion of the nature of prejudice deeper into the realms of educational philosophy.

## Part 2: Prejudice and Education

### 2.7 Introduction

This section continues to explore in some depth the way prejudice has been understood and tackled generally in education. This is in order to provide a conceptual backcloth to the discussion in subsequent chapters, particularly the empirical analysis in Chapters 5 - 8. At a time immediately prior to the first period of data collection for this thesis, the Swann report (DES 1985) was published, setting out a number of proposals under the heading *Education for All*. The Report (*ibid*) stated uncontroversially that "All pupils require a good, relevant and up to date education for life in Britain and the world as it is today (*ibid* p315). It continued:

*We want our pupils to have the power of critical reflection, ability to explore ideas and attitudes with understanding and detachment, and the ability to challenge information. They should acquire the confidence to question established authority and to think independently and should learn to justify opinion in a rational manner. (ibid p320)*

What the Swann Report states here forms a useful working model or draft of what education designed to tackle prejudice could look like, combining informational and thinking aspects. In a sense, therefore, this concerns the pedagogic questions about how it is we decide what to teach, to whom and by what manner; those questions, in other words, relating to the way societies, schools and teachers select knowledge. But the 'question of knowledge' is not raised in the form of a classic 'curriculum' issue, by which I mean an essentially technical concern requiring pragmatic and immediately practical answers. I see it as a matter of epistemology and a need to identify what drives curriculum choices, 'very much in the spirit of what Walsh (1994) refers to as "philosophy in practice", in the sense that the practice of education must involve teachers - and indeed all who are involved with it - in "philosophising".

In the remainder of this chapter, therefore, I pursue the concept of prejudice within such a philosophical context and an overarching guide or 'mentor' to this discussion has been found in Paddy Walsh's investigations of *Education and Meaning* (1994). My purpose is to identify - or discover - ways in which interpretations of education have impacted on our understanding of prejudice and secondly how a complex understanding of prejudice may help clarify certain educational goals. I do not intend that my "philosophizing" (a term which itself is borrowed from Walsh) become abstract or in any way divorced from

practice. Indeed an important safeguard in this respect is the empirical component of this thesis (Chapters 5-9) which both eavesdrops and engages with the philosophizing of teachers and pupils. But I begin this part of my enquiry by picking up on the critique of Allain Finkelkraut introduced in the previous section of this chapter.

## 2.8 The Traditional Undertones of Modern Education

The drive behind the position which Finkelkraut (1988) adopts is his perception that modernity, or the Enlightenment Project, is under threat. His book *The Undoing of Thought* can be seen as a European equivalent of (the North American) Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* (1987) which takes a similar stance in relation to what he believes is being lost in the current late modern age. Others, it needs to be said, understand these developments differently - not so much things being lost as other things being gained through the development new forms of knowledge. For example, Kirby and Laituri (1991) describe Bloom as "tapping into some deeply ingrained prejudices" (p224) writing that

*When Bloom writes about illiteracy, (he is) celebrating a particular vision of knowledge: one based upon a narrow male Judaeo-Christian heritage. (he seeks) to exclude by derision a new wave of knowledge that is dangerously threatening because it does not rest on safe, accepted principles: deconstruction, post modernism, eco-feminism, Black and American Indian Studies... the list is long. (ibid)*

These authors themselves attempt a little counter derision in describing Bloom's book as a "pedestrian call to arms over our inability to recite the classics" (*ibid* p221) and characterising what *he* claims to be under threat as "the good old days, when a scholar knew what he (*sic*) was about, teaching the verities and writing the occasional article and perhaps a book every decade". The point of quoting this academic squabble is a serious one: the argument has immediately polarised and in so doing has become over simplified. Though postmodernism is acknowledged by Kirby and Laituri to be a recognition of the "multiplicity and the relativity" (p226) that must cling to all claims of knowledge, it is possible that in their keenness to criticise Bloom's "narrowness" Kirby and Laituri's charge against the "good old days" is indiscriminate. Certainty, and "teaching the verities", may be nothing more than a stereotype of modernism - and a particularly misleading one at that. Furthermore, if what replaces it is wholly and unfettered *relativism* then Bloom's position is effectively given more credibility. Bale, for example, writes confidently of a postmodern school geography as a return to

"anything goes" (Bale, forthcoming). Bloom's response may encourage alarm bells to begin ringing: in the ears of politicians but of parents too and also of educators who believe in the creation of knowledge as fundamentally a disciplined activity, and particularly those who like Paul Hirst takes "a line in epistemology that disallows any consideration of different levels of objective reality..." (Walsh 1994 p 139).

What the above paragraph amounts to is the preliminary identification of an important tension in education. On the one hand, it is easy to see how the kind of view taken by Bloom could be adopted by those politically motivated to urge education to move 'back to basics' - for schools to teach, for example, a traditional literature canon. On the other hand, criticism of the contemporary "traditional-modern"<sup>13</sup> curriculum coming from a cultural relativistic (or post modern) standpoint can themselves become an easy target for derision as is sometimes the case in the context of contemporary notions of 'political correctness'. The Bloom-Finkelkraut view seems to go on to suggest that, in the name of the war against prejudice, the prejudices of the dominant culture have been substituted by those of others, which themselves have come to "close the mind" or "undo thought". Such a perspective has gained in popular currency in recent years; for example, Lawson writes:

*As the...pleading for political correctness seems to indicate, people really do prefer darkness to the light. No one wants answers they might disagree with, but rather corroborations for views already formed." (Lawson 1993 p13)*

Implicit in this statement is the the beguiling *attraction* of prejudice. This was noted in the previous section, in terms of the comfort to be found in the familiar and the rather stronger "maternal warmth" of prejudice (Finkelkraut 1988), and though what Lawson describes is not precisely the same as those ideas, there is clearly a connection in her allusion to darkness and the anti-Enlightenment spirit. This leads us to the main difficulty with an over simplified and polarised argument concerning the way in which (multicultural) education ought to respond to Bloom and Finkelkraut. The Enlightenment placed great faith in knowledge as the means to correct ignorance and of making

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<sup>13</sup>"Traditional-modern" appears to be a highly appropriate means of signifying what is alternatively referred to as liberal education (or simply contemporary education) in England and Wales. The term 'liberal' is used by Walsh as indicating the modern curriculum in which propositional knowledge is paramount, being the basis for an education which is illuminating, helping us make sense of our experience and worth pursuing for its own sake (Walsh, 1994 p132). As Coulby and Jones point out, however, "...the modernist epistemology, never mind any possible successor, has not yet completely overwhelmed the English and Welsh curriculum" (Coulby and Jones 1995). They write:

*During the nineteenth century, for instance, the stress on religious education, the essentialist concentration on the 3Rs and the high status which continued to be awarded to the classics would seem to indicate that curricula in schools... were successfully resistant to modernism. Technical and science education arrived surprisingly late in England and Wales. (ibid)*



progress. Usher and Edwards (1994) express this aspect of the Enlightenment project powerfully:

*...Bauman... refers to Spinoza's dictum that 'if I know the truth and you are ignorant, to make you change your thoughts and ways is my moral duty: refraining from doing so would be cruel and selfish'. Bauman argues that it is this notion of necessity to educate, of education's historical role to enlighten and emancipate, which is at the very heart of the project of modernity. ...education is itself a historically located cultural construct, constructed through a narrative which is not simply a means of understanding the world but also of continually changing it through the attempt to mould the subjectivities of those within it (Usher and Edwards 1994 p125).*

It is not clear that any alternatives to the modernist project as it relates to education could create aims or goals better than those offered in the above paragraph, although it must be emphasised that, clearly, the evidence shows that tackling prejudice - "to enlighten and emancipate" (*ibid*) - is not a matter (merely) of supplying people with the correct information. As Naidoo's recent research, building on work stretching back to Myrdal (see, for example, Rose 1964), amply illustrates, the 14 year olds she observed suggest that they build layers of defence and self-deception in order to "survive" in an uncomfortable world (Naidoo 1992; see also Fox 1992). It therefore follows that there is little to be gained from, as it were, *intentionally* making pupils feel more uncomfortable. The Institute of Race Relations pupils' book *How Racism Came to Britain* (IRR 1985) may be an exhibit of how not to avoid this danger: it is difficult to imagine how young people in, say, all white suburban English schools deal with its apparent message that racism is the product of a 300 year conspiracy that they themselves are a part of.<sup>14</sup> The task that falls to education - not a new task we should note, but one which may require redefinition and renewal - is how to maintain openness and reduce the temptation to hide behind the defences of the 'known', the familiar and the comfortable, thus eschewing the new or the strange.

Expressing the goal of education in the double edged manner described in the above enables us to see more vividly the inherent tension in the "traditional-modern" curriculum. Although we may broadly accept the modernist project at face value as 'enlightenment' (though, of course, still argue in detail about how this can best be achieved and acknowledge that enlightenment does not *necessarily* bring with it emancipation), the traditional undertone of education in England from which it has

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<sup>14</sup>This is a characteristic which has been observed by others, though sometimes expressed slightly differently as self-delusion or self-denial, for example David Hicks [1995] who notes students' capacities for self-denial in relation to global environmental issues.

proved impossible to finally break free, represents in some ways the antithesis of enlightenment as a result of the traditional emphasis on literacy and a narrow educational 'canon' which is concerned less with thinking and the critical evaluation of information and ideas, than with the efficient transmission of the certified knowledge. Moreover, as Peters (1977 p53-54) came to point out, as did Whitehead (1932)<sup>15</sup> before him, the traditional form of education was profoundly de-motivating to a great many students who were (and still are) unable to connect the intellectual product of learning to real world uses (see also Walsh *op cit* p125).

## 2.9 The Liberal Construction of Modern Education

Similar criticisms to those detailed above can, in fact, be levelled at the modern curriculum conditioned in 'liberal' rather than 'traditional' terms to which we can briefly turn. This is defined in the terms of Hirst's (rarely contested) theories of "Forms" of knowledge (Hirst 1974) which formally identified and emphasised *propositional* knowledge to the detriment of the *practical* which was down played. Though predicated on logical reasoning, which showed Hirst that *knowing that* always must precede *knowing how*, it seems that this judgement itself may represent an outcome of the deeply influential traditional tone to which I have already referred.<sup>16</sup> The realisation of education which should consist mainly of propositional learning, as Hirst's version of a liberal-modern curriculum urges, does not, of course, consist only of piling up facts-as-knowledge. What is also required - and given more prominence by Hirst recently - is that students gain the capacity to handle the processes by which propositions may be generated, related to each other and tested in the 'real world' (Hirst 1991, discussed in Walsh 1994 p 139).

Such capacities can be thought of at least in part as thinking skills and supports Bruner's influential contribution to interpreting education as a process:

*A body of knowledge, enshrined in a university faculty and embodied in a series of authoritative volumes, is the result of much prior intellectual activity. To instruct someone in these disciplines is not a matter of getting him (sic) to*

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<sup>15</sup>Education was defined by Whitehead (1932) as "the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge (cited in Walsh 1994, p141-142). Utility meant the "illuminating of ordinary life and its objects" and was distinguished from "inert" knowledge)

<sup>16</sup>Hirst has apparently refuted this element of his Forms (see Walsh 1994 p139): he now seems to claim that *knowing how* is the basis for *knowing that* - which recalls Gilbert Ryle's (1949) observation that the definition of what is "worthwhile" in education has changed from knowing that *to* knowing how. Hirst has retained his Forms much as before but, Walsh emphasises, he now sees them as *practices* in themselves, theoretical practices, that is, which can be placed alongside everyday social practices. Furthermore, it is 'culture' in the form of social practice which should be the start point of identifying curriculum objectives, not the 'disciplines' of old.

*commit results to mind. Rather, it is to teach him to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge. We teach a subject not to produce living libraries on that subject, but rather to get a student to think mathematically for himself, to consider matters as an historian does, to take part in the process of knowledge getting. Knowing is a process, not a product.* (Bruner 1966 p72).

Hirst's advocacy of the primacy of the intellectual in the development of the rational human being ("no matter what the ability of the child may be"; Hirst 1974 p28), has helped underpin attacks on certain kinds of curricula designed for the 'less able' as being anti-intellectual. Such arguments are, of course, even more powerfully directed against alternative ways of looking at the curriculum of children of average or above average attainment and this, it appears, has become a significant block to those wishing to broaden the curriculum experience: the Hirstian liberal-modern curriculum "overlooks the likelihood that the affective, the moral and the practical are properly *interdependent* with the intellectual - in a great variety of ways, depending on the context" (Walsh 1994 p132). The Brunerian view of education as process goes some distance in addressing such deficiencies by articulating in an accessible manner what the intellectual processes Hirst referred to might look like in the classroom. But by no means does the process view of education resolve these issues completely. There is, for example, no direct acknowledgement of the practical (or 'enactive') as a frequent facilitator of sound propositional understanding. Nor does the emphasis on learning-as-process necessarily tackle a number of other significant questions which Walsh identifies (*ibid* p132). In relation to our present concern, prejudice and education, the following questions (in somewhat abbreviated form, and derived from Walsh) are worth further consideration:

How does a liberal-modern curriculum (with traditional undertones) address:

- \*the role of values in science and knowledge production in general?
- \*the emotional aspects of learning?
- \*the subtle relationship between evidence and belief?
- \*moral education?

Each of these questions links directly with my emergent complex idea of prejudice and in the following paragraphs I shall show how. In doing so I shall also respond to the actual question posed. On a general level, however, I can state at the outset that I believe these questions to be significant in signalling aspects of the curriculum which a complex understanding of prejudice may help us develop more fully, aspects, that is, which tend

to be undervalued in the traditional-modern curriculum. Not least among these, as we shall see in Chapter 11, is the notion of some kind of *metadiscourse* conducted amongst teachers but also between teachers and pupils, leading not to the eradication of prejudice but to its greater understanding. In the meantime, the following section considers the first of the above questions.

## 2.10 The Production of Classroom Knowledge

The subject based national curriculum of England and Wales, the basic pattern of which resembles closely the 1902 English grammar school curriculum (Aldrich 1988), seems to reinforce the 'traditional' undertones of the curriculum described earlier. The mechanism for 'curriculum delivery' included an assessment regime designed to enforce compliance (Daugherty and Lambert 1994) to a curriculum which appeared to put heavy emphasis on factual knowledge or recall (Graves *et al* 1990; 1991). Though the regulations have been relaxed for the revised curriculum in 1995 (DfE 1995), there has been an observable shift in, for example the contents and 'didactics' of popular textbooks which, as it were, legitimise a form of 'bullet point' geography in which knowledge is 'given' and packaged into digestible lists (even the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) have gone on record to acknowledge the dangers of a "limited and limiting" range of textbooks resources for the learning of geography (Ofsted 1995 p 5). This leads to a more "closed" as opposed to an "open" approach to learning (see Roberts 1995).

There is every reason to think, then, that in response to the national curriculum and to perceptions of 'what the government wants' (through its quasi-autonomous bodies Ofsted), that there is now less attention than ever given in classrooms to the *processes* of knowledge production. If this assertion were shown to be correct (and evidence is beginning to accumulate that it is, for example Ofsted 1995) then it follows that myths and confusions, amongst pupils, concerning the way knowledge is created will continue to feed on themselves: for example, that historians 'discover' facts; that scientists follow a step-by-step process called *the* 'scientific method'; or even, as Stannard (1988) claims many people now think, that science 'disproves' religion. Misconceptions such as these are not helpful for education in the "widest sense"<sup>17</sup> (Walsh 1994 p16) - by which I include that which encompasses goals incorporating the tackling of prejudice - because unless confronted they tend to reinforce an anti-enlightenment undertone in learning.

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<sup>17</sup>Walsh distinguishes the formal sense of education which may imply something as narrow as 'for passing examinations'. In its widest sense he suggests a definition which runs: *the whole sum of that learning of a person, and what promotes or has promoted it, which makes for (or, which is considered to make for) his (or her) becoming, or being, a developed human being.* (Walsh 1994 p16)

Such learning makes assumptions about knowledge *objectivity* which itself is closely associated with 'transmission' models of teaching and learning (Burntwood 1986 p112-116) and implies *certainty*. This now raises issues to do with relativity which go to the heart of any discussion on the interface of prejudice and education, and confronts directly the first of my selection of Walsh's questions; indirectly, this is a discussion which takes on all four of the questions listed in the previous section (2.9).

## 2.11 Objectivity and Certainty

With regard to objectivity and certainty, the assumption that may be held by teachers and pupils in a transmission-reception relationship is that there is one truth, a right and a proper account which needs to be understood and learnt. But as Walsh has observed, "people are apt to become fidgety with solemn talk about the 'truth', associating it with rigidity and intolerance" (1994 p71). Subjectivists cannot accept that such a goal is realisable:

*Knots and tangles in our understanding, uncertainties, interwoven metaphors, thoughts too contextualised to be widely communicable, emotional nuances, all these and more, which might manage containment in a more wrought form like poetry or narrative, are bleached out in this standard expository style...*  
(Middleton 1992 p11)

West *et al* (1985) put it more prosaically observing that learning is "giving personal meaning to public knowledge", and we have seen already Usher and Edward's (1994) view of education as a "historically located construct...(which) attempts to mould the subjectivities of those within it" (p125). What all these sources seem to concede is that there is a subjectivity involved in learning. But the key question is whether this precludes all levels of objectivity, for to be an unrestrained subjectivist is to adopt a deeply disillusioned position and one which is likely to result in the sort of unhappiness that the sociologist Berger (1979) associates with his concept of "homelessness"<sup>18</sup>. Walsh argues that to reject *any* sense of objectivity goes far beyond the classical need for scepticism and is a position based upon beliefs that simply rule out objectivity. Why a person should wish to adopt such a position (and risk anomie) is, according to Walsh (*op cit* p71), founded on the following beliefs:

*\* an awareness of our fallability and of the fragility of our certitudes;*

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<sup>18</sup>Berger's argument claims to acknowledge a deeply grounded need for certainty: "Put simply, there is the ideal of liberation as choice and the ideal of liberation from choice" (Berger 1979 p110). There appears to be a strong connection between this idea and that of Finkelkraut's "maternal warmth of prejudice" (see Chapter 3)

- \* *a distrust of abstract generalisations;*
- \* *a sense that some of the best of our thinking evades 'logical' expression;*
- \* *a belief in a large freedom as a condition for human thriving;*
- \* *a sense that certain perennial issues are for different generations and individuals to face and to answer for themselves*

As he goes on to say "Defending objectivism is, to a large extent, a matter of showing that these values and beliefs can be accommodated within it..." (*ibid* p71). He succeeds in doing this, partly by showing that a measured form of relativism, one which, so to speak, uses the entirely reasonable let out clause of 'other things being equal', is perfectly consistent with objectivism; truth remains the goal, but *contingent* on particular circumstances or conditions.

Also crucial in defending objectivism is Karl Popper's (1966) development of "dynamic scepticism" which was a response to what he recognised was the kernel of truth in relativism which states that there exists no general criterion of truth. This, Popper showed, does not result in some arbitrary choice of theories. What he proposed was the principle of "fallibility"; "What we once thought to be well established, or even certain, may later turn out to be not quite correct...and in need of correction" (*ibid* p374). All theories therefore can be false, and falsifications should be deliberately sought. Falsifications may result from newly discovered facts, but Popper's insights take us further than this, for he also showed that the 'facts' themselves can be mistaken because they are themselves impregnated with theory. The logical step from the principle of fallibility is that the pursuit of truth is by no means pointless. We can accept some discredited theories as having *some* truth in them and the theories which have taken their place as *getting nearer* to the truth. But we can never be sure that, in fact, we have reached the truth, though in some circumstances we may be difficult to shift (exceptions do not falsify). The insight, in Burtonwood's (1986) view, is that Popper has demonstrated that we can learn from our mistakes, so long as we are aware of them and are willing to test our ideas critically (*ibid* p21).

Though this analysis helps us a great deal in putting distance between the quest for a level of objective truth and intolerance<sup>19</sup>, there remain some problems. We are coming to a sophisticated objectivism which in busy and practical places such as schools may be

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<sup>19</sup> When engaged in thinking about certainty, I am, like Burtonwood (1986 p109) regularly reminded of Jacob Bronowski standing in a puddle outside Auschwitz considering the consequences of certainty. He quoted Oliver Cromwell: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken" (Bronowski 1973 p186)

difficult to handle. For one thing there are in built ambiguities, or more precisely subtleties, which may be not readily be resolved.

For instance, Popper himself drew attention to the 'theory constructed' nature of facts - that the same phenomena may be 'read' differently. This immediately presents us with the problem of how to know when, say, a falsification is as it seems. This does not however, open the subjectivists' door to unrestrained relativity which would say that essentially we are only able to understand statements about the world when they are expressed within the conceptual framework of our own culture, which "effectively means that other cultures must remain unintelligible to us" (Burtonwood 1986 p15). Thomas Kuhn (1970a) admitted that this would indeed be the case if his concept of the 'paradigm' in the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (first published in 1962) were to be applied to the study of other cultures (cited in Burtonwood *op cit* p17). This realisation reminds us that the 'revolutionary' change which Kuhnian paradigm shifts require, whereby previously held truths are *completely* overturned, whilst accurate enough as a description of scientific development, is not in the nature of what we would want to see in school: change of this sort is likely to be resisted and the greater the discomfort children feel with their existing 'paradigm', the greater may be their resistance. Under pressure, pupils might embrace change but as Walsh (1994 p80) astutely observes, possibly at the cost of self-deception (a likely feature, of course, of the stubbornly resisting of change also). In his *Reflections on my Critics*, Kuhn (1970b) diluted his thesis of incommensurability; paradigms are not watertight, and limited communication between them is possible, based upon discovering what is shared. This can equally be seen as the basis for intercultural communication (or "conversation"). As Ginsburg (1953) pointed out well before Kuhn's influence was brought to bear, cultures could or should be judged according to their willingness to submit to criticism and to engage in self criticism.

## 2.12 Objectivity and Subjectivity: at-homeness and the need for deliberation

The "philosophising", described in the previous section, leads to some insights which I can summarise in the following. The modern curriculum, whether with the 'traditional or 'liberal' prefix, is, like most human artifacts, not 'given'; that is to say it can and should be interpreted by those whose responsibility it is to 'deliver' it. Accepting this requires taking up questions of epistemology or what I have referred to in Chapter 1 as the "knowledge question". More specifically, I have had in mind questions concerning objectivity and certainty. These must involve teachers in clarification of the just and meaningful application of relativity, an understanding of the scale of change we may be

asking people to undertake when introducing them to the new or the strange (a significant role that falls to geography) and the potential within the modern curriculum to include procedures and circumstances to support individuals in their own intellectual and moral development. The latter also needs *vision* as well as *arguments* and the opportunity to express good *deeds* (Walsh 1994 p80)<sup>20</sup>.

Sankey *et al* (1988) have produced a model for what the opportunities mentioned above may actually look like in practice. This takes the form of a text book *At Home on Planet Earth* which is usually to be found on the Religious Education shelves. As the authors remark in their introduction, the underlying theme is 'at-home-ness':

*Throughout human history there has been a strong desire to organise knowledge into a cohesive framework, enabling people to feel a sense of being at home in the world. This was one of the main aims of ancient cosmologies (ibid p xi)*

It is of significance to note that Jones (1987), whose ideas of 'home' preferences and prejudices we met earlier in this Chapter, acknowledges this reference to cosmology. It is this urge to feel comfortable that Finkelkraut (1988) and Berger (1979) (also referred to earlier in the present chapter), also recognised as feelings that should not (and cannot) be ignored. Sankey *et al* continue, "What concept of a unified world view is open to us today?" (*op cit* p xi).

They fail to answer this question (not surprisingly). Though we can support, in the context of the present analysis, the authors intention "not to teach individuals *what* to think, but rather *how* to think... not teach science but how to think about science" (*ibid*), the book fails really to develop "at-home-ness", at least in the way we have conceptualised it and in terms of tackling pupils' prejudices. The *world* is perhaps the wrong scale; turning once again to Walsh we are reminded that

*...the evidence of pluralist societies and cultures, ancient and modern, is that even after traditions have met, argued and diluted each other's purely inertial forces, ethical differences continue to flourish. Thus it seems precisely not the case that deep differences will disappear in some coming 'global village' of rational humanity.(Walsh 1994 p79)*

This is emphatically not an invitation for intolerance. The complex objectivism which, with Walsh's help and others, I have pieced together here directs us *to examine our own*

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<sup>20</sup>Walsh writes specifically on moral development:

*...consider our responses to bad faith. Satire, irony, good example, some forms of correction, and the sublime 'overcoming evil by good' - these combine a clearly objectivist assumption of a moral truth that is being evaded with an assumption that getting this truth acknowledged is going to involve the touching of hearts as much as of minds. (Walsh 1994 p80)*



*self-deceptions as much as our understanding of, or feelings for, the 'other'.* Walsh develops this thinking by advancing what he calls "an education in social issues and causes" (*ibid* p121) or, intriguingly, an *education in deliberation*. This is wholly within the remit of an enlightened modern education but represents a break with the contemporary traditional or liberal undertones we have noted in that it sets out to re-establishing the Aristotelian 'making' and 'thinking' alongside the dominating (in the modern curriculum) knowing/understanding.<sup>21</sup> Thinking encouraged in the contemporary curriculum fails to engage children in "deliberation" partly because of an immediacy or reality problem: issues introduced to the classroom are too often abstracted or long range in character giving thinking an "as if" quality. Furthermore, subject information in the humanities has become heavily 'theorised', resulting first in the exclusion of certain disciplines or fields from the range of what is considered legitimate (the law for example) and secondly a systematic mystification of the subject matter through the adoption of technical terms and jargon, some of which at least is thought to obstruct rather than support understanding (Gilbert 1984).

There would seem to be, then, a good case to examine critically the scope for introducing a wider range of thinking into the curriculum than is the normal pattern in the contemporary curriculum, and the next chapter develops this further within the context of geography education. If the previous paragraph is fundamentally correct however, it is more than just thinking that we need to examine; though this is likely to be the more intractable (judging by the persistence of the traditional 'undertones' that we have noted), the knowledge component of the curriculum also requires looking at. Little has changed since McGurk felt compelled to write:

*The overwhelming majority of British youth appear to be politically illiterate. They have no conception of the structure of society, of how the economy works, or the character of different political systems...Stemming, perhaps, from such political ignorance is the overt racism which the research projects commonly reveal to be endemic among white youth in Britain...We urgently need to ask what it is about British education which allows such ignorance and prejudice to be so widespread among young people, and what needs to be done to bring about change.* (McGurk 1987 p6)

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<sup>21</sup>In introducing his 'maps' for curriculum analysis, Walsh writes:

*First is the Aristotelian division of thought by aim, into science, art and politics - that is to say (since each of those terms was meant very broadly), the differences between thinking aimed at:*

*\* good (or better) understanding of how things are;*

*\* making good artifacts;*

*\* good decisions and good living.*

*This division can be a stick for the traditional liberal curriculum with its overwhelming emphasis on the propositional, its downgrading of art and still more of technical education, and its neglect of the ethical, political, legal, economic, ecological and family studies that bear most directly on deliberation and policy.* (Walsh 1994 p 120-121)

The challenge is in fact greater than even this worrying picture indicates, for this mix of informational, intellectual and emotional weakness which McGurk associates with racial prejudice, can be linked to a much broader range of "issues and causes" than this, all of which are subject to prejudice in one way or another. The matters to which I refer are, like racism, fundamental to the quality (or existence even) of a sustainable future:

*They are captured in labels like 'world hunger and North-South relationships', 'disarmament and nuclear deterrence', 'ecology energy and the green movement', ...'patriarchy, feminism and women's rights', 'relationships, the sexual revolution and AIDS', 'localism, nationalism and internationalism'.*  
(Walsh 1994 p122)

Lynch *et al* (1992) also urge a broader horizon to be taken in by researchers of 'cultural diversity'. Despite a burgeoning literature they remark that,

*Sadly, almost exclusively, they address the issues from the point of the industrialised countries and ignore the broader international context and implications. Yet, can one really demand greater equity for oneself or one's own, and not for one's neighbour?...discourse about equity and diversity has to be brought to the bar of a global stage. ...deep-frozen cultural and intellectual paradigms have been slower to adapt to the need to apprehend diversity and equity as global issues that the pace of events necessitates. (ibid p5)*

A range of issues, therefore, require "deliberation": young people require information of course, but also the mental tools to discriminate, to engage and to resist indoctrination. In this way "deliberation" becomes the practically minded political education which McGurk seeks. The obvious curriculum question is to ask where on the curriculum map this is to take place. Walsh agrees that it is a "nice question" whether effort should be expended on 'peace studies' and the such like (which, as Ivor Goodson demonstrated, (1983) always have to fight an unequal battle for curriculum space) or existing subjects opened out to pursuing "just astuteness" (Walsh 1994 p 122) as a common theme in the humanities. If the will were there, and a model to handle such a pursuit were available, geography would be able to make a major contribution, as the next chapter will, amongst other things, show. One thing is for sure, that it is the secondary school where we should attempt this pursuit. As Jones (1987) said of his "education for conversation" so Walsh says of "education in deliberation": if it does not begin in school, it is difficult to imagine where it will take place at all.

### 2.13 In Search of a Moral Education

At the beginning of Part 2 of this Chapter I referred once again to the Swann Report (DES 1985) as a means of taking stock. The quotation used was:

*We want our pupils to have the power of critical reflection, ability to explore ideas and attitudes with understanding and detachment, and the ability to challenge information. They should acquire the confidence to question established authority and to think independently and should learn to justify opinion in a rational manner (ibid p320)*

One result of my "philosophising" is that we should now be able to attach particular meaning to these words. For example, we have found that 'critical reflection' needs to include that of the self and of 'home' as well as the new and the strange. We agree in the principle of 'detachment' if what is meant by this is that we are in the pursuit of a *level* of objective truth (this does not exclude 'local circumstance' and a constrained relativity) enabling the individual to make "judgements of merit" (Wilson 1992 p301). 'Confidence and independent thinking' clearly require some challenging curriculum thinking on what is to be taught and how; education in deliberation or conversation requires that *real* deliberation or conversation takes place in lessons. Finally, the 'rational justification of opinions' goes to the heart of a moral education which, the word 'rational' notwithstanding, contains an emotional dimension. It is to a further consideration of moral education that we should therefore turn.

One starting point for this discussion is the document produced by the National Curriculum Council (NCC 1993) which advanced a proposal for what education for "spiritual and moral development" should include. The NCC document states:

*Morally educated school leavers should be able to:*

- \* distinguish between right and wrong;*
- \* articulate their own attitudes and values;*
- \* take responsibility for their own actions:*
- \* recognise the moral dimension to situations;*
- \* understand the long and short term consequences of their actions for themselves and others;*

*\* develop for themselves a set of socially acceptable values and principles, and a set of guidelines to govern their own behaviour;*

*\* recognise that their values and attitudes may have to change over time;*

*\* behave consistently in accordance with their principles.*

(NCC 1993 p6)

This is a long list of generally agreeable objectives which are to be developed through all subjects of the curriculum, though it is signally less ambitious in terms of promoting the personal autonomy of the individual than was Swann: there is no hint of encouraging the challenge of established authority - if anything the reverse - and clearly that apparently dangerous notion of a practically oriented political education is not considered a part of moral education. Atomised lists of objectives of this kind are difficult to handle, especially across subject frontiers; but perhaps they can be collected or aggregated into a fundamental principle or two, acting as a guide and prompt to all teachers in their 'philosophising' over what needs to be done.

Wilson (1992) is helpful in this respect. He considers, and then rejects, a notion of some kind of development stage theory which could describe, as it were, inevitable stages in the development of 'social values'. His grounds for rejection lie in the likelihood that the way in which people identify themselves and others is *contingent* upon a number of conditions:

*It may be that particular societies... force individuals to put weight on certain differences: you cannot help but put weight on the criterion of being black in South Africa, for example. But that seems to be contingent, and therefore a mutable, matter: something to be questioned, perhaps changed, not just taken as given or inevitable. (ibid p297)*

This notion of contingency, as we have seen earlier, is important. It allows us to question the 'facts' and it also allows us to acknowledge different 'readings' of common experience. But the contingent facts are also subject to scrutiny from what Wilson describes as transcendental, time-free and non-contingent standards, or "culture free rationality" (*ibid*). In practice what this entails (in addition to learning something about other peoples and cultures) is an encouragement for pupils to reflect on:

*(i) the reasonableness of certain propositions about the equal value of human beings;*

*(ii) the degree to which individuals should find security in identification or membership of a 'race' or culture;*

*(iii) the merits and demerits of particular ethnic cultures.*

*(ibid p298).*

Young people need help to steer through the conflicts to which these issues inevitably give rise:

*...if they were put on the multicultural agenda, so to speak, and actually discussed with the pupils (rather than played down for fear of giving offence), much would be gained. (ibid p299)*

There is certainly a resonance here with Walsh's education in deliberation and Jones' education for conversation. Further resonance is found in Wilson's powerful arguments to show the significance of people's strong emotional attachments to what he describes as "Because it's mine" (*ibid* p 299-302: 304); earlier we have used the different metaphors of 'at-homeness' and, earlier still, the comfort to be found in the 'familiar', but the meaning is much the same. As we know, the temptation which this perspective offers is for us to take up an unconstrained relativist position; but this is not (as we have also found) determined, and can be resisted by accepting the pursuit of 'levels' of objectivist truth - as indeed for which Wilson argues, when he refers to the procedures, outlined above, to encourage the pursuit of "culture-free rationality".

Wilson, then, proposes the combination of two aims in order to achieve an effective multicultural education, which

*...insofar as it means anything at all must presumably be a kind of moral education, and ought to be classified as such; it has something to do with gaining a proper concept of a person, being aware of certain kinds of facts, having the ability to relate to other people (ibid p305).*

Unpack this statement and the two aims are apparent:

\*the ability to form attachments;

\*the ability to make judgements of merit.

In Wilson's own words, they relate to each other in the following manner:

*Roughly, we want pupils (1) to be able to love and feel loved - to have the capacity to form local attachments rather than (as it were) being nomadic, unable*

*to see anything or anyone as 'theirs', with that peculiar sense of 'belonging' which is at the heart of love; but also (2) to be able to make proper judgements about the merits not only of colour or culture or race, but of other things that may be more or less worthwhile or trivial. (ibid p301).*

Wilson provides in this way a useful articulation of the aims of a moral education to which we shall return in Chapters 10 and 11.

## 2.14 Summary and Conclusions

Teachers will require that educational aims such as those identified above be articulated in a more operational manner. This is an entirely reasonable demand, but for now we are in an *a priori* mode of thought, engaged in the "philosophising" that both Wilson and Walsh identify as an inherent component of being an educator, albeit one that is all too easy to evade (Wilson 1992 p194). We should avoid falling into the trap of hurrying too quickly to operational solutions, for fear of closing down on thought.

Although some operational suggestions are provided in Chapter 11 (and many more are to be found in the likes of Gaine [1987] and Lynch [1987]), the main purpose of this thesis is to set out the empirical enquiry described from Chapter 4 onwards, which describes and reports the results of research conversations with pupils and teachers at Greenfields School and which formed a body of evidence which further substantiated a foundation for my conceptual maps of prejudice. As we shall see, however, the material in this chapter is influential in shaping the empirical analysis: not only in helping establish categories of description in the form of seven 'dimensions' of prejudice, but also in providing an overall trajectory for the interpretation of my 'results' (in Chapters 10 and 11). Thus, the concluding chapter of this thesis returns explicitly to the principles of a moral education spelled out by Wilson in the previous section. There also, the ideas of conversation, or deliberation, are further refined partly by recourse once again to literary sources (not least the philosopher Gadamer who has strongly influenced Jones' ideas on 'conversation') in addition to the Greenfields case study.

The discussion in this chapter has been conducted on a quite general level. We have established prejudice as a complex idea and have provided some definitions together with some critical evaluation of what the term has come to mean. Through discussion of its origins we have not only identified the possible dimensions of a conceptual map, but explored how a deeper, fuller understanding of prejudice (by both teachers and learners) may achieve, through a process of deliberation, the fundamental goals of a moral

education. It seems that an essential part of this is to "allow" prejudice. As Webster (1993) writes:

*The job of education (is) not to smooth the mysteries out, but to open eyes. Education (is) always provisional, along the way, always travelling with hope and contradiction (ibid p 100)*

He continues,

*Teachers have then to begin to assist youngsters to discern their humanity by setting them on the search for it, and walking with them for part of the journey. But it is the youngsters' own search and it is their own answers which they must find - not their teachers' (ibid p 101)*

The next chapter effectively continues this discussion, but within the particular context of a geography education.

## Chapter 3

### Prejudice in geography education

#### 3.1 Introduction

There is a view, widespread in Britain, that prejudice - particularly racial prejudice - is a problem which has been well contained: "Britain...enjoys harmonious racial relations. The 1976 Race Relations Act enshrines in law the rights of the UK's ethnic minorities in a way that is virtually unthinkable in Germany or France" (Evans 1993 p15). This view is one which is supported to a degree by academics in education (for example, Grace 1994; Wilson 1992 p198) and which is imparted to young people (for example see the Education Guardian 19.5.92 p1-3). However, in his *Geographical* article Evans goes on to warn that "we are in danger of letting this modest advantage slip" (Evans *op cit*) because of the slow progress made on what is termed "indirect" discrimination which the law does not deal with. Education, and specifically geographical education, is seen as having a key role in advancing on this front, but it is worth noting that in their evaluation of work supported by Education Support Grants in mainly white areas Tomlinson and Coulson concluded that they have done little more than "scratch the surface...there is a long way to go" (Tomlinson and Coulson 1988) - confirming, in other words, the slow progress which Evans reports.

This chapter, then, seeks to explore the potential of a specifically geographical contribution to a broadly conceived moral education. This is done through a consideration of how prejudice has been understood and tackled in geography education: particularly in the context of 'multicultural' education and education for international understanding, both of which have research traditions which have examined pupils' perceptions, preferences and images of the world, often through the analysis of textbooks.

I then attempt to weave into the discussion fresh perspectives, including insights gained from Edward Said's analysis of *Orientalism*. My discussion enables us to relate general ideas from Chapter 2, such as education for conversation, to the particular setting that geography education provides. Thus, the significance of geography education, of what I may summarise as 'distance and diversity', will be shown: the role that passes to geography in education to help pupils tackle foreignness, strangeness, distance and



complexity with confidence *and* with an open mind - to facilitate what Said called "reconciliation" (section 3.5).

### 3.2 Geography and 'Multicultural' Education: a question of goals

Rex Walford rightly claims that "few geography teachers would deny that the subject is closely related to multicultural education... (and that) the issues can only be avoided by some wilful act of negligence" (Walford 1993 p11). Partly as a result of this awareness, which is clearly connected to the realisation that "overcoming myths and stereotypes is a major problem in teaching about distant places" (Binns 1993 p8) school geography has benefited from numerous initiatives, projects and publications aimed at helping teachers find ways to tackle the issues (as they are perceived) more effectively. Most are characterised by their commitment to participatory approaches to learning "which help to get difficult issues aired and consciousness of them heightened" (Walford *op cit*). Notable amongst these are the Centre for Global Education (Pike and Selby 1988), Development Education Centre (1987;1990) and the World Studies Project (Richardson 1979; Hicks and Fisher 1985; Hicks and Steiner 1989).

There are many other more individualistic contributions including a penetrating, yet unpublished, analysis of racism detectable in the materials of the then highly influential Geography for the Young School Leaver Project (GYSL), undertaken by Dawn Gill for the Schools Council (Gill 1982; see also Boardman 1988 for an account). In addition several prominent writers in geographical education have opened up and developed the theme of attitudes and values in the geography classroom, helping to underscore the importance of identifying and understanding the personal values and attitudes as well as those which influence other people's motives and decisions - in effect, as another variable to put alongside physical or economic 'factors' and such like that help us understand the world. Procedures such as values' clarification, values' probing and moral dilemmas are now reasonably well known through the works of, for example Slater (1980; 1982; 1993) and Huckle (1983).

It would be difficult to sustain an argument that in the face of all this, school geography has had limited or no impact on the intellectual and moral growth of pupils. It too would ultimately be pointless to speculate on how much 'worse' attitudes of young people would be if, generally, they had not experienced the kind of enlightened geography education referred to above and which organisations such as the Geographical Association (GA) are willing to support and nurture (for example, see Bale 1983; Walford 1985; Speak and Wiegand 1993; 1994). Yet commentators often seem to be

guarded against making too generous claims for success. Robinson, for example, expresses concerns about the fragmentation of the whole curriculum in reducing its impact (1993 p15-17) and Walford (*op cit* p13) is alert to the dangers of an over full geography curriculum causing teachers to resort to "pressure-feed" methods of what is increasingly referred to as "curriculum delivery" (Ribbens 1992; NCC 1991). But it is the advice published by the London Borough of Newham that perhaps strikes to the heart of the issue by asking, somewhat rhetorically in its guidance for geography teachers, "How do you encourage students to identify common interests and problems with people living in other parts of the world?" (Newham undated p18). As Wassell-Smith notes "To European minds, poverty in the developing world is 'natural' and not in any way of anthropogenic origin" (Wassell-Smith 1993).

I accept these points but wish to pursue further a deeper and more critical account. Many of the participatory strategies mentioned above arise from a long recognition in geography of the subject's potential in education for international understanding which received additional stimulus from the "urgency" (Graves 1985) of racial tension in Britain during the 1980s: "the movement for multicultural education was given an added impetus since it was hoped that such education might help eradicate "racist" attitudes among school children and prepare them for a truly multicultural or multiethnic society" (*ibid* p47). Such approaches come within the broad remit of what Lynch calls "prejudice reduction" techniques (Lynch 1987; Oser 1992<sup>22</sup>) and they may well contribute in some measure to the establishment of Jones' concept of "education for conversation" (Jones 1987). The latter sounds similar in practice (if not in purpose) to Walsh's "education in deliberation": as he writes, "to be authentic (this) must involve actual deliberation, just as we make students read literature itself and not just commentaries on it, or do science experiments and not just read them up in the text book (Walsh 1994 p 122)<sup>23</sup>. We should note that such authenticity is not easy to achieve; "It is 20 years since the Danton Report castigated much school science as the mindless repetition of rote formulae. Instead now we promote 'scientific activities'. But what is 'science' and what do 'scientists' do?" (Marland 1991 p24). And in any case I still suspect that they may be some way wide of the mark, in the sense that *per se* their impact is muted.

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<sup>22</sup>Oser (*ibid* p314-317) lists five moral education approaches which he considers effective in reducing prejudice: (1) adopting Development as the Aim of Education (eg using Kohlbergs stages); (2) Values clarification; (3) character education (4) adopting the Consideration Model (which emphasises interpersonal sensitivity) (5) the Discourse approach (the state of readiness to understand others and to enter some kind of negotiation).

<sup>23</sup>Troyna and Hatcher (1992) make a similar point, though in the contexts of primary schools this is clearly a responsibility for every teacher and not only the subject teacher's role: *The curriculum needs not only to address the real experiences that children bring with them to the classroom, it needs to offer them the conceptual tools to interpret it* . (*ibid*)

Effective teaching strategies in geography, in order to be effective, need to be incorporated into a sustained and consistent concept of geography's educational purpose; to caricature the point, I am sceptical about the impact of an occasional running of Christian Aid's *BaFa BaFa* (in Hicks, 1981 p82-85) or the *Trade Game* (CWDE undated). Research over many years has supported this position - or at least that any observable gains are usually shortlived. Graves, for example, quotes Honeybone's (1957) work:

*Research tended to show that though changes in attitude could be brought about by geography lessons which were deliberately angled to show that people in other lands faced similar problems and had similar needs..., these changes were not necessarily permanent.* (Graves 1985 p46)

More recently, Slater appears to suggest more hesitation over the potential of "values" strategies affecting change. On a moral dilemma sequence involving students investigating housing issues she concludes,

*...suffice it to note that Kohlberg's <sup>24</sup>Stage 6 - the universal ethical principle orientation where right is defined by decisions of conscience in accordance with self-chosen ethical principle - was resoundingly absent. Stage 2 - the instrumentalist-relativist orientation, where right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others - was very common. Individualism reigns supreme. We understand the housing problem. We choose to do what suits us. There is nothing new in that.* (Slater 1987 p11)

On the other hand, she does add that "The moral dilemma strategy provides us in geography education with opportunities for decision making and the discussion of the values and attitudes upon which those decisions are based" (*ibid*). The teacher's role then is crucial, not only to ensure such discussion takes place, but to handle the occasion with clarity and purpose. This leads us back to goals. In a rather similar way in which the Burnage Enquiry<sup>25</sup> found that anti-racist policies in school were unlikely to be effective unless enacted in a whole school context of *democratic procedures* (Macdonald *et al* 1988; Hatcher 1990) prejudice reduction strategies in the classroom are bereft of a mission without the context of clear goals - and a concept of geography's 'mission' with

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<sup>24</sup>See Kohlberg and Mayer (1972): this describes an approach to education with (moral) "development" as its main aim. The goal is to stimulate higher, more complex and differentiated forms of reasoning.

<sup>25</sup>The Burnage Enquiry, referred to in Chapter 1 of this thesis (section 1.1), followed the murder, by a white youth of similar age, of Ahmed Ullah in the playground of Burnage High School in Greater Manchester in 1987.

regard to the knowledge we wish pupils to acquire and the kind of thinking we demand of them.

Observations on the GA's most recent publication on multicultural and related matters, *International Understanding Through Geography* (Speak and Wiegand 1993), help further to illustrate and substantiate my point from the preceding paragraphs. There are signs, for example, that the difficulties inherent in teaching for improved international understanding have only been part digested. There are clues to this in Speak's introduction, which states:

*It is often assumed, indeed sometimes explicitly claimed, that geography teaching will automatically bring about international understanding. This is, unfortunately, far from true. It is not enough for school curricula merely to list countries, topics or issues to be learnt, for although teaching about other countries can increase international awareness, it leads too easily to the acquisition of outdated facts and stereotypes without objective understanding.*  
(Speak 1993 p6)

She is right in distinguishing "awareness" and "understanding". Our discussions (see also, for example, Cartwright 1987) of the nature of prejudice, however, suggest that it is less reliable to claim that an "objective" knowledge or understanding is an achievable goal and will somehow put to right young people's prejudices; furthermore, attempts to 'deliver' an 'understanding of the world' is unlikely to succeed in motivating the learners. This faulty position is compounded in a later paragraph of Speak's when we read,

*(pupils) must be able to understand the viewpoints of, and the decisions made by, other peoples without developing prejudice. (ibid) (my emphasis)*

Speak is right to denote geography's key role in introducing pupils to the 'other'. It does not seem tenable, however, to imply that pupils are somehow without prejudice and can, as it were, be protected by the education process from developing prejudice (see Davey 1983). As we have observed earlier, such an assumption appears frequently: teachers at one 'all-white' school wrote: "Being in an all-white school (meant that) pupils readily assimilated prejudiced and racist ideas" (Duff and Turnbull 1987). This assumption, linked to the 'environmental' cause of prejudice hypothesis, was, as we shall see in Chapters 7 and 8 also to be found at the Greenfields School.

### 3.3 Geography and International Understanding

The long standing interest in educating for international understanding has spawned some distinctive avenues for geographical research, notably those exploring pupils 'preferences', 'stereotypes' and 'images' of the world (for example see Haubrich 1992a; 1992b). It is understandably an intrinsic interest of geography educators to know more of the geographical mental landscape of children; on the other hand, the results of many such investigations, including a number conducted very recently, seem unsurprising (for example Kent 1992). Indeed, without wishing to labour the point, it is largely predictable the images, say, British fifteen year olds have of, say, Australia, the USA or Nigeria, and this too is Benejam's contention when he argues that "The most overworked theme is the detection of preconceived ideas of the students or misconceptions that persist in these" (Benejam 1993 p83): it is time, he seems to be saying, to move on to a new and more productive research focus than that which merely accumulates more descriptive evidence.

Though preferences and stereotypes research tells teachers very little about how to respond to partial or negative images, it has nevertheless helped to build a picture of what we might expect in children's minds. As long ago as 1951, Piaget and Weil discovered a three stage model describing the development of the concept of 'homeland' (Piaget and Weil 1951, reported in Slater and Spicer 1980, p35-37). Children's reaction to the question of which country they would choose to live in, were they to lose their nationality, revealed that young children (7 to 8 years old) choose their own country, not only for themselves but for all children of all nationalities. Between approximately 8 to 11 years old the attribution of own national preferences becomes reciprocal. After 11 years children were said to enter the third stage when they display a genuine understanding of the principle of reciprocity. This model has since been broadly substantiated (for example, Middleton *et al* 1970) though the reciprocity principle has been found not to develop universally (*ibid* p126). Psychological research conducted after Piaget and Weil's pioneering work examined the evidence for stereotyping in children's responses to other peoples and countries (for example, Lambert and Klineberg 1959; Jahoda 1962) and has come to similarly unremarkable, but nevertheless interesting, conclusions - such as that children's views can be measured to become progressively less stereotyped as they become older (Lambert and Klineburg 1959 p236). Bearing in mind Eysenck's (1992) admonition concerning the assumptions researchers have often carried into research on stereotyping (see section 2.2) and certain methodological issues including the difficulty psychological approaches had, at that time, in "gaining full insight into modes of thought and feeling characteristic at various ages" (Jahoda 1962 p91), it is my judgement that in fact these studies have had relatively



little impact on geography education. To be sure, it is good that we know something about children's responses: that is, we know that we can expect, broadly, some kind of development in children's responses to home and to the 'other'. But we know less about how their responses are developed or how teachers can best intervene in order to influence these responses, if this were considered to be a legitimate and necessary educational aim.

More recently, research interest has moved from preferences and stereotypes to 'images' which includes consideration of the concept formation of the 'other' - usually in the setting of images of the 'developing world', reflecting the surge of interest in 'third world' studies during the 1970s and 1980s. Research has also become more qualitative, providing richer and more textured data; for instance Haubrich (1992a) uses the extended writing of students from around the world<sup>26</sup> to ascertain the ways in which they themselves express feelings for home, and this he feels provides clues as to how to introduce young people to foreign countries. Textbooks, he found, are information rich but cover a significantly narrower range of topics than the students' free writing about their own country which leads him to conclude that 15 year old students "are not only motivated by classical geographic topics but also, and especially, by cultural, political and social features or by human issues" (*ibid* p142). This view is supported by another German researcher who, using quite different techniques and with a more concentrated focus on prejudice, found that "reciprocal perception" is "more forthcoming with emotionally closer topics, like play rather than economic activity" (Troger 1992 p8).

Roger Robinson's work, like Troger's, is based (partly) on selected photographic images of 'development' to which he invites fourteen year old pupils to respond, orally (Robinson 1986; 1987). He reports that when students talked about the photographs,

*In most cases, components were selected from the photo that were congruent with the students' existing images. On four or five occasions the students themselves realised there was a clash between their own existing ideas and the photograph evidence. Sometimes they dismissed the evidence. Sometimes they were able to accommodate it with adjustments to their existing images.* (Robinson 1986 p7)

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<sup>26</sup>Haubrich's sample size is very small and he admits is in no sense 'representative'. Nevertheless, it is interesting to record that a student from England, quoted several times in Haubrich's paper, is one of the least patriotic and most critical students (from 21 countries in all). But the strong sense of 'home' is undiminished. She writes: "I feel no strong patriotism to England or its rulers probably because of the terrible state the country is in. After saying this I admit that I could not live permanently abroad, because I view England as my home and have a sense of affection for the country" (Haubrich 1992a p140).

This, it should be noted, could be seen as a less 'optimistic' finding than either Haubrich's or Troger's, both of whom see scope for working creatively and effectively with the children's existing attitudinal dispositions:

*The main result is that the students show very good psychological preconditions to combine national identification and international understanding... (Haubrich 1992a p131);*

*Didactic subdivision into teaching concerns of the pupils' everyday living environment and the outside [foreign] world should be abandoned in favour of a concept which embraces the two approaches. Teaching 'third world' problems will at the same time become teaching about the every-day-world of the pupils and will help support them in adapting and mastering [undersatnding] their own situation (Troger 1992 P10.)*

It may be that the suggestions that Troger makes - akin to 'starting where the children are at' - is a message well understood and already practised in Britain. On the other hand, it is possible that a significant difference between Robinson's work and the German work is that he is less concerned with "home" images; indeed his respondents were asked to react to the images with no other support other than the context was 'geography' and 'development'. Robinson is aware that this may have prevented children speaking freely on an emotional level, and in fact comes to a view (like Troger) that the "emotional context" is important in pupils' image construction (Robinson 1987 p52). However, his concluding analysis, in which he lists under three headings the key influences creating images, is concerned almost exclusively with how pupils 'process' outside information: (i) the reception of information; (ii) the construction of images (involving the recall and selection of "components" or significant information); (iii) the use of images (involving the interpretation of information). While Robinson's work, then, does not *centre* its concern on a complex view of prejudice, he nevertheless indirectly acknowledges its role:

*Underlying beliefs and values are crucial in the development of structures that construct images, and the unquestioned adherence to a narrowly based set of values... inhibit the creation of alternative images that could reflect more of the reality of complex and changing situations. (ibid p52)*

He concludes, echoing Fien in his account of a more "humanistic geography" (Fien 1983), that

*One of the roles of geography teaching is to help students identify these skills and make their images a more conscious and valued part of thinking, valuing and*

*decision making. They are considerations that we... must take into account ... in parts of geography in which students' images of people and their lives in contrasting environments are central - and isn't that all of geography? (op cit )*

Robinson's research is useful in informing the present conceptual analysis, particularly his identification of issues that, he argues, pervade the whole of geography as a school subject. What interested him in addition to the manner in which children created images of the developing world was the actions of teachers (Robinson 1986). Through detailed questionnaire and interviews he was able to classify teachers according to the approach they adopted to teaching an understanding of development issues. The distinctions between the six categories he identified were multivariate, but, crucial to the present analysis, they involved teachers' attitudes to knowledge, and resulted in four different classroom regimes for the study of the third world: "sympathy"; "paternalism"; "empathy"; and "realism" (Robinson 1988). On teaching approaches, he writes:

*Many multicultural educationists and those interested in World Studies and Development Education have offered imaginative classroom approaches, especially for exploring the field of values and attitudes. They aim to enable pupils to think freely, respond to and understand their own and others' attitudes to development, and to appreciate the complexity of the issues. But these approaches all involve an open attitude to knowledge, where the pupil's perception is valued and personal geographies are important, where there are no 'right' answers and a phenomenological definition of knowledge is an acceptable context for classroom activity. They also imply open discussion of attitudes and values, exploration of images and stereotypes, and consideration of alternative explanations and contexts, which would include structuralist and Marxist views of our lives. Such developments at the classroom level imply that teachers relax their control of knowledge, and stimulate interaction and discussion amongst the pupils. (Robinson 1986 p424)*

Robinson's work, quoted at length here, is useful on two counts. First, he shows the importance of:

- i) the process of image creation in pupils being introduced to new or foreign places;
- ii) thinking skills in geography education;
- iii) the contingent nature of 'geographical' knowledge.



Secondly, he recognises and demonstrates the importance of teachers, guided by their own beliefs and educational goals in influencing learning outcomes in the children they teach<sup>27</sup>.

Linked to the broader context which I have provided, of research into preferences and stereotypes and the long standing concern geographers have had to promote "international understanding" (now formalised in the Charter on Geographical Education [International Geographical Union 1992]; see also *Teaching Geography* 1995), we can see that ostensibly there is a commitment for the subject geography to be used as a doorway to ambitious educational goals that go far beyond those associated with, say, a form of 'cultural literacy' discussed briefly in Chapter 2 (see Hirsch 1987; Dowgill and Lambert 1992). Indeed geography has been formulated by some as "a medium of education" ( see Naish 1986, Slater 1982), about which

*geographers need to be clear about the nature of their subject, about its significance in environmental, social and political education, about its potential in developing understanding, skills and values and about its clear significance for the better management of space in an unequal and unfair world. (Naish op cit p109)*

This leads us to the fundamental point (noted in Chapter 1) that whilst it is relatively easy to make claims for what the subject can do ("its significance") it is more difficult to describe geography's methodology appropriate to achieving such claims. What knowledge do pupils need and how do we wish them to engage with this?

### 3.4 Prejudice in Geographical Education

This chapter has two purposes: first, (in the preceding discussion) to provide an account of how research in geography in education has responded to the concept of prejudice (however implicitly) within the context of intercultural education and education for international understanding. Secondly, the chapter intends to explore how our present understanding of prejudice might help us interpret further the role of geography in the school curriculum as expressed through curriculum goals.

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<sup>27</sup>The research, he also argues, "highlights the desirability of in-service work that emphasizes teaching methods as well as content, and does not avoid the ideological issues involved" (*ibid*).

My primary intention now is to take forward the discussion of prejudice and place it squarely within the field of geography education, identifying, as it were, whether the content of geography education (in its broadest sense) can inform our deliberations on prejudice and *vice versa*. I do not intend systematically run through the discussion so far, crudely showing the links or significance of each point to school geography as I go along. A more useful strategy is to, as it were, take mental note of our nascent topology of the concept of prejudice and explore the possibilities of either *adding* to it (using what knowledge and research evidence that exists in the field of geography education) or *moulding* it (beginning to give it shape) as a result of examining the concept through the particular focus of geography education. If geography has the role within the formal education system, to introduce young people to the 'other', to distant people and places and to foreign-ness, then *how is this best accomplished, bearing in mind what know about the difficulties we are likely to encounter in terms of prejudice?* To what extent, in other words, does geography occupy a distinctive position in relation both to how prejudice is understood and tackled?

Posing these questions is not intended to dilute in any way the relevance of general theories of learning to understanding prejudice (as we have seen in the previous section). Thinking about learning, for instance, brings to my mind the line from Rainer Maria Rilke that we are "grasped by what we cannot grasp" (Rilke 1986, cited in Bly 1992 p49); this gives us a general interpretation of prejudice which is based upon ignorance perhaps, or the inability to deal with complex issues, to which geography teachers can respond by deploying practical-theoretical constructs such as "readiness" (from Vygotsky), or giving time and opportunity for pupils to accommodate and assimilate new learning (from Piaget). Leat (forthcoming) gives examples of this kind of 'developmentalist' thinking in geography indicating that teachers need to understand the limits of young minds: most 11-12 year olds, for example, are said to be at a stage of development resulting in a "rigidity that denies the consideration of an alternative point of view" (*ibid*), the implication being that prejudice is not unusual at this age, but also that it is difficult to counter. But such a general notion of prejudice, linking it to learning 'abilities', fails to help us to an understanding of anything special about this condition - other than, presumably, something which "slow learners" have more of and "high achievers" less of; this, of course, is a highly dubious proposition<sup>28</sup> and one which would be difficult to support in terms of current research and learning theory which have adopted more complex and problematic attitudes to notions of intelligence (for example, see Gardner 1983;1994) and constructionist models of learning (see, for example,

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<sup>28</sup> Oser (1992) is far less sceptical (though it has to be said not necessarily with respect to "ability"). On the utility of developmental models in the context of "prejudice reduction" he asserts that "it is a fact that a higher stage moral reasoning is more and more incompatible with prejudice" (*ibid* p 314). The issue for geography (and other) educators is how to get pupils to function consistently at these higher orders.

Marton *et al* 1993) and are less governed by notions of stages or trends (see Flavell 1985).

What is the scope, then, in trying to pin down the concept of prejudice a little more - using 'geography' as the 'frame'? For example, can pupils who steadfastly claim a preference for the scenery, way of life (etc) in the south of England over the north be said to be prejudiced? The answer to this question may lie, as we have seen earlier in relation to Malcolm Jones' (1987) analysis, in the degree and circumstances of the preference and, for example, whether or not the individual can conceive of others having a different view. Troger (1992), in her studies of German children's "reciprocal perception" with children in Africa comes to a similar view: she expects to find 'ethnocentrism' but determines to classify children's degrees of prejudice based on their openness to further information and reflection<sup>29</sup>. There is a distinction between this aspect of geography's content and, say, pupils who steadfastly refuse to see the difference between 'weather' and 'climate'. Whereas the former may involve several of the 'dimensions' we identified in the previous chapter, the latter could be construed as purely a conceptual difficulty with an abstract physical concept, or simply an inability to generalise. This kind of distinction is also made by Bridges (1986), who draws out the significant differences between 'controversy' in, say, science and that which is involved in moral, political or social education:

*There are certain epistemological features of the moral, social and political domains of belief which go to explain both the controversy about their handling in schools and the heatedness of that controversy. The bitter controversies about belief are not resolvable by reference to more factual information or more evidence. (Bridges 1986 p 21)*

I acknowledge the difficulty in the distinction I am attempting here. 'Openness' is clearly a key to all kinds of learning, but the content of geography covers a wide spectrum and within this we can distinguish conceptual learning issues from those that we can associate with issues of prejudice. Fundamentally, as has been hinted at earlier, the singular aspect of geography which gives it a special role and which a deeper understanding of prejudice may help us develop, is geography's function introducing

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<sup>29</sup> It is worth recording further aspects of this study (Troger 1992;1993) , points which link with our emergent map of prejudice. There are interesting resonances *and* dissonances: (1) the study attaches a relatively narrow and negative, or traditional, meaning to prejudice; hence some children are said to be "hardly influenced by prejudice" (1992,p4), a finding I find difficult to accept. (2) over half her sample of children showed that they could be encouraged into displaying "reciprocal perception" in their views of the 'other'. (3) what she calls "cognitive enlightenment" is easy to overestimate - "understanding is subordinated to the socially learned values and value orientations, dominantly to the values of acceptance and obedience" (*ibid* p8). (4) Pupils were considered to be open "whenever they are willing to reflect on their own way of life". (5) "traditional lessons, overloaded with facts should be abandoned in favour of lessons which offers a way of influencing the pupils' value orientation and thereby promoting reciprocal perception" (1993 p4)

children, within the context of the formal education system, to the diversity and complexity of the 'other', both at home and in distant places.

It could be that what we learn about prejudice, particularly how it appears in part to be grounded in positive (and rational) feelings for 'home' could be important in helping teachers help children to 'open their eyes' or as R S Peters (1965) would put it to "travel with a different view" (cited in Slater 1991 p 97). The significant point here, which has the potential profoundly to affect the manner in which we introduce pupils to difference, is that it is not so much about their concepts of the 'other' that children need challenging, but of themselves. Children, perhaps even more than adults, need to be able to develop and express *attachment* and allegiance but not at the expense of ignoring their critical faculties. When Kirby and Laituri (1991) warn: "If Bloom is correct to assert that there is a certain 'closing' of the mind it hardly stems from the (universities), but starts much earlier, in the classroom" (*ibid* p 226), they may be signalling a deep rooted problem for geographical education, therefore. In much the same way as Walsh reduces (though he would not express it in this way) history to "a love of the human past", could we think of geography as 'an understanding of at-homeness'?; the problem is that we want pupils to do this with a critical eye on both the 'home' and the 'other', (the near and the far). Warner, examining what she sees are the myths of (uncritical) national identity, expresses the nature of the problem forceably when she writes,

*This romantic figment of the folk hearth returns us once more to Mum, she who embodies birthplace as well as larger allegories of native land and by extension of nation. But she can only fulfil this role at the price of shedding... history, of claiming timelessness and unchangingness. Home in myth promises an end to questioning, to wandering, to trouble... (Warner 1994 p18)*

I am not suggesting from this quote that geography's role should be to cause "trouble" for young minds other than in the very benign sense of what used to be called "crap detection" (Postman and Weingartner 1971). Preference for 'home' is entirely understandable and rational; what is not is an allegiance to a romanticised versions of home such that no other rational possibility exists.

### 3.5 Geography and Orientalism

It is possible to perceive in this analysis a strong connecting thread with the concept of *Orientalism* as delineated by Edward Said (Said 1978). Amongst other things, this book holds strong messages for geography educators concerned with how the world is categorised and packaged for the consumption of the next generation. In the book, Said

shows how Orientalism, a set of powerful assumptions, myths and metaphors concerning the 'East', was purposely propagated systematically and remorselessly by the 'West' for the purpose of ensuring intellectual, cultural and political hegemony (Gramsci 1971). Orientalism is, in a sense, a modernist intellectual construct *par excellence*. Late modern and post modern perspectives on knowledge have served well to break up the monolithic orientalist construction: put simply, the 'East' is more complex, more varied, more difficult to understand than the school geography text books had suggested. Said shows this brilliantly but what he also argues is that the whole Orientalist construction was not only to do with establishing authority over the Orient, but equally to do with the 'West's' self image:

*European culture gained strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self. (Said, op cit p 3).*

Thus, if people make their own history, as Vico observed they did<sup>30</sup>, then Orientalism is the statement that they make their own geography too. The truth of this is and its implications are not widely accepted in geography classrooms; but introducing pupils to the Orient is not simply a matter of revealing the 'facts'. As Said explains:

*one ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism<sup>31</sup> is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away...what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability (ibid p6)*

The challenge for geography education which emerges from this position is important to clarify. We are beginning to suggest that the way we introduce children to the 'other', needs to respond to three realisations. First, is the need to understand peoples' likely prejudice for 'home'. Secondly, that notions of home can be romanticised and mythologised into potentially harmful ideological distortions and thirdly, these myths of home may themselves depend in part on equally distorted myths of the 'other'. Geography education, therefore, has a requirement to develop ways of exploring and interrogating geographical information which can effectively counter Orientalism. That is to say, to counter the effects of the system which

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<sup>30</sup>Vico's dictum is extended by Hobsbaum: *Historians are to nationalism what poppy growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: we supply the essential raw material for the market...Nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation is the past* (Hobsbaum 1992 p23)

<sup>31</sup> Try substituting 'racism' for Orientalism and 'racist' for Orientalist for even greater effect.

*is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences ...), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do). Indeed my real argument is that Orientalism is - and does not simply represent - a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world. (ibid p 12)*

Elsewhere, Said has addressed this issue slightly differently but in a way that is consistent with the problem which I argue exists for geography educators:

*The fundamental problem is therefore how to reconcile one's identity and the actualities of one's own culture, society and history to the reality of other identities, cultures, peoples. This can never be done simply by asserting one's own preferences for what is already one's own... (apart from any other consideration) so many societies are composed of different races and backgrounds as to beggar any reductive formulas. (Said 1993 p12)*

The "reconciliation" that Said seeks is not, of course, *exclusively* a responsibility of geography educators. In addressing history teachers, for example, Fry *et al* (1991) write that

*... it is impossible and arguably undesirable to be 'free of one's culture'. What is both possible and desirable is to increase examination and understanding of culture-bound attitudes and values. They need to be handled in an open, rather than an implicit and unexamined manner (Fry et al 1991 p15).*

But it can be argued that a geography education which did not attempt to be responsive to the subtleties of "reconciliation" in trying to articulate its goals, as well as strategies, was particularly culpable. One of its principle roles, as I have sought to establish, is to introduce a critical understanding of and attachment to 'home' and to reconcile this with an empathetic understanding of the 'other' - that is to develop knowledge and understanding of the 'self and the other'. This, I maintain would encourage greater understanding of prejudice and would discourage a stereotypical understanding through the presentation of an unchallenging 'window on the world'. As Norman Graves said

of a previous geography, the latter would become no more than "a burden on the memory rather than a light on the mind" (Graves 1975 , cited in Butt 1992 p161).

### 3.6 Prospects for Understanding Prejudice through Geography

It is possible to see similar dangers to those Graves identified in the previous paragraph in the present geography national curriculum 'canon'. If we briefly examine the curriculum architecture of geography in schools, what it looks like in terms of curriculum documents and popular learning materials, we will find a number of reasons to be cautious about the subject's capacity to effect "reconciliation". We have seen, in Chapter 2, that both the national curriculum and the most popular text books of the early 1990s have been heavily influenced by certain assumptions about the subject and the needs of the education system. Other concerns, including those to do with the broader educational goals raised by Said, have consequently been sidelined. Gundara predicted this: "It is likely that the discussions about the national curriculum will be articulated in terms of a nationalistic curriculum and the broad national and societal interests and concerns about education are likely to be ignored" (Gundara 1991, p1). He concludes his analysis by urging:

*a critical reading of European thought ...so as to reappraise the way in which knowledge is currently constructed...which ought to assist in a reappraisal of what educators consider legitimate and relevant knowledge (ibid p19).*

Gundara's emphasising educators (not governments nor bureaucrats) is significant. It is to be expected that the centralised curriculum and text books prepared for the mass market may express knowledge of a certain kind as 'given'.

This kind of criticism, insofar as it is directed specifically to geography, has been strongly endorsed by geographers working in development education (eg Robinson 1992) as well as mainstream geography educators (eg Roberts 1990). On the other hand this form of criticism can on occasion be misjudged, forgetting the power and responsibility that rests with individual teachers to effect change. A curriculum document always can be interpreted according to implicit or explicit educational goals. So for example when Crozier and Menter (1988) asserted that "It is inconceivable in the current political climate ... that the development of British racism will be part of the history curriculum or that South African apartheid will be in the geography syllabus" (*ibid* p32), they were premature and overstating the issue: apartheid was prominent in a mainstream published text expressly written for the national curriculum (Lambert 1992).

It is, therefore, not necessary to accept the 'givenness' of 'certified facts' as the entirety of geography education (see Lidstone's [1992] spirited chapter "In Defence of Textbooks"). To illustrate this I can make a play on Gundara's "critical reading", not in this instance of European thought, but of Europe as a geographical entity. In the *textbook*, Europe is most often portrayed as given; experts, presumably, have defined its boundaries and in so doing have created a sense of "us" and "them", who is in Europe and who is outside. In the *classroom*, the textbook definition of Europe can become more problematised - more contingent and available for 'critical reading'. For British pupils this *construction* of the concept Europe can perhaps be given an extra twist in that "we" live on an island with physically identifiable boundaries; even so, they are by no means fixed in political, economic, social or environmental terms. Examining the meaning of boundaries defined in these ways, and what strengthens or weakens the impact of boundaries in people's lives<sup>32</sup>, provides a way in to what Said called "reconciliation". It is feasible as an approach but does not come naturally to teachers or learners:

*For the most part, we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, bustling confusion of the outer world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture" (Lippman 1922, cited in Wilkins 1991 and Lidstone 1994, p18)*

There is therefore resistance to approaches which turn received or given information about the world into contingent material which can be challenged. Lidstone refers to considerable research evidence which identifies "instruction resistant" misconceptions in economics; in environmental education "researchers have been at pains to discover links between environmental knowledge, environmental attitudes and 'applied' behaviour and their results are not reassuring." (Lidstone 1994 p5). The unsurprising conclusion that he reaches is that "the teaching of 'correct facts' is unlikely to dislodge misconceptions" (*ibid*). Although, as we argued earlier, misconceptions are not necessarily the same as prejudices, we nevertheless can see that we have reached, once again, a familiar point: in essence this is the challenge that faces geography educators to engage with imaginations and subjectivities where information is treated as if it were contingent (as it is) and feelings were accepted as if they mattered (they do).

David Hicks has researched this educational arena with a special focus on "futures education". Like Huckle (1991) and Fien (1993), Hicks identifies 'sustainability' as a

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<sup>32</sup>Note that the title to the opening Unit of *Jigsaw Pieces*, a Key Stage 3 geography text, is (not coincidentally) similar to this: *Boundaries in Our Lives*. The book, one of a series of three, takes boundaries as a key concept in geography education (Lambert 1992 p5)



concept of immense contemporary educational importance but one which receives little serious attention (Hicks and Holden 1995). They cite a major obstacle to progress:

*One of the most common responses to contemporary environmental threats is a denial of their severity and complexity. Such a psychology of denial is akin to that used to repress and deny uncomfortable aspects of our daily lives.....To work creatively with (such) emotions requires the development of both cognitive and affective skills. (ibid )*

This articulates a concern which has emerged implicitly, in different ways, in parts of this current analysis; prejudice as self denial - not necessarily a new 'dimension' to add to our list (see Chapter 8, section 8.2) but a significant element or 'field' on the *Feelings* dimension which itself was derived from a 'fear and pleasure' dialectic. Hicks and Holden elaborate on the nature of the educational obstacles, reflecting that young people have a poor ability to *think* about the future and yet have a high concern about future related issues (especially those to do with the environment but also peace, economy and social justice):

*In particular, attention needs to be paid to the development of envisioning skills so that more positive images of the future can be developed ...Sustainable futures have to become alive in the imagination first (Hicks and Holden op cit).*

I will continue to argue that pupils need information as well as the thinking skills, together with time and space with which to develop the creative use of their imaginations: but in the light of the foregoing analysis we can see the basic tension emerging - what information do children need and what thinking skills? And what sort of balance or relationship between the two should teachers attempt to strike?

### 3.7 Geographical Information

To round off this chapter I shall now focus on a growing sub-field of research in geographical education concerning what I have called geographical information. It is possible to divide this work crudely into two broad categories, both of which are of some relevance to the present analysis. First, there is a large body of work which is concerned with content analysis of various types including investigations of bias (Hicks 1981; Wright 1979; 1985; 1986; Bar Gal 1994)), ideology (Henley 1989), paradigms (Acheson 1994) and 'discourse' (Bennett 1994). Secondly, we can refer to significant research into the way textbooks are used by teachers and pupils (Lidstone 1985).

In referring to these fields of research, we should first acknowledge that textbooks are predominant in geography classrooms (see Lidstone 1985; 1989; 1992) both for teachers and pupils, forming the key resource for learning. Few textbook authors these days see the function of their book solely in terms of providing information: we have incontrovertibly moved away from the famous position adopted by the Rev. J Goldsmith who explained in his *Grammar of General Geography* (1823) that

*The proper mode of using this little book to advantage, will, it is apprehended, be to direct the pupils to commit the whole of the facts to memory, at the rate of one, two, or three per day, according to his age and capacity* (cited in Lidstone 1992 p179).

And, although Graves has expressed some concern over the impact of a heavily content bound national curriculum on textbook writers (Graves 1991 p10), most envisage the task of having to adopt a balance between the 'content' of geography and what are considered to be desirable approaches for learning it.

However as Lidstone notes, "No textbook can be, or should ever attempt to be, teacher proof" (Lidstone *op cit* 193), a fact of life that has become double edged. On the one hand, not being teacher proof can result in the text being used in ways unintended by the author (and perhaps inappropriately) and, on the other hand, teachers may remain inflexible in terms of the way in which they present information and have pupils engage with it. As Lidstone concludes,

*The central issue for these teachers was not the provision of appropriate teaching materials in the form of textbooks, but their personal decisions on the fundamental aims of geographical education. While teachers were prepared to learn new techniques of teaching and adopt new information from a good textbook, neither their fundamental aims nor their conceptualisations of the nature of geography appeared to be strongly influenced.* (ibid 192)

This finding should not surprise us. But it serves to remind us of points noted several times now in this analysis, namely that the identification of goals is of crucial importance to teachers and that once formed, implicitly or explicitly, they are often difficult to shift. Lidstone suggests that in-service education for teachers could help in encouraging teachers to become "suitably critical" (ibid p193) of textbooks, and to re-appraise their goals from time to time, but fails to say how this may be achieved. It seems to me that our discussions of the concept of prejudice, and its relation to geography education, may be able to help in this matter - not in any way helping define what information a geography textbook should contain nor how that information ought to be expressed, but

in guiding, by way of a broadly applicable model, the way in which, in geography, our conclusions, decisions or judgements should be viewed (or, put more formally, evaluated). This model, it will have been noted, is one that will apply equally to teachers (evaluating their courses, materials etc) and to pupils (evaluating their own knowledge and opinions); the main difference will be that pupils will be taught how to use the model in the form of a "thinking skill". A simple model along such lines is put forward in Chapter 11.

Most textbook research has focussed in one way or another on content. I am not here concerned with 'readability' and similar technical pedagogical matters, but more in the way that textbooks, often perceived as impartial purveyors of information (see Hicks 1981 p 8-10) can seed biased images and information, and in Hick's words, "offer a vehicle for prejudice" (*ibid* p7). Wright (1995) notes that the Georg Eckert Textbook Research Institute, with its own international journal for textbook research, in Brunswick, Germany was established as a result of

*a feeling that incorrect textbook messages could have led to hatred of other peoples and nations, and ultimately to two devastating wars. Hence there was concern for factual accuracy. (ibid p4).*

Work in geography, in Britain, has tended to show that although factual accuracy is of great importance, what is perhaps of even greater significance is first, increasing awareness amongst users of the potential for any mediated description of people and places to contain bias and secondly, to nurture the intellectual tools required to deal with it. Progress has been made on both counts<sup>33</sup>, though it is with regard to the latter that a general model to guide thinking in geography may have great utility: as we shall see in Chapter 11, the purpose of such a model is to stimulate an attitude towards information amongst teachers and pupils that will stimulate the act of what Jones (1987) called "conversation" or what Walsh (1994) called "deliberation". In this way geography may improve the way in which it introduces the "other" and effect what Said referred to as "reconciliation".

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<sup>33</sup> Wright (1990;1995) urges that pupils should be used more in textbook evaluation. Whilst my assertion that teachers are more aware his findings are to date perhaps salutary; "Not a single pupil, of any age, expressed any praise or criticism of the values, attitudes and bias of any of the textbooks, whether implicit or explicit" (1990). The point here is that children need teaching how to evaluate. Fry (1987) developed an interesting strategy in the context of environmental pollution and the question of how to cope with conflicting, complex data arriving from different sources on the European acid deposition issue: children were required, over a period of time to *detect* bias, *correct* bias and *create* bias.

### 3.8 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter provides an overview of a substantial research commitment in geography education to a better understanding and development of the subject's role in helping children 'make sense of the world'. Progress can be charted on both these counts. However, the purpose of this chapter has not been to provide an inclusive documentary of progress, but rather to evaluate the broad nature of this research with a particular emphasis on how I argue that the current thesis can contribute potentially to further progress.

In the totality of work in development education and education for international understanding, perception and images research and the significant literature on textbooks, I maintain that a *direct* analysis of how prejudice relates to geography education has largely been ignored. As we shall see in Chapters 10 and 11, it is possible to think of prejudice not so much in terms of a barrier to learning about the world, but as a threshold for learning. It is this perspective which our discussion on Orientalism allows, for if we can encourage, through the study of geography, an understanding of how the 'world order' becomes fixed through, for example the propagation of certain unchallenged assumptions, myths and other information, we may also encourage, through an understanding of our prejudices, individuals to 'travel with a different view'. As we concluded Chapter 2, so I restate here: the process required almost certainly involves a form of metadiscourse both amongst teachers and between teachers and pupils.

The next chapter takes us forward to a methodological discussion, which, amongst other things, will enable a link to be made between the conceptual analysis of the last two chapters and the empirical work which forms the main part of this thesis. I argue for a pluralistic research methodology which allows for the adoption of the conceptual categories, which I refer to as 'dimensions' of prejudice, as the basis of an analysis of transcribed conversational data. The chapter focuses our attention on the particular epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning this research and draws attention to the quasi-autobiographical nature of the study

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter explicates the methodology which underpins this thesis. The purpose of the chapter therefore is "to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of (the) scientific enquiry but the process itself" (Cohen and Manion 1985 p43). The introduction sets out some initial thoughts on the nature of methodology and justifies my adoption of a form of autobiographical approach. The second section pursues further a number of basic questions concerning ontological and epistemological assumptions that have shaped various methodological choices. The final section examines such choices in more detail, including some discussion on particular methods.

The chapter is placed here to link the conceptual analysis of the previous chapters and the empirically based work which is to follow. I have chosen to position the two components of the thesis in this way, the conceptual preceding the empirical, for reasons of clarity. However, it would be misleading to suggest that it was in this way that the research itself unfolded, as if in neat, logical and predictable steps. It would be suspiciously out of keeping with the realities of qualitative research if the research were to be portrayed in such a manner. As Bryman and Burgess write:

*Many of the volumes on qualitative research emphasised the research process and demonstrated that qualitative research cannot be reduced to particular techniques nor to set stages, but rather that a dynamic process is involved which links together problems, theories and methods. (Bryman and Burgess 1994 p2)*

In stating this they echo Bechhofer when he wrote:

*The research process, then, is not a clear cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern, but a messy interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, deduction and induction occurring at the same time. (Bechhofer 1974 p73)*

The word "messy" is not used here perjoratively. It gives a realistic evocation of research for which clear-cut sets of procedures can rarely be identified and used in a straightforward way. Researchers move backwards and forwards between aspects of the

research process, keeping an open mind towards progress and the impact of particular events and activities on the direction the research takes. There is no part of the research not open to review in this way, including even the research question itself which may be revised in the light of reflection, from the gaining of additional perspective from either the conceptual or empirical world. I have found this to be so in my own case

Bryman and Burgess (1994) interpret this acceptance of 'messiness' as part of the trend in British sociology (though I suspect to a lesser extent in education) away from the pre-eminence of quantitative methodology to qualitative methodology (*ibid* p1). This has replaced the traditional concern for stages of investigation with the idea that the research itself is a social process which requires close scrutiny. This in turn has meant that detailed consideration of *method* has given way to broader more rounded discussion of *methodology*.

The characteristics outlined above are in accordance with the nature of work contained in this thesis, as it is essentially a qualitative research inquiry which has taken shape over a considerable period of time. There has been movement backwards and forwards, between the conceptual and the empirical, and between the 'stages' of the project. Such toing and froing continued up to the writing-up stage, which, as Woods (1985; 1986 pp170-188) eloquently reminds us, is a creative part of the research process not to be confused with something resembling more a final 'chore'.

Methodology is concerned with strategy and choices. Lidstone, citing Walker (1985), identifies methodology as the discussion of specific methods (such as observation, interview or questionnaire) "...but only in order to justify their use for defined purposes in specified circumstances and situations" (Lidstone 1988 p 275). He implies that there is a tendency in educational research to place a too heavy emphasis on the individual methods at the expense of broader methodological perspective and continues

*... part of the skill of the researcher must lie in relating the methods he or she espouses to the selected area of investigation. This is not a simple one-way relationship but a progressive process of refinement (ibid p275).*

This seems close to the Bryman and Burgess view, reiterating, for example, the idea of research as process. It is perhaps worthwhile simply noting at this stage that the "process of refinement" mentioned by Lidstone, alternatively referred to as to-ing and fro-ing above, allowed me to discard certain data acquired during my empirical investigations at Greenfields School - not because it was insubstantial or was in some other way 'wrong', but because it was no longer fit for the purpose of my study, which

had shifted focus quite decisively (though not entirely) from pupils to teachers (see *Reflections on Research in Progress*, Chapter 6).

It is therefore impossible to go along with Barrow (1986) who concludes that once researchers have adequate conceptualisations of their subject matter, then good decisions about methodology will necessarily follow. The process was, as we have noted, messier than this; things do not always simply fall into place. It seemed to me, therefore, that in order to provide a reasonably accurate account of the methodology underpinning my research, a first person or quasi-autobiographical approach was necessary. This would, at the very least, enable me to be explicit about - to 'come clean' about - certain links I had made between theory and research, acknowledge influences where necessary and avoid sustaining the myth that there are only a very few, well mapped and predictable routes that can be taken up in educational research.<sup>34</sup>

As Bryman and Burgess make plain, autobiography has become popular in recent years, researchers writing about "the ways in which they actually conducted their research, in contrast to the ways they might be supposed to conduct it" (Bryman and Burgess 1994 p8). In much the same way as Stenhouse (1984) categorised research as "systematic enquiry made public", it is true that all autobiography is itself *post hoc*, which gives the writer opportunities to reflect on events and, where appropriate, tidy up some of the mess before bringing it to a wider audience. Nevertheless, an autobiographical account should be flexible and responsive enough to real or actual events and help avoid the concoction of a 'rigorous' sounding fiction. In most qualitative research it is the researcher in person, in contrast to the inanimate 'instruments' or 'techniques' he or she may have selected in a more quantitative study, who *embodies* the whole research. It is, then, not surprising that increasing numbers of researchers in the social sciences have chosen the autobiographical approach. In most qualitative research it is not the choice of techniques and how competently they were handled that forms the basis for judging its outcomes, but the role and conduct of the researcher. The researcher does not appeal to the audience simply to trust the techniques chosen for the veracity of the findings, but to trust (her)himself. The first person allows the audience to be addressed directly.

Researchers in geography education have developed expertise in methods which have close links to the autobiographical approach being advocated here. Methods such as

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<sup>34</sup>I also support Shulman's (1980) four distinguishing characteristics of that "family of methods which share the characteristics of disciplined enquiry or research; research is enquiry such that

\* arguments and evidence can be examined;

\* it is not dependent solely on eloquence or surface plausibility;

\* it avoids sources of error where possible and discusses margins of error in the conclusions;

\* it can be speculative, free wheeling and inventive." (cited in Lidstone 1988 p275)

diary keeping can be seen to have prepared the ground for, or at least been a step on the way towards, creating the consciously self-conscious approach to knowledge and understanding such as that described by Ghaye (1995). Drawing from his personal research history, Ghaye develops Whitehead's (1992) notion of "living educational theories" through the direct use of the "teacher's voice". Slater (1988; 1989a), and Roberts (1989) have also used diaries in different ways in order to create knowledge through reflection; for example, Slater has written, in relation to her 1988 enquiry into student teacher teaching styles:

*Perhaps the paper I wrote around the students as I had observed them and concepts like personality, strategy, class organisation and activities and style became like a word game. I do know that what I wrote was based on experience. I was trying to unravel how unique individuals worked in classrooms and how they played their roles differently using different personalities, different strategies, different activities in different mixes. (Slater 1995)*

Her own diary became the recorded data, but was also in itself a tangible product of mental enquiry; in a sense the *method* of data collection. In the field of intercultural education, Gaine (1987) has used diaries in a similar way, but explicitly attempting to get into dialogue with pupils using the diary as the conduit. As this chapter goes on to show, it has been possible to draw from this research experience. Though my main method is interviews rather than diaries, my research approach is believed to be a continuation of an established trend within educational research.

Autobiography, then, is an approach to self conscious or reflective data collecting and handling (and to writing up); as such it forms part of a methodology but is not the methodology in itself. Having discussed the approach adopted for this thesis, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing the methodology in more detail, including reference to the choice of particular methods. As a preliminary to this, the next section raises a number of fundamental issues of a general nature about approaching research, and how in this thesis they have been addressed.

#### 4.2 Asking Fundamental Questions

To begin this section I shall briefly describe the research as a whole - both as a way in to identifying fundamental methodological questions and as a context for their consideration.



The contents page of this thesis provides a sense of the sequence in which I have chosen to report this research. Following my two chapters of discussion concerning the concept of prejudice (which moves from a broad consideration of the concept ever more centrally under the focus of geography education), I embark on the empirical enquiry in Chapter 5. I begin this with a "thick" (Geertz 1973) description of Greenfields School utilising documents, interviews, commissioned writing from the staff and the unusual opportunity of my own status in relation to the school of "insider-outsider". Such a detailed construction of a particular context gives this research the appearance of a case study, though as I discuss below, this is not necessarily how it should be interpreted.

This is then followed by the presentation and analysis of three main data sets: first, listening to the pupils talking (Chapter 6), secondly the teachers in discussion with me (Chapters 7 and 8) and finally a number of 'expert' colleagues, again in conversation with me. The pupil data analysis tries to preserve some of the conversational quality of the data and is essentially (though not solely) descriptive; occasionally the manner in which a remark is embedded in the conversation seems interesting, if not significant, and some extracts have been selected to preserve this quality. In some contrast, the data arising from teacher interviews is presented after a process of *conceptualisation* (Bryman and Burgess 1994 p219) which resulted in a number of both descriptive and conceptual categories (for example, see Mason 1994 p91-93) being used, some of which were "grounded" (Glaser and Strauss 1967) in the data, some of which were not, the latter being the speculative product of the earlier conceptual analysis. The conversational context of particular quotations is lost a little in the write up, but it is emphasised that the data were never chunked or disaggregated, a reference copy always being held together, each conversation with its original integrity and available for checking (a facility frequently used).

My empirical work is then followed by two concluding chapters (Chapters 10 and 11). Chapter 10 attempts to clarify and summarise the increasingly familiar map of the concept prejudice. Chapter 11 discusses the implications of having such a map for teachers of geography, together with possible directions of future, more developmental research.

The preceding outline sketch of what could be thought of as the surface features of this research fails to provide anything more than the occasional hint of my methodology, and even less the precise methods. I shall discuss the choices of strategy, and specific methods, in the next section of this chapter. For the moment however, brief

consideration of the surface features given in the above paragraphs leads inevitably to a number of preliminary but fundamental considerations which we need to address first:<sup>35</sup>

- i. what ontological and epistemological assumptions have influenced or determined the research?
- ii. what conceptual frameworks have helped guide the development of this research?
- iii. how do my conceptual frameworks link to the assembly and subsequent analysis of data?
- iv. in the context of the previous three questions, what is my position with regard to those touchstones of any research or evaluation exercise: validity, reliability and 'fitness for purpose'?

Each of these is addressed in turn.

**i. *Ontological considerations*** are those which concern our assumptions about the nature of reality. Put simply, is the object of research, in this case the concept of prejudice which is a part of social reality, something that exists objectively (that is, external to the individual), or is it a product of individual cognition, a creation of the mind? My position in relation to this debate is substantially to the 'nominalist', as opposed to the 'realist', side of the spectrum: which is to say that I tend to the view "that objects of thought are merely words and that there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word" (Cohen and Manion 1985 p6). In other words, one fundamental philosophical assumption underlying this research, that concepts (the building blocks of learning) are perspectival and arise from negotiated understanding (Gadamer 1975), has led me to researching my question in such a way that values the results of individual deliberation. And following Ghaye (1995), I can anticipate the implications of this, namely the expectation of finding in individuals "living contradictions" (Whitehead 1992, cited in Ghaye *op cit*) when, for example, a person expresses certain value positions which are not lived out in practice.

Insofar as the nature and form of knowledge is concerned, the epistemological consideration of how knowledge is acquired and communicated, the position I adopt closely follows my ontological viewpoint. I am not persuaded that adopting the role of a

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<sup>35</sup>Considerations such as those which are listed here often seem to remain implied, particularly in published research which has space limitations as well as other constraints such as the tolerance or presumed capacity of the readership. A good example would be Grant and Sleeter's (1986) otherwise excellent *After the School Bell Rings* which does go as far as to offer an extended summary of "methodology", but in fact merely provides details of methods: how much, when, who, what; but not why. It seems to have been simply taken as read that the approach they adopted was appropriate and justified.

neutral observer will *per se* lead me closer to the understanding of prejudice that I set out to find; indeed use of the word "find" is inappropriate as from the beginning I have in fact been seeking to *create* a conceptual map of prejudice rather than 'discover' it as if it existed independently of me or the inhabitants of Greenfields School. The word prejudice is used in different ways and it carries a number of connotations by those who use it; my aim was to involve myself with a broad enough range of uses for me to construct a map which people generally would recognise. It is possible that such a map may assist us in, first, understanding more clearly the dimensions of what it is and secondly, understanding ways of responding to it when we encounter it. This would not be an easy field for a researcher who aligned to the methods (and assumptions) of the natural scientist for I am explicating the contrary assumption that such an understanding cannot be achieved independently of the knower. Knowledge, I am assuming, is personal and subjective and as a researcher I am unavoidably involved in that subjectivity. But, to the researcher also falls the duty to 'make sense' of such knowledge, and to resist any temptation simply to be driven by one's *own* subjectivity. Though this may imply 'getting outside' or 'standing back' from the data, the task of analysis is necessarily more complex - "messier" (Bryman and Burgess *op cit* p1) - than this.

Daniel Bertaux begins a chapter in his book *Biography and Society* with the 'confession' that "Once I was a positivist. I thought... Let us go to the facts!" (Bertaux 1981 p29). Like him, and I suspect most of my generation of geographers brought up in the crucible of the so-called "quantitative revolution", I have had to come to terms with an ontological and epistemological break with the past and have embraced Bertaux's view that much of social science (and we could include educational research in this) "has been overloaded and sterilized by the burden of proof" (*ibid*). Rather than the "facts", he advises that we go for intensive (rather than extensive) knowledge, knowledge which does not necessarily lend itself to easy 'collection' using trusted and (in themselves) rigorous techniques. The data on which such knowledge is constructed are usually characterised as 'soft', subjective (even transcendental) and "based on experience of a unique and essentially personal nature" (Cohen and Manion 1985 p8). Such data are often difficult to group or 'reduce' and, by definition, impossible to replicate. Findings cannot therefore be generalised in the traditional way, still seen as a disadvantage by some, but it is in realising this that frees us from "the burden of proof". It is emphasised that this "freedom" is not an abrogation of responsibility; a liberated research approach does not free us from the need to systematically collect, examine and present evidence.

As has been demonstrated repeatedly qualitative research has its own distinctive concerns about procedures,<sup>36</sup> and freeing oneself of the burden of proof is not a "soft option" (Pope and Denicolo 1986); though not generalisable, much research of this kind produces findings which clearly are *applicable* outside of its unique context. The responsibility falls to the researcher to ensure that the methodology is visible enough for the reader to make transferrable judgements and that the findings are in such a form that that they can be applied flexibly to new settings.

ii. *The conceptual frameworks* employed to guide the development of this research have been influenced directly by the ontological and epistemological assumptions outlined above. Referring to concepts here does not mean the object of study, prejudice; rather, I refer to the underlying thinking which has influenced the research trajectory, or what Baldamus (1972) highlighted as the important informal and formal theorising which has a bearing on the theme of analysis. Bryman and Burgess (1994) liken this to the search apparent in early autobiographical work "for integrating principles, theoretical amalgams and conceptual frameworks" (p 8). In relation to the present research I can identify three such underlying concepts to the work, namely conversations, philosophising and dimensions.

The first of these is "*conversation*". This has its origins for me in Jones' (1986) idea of an "education for conversation" as being the means to enable young people to understand their own prejudices and those of others. Being intuitively attracted by this idea, I also imagined additional potential in conversation as a data collection method. As I go on to explain in subsequent chapters, such conversational interviews (or research conversations as they also became known) were deliberately contrived to enable the "discussant" to contribute in ways that I might otherwise not have experienced or anticipated. Research conversations were conducted with pupils (Chapter 6) teachers (Chapters 7 and 8) and also with colleagues and students at the Institute of Education (Chapter 9). The sequence of chapters reflects the chronological order in which the conversations took place (although in actuality they overlapped somewhat). The sequence also portrays the evolution of this research: for example, there was a clear shift in focus away from children talking, and towards teachers "philosophising", as reported in Chapter 6 (section 6.4 Reflections on Research in Progress), and thus teachers became the more prominent discussants. The Institute conversations, described in Chapter 9 as a form of "experiment", were conducted for a variety of reasons: to refine a technique of data collection, to provide data for trialling appropriate methods of analysis, but mainly to provide perspectives from experts drawn from a range of specialist fields

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<sup>36</sup>There are many classic examples of research that illustrate this such as Robert Burgess' (1983) *Experiencing Comprehensive Education: A Study of Bishop McGregor School*. On a more general level, Helen Simons (1987) provides a thorough account of how rigour is built into democratic evaluation procedures.

in education. These individuals were not practising school teachers and had no knowledge of Greenfields School; it was to be hoped that their deliberations on the concept of prejudice would strengthen my analysis and subsequent creation of a conceptual map.

Conversation, then, became pervasive; starting out as a pedagogical ideal, it was then transposed to become a data collection method. And in the meanwhile, conversation remained, in one sense, a research goal in that I could see from the earliest stage that to create a conceptual map of prejudice could find its main utility or purpose simply in *enabling* teachers and pupils to converse more effectively about prejudice.

It is worth noting also that the conversational idea partly drew me into Walsh's (1994) work in which he discusses the notion of "education in deliberation", something which sounded very similar to an education for conversation. But it was this work which helped identify more clearly a second underlying concept for my research. This I refer to as teachers "*philosophising*", and there are clear links between this and my epistemological 'stance'. My belief was, and remains, that unavoidably teachers theorise about their work. It is possible that there is a range of motives for why they might do so, from finding "coping strategies" (Woods 1978) to striving to improve. Teachers have theories which often have never been articulated at any length and which only rarely are systematically recorded and assembled for scrutiny. Like Pope and Denicolo (1986), I was interested in these "intuitive theories" (*ibid* p 153) of both pupils and teachers and anticipated having to utilise methods which counter some predictable difficulties. For instance it would have been naive to expect teachers to be ready and able to articulate difficult (and slightly sensitive) ideas without some kind of preparation or practical response from the researcher. Pope and Denicolo support this view, citing a teacher who avoided answering questions directly on the nature of science:

*In later interviews, when this was queried, he spoke of 'feeling rather at a disadvantage in that rather philosophical area' since he saw himself as 'not a great scientific brain, just a plodder who is quite good at putting the basic stuff over' (ibid p155)*

My response, as is discussed later in Chapter 7, was to be openly encouraging of speculation with frank and open dialogue; I explicitly wanted teachers to philosophise, experimentally if necessary, and out loud. As a former "insider" of Greenfields School, who knew most of the staff and many of the pupils well, I was able to gain the trust of individuals sufficiently for them to feel comfortable with this. The Institute conversations were similarly opportunistic of my position as colleague.

The third component of my underlying conceptual framework is also philosophical in nature. This is captured by my insistence that the concept of prejudice, the object of my research, could best be described by what I have called 'dimensions', leading to the creation of a 'map'. Identifying dimensions effectively 'opens up' the concept in a similar way to Walsh's (1994) subjecting of education to a novel linguistic analysis, resulting in his articulation of a 'geometry' (*ibid* p 9) of education. He writes,

*I had not thought to find much new here, but I was wrong. Previous analysis, I was to realise, had been diverted into shallow waters by methodological prejudices, and I found a more open approach yielding a good dividend, exposing, indeed, what I came to think of as a "geometry" of the concept of education. (ibid p vii)*

The decision to follow a similarly open path was partly in response to my rejection of more reductive methodological influences which exist even within a qualitative research paradigm. For example, a phenomenological search for the "essence" of the concept may have momentarily looked attractive, as could the emerging (in the late 1980's) phenomenographic method. I shall consider briefly the latter together with the reasons such a method was finally rejected, despite its purpose to identify a limited number of qualitatively different conceptions of a phenomenon, which on the face of it could have served this research well.

The initial attraction of phenomenography in research such as this which sought, as it were, to get inside people's heads was, to use Marton's words, that "Phenomenographers do not make statements about the world as such, but about people's conceptions of the world" (Marton 1988 p88). The theory claims that people conceptualise phenomena in a limited number of qualitatively different ways. Though some phenomenographers seem to hold that context, in the form of "history, culture and particularity" (Guarelli 1988 p23-24), plays a part in determining concept, and others that learning can be defined in terms of the change in a person's conception of a part of reality, the theory seems to suggest universality of these conceptualisations. The method seeks to identify a concept's so-called 'outcome space' which itself is based upon depersonalised 'categories of description' identified from mainly interview data. The interviews themselves are supposed to follow a definite pattern, for example seeking answers only to 'what' type questions - interviewers can probe for clarification, but interviews are not to become discussions or include any interpretation. But it is in the analysis that the method finally appeared inappropriate to the trajectory occupied by the present research. Ghaye states that

*...each category (of description) needs to be 'tested' for exclusivity, robustness and stability. They need to be adjusted in an iterative cycle of finding examples, categorising and adjusting. This can be tedious, time consuming and labour intensive (Ghaye 1994 p3)*

I would argue that all qualitative methods meet Ghaye's final point; there can be no short cuts in analysing data which readily become voluminous, noted for their "bulk and complexity" (Bryman and Burgess 1994 p 217). But, particularly in view of other components in my conceptual framework (namely, the significance of conversation and "philosophising"), I find the implications of Ghaye's remarks too reductionist, a point which finds support from elsewhere. Watts (1982), for example, remarking on research showing the ways in which children conceptualise energy, wrote that his frameworks of description

*...are not intended as discrete and mutually exclusive classifications, but as characterising and sometimes over-lapping categories of interview responses. This is an important point. The expressions of youngsters can be classified in a number of ways. (Watts 1982 p14)*

In other words the 'frameworks' are not inevitable, and there is implied warning against a reification of the research findings which would be to fly in the face of the ontology of the frameworks. I too expected to find overlapping interview responses and, as demonstrated in Chapter 10, the conversational interviews attracted responses which did not lend themselves to exclusive categorisation. A simpler interview technique, yielding more unidimensional utterances, would not have given teachers the scope I believe they needed to explore concepts and thoughts. Phenomenography, though superficially attractive, was therefore found to be inappropriate for this study.

The idea of creating a conceptual map of prejudice, consisting of 'dimensions', implying some kind of geometry, was therefore significant in this research helping me to resist, as it were, a post-positivist tendency towards reductionism.

**iii. Description and analysis:** The above discussion relates to my methodology. The next stage is to take forward the underlying concepts I have identified and relate them explicitly to the methods used of data collection, description and analysis. Bryman and Burgess note that the record of autobiographical account in sociology is not strong in this respect (Bryman and Burgess 1994 p8-9) and invite authors to make links between theory, data collection and analysis (*ibid* p10). Of course, such questions immediately point once again to the overlaps between different aspects of qualitative work such as this - the to-ing and fro-ing. It is not easy to show convincingly a

developmental pathway from the articulation of a research question to presentation of findings. This remains the case even at the writing stage, as Woods has described:

*...the nature of the research process (is) an open ended ongoing dialogue between data... and theory, where the search for ideas militates against early foreclosure; ...the 'writing up' process is an important inducement to the production of ideas as well as to their communication. (Woods 1985 p104-105)*

However, it is possible to clarify a number of points in terms of the implications of certain theoretical positions adopted in this research for data collection and data analysis. I shall examine data collection first.

**Data collection.** The status of my 'interviewees' is important to clarify. Powney and Watts (1987 p 44) describe the difference in nuance between 'respondent' (answering specific questions) and 'informant' (giving information, probably in a less structured situation, in their own words). The designation I favour for my interviewees makes a further significant distinction: 'discussants' were expected to respond and inform as appropriate but also to object, argue, explore or speculate as well. I did not wish staff or pupils to reflect back to me a concept of prejudice as 'given'.

For this reason I found that my unusual status as 'insider-outsider' was enormously helpful. I was known, and evidently trusted, by almost the whole staff (I am less sanguine about the pupils; my personal 'capital' with the pupils was fairly exhausted by 1989, though pupils from Y11 and up still knew my face) which gave me at least two advantages in relation to the way I wanted to proceed. This, incidentally, is in contradistinction to Powney and Watts who maintain that "Most people find that strangers make better informants" (*ibid* p50): once again, it depends on what the research sets out to do. First, mutual knowledge, particularly with my recently acquired status of 'outsider', became the basis for countering what Powney and Watts call 'vulnerability' (*ibid* p44-45) - the fear of losing face, revealing one's own inconsistencies in beliefs, behaviour and perhaps ignorance. In a way, I wanted them to reveal these things. Most conversations were successful in that people talked openly; of the staff only one (Jill)<sup>37</sup> failed in the end to really engage with my agenda. Secondly, overcoming potentially tricky status issues was relatively straight forward. Powney and Watts (*ibid* p47) describe the syndrome whereby interviewees often adopt the role they think is the 'correct' one and (sometimes aided and abetted by the interviewer) the propensity they often show to give the interviewer what he or she wants. With my personal knowledge of discussants I could disabuse them directly and effectively of

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<sup>37</sup>All names used are fictitious. A complete list of fictionalised names used in this study is provided in Appendix 1



certain assumptions. I did not, for example, want non-analytic informants ('giving me the facts'); on the contrary, analytic discussants, willing to 'philosophise', was exactly what I required. I believe this would have been more difficult to obtain as a true outsider.

**Data analysis.** The data yielded by methods such as those described above presented particular problems when it came to analysis. I had already rejected the fairly rigid procedures associated with phenomenography. Nevertheless, I had undertaken the conversational interviews with the assumption that, as appeared to be common practice with ethnographic<sup>38</sup> type interviews, I would need to code the contents of transcripts in order that I could derive analytical categories which were "grounded" in the data. As I explain more fully in Chapter 7, a first reading of the transcripts indicated not only would strict coding have been very difficult to undertake (so many of the utterances were obviously multidimensional, exhibiting "multiple frameworks" (Gilbert and Pope 1982), that category allocation could have been ruinously arbitrary) it was also unnecessary. Using marker pen and copious memos, it was possible to keep the data intact. Categories were kept few in number; indeed in the case of the pupil data it was kept to effectively a single category ("talking about the 'other') and the data have been used and presented in such a way as not to renege on what Pope and Denicolo call "the original aims and ethics of the hermeneutic approach" (1986 p 161). In the case of the teacher derived data, it emerged that as well as a number of 'grounded' categories the data could be pitched against my seven conceptually derived categories or 'dimensions'; in other words, the data were analysed (partly) with pre-existing categories.

No single 'pure' method of analysis was used, therefore. It is probably misleading to claim that my analysis is based truly in the framework of "grounded theory"<sup>39</sup>, though I do claim that the data have been conceptualised (Bryman and Burgess 1994 p 219) As Bryman and Burgess show, the generation of concepts, the building blocks of theory, is not always left open simply to 'letting the data speak': "...greater recognition of the need to ensure that certain topics are addressed... mean that some concepts are 'given' at the outset of the research" (*ibid*). In the case of the present research, several of the 'dimensions' of the concept prejudice emerged at an early stage, but all of them had begun to crystallise by the time of the data analysis (though in truth *collecting* the data had implicitly influenced my understanding of the insipient conceptual map and its

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<sup>38</sup>I use this term in the broad generic sense described by Powney and Watts: *Ethnographic methods were developed to record people's responses in more natural settings without pressures to distort information deliberately to fit in with the researcher's predetermined questions or interviewee's assumptions about the inquiry.* (Powney and Watts 1987 p46)

<sup>39</sup>Grounded theory is frequently cited by researchers (myself included) though it is questionable whether it is ever employed by researchers in its entirety. Richards and Richards (1994 p 220) write that grounded theory influences qualitative research "as a general indicator of the desirability of making theory from data, rather than a guide to a method of handling data."

dimensions). In consequence, I exploited the opportunity to 'test' them against my conversations: could the emergent 'dimensions' serve as effective analytical categories? But equally importantly, I expected the data to inform and guide the configuration of the dimensions; to transform the dimensions, in other words, from a list into 'map'.

**iv. *Validity, reliability and fitness for purpose:*** What I have described in this chapter is an evolving research methodology; that is to say, one that has been responsive to opportunity and flexible in the face of changing circumstances and conceptualisations. For example, I decided to accept a relatively high risk<sup>40</sup> strategy to engage interviewees in 'philosophising' on the grounds that I knew them well. I also changed the focus of my study, the primary interest shifting from children to teachers talking about prejudice; this was partly an indirect result of my increasing 'outsider-ness', but mainly a result of my increasing interest in (and belief in the significance of) teacher 'philosophising'.

As an evolving project, there has been a tendency for the methodology to become eclectic. To an extent this resulted in a data rich project in need of serious pruning and some significant collections of data have been discarded for the purpose of the final thesis. An example is some classroom based data arising from specially designed 'conversational' lessons on 'difference and diversity': they remain interesting but in relation to my main focus, as it increasingly emerged, have limited relevance. Other examples include several pupil to pupil conversations set up and recorded by me but conducted in my absence (what Powney, 1988, refers to as "structured eavesdropping"): these were also felt to be of limited applicability in terms of how this research developed.

There is a sense in which the above paragraph could illustrate what Boring (1950) called "sheer eclectic laziness". Powney and Watts (1987) prefer "pluralism" to "eclecticism" in order to distinguish the free choice of methods "with little concern for particular principles underlying the choices" from the wide choice of methods "which are all intentionally congruent with a set of principles or philosophical assumptions" (*ibid* p179). This is a useful distinction which I wholly endorse. But there is a methodological point to note which is that whilst I agree that methods should pluralistic rather than eclectic, being congruent with the underlying conceptual framework of the research (and I believe all of mine were), there is sometimes no way of knowing in advance the particular direction, within a broad field, the research may lead; in these circumstances it

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<sup>40</sup>Text book advice on interviewing emphasises systematic and controlled approaches to help reduce bias. Powney and Watts (1987) aver that "Normally researchers do not want informants to be filtering information via categories that they, rather than the researcher, believes to be appropriate" (p50). I was aware of this kind of advice and rejected it, although I ensured interviews had no rigid time constraints, were conducted in a location chosen by the interviewee and that discussants were given a 'briefing sheet'. The latter was partly to orient people to the nature of the discussion but also in the belief that people are more disclosing when 'taking off' from what they understand to be "known" already (*ibid* p 47)

is quite likely that certain methods could be explored only to be discarded sometime later (together with the hard won material). This leads to a form of 'data wastage'<sup>41</sup> which, it seems to me, is inevitable in this kind of qualitative research.

What determines 'wastage' (what, how much, why) is according to the above paragraph the test of congruence, similar in my view to the idea of fitness for purpose. What I have tried to do so far in this chapter is spell out the ontological, epistemological and conceptual underpinnings of this thesis and, by adding detail concerning the data collection and analytical methods chosen or developed, show how I have abided by the principle of fitness for purpose. But there are two further principles or research touchstones to add to fitness for purpose or congruence. These are the linked issues of reliability and validity and I shall complete this section of the chapter by brief consideration of both

Though my methodology, as we have seen, is free of some of the restrictive assumptions bequeathed by traditional positivistic science - it is phenomenological in the broadest sense, personal and subjective - I do not hold with those who argue that because of this their methodology and stated outcomes cannot be questioned by those outside the experience of the particular research. To be sure, in the end we have to trust the researcher, but he or she can be expected to make as public as possible the logic of their method (see Rist 1980). To some, this has meant transposing traditional concerns like validity and reliability into new ones such as "authenticity" (see for example Lecompte and Goetz 1980). Others prefer to take the issues head on such as House (1980) who, in emphasising the dangers of oversimplifying these issues, reminds us that in effect it is precisely this that those working under objectivist epistemological assumptions have done; that is to say the question of validity in research is at heart an *ethical* issue which those who believe in an objectivist scientific methodology have reduced to a technical problem. Thus, *all* researchers have to publicly face questions concerning the reliability and validity of their methods and outcomes. The ultimate credibility of the research lies not in the technical 'fix' but how well the audience has been persuaded. As Simons says of research employing only objectivist approaches to claiming validity: "It is only credible to those who believe in the methodology" (Simons 1987 p26).

Relying heavily on House (1980), Simons identifies three components to validity (Simons 1987 p25-27). First, the outcomes need to be "true", which means meaningful

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<sup>41</sup>By "wastage" I mean not used in roughly the same way as we can talk about muscle wastage when a person can no longer use a limb. "Data wastage", therefore, does not imply that the data in itself is, or was, useless. Indeed, in qualitative research such as this it is difficult to imagine any data, in whatever form, being of no use: even the most informal or ephemeral information can add colour, depth or perspective to the emerging picture.

and recognisable to those involved - including the reader. Truth alone, however, is not enough. The research needs also to be credible, which is to say trustworthy. This characteristic is to be found in the work's authenticity and coherence; does it, as it were, 'ring bells' and is it convincing? Finally, the work has to be normatively correct, that is of interest and utility to multiple audiences. House and Simons are educational evaluators and this component is perhaps most readily applied to that context. However, any research, including the current research, could be said to lack an aspect of validity if it were seen to address one audience more than others. These, then, are the criteria which have guided my attempts to provide both 'internal' and 'external' validity to my project.

With regard, finally, to reliability, once again we find that technical procedures are insufficient in themselves to ensure that findings are reliable. Brenner (1981) found, for example, that in even the most tightly controlled conditions, using the most experienced interviewers, rules were breached often in the collection of data (this applies to both 'hard' and 'soft' data). He went further, writing that "to want to interview without interviewer influence is a contradiction in terms " (*ibid* p122). House (*op cit*) argues that for the investigator to resist this inevitability through the adoption of an objective of disinterested mode is in fact "morally deficient" (p255). Instead he recommends "impartiality":

*The analysts thought objectivity was sufficient... More often it means irrelevance. Objectivity sought to deal with interests by excluding them. What is needed is impartiality which deals with interests by including and balancing them . (House 1980 p224)*

It is in this way that I have sought to maintain a level of reliability, as distinct from validity, in data collection and analysis. If reliability concerns the eradication of individual researcher influence and such like, which is said to lead to bias for example, then this, along with most research of this kind, inevitably fails. But if reliability can be enhanced by open acknowledgement of interests and a balanced (impartial) approach to conflict or ambiguity, then this is what I have set out to do to do.

#### 4.3 Summary: can this research be categorised?

In the introduction to this chapter I commented that methodology was concerned with making appropriate choices of methods and justifying them in terms of their fitness for purpose. This is in accordance with Judith Bell's (1993) assertion that "no approach prescribes nor rejects any particular methods" (*ibid* p4). I have also noted that as the

purpose. This is in accordance with Judith Bell's (1993) assertion that "no approach prescribes nor rejects any particular methods" (*ibid* p4). I have also noted that as the project evolved I was able to narrow, or sharpen, my approach and concentrate analysis on data that seemed most appropriate to my question.

However, what kind of research is this? In what genre or paradigm does it fall? In one sense this question may simply be one of semantics for as Slater (1995) points out, in geography education "A very valuable hybrid research tradition is evolving as theory and practice from different paradigms interact and 'talk' to each other" (p 28). She suggests that a not unusual sequence of events is for the researcher to decide what it is she or he wishes systematically to investigate, decide how best this may be accomplished and then identify (and choose from) appropriate research paradigms. This would be true of this research and I have been at pains to be open and detailed in my justification of the directions taken.

**Figure 4.1 Research Paradigms Tabulated.**

<b>Framework</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Techniques</b>
<b>Scientific</b>	to test relationships among variables, to understand interrelationship, to describe, explain, predict.	inductive or deductive, hypothesis formulation.	experimental, testing, pre-test, post-test formulae, hypothesis testing, observation and survey.
<b>Interpretative</b>	to find meaning, to illuminate meaning in written and spoken accounts, past and present events and situations and interactions among people, to portray, to paint a picture.	anthropological, ethnographic, phenomenologic, case study, context respecting.	observation, note taking, interviewing, (structured and unstructured, semi-structured), conversation, diary keeping, illuminative descriptions, thick descriptions.
<b>Action</b>	to effect an improvement by action within a situation alone or with others	critical stance, working within a situation.	acting, observing, refining and replanning.
<b>Postmodern</b>	to highlight the 'constructedness' or contingency of knowledge. To draw attention to the hidden agendas of knowledge claims	Working within a situation, case study, ethnographic, critical stance, self-reflexive, foregrounding of researcher subjectivity.	experiments with writing that blur boundaries between facts and fiction, textual analysis, collaborative research and collective authorship of research texts.

Source: Slater (1995)

Accepting the broad conceptualisation of research paradigms shown on Figure 4.1, my research falls mainly into the "interpretative". In terms of methodology and techniques it has at different times taken from most (and more) of those displayed in the table under this category. However, though I have consciously rejected a positivistic "scientific" approach, it would be careless to suggest that this research does not also fall partly under the framework of "science". The language used, from 'test' to 'experiment', or from 'data' to 'evidence', is from science; furthermore, I have accepted, in the above discussion of "validity", a number of "scientific" constructs such as the significance of inviting external judgements of authenticity and taking care not to make general claims beyond the capacity of the data.

The two remaining categories on Slater's table, "action" and "postmodern", are also occupied, by this research and possibly to a greater degree of comfort. For example, in the spirit of my autobiographical account, this research does have an "action" dimension. In fact, as Slater (1995) has observed, by some definitions very little educational research falls outside this category; Kemmis (1982) describing action research as "self reflective enquiry" would be a case in point. But even if, as Figure 4.1 suggests, we take action research as that which effects improvement by means of reasoned action, then for this present project a case could still be made for inclusion. Especially in the early stages, this research was motivated by the need to improve and had I remained an "insider", directly involved with the 'prejudice working group', this is how the research would have finished, with recommendations for action. I would have expected changes to have been made to my teaching (as it happens, it is highly likely that this research *has* impacted upon my teaching at the Institute of Education, though it is not possible to substantiate such a claim at the present time). The project has become more conceptual and, as I argued in the previous section of this chapter, targetted at wider audiences than one school. It nevertheless identifies improvement explicitly as an ultimate goal, specifically by pointing to a sharper understanding of geography's role in introducing and developing concepts of the 'other'.

I also claim that this research has taken on (in part) what Slater describes as a "post modern" framework. With reference to 'methodology' and 'techniques' in Figure 4.1, I believe I have worked with my own subjectivity openly acknowledged, within a situation which I have attempted to 'capture' through an ethnographic and critical stance; my portrayal of the school, for example, came to rely on a form of collective authorship through my textual analysis of commissioned pieces of writing. But it is in my attempt explicitly to have teachers reflect on the 'constructedness' of their knowledge, through their 'philosophising', that my work most closely matches Slater's summary. It is probably not merely passing coincidence that the notion of 'contingency' has become

prominent in my account, from my conceptual analysis through to my concluding comments (see Chapter 11).

Whereas the 'action' element of this research has its roots in the origins of the project, the 'postmodern' element is a later development, coinciding with my shifting emphasis away from the pupil data towards the teacher conversations. This in itself was precipitated by an increasingly self conscious 'post modernist' approach to the concept prejudice: an understanding that the concept required 'breaking up' rather than 'defining' in an objective sense. My empirical work was not designed to 'prove', but to bring to life a complex concept through the manner in which it was used and understood.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

My decision to engage an evolutionary approach through a given period of time has thus enabled me to encompass and communicate a pluralist attitude to the methodological approach that guides this work. In describing the evolution of the research project I have consciously been guided by an autobiographical perspective, realising that my changing circumstances and experiences radically altered my position, both practically and philosophically. For instance, the opportunity to conduct the Institute conversations, or "experiment", arose through practical circumstance, but it also provided the insights and evidence that confirmed the point made in the previous paragraph; namely, the realisation that my goal was a conceptual map rather than a definition.

The analysis of research conversations, in Chapters 6 - 9, is accompanied by further specific detail relating to particular techniques; issues, in other words, to do with methods rather than the broader methodological concerns of this chapter. Before moving on to this, Chapter 5 makes a detailed description of the school setting which formed the context for the pupil and teacher conversations. It continues to acknowledge the evolutionary character of this project, drawing partly from my autobiography, by sketching the development of potentially significant influences on teachers' philosophising at Greenfields School, such as the activities of the so-called 'prejudice working group' and an HMI full inspection.

## Chapter 5

### Portrait of Greenfields School

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to accomplish three objectives:

- i) to describe Greenfields School, the 'all-white' suburban comprehensive school in which I conducted the enquiry into prejudice, which forms an empirical counterpoint to my conceptual analysis. There is a place and time specificity to this work, as was discussed in Chapter 1, and I attempt to capture the spirit of this partly through my own portrayal (written in 1987). This was supplemented later with evidence drawn from a full HMI inspection conducted in May of the following year (DES 1988), and various school documents including the Headteacher's annual report on 'Speech Night' in 1987 (shown in full in Appendix 2). Excerpts of specially commissioned writing from a number of the Greenfields staff then follows in which individuals explore the question "What Greenfields means to me" (shown in full in Appendix 3).
- ii) to provide an account of the 'way in' to my main enquiry, which is based primarily on interviews and conversations with staff and pupils of the school and which is reported in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. I do this by way of my own exposition but also drawing from evidence arising from the staff working group on prejudice in which I had been involved establishing during the previous year (1986) when I was an employee of the school (Head of Geography, Director of Sixth-form Studies and acting Deputy Head).
- iii) to provide a summary of the progress made by the staff working group on prejudice. This group existed at the Greenfields School between 1986 and 1988. It met frequently and I was able to attend some meetings as a participant observer during my first period of research in the school in 1987 (I also returned for another twenty days in the academic year 1989-1990 in order to conduct further interviews with children and teachers). It is interesting and pertinent to my research to note the starting points in the group's thinking and how its thinking subsequently developed.

The role I play in this portrayal is important to clarify. As was discussed in Chapter 4, I was in the fortunate position of being able to exploit the unusual opportunity of



'outsider' with recent 'insider' knowledge. This enabled me to act as one of several 'key informants' in addition to my role of dispassionate researcher. In the former guise I was able to draw from insider knowledge of the school at work, whereas in the latter role I intentionally adopted more the stance of an outsider looking in and making judgements based on evidence from a range of sources. My overarching aim has been not only to contextualise the school setting, much in the manner one would expect of a 'case study', but to capture what Jackson (1968) first called the "hidden curriculum", the complex mix of procedures, structures and principles which together shape the 'ethos' of a school. Lynch has referred to the hidden curriculum as "the universality of competitive individualism and hierarchical control" (Lynch 1989 p xii), a description that might, superficially, fit the Greenfields School. However, by definition this covert curriculum is not readily identifiable and my unique opportunity to adopt the dual role of 'insider/outsider' has enabled me to explore the Greenfields School culture in a more textured and multifaceted way than otherwise might have been possible. Certainly, I am confident that in using the approach I have adopted, the school has been given a voice, the subjectivity of which counteracts the bias that the most 'dispassionate' observer inevitably brings to the task of observation and representation. Woods puts the point slightly differently:

*Another form of misrepresentation,... is to seize on only those points within one person's position that serve the present purpose, ignoring their context which may well modify those points. ...the major sin is inadequately contextualising one's own work in the field (Woods 1985 p101).*

The aim of this chapter, then, is to contextualise my work in the field. I begin with a highly personalised account which has been written in a particular tone in order to register this fact. In a sense it should be read as 'evidence': that is, a statement written from the perspective of one person who, despite drawing from other sources and having a strong commitment to assemble a portrait which contains the truth, is inevitably potentially biased. It remains the case that this description, seen by several teachers at around the time it was written, is likely to attract comment and generate debate amongst other people with insider knowledge. I am confident, however, that such debate would be confined to the detail and be concerned with refining emphasis rather than demanding substantial change of meaning. One reason for this confidence is that the description did emerge over a period of time during which others' points of view were expressed to me. But I chose not to give members of staff editing rights; after all, would this imply everybody having a say; or only certain individuals - and if the latter, then who? Furthermore, I wished not to lose the personal quality of the writing which I felt offered a greater chance of 'capturing' the nature of the school.

A description which depended solely on a mainly personalised version of the school context, checked only by the informal process mentioned above, might have lacked an adequate level of 'reliability'. For this reason my description of Greenfields School is supplemented by:

i) the fortuitously timed HMI full inspection (DES 1988) from which I have quoted selectively ;

ii) excerpts taken from a writing task which I invited ten teachers at the school to undertake. These teachers were selected in order to give me a range of perspectives; from different subject areas, gender, length of service at the school and levels of responsibility within the school, though I excluded the Head on the grounds that his perspective is well documented (and in any case reporting his writing would be present difficulties in terms of preserving confidentiality). In the space of a page or so teachers were asked to write down and hand to me their response to the question 'what Greenfields School means to me'. Anonymity was, of course assured. In the event, seven teachers handed me their written texts during the spring term of 1988 (Appendix 3), at least one of whom observed that this had been a personally useful, even therapeutic, task.

## 5.2 Thick Description of Greenfields School

The following description was written at the beginning of my main period of research at Greenfields School, approximately one year after I completed my seven years' service at the school. I have not changed the substance of my 1987 writing.

The Greenfields School, October 1987\*

You drive into Kingsford and you need to slow down quite quickly: although the High Street is long and straight, it is also narrow. This is not so much a problem now since the "Kingsford Bypass Now!" posters have now disappeared; I remember the opening of the new road coincided with the June election campaign: the road opened (after over thirty years of campaigning) days before Mrs Thatcher was to begin her third term in office.

This is an affluent town and the present activity on the High Street, much painting and renovation, symbolises this. As we approach the school, we pass new, large houses; I suspect, and later confirm,

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\* Written October 1987, edited January 1990 to incorporate headteachers' comments.

that no teacher live in these. In fact, only a handful of the staff of Greenfield School (GS) actually live in the community and the majority of these occupy local authority rented housing, usually on a temporary basis. We have timed our visit to coincide with the end of the school day. The entrance to the school grounds is very busy with three or four full buses trying to negotiate an exit through the rather narrow gates. The task is not made easier by the presence of many cars, new and shiny, mainly driven by women and picking up one or two students. All this brings to mind the fact that over half the children at GS live within the rural catchment; furthermore, something between 15 and 20 per cent of the children live even beyond this and a few of them may have a journey home of 12 miles or more. This is a popular school and attracts the interested, middle class parent, who clearly feels that the school "delivers the goods" (more on this later). The majority of the two to three hundred children walking home to destinations within Kingsford itself are, to coin a phrase, "well turned out", wearing a school uniform and without obvious resentment. We can't help notice a small group of rebel girls, looking older than their years, smoking and chatting to a group of young adult males. These are sharply, but casually dressed young men displaying the small but very conspicuous designer labels on their clothing. Their faces are familiar; they are "old boys" of the school and either at college or unemployed. They may even have been back to the "Old Greenfields" annual reunion which, despite its elitist sound, has astonished many by the comprehensiveness of its clientele. This is just one of several apparent paradoxes about GS, for in the view of many of the students themselves, this is an elitist school, which puts great emphasis on its outstanding Oxbridge record. And yet it maintains an atmosphere in which all children (including these with limited academic prospects) seem to feel comfortable.

The activity dies down remarkably quickly. We drive on through the gates and on to the staff car park, which is nearly full. No mad rush to leave this place the moment the bell goes. In fact, as we park the car I can reflect that to my certain knowledge there is a school play being rehearsed, house hockey and rugby competitions are being played out on the school field, there is an informal staff workshop being held to discuss the video "Being White" (Albany Video, 1987), and it is quite possible that other activities such as "Scribblers", the Admission year drama group and more informal groups could be meeting as well.

I smile to myself because I know that this level of commitment amongst the staff of a comprehensive school is considered to be unusual, especially in the current political and educational climate, but I also know that it does not just happen by accident. It has been hard won (through careful selection of new, young appointments; through a balanced but thorough induction process which clearly heavily influences the new teacher's socialisation into school life; and through promoting staff from within wherever possible, which has ensured that most key positions at a "middle management" level are "young, enthusiastic Greenfields types"). The commitment of the teachers is manifest in diverse ways and, although this presumably is the kind of school referred to by HMI as being a place in which success has followed "shared values" (DES 1977 p35), the staff demonstrate interest and expertise in a variety of directions. In addition to the Oxbridge success rate, which is spread across the curriculum and

not limited to the odd spectacular department - the school has a history of spotting success - it has a very full programme of trips, visits and field excursions, children with some musical interest or skill will find themselves playing in public at least five times in a school year. Teachers help students organise charity events, put on school assemblies, and arrange spots for the annual "Cabaret", and it seems that students are able to take the initiative and the responsibility for such activities themselves at an early stage, the teacher's help fading into the background.

But, to return to the crucial aspect of the selection and appointment of staff. It would be quite false to paint a picture in which the teachers at GS were portrayed as something like paragons of a lost profession. However, they are, generally, more committed in certain ways than many staffrooms. They are also younger and less experienced, than most<sup>42</sup>. It is a "well qualified" staffroom, with a large proportion of good degrees from top universities. The staffroom reflects the Headteacher's recruitment policy. He is first and foremost a *teacher* and fervently believes in the individual and the potential for gifted individuals in the classroom to fire and excite young minds, and to guide their development. It is not left simply to "gut feeling" to identify such people; indeed, over the years a number of criteria would seem to have emerged. Amongst these and perhaps the priority criterion (though it is difficult and foolish to lay down any benchmarks like this for the kind of leadership I am attempting to describe is nothing if not pragmatic), is a love of subject together with some evidence of an adequate level of expertise in the subject. Personality factors are also vitally important; some of the positive attributes looked for could be listed as 'happy disposition', 'warmth', 'enthusiasm' and something even more vague, namely "sparkle". Related to this is possibly one of the cornerstones of the Head's philosophy, for although pragmatism rules, it is certainly not without deeply felt principle. And the principle in question is that of "service", a concept whose influence ripples throughout the school and has helped produce the distinctive, traditional and powerful ethos of the school. The Head certainly seeks to recruit teachers who demonstrate either through their achievements or through their personality a developed sense of service. Generally speaking, such people are found. Partly as a consequence (and by way of illustration), the school did not close once during the recent teacher union "industrial action" (1985-1986), CPVE seems to have been launched successfully with no timetabled team planning sessions during its first year (although eight teachers were involved), all trips seem to be going on as before the onset of "directed time" and often during half-term vacations; staff morale, in October 1987, though not high cannot be described as in the trough that many believe the teaching profession to be in.

The staff seem also to be aware of wider developments in a number of areas, both subject specific and of a wider educational nature. For example, several teachers have been heavily involved in the developmental work attached to a DES funded county wide "low achievers" project. The work at school is coordinated by the examination officer of the school who is the second in the geography department and also one of the four House Leaders in the school. This individual offers dedicated leadership for the project and it is significant that he has arrived at this position from more than one direction as his brief

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<sup>42</sup> A point confirmed by HMI (DES 1988 p 12-13)

profile shows. As a House Leader, he has a vital pastoral role - the Head has often described the House Leaders as the key personnel in the school - but, like all the other House Leaders, his full role in the school is not simply or narrowly defined as only pastoral: other House Leaders are the head of physical education, the head of history and the humanities faculty and the head of craft. This tradition of combining roles is not unusual in school, of course, but it is taken very seriously indeed at GS; it means that there are no precise "job descriptions" laid down<sup>43</sup> which, whilst undoubtedly unnerving for those versed in a "management" approach to running school, is liberating and encouraging to many staff. For instance, the stimulation for the widespread engagement of teachers in the "low achievers" project was without any doubt from the grass roots and although the examinations officer is now important in coordinating effort, he is not regarded as the instigator or the sole expert.

This then is another corner-stone principle of the school. That is to say that all the teachers within the school are expected and encouraged to achieve excellence in their subjects, but, at the same time, to become fully involved in the wider community side of school life. There is no significant "academic/pastoral" divide and in this sense the school exposes the crassness of the oft heard adage "I am a teacher of children, not my subject". In this school the aim has indeed been to employ teachers to teach children, but there is also the fundamental belief that teachers need to be able to teach children something and inspire them with it. This can be demonstrated further, maybe, by a glance at the timetable which shows the Headteacher in the classroom for 20 out of a 40 period week and across the age and ability range<sup>44</sup>. The Senior Teacher is also head of the English faculty and at one time, shortly before this study began, the acting Deputy Head was also head of geography and Director of Sixth-form Studies.

The timetable, or more precisely the process leading to its formulation, should repay a more detailed examination. The timetable is published late in the summer term. Each member of staff receives a large, handwritten copy of the whole school timetable, though it is not the first time they have seen the document. From the Spring term onwards there are occasions for teachers to contribute to the timetable discussions, at one or two (or sometimes three) meetings, chaired by the Head and open to all staff. These meetings, dubbed "curriculum meetings", are occasions really for discussing options; which subjects to go in which columns. The finished timetable document tells us immediately that this is a school that believes in discrete and traditional subjects and which does not have an extensive core curriculum; the curriculum meetings give the formal setting in which subject teachers can defend their ground or even advance their cause.

After May 31st the timetable is written, in the space of a week or so, by the Deputy, the Head and one other member of staff. The very nature of the process and the intense, concentrated (but constantly interrupted) timetable writing meetings are described by the Head as supremely human experiences;

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<sup>43</sup> A point also noted by HMI (DES 1988 p13-14)

<sup>44</sup> HMI confirm heavy staff workloads (*ibid* p13)

members of the teaching staff of the school, for example, can gain access to the writing team for detailed consultation on the filling of boxes.

The timetable is revealing of the School's underlying belief system, which can be brought into still sharper focus when we learn, for example, that the Head has given talks to teachers groups on defending minority subjects such as classics in the curriculum, and that GS is the only school in the county to fail to comply with the curriculum demands of the TVEI extension: there are clearly deep philosophical objections to TVEI and these are translated into a practical form by highlighting the plight of the small departments, particularly in a small school such as GS (whose role is just 600 students). The demise of the minority subject is also clearly related to fundamental beliefs about the way in which children learn and the positive role that specialisation plays in this. That TVEI or the proposed national curriculum will squeeze options such as a second or third language or the "Intermediate year" (Y10) drama group, is an issue so important that it is, for the Head, worth taking a public stand about:

*A major case against a national curriculum is that it will not allow schools to be themselves; it is distrusting; there will be more emphasis on accountability and filling in the right boxes. And of course the proposed national curriculum is not national at all: it is a curriculum for State Schools. It does seem to me that on such a contentious issue as this, that what is right for the large majority of the population surely ought to be appropriate for everyone. A comprehensive school, properly run, is as serious and credible an institution as a public school;...It does appear to me that the new reforms that central Government are suggesting will have the effect of diminishing our individuality and clipping our wings in possibly harmful ways... are they devised to keep State School teachers in check? I have found over the years that the more space you give your staff the more initiatives and responsibilities you allow them, the quicker they grow and the greater impact they have on the lives they educate, and if I may say so without being presumptuous, I think the more fulfilled they, the staff, become. (Headteacher's Report, Speech Day, 24 September 1987)*

The nature of these beliefs, (which I emphasise we need to understand as plainly as possible as they are an indispensable to our contextualising the whole school), can be lucidly illustrated by further quoting directly from the Headteacher himself.

*"Now then, some of these changes proposed by the Secretary of State for Education would appear to militate against the Greenfields Experience..... If some of the current national proposals are implemented, I fear for our ability to minister to the diversity of human nature. The implications of this - manoeuvre - are immense. Every student, it would appear, will need to experience a smattering of most things. And one problem lies in the fact that it might be a smattering, nothing substantial...*

*... Compulsion has never much appealed to me in terms of getting the best out of one's students and it ill behoves the Secretary of State, in the job for only two years in educational terms, so quickly to devise new panaceas, placebos or solve-alls as if what we have been doing is inadequate". (ibid)*

These passages give us an insight into the individuality of GS. The school is at once steeped in traditional values and yet has an unusual and progressive feel about it too. This apparent paradox can be illustrated further. Early in the same speech the Head, on the subject of comprehensive schools and the open, community framework established at GS, stated that "I like to feel that Greenfields at its best is making a special contribution towards society, towards England, in this way" (*ibid*). It is certainly possible to interpret this in a profoundly conservative way. Later in the speech, we can link this particular line with "And what is success? For me, engagement in - not even distinction in - engagement in one small exciting area of experience.... anything that is active, outgoing, life giving rather than passive and hum-drum. Such interests you may note may happen at any level of academic ability; they are not primarily to do with the possession of fine intellect" (*ibid*).

Perhaps the beliefs underlying the Head's policies and actions can best be summed up by quoting his "Personal Credo"<sup>45</sup> which was attached to his report to HM Inspectorate in March 1988:

*In the State system of education there are no certainties: everything has to be won. The answers we think we have found in Kingsford are answers for Greenfields, maybe with some relevance to the national scene; perhaps not. The school has evolved organically from certain strongly held principles. One of these is that the academic and the pastoral are indivisible; another is that the greatest opportunity and excitement in the school for staff are meaningful contacts with young students and that the critical essence of a young person's experience lies within the classroom, on the playing field, on the stage. Another principle is the pursuit of excellence. And a touchstone of all experience is hard work: Hard work that gives a belief in the self, whatever the level of achievement, and validates the educational enterprise.*

*Above all, there is within the community a commitment - spoken, sensed and intuitively registered - that what matters is the quality of human relationships: the individual matters. (from the Head's "Personal Credo")*

And so to the pupils. They are good to work with, generally responsive and diverse in terms of their interests and academic potentials. But I feel that in some ways they remain relatively untouched by their schooling. This is a view that is shared by many colleagues, often expressed in terms of 'something not quite clicking'. I am reminded of a recent field trip to Sheffield during which three Greenfield pupils were accosted by car-driving local young people, one of whom punched a Greenfielder in the face, breaking his nose. This was, I am assured and believe, an unprovoked attack. It was frightening to the 15 year old pupils and astonishing to me and my colleagues. Reflection later stimulated a significant comment from a colleague (not from geography but who also ran regular residential trips with pupils); "our children seem to need to occupy so much more space when they're on the street; they seem to attract attention." Her meaning was that somehow Greenfield pupils may have been unwittingly provocative, something

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<sup>45</sup>When passed to me it came with a further hand written annotation that "The whole is more than the sum of its parts": a truism maybe, but clearly an important condition to the statement "the individual matters".

to do with their affluent appearance maybe, their confidence in a group and, coincidentally, their naivety and lack of a certain type of 'streetwiseness' associated with their relatively limited social and cultural horizons.

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The above conclusion concerning the children, takes more the form of a speculation and is something to which I will return, as it forms a key component of the second part of this Chapter, the discussion on my 'way in' to the study of prejudice at the Greenfields School. Before moving on to this discussion I shall complete my initial description of the school, first by adding perspectives provided by the 1988 HMI Report and secondly by drawing from specially commissioned writing from members of Greenfields staff. In this way my highly personalised account is in effect 'triangulated' to some extent with (i) views from both the disinterested outside source of HMI and (ii) the individualised and variously independent opinions of members of the teaching staff.

**i. The HMI Report :** Though not uncritical in parts (for example on provision for slow learners) this report was most favourable, commending the school particularly for the quality of human relationships and care extended to all pupils. That the staff of the school was described as young but well qualified is evidenced in the following:

Four-fifths of the staff have graduate qualifications and the majority are teaching subjects for which they obtained initial or subsequent qualifications.... Fifty-five percent of staff are below 34 years of age; few are above 54 years. Nineteen teachers have fewer than five years experience and 26 have joined the school in the past four years. In this period only three external candidates have been appointed to high scale posts, while a significant number of teachers has benefited from internal promotion and role changes....Eighteen teachers with management responsibility have fewer than five years experience in the school. Of the 29 men and 12 women, 20 are above the main professional grade (MPG). However, 85% of posts above MPG are held by men and 15% by women.

Source: DES 1988 p12-13

This quotation also is indicative of the headteacher's belief in slowing individual teachers responsibility, rewarding it where possible and desirable with internal promotion. It also points out the gender imbalance in the staffroom (especially in senior positions) which several members of staff (usually male) brought up in their conversations with me.

My second quotation substantiates the claim that teachers at Greenfields School were hardworking, conscientious and unusually committed:



On average staff teach 82% of each week, which is above the national average. The school works a 6 hour 5 minute teaching day divided into eight periods. Teaching loads throughout the staff are heavy, especially for MPG teachers (86%) and probationers (88%). the headteacher teaches 22/40 lessons each week. These high teaching ratios result from a policy decision to work with smaller teaching groups in order to enrich the curriculum for all pupils. Whilst the time available to postholders for attention to their diverse responsibilities is well used, it is far from adequate. In some cases the current pattern deprives a relatively young staff of sufficient opportunities to plan and work co-operatively during the teaching day. In particular probationers would benefit from a reduced workload to discuss planning, delivery and evaluation of lessons with experienced colleagues.<sup>47</sup>

Source: DES 1988 p13

ii. *"What Greenfields School means to me"* : In 1987-1988, nine current members of the teaching staff (one quarter of the total staff), plus one recently departed former 'house leader' (chosen because of his recently acquired 'outsider' status and perspective) were personally asked to write an account of their response to this question. I obtained submissions from seven:

- A. Experienced head of department;
- B. Experienced teacher;
- C. Newly appointed head of subject;
- D. Recently qualified teacher;
- E. Deputy Head<sup>48</sup>.
- F. Former 'house-leader' (left the school in 1985)
- G. Recently appointed head of subject

Transcripts of six of the seven accounts are to be found in Appendix 3. Each individual responded to the task in their own way; together they illuminate not only the school but the feelings some teachers have about the children especially in relation to their preparedness to understand and function in a plural society. They were analysed straightforwardly by inductively identifying from the texts themselves the following content categories:

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<sup>47</sup> It is worth noting that one 'felt need' of the prejudice working group at Greenfields School (1986-1988) was for the school to buy time to facilitate teachers being observed and debriefed by colleagues.

<sup>48</sup>(full transcript not included in Appendix 3 in order to preserve confidentiality)

- a. location/type of school;
- b. staff;
- c. children;
- d. hidden curriculum/ethos;
- e. other

Quotations have been taken directly from the texts and require little additional explanation or commentary and consequently are presented below without additional comment or mediation. They can be seen as a collage of perspectives contributing a further layer to the 'thick' description of the school and its setting. I have been careful not to impose any consensus of view and have tried to preserve diversity where it appeared to exist: the collage therefore seeks to represent the range of view contained in the seven accounts. Where there *was* consensus, however, I draw attention to it in my initial remarks for each category.

a. "Location/type of school": This category confirmed strongly the self image of a school feeling somewhat isolated, perhaps unusually comfortable in its position 'off the beaten track'. Precisely how staff interpreted the significance of this point varied:

*very demanding,*

*a fur lined rut*

*warmth, vitality, care and compassion*

*academically successful*

*excessively male dominated*

*we do not deal so well with the middle (of the 'ability' range)*

*low white buildings with their large unsecretive windows*

*tucked away, but not isolated*

*too busy an environment in which to find wisdom or to fully develop creative talents, too well-run and stable to find challenges for leadership qualities and too small a world to find high adventure*

*GS's exceptional weaknesses come I suspect partly from the same roots as the strengths; it is in some ways exceptionally enterprising and boldly innovative*

*it is a rural school and its isolation geographically works in two ways; isolating us (staff and students) from others in a negative sense that we are inward looking but also in generating an independence and vigour of having to get on with ourselves*

*preoccupied with public image*

b. "Staff": Under this category there was evidence to support the view of a young, confident and dynamic staffroom, willing to accept responsibility and a heavy work load. There was also the occasional allusion to some conflict, especially in relation to the dominance of the Head in the life of the school:

*conservative approach to change...in an environment where the challenges are of my own making, not external*

*it is possible for any member of staff to take up initiatives*

*young and fairly efficient staff...serious about their teaching and career plans...happy and motivated but tend to be overworked*

*some younger staff need to be aware of growth of a radical kind as a complex process...is it surprising that we may find it hard if people...start overriding, disregarding and...superficially rejecting some of our first generation attempts at changing the school for the better*

*a (better) balance of sexes on the staff and a wider age range would probably be a benefit to certain students*

*in the classroom and in the staffroom personal style is allowed to flourish*

*unwilling to speak up for their beliefs; overbearing Head*

c. "Children": Comments under this category reveal teachers in a slight dilemma. They like the children and find them generally responsive, but do not like part of what they seem to represent through their attitudes towards, and knowledge of, difference and diversity:

*generally 'well-heeled', middle class, white children. They are rather parochial, racist, somewhat spoiled and rather blinkered in their approach to life*

*too often (GS) is undermined by the more negative aspects of British youth culture (though at these moments I think of teachers in troubled inner cities etc and count my blessings)*

*students in general are well disciplined, bright, have good parental support, are keen to succeed academically, are prepared to be involved...tend to take an awful lot for granted, are narrow minded and unaware of broad social issues/current affairs and readily accept the system*

*their ignorance of the outside world*

*girls pushed aside by the boys*

*intense feelings of loyalty shown to the school*

4. "Hidden curriculum/ethos": It was under this category that qualitatively perhaps the most interesting comments have been grouped. Contrary to what Grant and Sleeter (1986), for example, seem to have found at 'Five Bridges' school (in the USA), many staff at Greenfields clearly thought deeply about the functioning of the school and their individual roles within it. On the other hand, some staff clearly believe the staff as a whole need to be far more responsive and willing to adapt and change:

*Clearly structured without ever really pushing (the children) too far or really challenging them too much*

*safe atmosphere*

*approachable relationships of the majority of staff but this is within a quite formal, but hidden structure. A sort of cosiness...permeates*

*like a gigantic spaceship*

*(on the senior management team)...who hasn't stood back in amazement at THEIR care and extraordinary principled people care - this idealistic leader surprises all of us sometimes*

*more self doubt, self criticism and even a readiness to encourage argument are needed to make...open mindedness really productive and meaningful*

*Greenfields means hard work*

*time for reflection is at a premium; personal leisure interests are pursued at the price of feeling guilty*

*attempts to improve conditions...are treated with mistrust and/or a 'don't let's rock the boat' attitude*

*inability or unwillingness to deal with racism and sexism*

5. "Other": This category contains a *pot pourri* of comments which were difficult to place, and yet seemed relevant to the building picture of Greenfields School. If there is a any general point that may be extracted from these excerpts it is possibly the intimation of a disciplined school, one in which power is firmly located at the centre:

*communications between staff and hierarchy could be improved*

*House system a raging success*

*the underlying assumption (is) that a successful formula has been found and should be adhered to*

*despite our inward looking approach it is surprising how successful this has been in many areas with Greenfield staff setting examples etc for much wider groups*

*such wing-clipping as does go on in Greenfield is done constructively and discreetly. This is also true of any point scoring among the staff*

*Greenfield's senior management confuse issues by appealing to the staff's better nature (intimations of moral blackmail)*

### *5.3 Summary Description of Greenfields School*

The foregoing detailed description of Greenfield School presents us with an energetic and highly successful but in a sense exclusive school community. It is one which exhibits some of the characteristics of what Wilson (1972; 1992 p302) calls a school with "potency" (with the "traditional" values of a strong 'house' base, a deliberate shielding of the institution from outside influences - an attempt to recreate the strengths of a "family" ethos) Staff generally were pleased to identify such strengths but some were not uncritical of their own performance in educational terms. Unease was articulated in the identification of issues related to the school's 'exclusivity' and 'isolation', which some staff clearly felt that the school had a responsibility to address. There perhaps is evidence to suggest that some teachers felt a particular tension between the fierce individualism which shapes the school's "ethos" and the broader more society related goals they have identified. What seems to be expressed here is the feeling that 'if a school like ours *fails* to open children's eyes to complexity and broader issues associated with society as it is, then what grounds have we to claim success?'

This is a question which can lead to fundamental examination of goals; indeed the school staff as a whole had become used to a rolling programme of curriculum review in the

years preceding this present study, which had the effect of raising the profile of basic questioning of this sort. One outcome, precipitated by the kind of concerns summarised in the previous paragraph, was the establishment by a small group of teachers (though with the headteacher's agreement) of the prejudice working group (1986 - 1988). It needs to be emphasised that this group, though open to the whole staff, was small and self selected; even at two high profile meetings in the spring term of 1987, involving the County Adviser on one occasion and on another John Twitchin, producer of the BBC's *Black and White Media Show* (see Twitchin 1988), no more than 30% of the staff (12 teachers) were attracted. It would be misleading, therefore, to suggest that prejudice had been identified as a serious issue by the whole staff, although for over one quarter of an overworked staff to take on an additional and difficult responsibility demonstrated the existence of real concern, a point noted by the Head who, somewhat reluctantly, supported the group's existence. The following section begins to examine the prejudice issue at Greenfields in more detail.

#### 5.4 Commentary on the Prejudice Issue at Greenfields School.

*i. Introduction* : My own view of the *pupils* of Greenfields School was one of generally interested and motivated children, responding in a positive and apparently open manner to a predominantly young and enthusiastic teaching staff. HMI came to a similar viewpoint: "Pupils respond readily to visitors and talk easily about themselves and the life of the school" (DES 1988 p22); and "Many pupils are articulate, with a confidence to exchange extended conversation over a number of topics and in a variety of situations." (*ibid* p5). The school community as a whole, teaching staff, ancillaries and pupils, was complimented by HMI on the "pleasant and orderly environment":

*The daily life of the school is characterised by good relationships. There is mutual respect between teachers and pupils, which helps to create and sustain a harmonious and businesslike atmosphere. Control in corridors is not excessively authoritative but is effective. Behaviour between lessons is good and remains so in the playgrounds and on the way to and from school. Teachers expect pupils to work hard, and they give clear instructions about what is required and how much work is to be presented. Good relationships and clear routines do much to promote personal and spiritual growth. There are opportunities in classes, assemblies and tutor time to consider and discuss current social issues, and more such opportunities are being planned through the working parties on personal and social education (PSE) and prejudice. (*ibid* p 5)*

In the following paragraphs I return to and elucidate the proposition that, despite the strength of human relationships which undoubtedly existed at Greenfields, the curriculum was in some way failing to prepare pupils for the possibility of a broader perspective of difference and a diverse humanity.

**ii. A critical incident :** During the Inspection there was what was for me (and for a number of teachers) a 'critical incident'. It was critical in the sense that it helps illustrate the issue introduced in the paragraph above, but also in the way it helped raise awareness of this issue in the school at large.

On the fourth day the Inspection, a former colleague contacted me with the news that "there has been a racist incident observed by an HMI". As part of an assembly, sixth-formers had been performing a sketch copied from a popular television comedy duo. The theme of the assembly was 'victimisation' and the sketch concerned the approbation given to a policeman on arresting a 'suspect' after a blatantly 'racial' description had been circulated. It was said to have been funny but there was apparently no attempt to add interpretation, say on stereotyping, for the benefit of the assembled audience. The HMI observer was said to have been "incensed" that a racist assembly such as this should have been allowed. The senior staff member in charge denied that it was racist, as did another teacher present, initially.

My purpose here is not to analyse the incident *per se* (I was not there), nor to comment on the reported reactions of HMI or of the staff (I do not have enough evidence on which to base any judgements of this kind). It is simply to illustrate the point at which the school had reached in terms of its response to issues of prejudice and discrimination: some teachers thought that HMI had overreacted, underestimating the perspicacity of the pupils, while others thought that it was unrealistic for HMI to make a judgement on the basis of one assembly (children can expect three assemblies per week) - it was like "catching a glimpse through the window as the train shoots by" ('Dave'). The teacher present, however, later in the day recognised that the assembly *was* racist, on the grounds of it having putting before the audience unchallenged and negatively stereotypical assumptions. The outcome in the days and weeks that followed was that wide agreement grew amongst the staff that a school policy for tackling racism would be appropriate, one that could be published in time for the soon to be printed school brochure and one which would influence teaching strategies and curriculum content across the school. Three teachers from the prejudice working party (acknowledged in the HMI report) agreed to draft a document for discussion almost immediately.

**iii. Searching to identify the problem :** The stimulus afforded to the working group's activity by the critical incident reported above, and which seemed to win the

support of senior management, came as a filip for some members of the prejudice group, who felt deeply about the issue but frustrated at their lack of progress. One month before the aforementioned Inspection, one teacher, Joan, reported to me (18.4 88):

*Things are very fraught. The response of (the class) today was depressing. Just like Tom's (previous) experience with (another class) in which he refused to go on. I was so angry inside. You cannot reason with them, because it is not a question of reason. It's so deep seated and mostly directed to the 'anti-Paki' thing.*

She reflected, as an experienced teacher, on the gulf between her language and the children's:

*The lesson was prepared for by a homework. This was OK, and some of it was quite interesting. But we then went into a role play which produced the circumstances where abuse was rife. How can you cope with this kind of situation? It's a massive problem with such deep seated prejudice... it's as if they cannot hear. It cannot be penetrated... .. I'm worried now that (my actions) are counterproductive: you know, 'Oh no, not this again.' This in itself creates a block.*

This passage could take us in a number of different directions. We would require a lot more information than exists in this extract if we wished to analyse her effectiveness as a teacher, for example, in setting up the role play, or whether there was something in the way she responded to the pupils which attracted behaviour which the children knew would upset her equilibrium ('teacher-baiting'). Suffice it to say that HMI referred to this individual as "experienced... who carries other substantial school responsibilities as well as contributing regularly to the LEA teacher training programme." What is noteworthy about the passage for my present purposes is the resonance between it and other well documented attempts at teaching for better intercultural understanding in the 'all-white school'. For example, Gaine (1987) writes:

*People who have tried straight education in this field in the past 20 years have repeatedly dispaired of progress. Cliches like "education will help" and "give people the correct information", "counter the myths" are known through a lot of bitter experience to be empty hopes, at least for the most part... People do not learn, or change attitudes, or change actions, when they feel attacked, defensive, hostile, angry or guilty. (Gaine 1987 p103)*

Earlier in his book, Gaine asserted in strong terms why this state of affairs should be so:



*The real condition of millions of teenagers is that they are scared, and whatever their bravado about the dole or lack of "realism" about their career hopes they are scared of the future they see before them. This is an old cliché... but unless it is actually faced as a reality in teenagers' worlds - though not necessarily in their awareness - I do not believe that teaching about "race" is going to touch secondary pupils at all. (ibid p 15)*

Joan showed she was well aware of the condition that Gaine describes in the former quotation. She personally may have a sympathy for the second passage, though generally at Greenfields the description of scared teenagers is probably not widely held among the teachers. Joan certainly agrees with Gaine's final sentence, however, and it is a conclusion for which there was in fact *widespread* support at Greenfield School.

This needs further unpacking. Joan and some other teachers in the school agreed with Gaine's conclusion on *his* terms; that is, that there was an issue to be tackled, but one that required an educational response of a more sophisticated nature than (merely) teaching about 'race' - which could easily have become counterproductive. Others, perhaps a majority in 1988, agreed with Gaine in a different way. A few would argue, counter to Gaine's thesis, that there was in fact no substantial problem to be tackled (and hence the ineffectiveness of teaching about "race"), whilst others would articulate the view, conducive to a smooth running classroom maybe, that it was a complex problem best avoided. One sixth former at the school revealingly divulged to me (outside the school day) that "all this talk of racism exacerbates the problem; a problem that might not even exist (initially). When I meet a coloured (*sic*) person I no longer see him or her as a person but I have to recognise their colour and be careful of what I say" (22.11.88). This, then raises a key question; in a staff training manual, for example, Hudson highlights the importance of teachers discussing the following question (among others):

*Should the issue of race, gender and class inequalities be studied and discussed in schools in explicit ways or is it better to encourage pupils to show respect for all people without mentioning race gender or class? (Hudson 1995 p 14)*

**iv. Distinguishing prejudice from discrimination :** At Greenfield School, in 1988, Hudson's question was indeed one which had emerged as central to the progress of the prejudice working group . The "critical incident" reported above may have helped in putting a more explicit response on the agenda. For much of its existence, the group had been measured and deliberate in its actions: the group did not want to risk ostracism and subsequent marginalisation in a staffroom which had other priorities and needed convincing. In retrospect, however, there was an important distinction with which the group was grappling (which was not clearly appreciated at the time). Though overt acts

of racism, in the form of *discriminatory* language or acts, was part of what concerned the working group members, what also motivated their interest was the more concealed problem - described by Joan (above) as "deeply held prejudice". Gaine, drawing on Gordon Allports's (1954) progressive classification of "persecution and prejudice", describes prejudice as "attitudes and behaviour which stop short of discriminatory acts" (Gaine 1987 p92); what some of the group found themselves feeling it had to do, in order to substantiate the case, was be able to present 'evidence' of prejudice to the staff - not easy when it is invisible, inside people's heads.

Nevertheless, this was attempted (see the following section of this Chapter, section 5.5 The Prejudice Working Group). It is significant to note, however, that at no time during these early deliberations did the group recommend that a school-wide system of recording 'racist incidents' be adopted: it was felt inappropriate in that it would signal only part of the issue and possibly be counterproductive in causing pupils and teachers alike to put up their defences. There was, in other words, an intuitive grasp that at Greenfields School it was not only discrimination that was at issue, but the more ephemeral (or at least less concrete) prejudice. This was connected to the feeling that children needed to have their eyes opened wider, to be challenged to think<sup>48</sup> more about themselves and the wider world. There seemed, then, to be a growing understanding not only of the distinctions to be made between prejudice and discrimination but that the concept of prejudice itself was not easy to delineate.

As initially a founder member of the group in the months immediately before it began its work in September 1986, I had begun to develop an approach to prejudice which saw the weakness of assuming only a perjorative meaning to the concept. If prejudice were treated only as negative, wrong and something to be avoided, it would invite responses such as those Gaine reports: "... I can't say I'm prejudiced because I have nothing against blacks..." - Gaine's own response to this fifteen year old's diary reads: "It's interesting you say you aren't prejudiced, but I'm puzzled as to why you use the term "Paki" when describing Asian people..." (Gaine 1987 p60). The teenager inadvertently, perhaps, betrayed a negative attitude towards a group whilst at the same time 'knowing' that to be prejudiced was 'wrong'. I will report similar instances of "sympathy and generosity at the same time as intolerance and learned misinformation" (*ibid* p54) arising from conversations with Greenfield's staff and pupils in the next chapter. For the moment this example is simply to illustrate the sort of difficulty which the Greenfield's prejudice working group faced. Although the working group was increasingly and self consciously focussed on prejudice (not discrimination) it had yet to clarify what in

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<sup>48</sup>This is not dissimilar to Vaclav Havel's reported remark that "The tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his own life, but that it bothers him less and less" (Bullock 1990 p672)

educational terms was the significance of its work: what changes did it want to see? how best was prejudice to be tackled? In fact, what was prejudice?

v. **Conclusion** : This, then, was the 'way in' to the systematic empirical enquiry reported in the following three chapters. In essence it was to use the opportunity which presented itself to me (having left the school in 1986, becoming an 'outsider') to listen to and reflect on the way pupils and teachers spoke about a range of issues; including the school, individual lessons, other stimuli (such as newspaper articles) and their understanding of the concept of prejudice itself. This, it was hoped, would yield evidence to illuminate questions such as those listed at the end of the previous paragraph. As a geography educator my ultimate goal, as in this thesis, was to illuminate the role of geography in the curriculum in relation to these matters; my 'way in', however, was deliberately on the whole school level.

Before coming to the empirical work, however, we should examine a little more closely the role of the prejudice working group which, of course, also identified a 'whole school' brief.

### 5.5 The Prejudice Working Group

To conclude this Chapter I present a synthesis of a further source of evidence of the functioning and character of Greenfields School, the prejudice working group. This section, therefore, simultaneously provides further insight to the school context and some detail on the progress and outcomes of the prejudice working group. I limit the evidence base for my comments to three significant episodes of the group's work: a report on 'departmental thinking' within the school (conducted and written by myself) at around the beginning of the group's life; the report of an interim meeting from around a year into the group's life; and the group's draft policy document written near the end of its two year life.

i. ***The incidence of prejudice at Greenfields School*** : I begin with the report commissioned by the group, organised and written by myself, on how subject departments in the school perceived "the prejudice issue". Heads of subject were asked to record and submit in writing their response to how prejudice (particularly in relation to "race") was manifest in their classrooms or subject area.

My report, based upon fifteen pages of written submissions received from nine departments (plus one unidentified individual) was written and presented in April 1987. I have tried wherever possible to anonymise sources:

## Departmental comments concerning prejudice

The aim of this exercise was to provide anecdotal evidence of prejudiced attitudes and actions amongst the children at Greenfields. This was done at around the same time as teachers were invited to meet together in order to discuss the issue...with the county multicultural adviser and, on one occasion, with John Twitchin of the BBC who were most effective in reminding the group that, for example, racism was not simply a 'problem' exhibited by the children and that there were institutional and societal dimensions to the issue which are complex, subtle and sometimes difficult to face - for everybody.

Many staff remarked that racism was occasionally demonstrated by children through remarks made at certain times, such as when the dietary requirements of different groups of people were being studied or when pictures of different people were being used in the classroom. These remarks include the use of derogatory descriptive terms for people, the use of mocking accents and the tendency to jump to incomplete and tendentious 'conclusions' concerning some issues (such as food production problems of some societies being equated with 'backwardness' or 'ignorance') At least one teacher felt that these 'intolerant, racist and dismissive' attitudes have become a deterrence to embracing any work that would include looking at different cultures.

Several teachers wondered whether it is 'time for Greenfields School to have an all-school policy' to help combat racism. These teachers described how, on an individual basis, they pull students up if they utter prejudiced comments but indicate that this kind of student behaviour does not seem to be recognised - by the students - as a sufficiently serious matter. Perhaps, the argument runs, as long as the school does not have an explicit 'position' on the matter the school as an institution is not seen as taking the matter seriously.

There is possibly some confusion amongst the staff at the school as to how far up the long list of priorities the issue of racism should be placed. One subject area, for example, recognised that it was able to offer a 'multicultural dimension' to its work, 'although it was also thought that there could be constraints on this due to pressures of the syllabus. How relevant are multicultural approaches in an area such as Kingsford?'

It is clear from some departments reading of GCSE syllabuses that the school would be failing to meet National Criteria if the relevance of addressing such issues is not accepted; in modern languages, for example, the aims of the GCSE course include 'offering insight into the culture and civilisation of French speaking countries' and 'encouraging positive attitudes... to speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations'. The department felt that their problems in this respect were 'not serious'. Other departments registered deeper concerns. Students, it was observed, seem to have a system of 'racial' categories in their heads: this in itself may demonstrate the depth of their 'Eurocentric' view of the world, but especially so when, as one department observed, students have developed a 'sliding scale of merit which they apply to 'racial' categories'. This is perhaps epitomised by

the direct student quotation: 'God could choose what his son looked like and he... made Jesus tall with fair hair'.

The complexities inherent in designing strategies to confront pupil responses such as this are perhaps clear. Some teachers wrote about their anxiety over how to deal with the issues head on when there are one or two black children in the class - who do not (apparently) themselves feel subject to racism. There is also a recognition that 'we need to go beyond the 'poor black people' syndrome (which is) patronising and inaccurate'. Sympathy does not equate with prejudice on a personal level - mine, yours, the children's - and it fails to teach deeper, broader meanings of racism. One teacher felt racism needs to be linked to other forms of prejudice, such as that associated with class.

Another teacher (in the same department) remarked that 'it may be my imagination, but I feel that there is now less tolerance shown to minority cultures than there was 10 years ago - the fear of 'their' threatening invasion of 'our' vaguely conceived British way of life... appears to be paramount' In contrast, another teacher (classics) has *not* found issues such as colonialism, sexism, slavery and nationalism difficult to discuss in the classroom; it was hypothesised that the distance between now and the ancient world might make such issues easier to consider. There appears to be wide support for the idea that the staff group could learn a lot from each other - others' teaching strategies, teaching materials and simply knowing more about the content and context of each others' syllabuses.

To finish I will quote one department which notes that 'Greenfields is a bit of an island... through social contact and working with different people we can expect to learn more about each other...' This is perhaps the kernel of our problem. As a virtually 'all-white' school students here have little experience with different people on a day to day basis. There is much evidence from across the school that the attitudes of many students at Greenfields are sometimes shocking and often naive. Many staff feel strongly moved to improving the effectiveness of our teaching about human diversity.

(Report for the prejudice working group, dated April 1987)

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This report is revealing in a number of ways. In discussing this I have found it useful to call upon some of the "dimensions" of prejudice introduced in Chapter 2 and dealt with fully in Chapter 8 (section 8.2). These appear italicised in what follows. First, it (indiscriminately) conflates 'prejudice' and 'racism', though there is recognition at the beginning of the text that racism relates to a broader remit than only individual or personal characteristics. Secondly, there is no point in the report where prejudice and discrimination are distinguished; the distinction, an important one in terms of directly observable behaviours or *manifestations*, is not, apparently, seen. Thirdly, although there is an assumption of the *universality* of prejudice, there is also an assumption about its negative *value* and the associated felt need to 'correct' or 'eradicate' it. These two

dimensions are in some tension, as we have seen in Chapter 2; though not registered in my April 1987 report, this tension was not unremarked upon at meetings to the extent of voicing thoughts along the lines of: 'If we all have it, what's 'wrong' with prejudice? - don't we just have to put up with it and try simply to limit any negative effects (*manifestations*)? Or is it possible to see it in a positive light?'. Fourthly, there appears to be recognition that the *feelings* dimension is of significance, perhaps in explaining the incidence of prejudice, but also in shaping any teaching responses. Thus there was acknowledgement that though ignorance of the 'facts' may on occasion be the *cause* of prejudice, simply supplying the facts was unlikely to resolve the problem. On the other hand, there was interesting discussion among members of the working group on whether much of the school knowledge being taught was in fact appropriate. Fifthly, there seemed to be an implicit assumption that through more effective teaching, and despite Greenfields 'isolated' state, prejudice did not represent a fixed, immovable opinion; prejudice was thought to be *mutable*.

Two proposals which emanated from this report were subsequently taken up by the working group: there was agreement that the group ought to work towards drafting a policy document; and there was agreement that members of the group could further their knowledge and understanding of the issues - and how to respond - by a programme of inter-departmental lesson observation followed by structured debriefing discussions. The former was considered to be essential as a device to include the whole staff body. The latter was thought to be particularly worthwhile given the strong subject ethos within the school and the potential that may exist in teachers learning from each other. This, incidentally, is in contrast to the experiences reported by Grant and Sleeter (1986) in the USA. There was apparently very little inclination among teachers at "Five Bridges" School to broaden individual professional repertoires, least of all through the critical examination of each other: "Teachers were not observed by their peers...when they taught. They rarely exchanged ideas and never had to justify to another adult why they taught as they did" (*ibid* p243).

ii. **Discussing policy** : The second 'episode' I have selected concerns the group's discussions on the county "Statement on Racial Harassment" circulated to schools in 1986 (see Appendix 4). The notes arising from the group's open meeting, distributed to all staff, are provided in full in Appendix 5. The Statement broadly agreed with the recommendations of the Swann report (DES 1985) that "the best way of countering prejudiced attitudes and racist behaviour is to develop a school ethos and curriculum that actively encourage positive attitudes to racial and cultural differences" (Statement on Racial Harassment, Appendix 4, p1). It recommended schools draw up policies

encompassing this and a number of other "aims and objectives" and begin to record incidents of "racialist behaviour and the school's response" (*ibid* p3).

The Statement, like the earlier working group report discussed above, tended to conflate prejudice and "behaviour". By the time Greenfield's teachers came to discuss the document their thinking had moved on somewhat, being more concerned with the less readily delineated concept of prejudice as distinct from behaviour (or discrimination). This may explain the apparently luke warm reception given to the document: whilst agreeing that Greenfield should identify a policy and that racist behaviour should be corrected, the group records that "the best way to deal with it is not necessarily according to a 'firm and consistent' disciplinary structure" (minutes of the meeting held on 3.5.88; Appendix 5). The minutes continue:

*The document seems combative, negative in tone and, in the context of the whole school life, rather narrow. Prejudice, although undesirable, is part of being human. Understanding prejudice, acknowledging one's own feelings and altering one's own behaviour is part of learning - about oneself and the wider world. Pupils may learn better if they are supported in this learning process, rather than solely attacked or disciplined. Furthermore, the issue of "race" is but one focus for prejudice; whilst it has certain unique characteristics it would be wrong, even counter productive, to single out this issue. Other foci of prejudice that were mentioned at the meeting include: gender, disability, clan, rich and poor. (*ibid*)*

This response could be dismissed as merely the highly individualistic assertion of independence in the face of a county circular. After all, the minutes also record the group's rejection of regular monitoring of "incidents of racist expression". Such an interpretation, however, would be mistaken. What was important to the group was real change that would have the support of all teachers and pupils: the option of introducing some form of visible policy such as monitoring, which would run the risk of being seen as a 'top-down' bureaucratic and cosmetic device, would also risk alienating many individuals and closing down on open talk. Instead of permanent monitoring it was suggested that perhaps once a year the whole staff undertake a more intensive set of observations to inform an annual 'taking stock' exercise; this, it was felt would be less bureaucratic and less threatening, and would have more impact on "individual teachers".

Returning once more to our 'dimensions' of prejudice, we can make two observations: first, the working group has now clearly distinguished overt behaviour (the *manifestation* of prejudice) from prejudice itself, which cannot be directly described or recorded. The group clearly sees the latter as the more interesting, and, in the context of

Greenfields, the more important issue. Secondly, although the group continues to assume a negative *value* for prejudice this is, perhaps, less forthright than earlier. This is most clearly seen in the group's difficulty in accepting a solely disciplinary response. The response, they appear to argue, has to be educational (of course, this does not exclude forms of discipline) which has to build on trust and openness; this is made difficult, the group seems to argue, when certain kinds of utterances or behaviours are, without consideration, ruled out of court. Thirdly, the working group is explicit about the *universality* of prejudices, a point that the county document appears not to make. In conflating prejudice and racist behaviour, the document, perhaps inadvertently, suggests that though "not uncommon amongst school pupils" such characteristics are by no means universal. Furthermore, and partly arising from this assumption, the document urges schools to "combat racism and prejudice by attacking inherited myths and stereotypes". The Greenfield's working group was wary of this approach and this seems partly because of the realisation that such "attacks" could, if administered insensitively and indiscriminately, yield a collective defensive response in which, literally, *feelings* would be running high. This would, effectively, rule out a calm and reasoned approach to the examination of myths and stereotypes.

Finally, one further significant observation to make concerns the tone of the working group's response to the County Statement. If the County document itself could be said to be a temporally located artifact (a product of the 'moment' as described in Chapter 1), the working group may be interpreted as attempting to move the debate forward. In emphasising its commitment to learning from each other (through the process of inter-subject department lesson observation), and in expressing its concern not to close down on pupils and teachers being able to express their own feelings (ultimately becoming aware of, and understanding, their own prejudices), the group was articulating a belief in the importance of dialogue in support "this learning process". There is possibly a connection to be made here and ideas met earlier in our conceptual analysis, namely Jones' (1987) "education for conversation" and Walsh's (1994) "education in deliberation". What the group clearly lacked was a firmer definition of this, or a way to operationalise these ideas.

**iii. *Towards a school policy*** : The third and final chosen 'episode' concerns the presentation of the Greenfield's policy to the governors and staff during June and July 1988. The "critical incident" involving the assembly observed by HMI (May 1988) was helpful in renewing efforts to establish a policy (the working group in any case was approaching the end of its allotted lifetime). In the event, the document (curiously and probably erroneously entitled *Education through Education* in its first draft, becoming *Equality through Education* by the time it was presented to staff: Appendix 6), not



surprisingly owes much to other published policies and seems not to have resolved some questions which, as we have seen, had begun to emerge in the group's earlier discussions.

First, in a reversal of earlier sentiment the policy recommended that "a written record will be kept of incidents of racist behaviour, the school's response and parental involvement". It is not clear why this happened other than to accord with 'county guidelines'<sup>49</sup>. On presentation to the governors (14.6.88), this aspect of the policy was in fact endorsed on the grounds that 'objective' evidence for the policy's implementation was required (personal communication from Joan). Interestingly, when the policy was presented to staff (14.7.88), this clause caused lengthy debate (largely around how it was to be implemented and how definitions of what behaviours were deemed suitable for this treatment were to be agreed), and the policy was only saved by the proposal from the Head that it be dropped for the moment, on the grounds that it sat uneasily with the rest of the document; the working group was asked to reflect on and resolve this issue.<sup>50</sup>

Secondly, the policy made a strong case that ,

*...education is by its nature, opposed to prejudice and discrimination. Good education creates a habit of independent thought and evaluation, and respect for the rights and identity of others...*

But it failed to extend thinking beyond this, perhaps, platitudinous point. Note once again the conflation of prejudice and discrimination which leads the policy into *having* to state an "opposition" to prejudice: if, as was argued by the group on an earlier occasion, prejudice is universal and unavoidable, and that it was not necessarily productive to attack or oppose people for having them, this turn of phrase does not take us forward. This failure is noticeable elsewhere in the document:

*(staff) should avoid stereotyped images;*

*(staff) should develop pupils' ability to recognise, question and oppose bias, prejudice, discrimination and injustice in all their forms...*

*(pupils must not) bring into school...prejudiced literature;*

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<sup>49</sup>Though it may be significant that of the three teachers charged with producing the draft, one was a former ILEA teacher - brought into the task for his experience - who had not been able to attend one single meeting of the working group, and was not therefore party to its deliberations.

<sup>50</sup> The clause was not reinstated.

It is not that I am necessarily arguing that these statements are 'wrong'. But I strongly question, in light of the group's earlier discussions, whether the manner in which these clauses are phrased take forward in any way teachers and their work with children.<sup>51</sup>

With regard to stereotypes, for example, the bald statement above fails to allow for the reason stereotypes arise - and (after Eysenck 1992) that they are by no means always 'wrong' or negative. The second statement above is too strong, or at least too inclusive; we can oppose discrimination but it is not clear how, or whether, we should "oppose" prejudice. Finally, whilst we can immediately see the intention of the third statement above, it may prove useless as a policy clause; there is a case to be made that *all* literature contains prejudice.

The difficulties outlined here could be put down to drafting errors, though I do not favour this suggestion as the document was originally drafted by a team of three members of the working group, was examined by the governing body and finally by the whole staff. I favour more the suggestion that in choosing to identify *prejudice* as their main focus (as opposed to, say racism or racial harassment) the working group created a problem for itself which in the time they had at their disposal and the circumstances in which they were working, proved insoluble. Prejudice carries with it connotations, such as 'negative' or 'needs to be opposed', which tend to be widely and uncritically accepted. Indeed these connotations *are* difficult to counter; it would sound absurd, for example, to argue for greater prejudice among people. But as my earlier analysis shows and as the working group began to appreciate, prejudice may well be a feature of a perfectly healthy mind which itself may not necessarily result in discriminatory behaviour or injustice. Similarly, even if prejudice were to be eradicated (if this were possible) does it follow that all injustice would end?

The difficulties here point me to the need to clarify the concept; and as we have seen, the path I have chosen is to designate prejudice as a "complex idea" and map out its "dimensions". What this discussion may also show, however, is that as well as the need to handle the concept with care, an equally difficult question centres on how to translate any complex concept "map" into operational language. If writing policy documents is arduous, then inserting school wide policy into curriculum practice - and thence to day-to-day lesson planning - is even more exacting.

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<sup>51</sup>Subsequent to the main period during which this research was conducted, the Headteacher provided me with an interesting postscript. After the concrete establishment of this policy, momentum was lost and energies diverted to other pressing issues, not least the introduction of the National Curriculum. It was not until preparations were being made for the next inspection, under the auspices of Ofsted (between the 1st and 5th May 1995), that the policy was seriously examined once again by the Head. He found it to be negative in tone and not in accordance to the Greenfields "way". He therefore rewrote it in eight lines (see Appendix 6, part C). In my view, it manages to capture the kernal of what the working group had been trying to articulate: "... (the school) recognises the differences in perception and being that are generated by issues of gender, religion and race, and enjoys the diversity of experience that such distinctions allow..."

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to situate Greenfields School geographically, psychologically, sociologically and, indeed, philosophically. In doing this the iniqueness of the school has been delineated to the extent to which readers not acquainted with the particularity of Greenfields may obtain a 'fix' on it. This in turn will enable them to attach to the following interpretive empirical chapters their own particular 'gloss'. I am in other words aiming not to sell some impossible objective truth but to provide the circumstances in which a truth told is contingent: the reader can weigh up the contingent 'facts' of the case but I hope this chapter has helped set the context in which my empirical enquiry can be seen to hold both 'truth' and 'credibility' (Simons 1987 p26).

This study is also situated in time, although findings can be extrapolated. My description of the school and the conversational data are located at the end of the 1980s. The fieldwork took place at around the time of the passage through Parliament of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). Trends which appear to have been operating, some of which played their part in precipitating that legislation (eg Lawton and Chitty 1988) are now, from the vantage point of the mid-1990s, more clearly visible. Perspective afforded by the passage of time tends to reinforce the significance of certain of the features identified as important in this portrayal. For instance, the ERA and subsequent legislative effort to put schools into the market place have encouraged the subject based, individualistic and 'potent' school culture of the kind observed at Greenfields. The issue of how to work with this, which fell to the prejudice working group at Greenfields, is one which is relevant to many schools in the 1990s, and probably not only in suburban locations.

The next three Chapters take forward this discussion using the evidence from my conversations with both pupils and teachers at Greenfields. I explore more fully the meaning of prejudice with my 'discussants'; this will add clarity and perspective to my conceptual map of the concept by further illuminating the dimensions and how they relate to each other. My conversations with both pupils and teachers (but especially the latter) also further develop the notion of 'philosophising' introduced in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 6

### Listening to the pupils at Greenfields

This chapter is divided into two distinct parts reflecting the related yet discrete data sets arising from my conversations with pupils at Greenfields School. Part 1 concerns conversational interviews conducted during the academic year 1987-1988 whereas Part 2 analyses conversations held later, in the academic year 1989-1990.

#### Part 1: The Academic Year 1987-1988

##### 6.1 Introduction and Background

There are several reasons why children may be identified as the objects of educational research. As education involves and concerns them directly it is self-evidently sensible to find out more about children - what they think, the way they think and how they learn. I have reviewed a good deal of such research as it has impinged on the field of preferences for example (see Chapter 3), and the findings of this forms an interesting and useful backdrop for the present investigation<sup>52</sup>. Robinson's (1987) research on images also informs us of the kinds of responses to the 'other' we might expect in geography from fourteen and fifteen year olds in England. It could be argued that so well understood are, say, 'Eurocentric' responses to images of Africa (Rupar 1982), or indeed, middle class images of the city (see Harrison 1987), that there is no longer any surprise when such responses are revealed to us. Indeed it may well be that the crucial problem for the researcher in this field is to maintain a readiness to be surprised, so

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<sup>52</sup>My own research has added to this. A questionnaire survey of the entire Y9 cohort (167 pupils) undertaken at Greenfields in the autumn term 1987. Amongst the questions were two which asked children to select from a list of eleven countries their most and their least favoured country. The results demonstrate the predictable fondness for 'home' and familiarity (through language and the popular media) on the one hand and the tendency for adverse reaction to distance and difference, particularly countries given a negative portrayal in the press (the 'Falklands War' was still fresh in the national consciousness). Some traditional animosity is also evident (also fuelled by aspects of media coverage) as in the case of France and Germany. The results were as follows (actual number of responses shown in brackets):

**Most favoured:** Britain (101); USA (27); Australia (15); China (3); Germany (2); France (2); Japan (2); South Africa (2); India (1).

**Least favoured:** Argentina (45); South Africa (38); USSR (32); Germany (9); India (8); Japan (5); China (5); Australia (4) France(4); USA (2); Britain (1).

predictable is the general expectation leading, perhaps, to self-fulfilling prophecies in research outcomes.

The purpose of listening to pupils at Greenfields, however, was not merely to identify their images or, as it were, replicate earlier research, for there are other reasons why we may wish to listen to children some of which have influenced the focus and scope of the present investigation. We may for example, be less interested in psychological dimensions of learning and be more interested in children as groups - their social and educational settings (see Chapter 5). On the other hand, we may simply be motivated by our respect for the children's views in informing our judgement, say, about course construction, teaching and learning approaches and so on (see Wright 1990).

Techniques systematically to acquire useful information for this latter purpose were developed by Dee Fink (1977) and have been influential on this study. The research approach, encapsulated in Dee Fink's title *Listening to the Learner*, appears to be based upon a fundamental belief that the students (in our case, school students) have a valid point of view and are able to articulate this well enough to merit seriously the evaluator's or researcher's attention. This belief was taken forward by Grant and Sleeter (1987) who listened to students' views on numerous issues including, specifically, human diversity. Dee Fink's research interest was the student evaluation of college geography courses and the approach is predicated on a model which distinguishes what he termed the "Being" from the "Experience" of students: "This model suggests that there is an inner self, the condition of which is here referred to as "Being". The character of a person's being influences and is influenced by his (*sic*) experiences" (*op cit* p10). The model is based upon a belief "that any learning experience ought to be related to other experiences in a student's life in such a way that it contributes to growth and development. Growth and development can be defined... as an increase in the capacity to differentiate and integrate one's experiences" (*ibid* p11). As we have seen, in Chapter 3, many geography teachers in England and Wales would have little difficulty accepting the principle of relating classroom experiences to 'where the children are at' and have made strenuous efforts to bring the pupils' worlds into the classroom. Nevertheless, much classroom knowledge remains 'inert': more than one Greenfield teacher suspected that pupils were accomplished at separating 'school' and 'everyday' knowledge, giving the teacher what he or she wanted and not relating classroom events and activities to 'real life' outside. Interestingly, Grant and Sleeter (1987) report a similar finding: "We asked the students if what they were being taught related to their lives in any way. Almost half said that none of it related" (*ibid* p167)

It seemed to me, then, that Dee Fink's distinction between 'Being' (every day, real life) and 'Experience' (school and classroom experiences) was potentially useful in adding a

basic framework to our understanding of how, at Greenfield School, we can best introduce children (who as many staff openly acknowledged were "isolated", "cosy" and "naive") to the complex and sometimes uncomfortable wider world. As I wrote in a briefing note on my research to the Greenfield's prejudice working group in September 1987:

*How do children attempt to relate their common sense knowledge (or received wisdom?) to the intellectual experiences in classrooms? Are teachers aware of their students' social and psychological settings and to what extent do these dimensions impinge on the predominantly intellectual activity of most classrooms? (see Appendix 7)*

## 6.2 Data Collection

In order to pursue such questions I decided to identify a small number of pupils who could become my 'informants' on school (see Burgess 1985d) and its impact on their thinking, and provide me with insight into the dissonance between their school knowledge and what is 'known' outside the school setting. In view of the qualitative nature of my study I realised that my informants could not be large in number and that they would have to be people with whom I would be able to establish some trust and a good working relationship. My favoured format for data gathering of the quality I required was informal: I wanted to hold conversations with the pupils in which they could exert control to some significant extent rather than slavishly following my predetermined agenda<sup>53</sup>. I therefore 'practised' conversational interviewing with a number of children (learning, for example, when to allow a silence, when to prompt, how to probe (Powney and Watts 1987 p138-139) and when - and how often - to ask direct questions) and in the Autumn Term of 1987, with the assistance of the working group, selected four pupils from each of Years 9, 10 and 11. Permissions were sought and obtained from parents to interview these pupils in view of my intention (at that time) to meet with them regularly and over some prolonged time period of two to three years. After meeting with them and satisfying myself with their suitability - I needed a range of backgrounds but above all the pupils needed to be able to talk and listen, and if

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<sup>53</sup>To encourage the children to exert some control - so that they felt free to say what they wished (and not what they thought I wanted), I in fact experimented with several formats including *group conversations*, in which the children were in pairs of threes - that is, with me in a minority, and *structured eavesdropping* (see Powney 1988) in which I withdrew completely from group conversations. I retained the former (later employing the technique effectively with colleagues and Greenfield teachers - so called research conversations) but rejected data arising from the latter: though powerful as a pedagogic tool, as a research instrument it had difficulties. For example, recording quality became an issue and the potential gains (which in any case were limited as the children knew that they were being listened to) seemed to me to not outweigh the costs.

necessary be self disclosing ("...they should be willing to inform." [Powney and Watts 1987 p49]) - I began my conversational interviews. They were conducted in a quiet room, and, when possible, during lesson times, and were tape recorded. My only guidance was a general 'crib sheet' (see Appendix 8a), which I found I rarely had to use; the pupils had merely been told that they would be "discussing with me what they are getting out of school, what they are learning, how they feel about homework, different subjects *etc* and also their thoughts about the "world outside", their interests, their ambitions *etc* (see Appendix 8b: *Memo to working group and tutors*). I subsequently transcribed ten conversational interviews, each of around 40 minutes, onto 62 A4 sheet.

### 6.3 Methods of Analysis

The transcribed conversations are difficult to analyse partly because each one possesses unique characteristics; such characteristics are often important and it would serve no purpose to shake out from the collected conversations only general similarities if the original intention was to identify informants who could 'tell it as they saw it', individually and perhaps esoterically; as Lambert and Slater observed,

*The dilemma faced in analysing these kinds of data is the tension between not wishing to lose the richness and texture of the spoken word and the need to categorise, which carries the risk of being reductive. (Lambert and Slater 1992 p257).*

This research sought insights and illumination more than general views or trends, through conversations which often contained long passages of ostensibly limited relevance. I have taken care not to impose any such prejudgements, for at the very least such passages can potentially indirectly show a person's mental attitude. The analysis in this chapter, therefore, consists of a discussion based upon a presentation of appropriate conversation extracts selected on grounds of direct relevance to my theme, prejudice; but I have tried to preserve some of their 'conversational' quality. Thus, in what follows, The extracts are introduced, then presented (sometimes abbreviated to increase sharpness and readability) and then finally commented upon. At the end of the analysis I shall, as it were, look back and identify key, general points. It is probably significantly revealing about the nature of pupil conversational data in general that the strategy outlined here - which is different from the way in which I tackle the data derived from teachers in that I do not preserve the conversational characteristics of the latter - is paralleled by Grant and Sleeter's (1987) work: in their book there is a stark contrast

between the more interactive transcriptions presented in their chapter on students and the illustrative single quotations used in the chapter analysing teachers' interviews.

Before coming to the analysis I need to make one more important general observation on the dynamic nature of research in progress, which I do in the following section.

#### 6.4 Reflections on Research in Progress

Reflecting on the data arising from my 1987 pupil conversations drew me to conclude that to continue (as I had intended) revisiting the pupils two or possibly three time during the year, would have yielded very little additional information. This was partly due to the success of the interviews conducted. The information I had gained was rich, but could inform the working group only in the most general sense (to protect confidentiality). Furthermore, as the group's deliberations continued it became increasingly clear to me that,

- \* it was teachers as much as pupils I needed to converse with, on the grounds that it was *their* assumptions which were formative in establishing the nature of school and classroom experiences for children and were thus equally significant, if not more so, than the knowledge and attitudes that the children brought into school with them;

- \* it was not so much 'information' I was interested in, but the way in which teachers, and pupils, *thought* about difference and diversity; increasingly this crystallised more into *how* they thought about the concept prejudice or the assumptions they made when talking it or its effects. In other words, I could see a need for a subtle shift in the nature of the conversations I was conducting; they were to become what might be thought of as engagements in 'philosophising'.

I therefore resolved to adjust my research focus somewhat away from the pupils *per se* and more to the staff. I decided that a longitudinal *relationship* with the selected pupils was no longer my main significant interest. I took the opportunity to meet most of them again after an interval of two years, though endeavoured to engage them in "philosophising" rather than the more limited and perhaps less ambitious task to seek information on their lives, thoughts, and feelings. This is quite in accordance with "listening to the learner" of course, though I anticipated that some students would find it more difficult to manage than others.



The following data can be taken, therefore, as the first stage of an *evolving* research strategy. As the 'crib sheet' (Appendix 8a) indicates, the conversations were deliberately wide ranging but consistently concentrated on the pupils' perspective. In virtually all conversations the topic of 'racial' diversity emerged, sometimes gently prompted but usually of the pupil's own volition (it was an issue which, at the time, seemed to be on the minds of many pupils; not surprising, perhaps, since cases such as the Honeyford controversy (the background to which is described in Honeyford 1986) and the Burnage Enquiry (Macdonald *et al* 1989) were prominent in the media. Also it is possible that the working group at Greenfields was having impact - it was not unusual to hear the intonation "we're always doing race", even though this was a claim that could rarely be substantiated. The extracts I have selected concentrate on this particular aspect, that is the children talking directly about cultural and ethnic diversity; commentary on the extracts follows.

## 6.5 Analysis of the Pupil Conversations

It is interesting to acknowledge at the outset that there existed in the conversational data general agreement in tone that the school had a particular role in the children's lives - usually expressed in very positive but instrumental terms. Even a low attaining boy, 'Sam'<sup>54</sup>, for whom GCSE prospects seemed to be (and later proved to be) exceedingly limited saw the school's purpose as preparing him quite narrowly for work (via "qualifications" he was unlikely to get). School was often "a waste of time" but he still saw it as a "good school". What he did not express, along with his higher attaining peers, was any clear concept of the school preparing him more generally, for want of a better term, 'for life'. The formal curriculum and its individual subject components were also often understood in surprisingly restricted ways. Karim for example, conversed at length about geography lessons, how he enjoyed the present topic "about people's lives... about how one side is rich and one side is poor" in Brazil, but that he did not necessarily think this was what he *should* be learning about in geography: "I don't know why we're learning it really. Geography is our country; the old geography used to be boring, but I think the old geography is more geography than this geography; about the British Isles, about compasses and things like that, that's more geography".

We begin with the extracts which follow, selected from three conversations. These have been selected to show individual ways in which pupils talked specifically on the topic of human diversity - sometimes, as in Gemma's case, probed quite tenaciously by the

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<sup>54</sup>All pupils have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity. A list of names used is given in Appendix 1.

researcher (R). Generally they display a tendency to a kind of defensiveness and slight unease, but also, as once again Grant and Sleeter (1987) found in their US study, a sense in which they were "lulled into believing that there was no problem that they should be concerned with" (Grant and Sleeter *ibid* p305). I resume this commentary in more detail after presenting the extracts. I then subsequently add a longer and contrasting extract; what we learn from this depends on the way in which the unabridged conversation develops. The evidence presented in this Chapter is intended to be read as a whole.

**Caroline:**

**15 year old girl; low attainer; conversation has been concerned with her own background, likes and dislikes, attitude to and approach to school.**

*R: Twice you've mentioned "coloured people" - once in connection with Jane and Liz and once for London. You said that more coloured people are beginning to move in. This seems to have made an impact on your mind. Can you tell me why?*

*C: (Long story about a former stay in Wales as a small child; isolated incident was witnessed during which a brick was thrown through a window; the thrower was black) "Since then I've never got on with them".*

*R: What about at this school?*

*C: I get on alright with Jane and Liz.*

*R: Are they different?*

*C: Well they're not proper ones are they? They don't look as bad - that funny nose and those horrible lips (ha ha)*

*R: (Challenging her logic)... You haven't been put off white people even though the stabbing incident (you told me about) was by a white person.*

*C: Well no. It's because I'm white, innit (ha)*

*R: Do you understand what racist is?*

C: *I suppose it's like,...you can't go around... saying... Like, if you work for a company and you're the manager and a coloured person is lazy, they don't do something. If I go around calling them a black whatever... well, that'll be called racism, because you'll be insulting them.*  
*It's getting stupid - you can't go around calling a blackboard a blackboard anymore....*

R: *I'm not sure that is true actually.*

C: *Yeah, it was in the papers. And something about manholes or something.*

R: *So racism means?*

C: *Insulting a person. Like calling a Paki a Paki, I suppose.*

R: *Have you done anything in school, anything, about racism?*

C: *No*

R: *Never?*

C: *No*

R: *Would you have liked to have done?*

C: *Dunno. I might have found it boring or something like that.*

R: *Why?*

C: *Because you'd get people lecturing you on why you can't call coloured people black or something like that...*

R: *Is Greenfields a good School?*

C: *It's OK. But it's got too many kids dossing around and getting away with things, like me.*

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**Mark:**

**15 year old boy; high achiever; conversation concerning school, the local area, his own likes, dislikes, feelings....**

(On talking about subjects in which we learn about people and ways of life).

*M: I don't agree with racial discrimination. So long as they don't make trouble..or we don't, then that's fine. But it seems to me that nowadays, that blacks can do what they want... and yet if we say something against them it is immediately harassment of some sort. So, it seems to have swung too much the other way.*

*R: You've heard of the word "racism". What do you understand by that?*

*M: Generally, someone who gives abuse of some sort to another nationality or colour  
In London there's a lot of racism.*

*R: What about Kingsford?*

*M: You don't see that many coloured people here. But, I mean, for the amount of coloured there are, they don't have any trouble at all. No, I wouldn't see this as a racist village at all.*

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**Marie:**

**14 year old girl; high attainer; conversation concerning local area, the School, personal likes and dislikes and different subjects - specially, the conversation had focused on studying Nazi Germany in history lessons.**

*R: Do you think other countries have racism, say, even in the present day?*

*M: Yes, but I suppose not in countries like Sweden... there's not that much. But I suppose it depends where you live really. Some people, like in London, are quite bad, but somewhere like here, well there's not much. I mean, not many coloured people live around here.*

*R: How many blacks live in Kingsford area?*

*M: Uhm, I don't know (ha). There are two I know at school (silence).*

*R: Are you saying that the fact that not many blacks live in Kingsford accounts for why there is less racism here?*

*M: Hum, Well... I still think, even if there were more black people living here, there'd still be less racism. I don't know why (ha) but that's what I think.*

*R: So, what do you understand by racism? What is it?*

*M: Well, people, uhm, people taking liberties with other people who've got different coloured skins, or different beliefs. You know, they think the way they're doing things is right and they don't take into account other people's views... and it's not only whites being horrible to blacks but it's vice versa as well.*

*R: Oh, you think so?*

*M: Well in London, say, after football matches, for instnsnce, there's lots of blacks, attacking whites.*

*R: I've never heard that before.*

*M: Yes, I saw it. All these blacks taking on these white people (ha ha).. it's strange, though, because you can have black and white on the same side and I suppose they don't take account of skin colour then...*

These three extracts may be no more than we might expect from a group of teenagers in an "all white" suburban school. We are not surprised. Nevertheless these extracts give a concise account of what worried a large proportion of the teachers at the school, prompting some to describe racism as a serious problem which required a sophisticated response from teachers - note Caroline's clear resistance to 'being told' how to think or behave. Perhaps a particularly noteworthy aspect of the extracts lies in their depiction of an exceptionally superficial view of what racism is (which they universally agree is something to be deplored) and the association of racism as a problem with London (and in fact other large cities<sup>55</sup>). This is exactly what Smith (1993) and Jackson (1988) meant by the "racialisation of culture": the terms inner city, immigrant, even racism itself are code words for the idea of 'race' contributing to the "reservoir of racist imagery" (ibid p203) which leads to the convenient conclusion that it is with the black population that 'the problem' lies. When the pupils averred that Kingsford was not a racist village or that racism was not found in Sweden it is difficult not to conclude that what they meant to say is that because there are comparatively few blacks in these locations; there is, as Chris Gaine (1987) put it, "no problem here". Though to be fair, the third interviewee, when pushed, believed that Kingsford would be freer of racism even with a greater black population, and this too could be a highly significant point: racism is perceived to be undesirable and, as something undesirable, is not something that pupils wish, or are able, to associate with 'home'.

This point is, in a sense, repeated in a slightly different form in the next extract in which the discussant distinguishes people she knows who are black from characteristics she associates with the generality (a feature we also observed in the passage with Caroline).

Annie-Rose, a relative newcomer to Kingsford developed her views on human diversity at some length. Her conversation, incidentally, was one which moved to this topic without any prompting, and as a recent arrival it seemed she was aware of the relatively isolated state of the locality. This extract occurs about 15 minutes into the conversation which has been concerned with everyday matters of school, homelife and friends. I have retained it almost in entirety in order to preserve the flow and pace of the exchange which contains ambiguities, unusual modes of expression and at least one *volte face*.

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<sup>55</sup>It is tempting to associate this with the deeply lodged stratum in the English cultural memory of rural 'goodness' as an antidote to urban malevolence. Schama writes that "the rustic life was to be valued as a moral corrective to the ills of court and city" (Schama 1995 p11).

**Annie-Rose.**

**A 15 year old girl; middle to high attainer; very active in school music and drama activities (a 'star'). Conversation concerned with her own background and her view of the school.**

*R: People can do well here can't they?*

*A: Yes, if they want to. It seems to be a school where the lower groups get help. If you want to do well you can do extremely well - you could get into a university if you want to. But if you don't want to then a lot can get away without working. I mean they are put on report and everything but they just don't care.*

*R: Why is that do you think?*

*A: They must care. They totally confuse me - they bewilder me. Also my parents would be upset. They aren't upset if I'm doing my best. They've never been angry.*

*R: But would this be the same in a girl's school? Is it something to do with human nature or is it something to do with the school?*

*A: No I think it's more human nature. I should think there would be more in Birmingham than there are here, because of the way they are brought up. A lot are brought up in very high circles round here.*

*R: I was very interested in what you were saying earlier about people here.*

*A: About people being sheltered. Well that was an over statement. They're not all like that. They all know what it is like in London.*

*R: What is it like?*

*A: Well the very down part is pretty grotty. The thing I noticed around here is that there are hardly any coloured people. In Birmingham you can drive for ten minutes and you won't see a single white. There is an Indian part where the Asians are and then you get the African part.*

*R: How do you feel about that?*

A: *I'm not racist at all because I know a lot of people who are really nice but the fact that there are so many and now all their houses are being done up. There are lots of whites that haven't got any jobs, that are angry now.*

R: *Are you talking about Birmingham?*

A: *Yes*

R: *Why does it anger you?*

A: *Well this sounds really bad. It's our fault that they came in - we gave them all passports. If anyone is to blame it's ourselves but the fact that there are so many. The thing that makes me mad is that people say there is terrible racism in Birmingham and because they say that they think they have got to do the blacks first. So they do their houses and everything for them first.*

R: *What kinds of houses are these - are they Council Houses?*

A: *Council houses and they are all being done up now. They are nice houses - the old ones too. I went down one road and it was lovely and there was not a white person down there. It's because they are being called racist and so everything is being done for them.*

R: *And there aren't many blacks around here?*

A: *Not round here. In London they are.*

R: *Why aren't there many blacks living here?*

A: *Well I'm not really very sure about that.*

R: *Have you ever thought about it? I mean obviously it is quite different.*

A: *It's incredible, it's just incredible. The difference - I mean Miles was 6 and he noticed. He came and said "there aren't many of them around here are there. There's just this little boy and he's the only one. I think that they are foster parents".*

R: *They live round here do they?*

A: *Yes*



R: *You didn't answer the question of why not many live round here.*

A: *In the surrounding villages there aren't many high rise flats.*

R: *Do you think an area like this is attractive to black families - black people?*

A: *No because there are no communities around here. They are all in their big houses with their big driveways. They always like communities where they can go and knock next door- which is nice. But it goes back to what I was saying before - around here they are all for themselves. So they're all in their separate houses and there is not that much community spirit.*

R: *So it is that plus that fact that big houses cost 1/4 million pounds to buy.*

A: *Yes*

R: *So what about London then? There are lots of blacks living there.*

A: *Well it seems like that when you walk through. I mean I don't really know London very well at all. A lot of it I have seen just driving through. But back in Birmingham a lot of the corner shops - people treat it as a joke, but it isn't a joke - a lot of got the corner shops and they're open on a Sunday and everything because they're getting more business. They're prepared to work hard - they do their work all hours of the day.*

R: *Well what are you saying about that? It is a good thing or a bad thing?*

A: *Yes, it's a good thing but because they are prepared to do this a lot of us British are losing a lot of our work because they are prepared to do it and we're not. It shows us up in one way but then you've got to stop working sometimes. I mean Sunday. That's one thing about religion, I suppose. Because they don't believe that Sunday is a rest day. Is that right? I don't think they think Sundays are.....*

R: *I'm not quite sure whether many white British think Sunday is a rest day.*

A: *No but they use it as an excuse don't they?*

R: *Yes they do.*

A: *They say it's Sunday so we don't work.*

R: *But there's an element of hypocrisy about that.*

A: *Yes there is. There is a lot but they still say it.*

R: */n lessons, have you ever done any work on the issue of race?*

A: *Hang on, I think we did. There wasn't much on it she just mentioned it. She mentioned the (?) but I think you do go more into it if you take it as a subject. Yes, I think some did a topic on it. But I have known some nice really genuine people. That was just one of the things that shocked me living here - there is hardly anybody - there is for in the school.*

R: *I don't know. Can you say that you are shocked - is that the right word?*

A: *Not shocked horribly but it was - where are they all? where are the people taking it out on them? Yes, they get picked on especially if they are in a minority. They do get picked on. They get into bigger groups now.*

R: *So you are saying, here people do not picking on them.*

A: *Well you don't get people talking about them or anything*

R: *Oh I see. It's not an issue; it's just something you don't worry about... Have you ever heard people at school making racist remarks?*

A: *Yes. Only because Sandra goes round with us. They do take it out on her- the boys... But they thought she would just take it as a joke because they're not used to it I think. They don't use it so seriously. They go over the top about it sometimes...*

It can be noted that Annie-Rose denies the presence of racism in Kingsford - she is "shocked" by its absence. One feels she is very pleased; after all, this is an area she described as moving in "high circles" and she is proud of her new identity. Just as interesting is her acceptance (at the end) that, in fact, there is racism present.

Here, Annie-Rose has attempted more analysis than most of her contemporaries, and in doing so reveals aspects of the conceptual framework she uses for the purpose. From a close examination of just the highlighted part of the longer extract we see that the framework appears to give her:

- \* categories in which to group people;
- \* categories to describe residential spatial segregation in the city;
- \* an 'explanation' for white "anger";
- \* a source of the 'problem' (to blame);
- \* an 'explanation' for residential segregation ("communities") within the British urban system.

She also apparently has a concept of what constitutes "racist" and clearly she does not wish to label herself in this way. Whether she is or is not racist is rather beside the point, however, the purpose of my discussion being to illustrate the self-evident point that this girl appears to have knowledge which she attempts to deploy fluently and with conviction: she may appear, in fact, to be knowledgeable. Some of her 'knowing' may have its origins in formal school learning (possibly, for example, providing a vocabulary of types of housing) but much of it would appear to be part of her 'Being' with its origins in her family circumstances and social setting. The outcome is a conceptual framework through which, say, her understanding of the way in which the housing market works is mediated; it is a model apparently based upon unconstrained choice which bears little resemblance to reality; again, we could say that her view is "racialised", such as in the obvious truth (in the way it was presented to me) that black people prefer "communities" in (of all things) "high rise flats".

Indeed, almost despite herself, she seems convinced in her understanding of housing and job shortages that immigration is a causal factor. There are three points to make about this: first, I am certain beyond reasonable doubt that she has not been taught this in the geography (or any other) classroom at Greenfields - not *intentionally* at any rate. Secondly, she is aware that the view she espouses is not officially sanctioned - when she says "this sounds really bad" it is tantamount to admitting its political incorrectness. It is a deeply conservative view which, in the way that Barker (1982 p23-24) points out, contains a theory of human nature in which "it is in our biology, our instincts, to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders - not because they are inferior, but because they are part of a different culture" (quoted in Smith 1993 p137).

The third point to make is the most significant in relation to my thesis; this relates to the role she sees the anti-racism movement having played in *creating* injustice, causing the authorities, as it were, to pander to minorities' housing needs (at the expense of the understandably indignant whites). The opinion that "... (the authorities) are being called racist and so everything is being done for (the blacks)" is matched by Mark's earlier

assertion that "nowadays blacks can do what they want... things seem to have swung too much the other way". Is this concrete expression of Leicester's (1989) description of the growth of "anti anti-racist thought", or is there something more subtle to comprehend in order to respond, as teachers, more effectively than, as it were, simply shouting louder? The pupils are expressing here part of a prejudiced line of thought which, though probably not immutable, is probably difficult to erode by rational argument (or as Jones [1987] would say by "truth and logic"). It seems to be as much a product of anxiety concerning a sense of threat to the comfort they feel in what is known and loved as it is (more crudely) a prejudice against blacks. Annie-Rose apparently feels that accusations (real or perceived) of racism against Birmingham city authorities are unfair and have resulted in discriminatory practices in favour of blacks which increases her sense of threat. To attack her prejudice as "wrong" would be in effect to threaten her "Being", to betray her instinct to feel good about (to use Wilson's [1992] phrasiology) what is hers (that is, "Because it's mine" [*ibid* p 199-302]) and to form "local attachments". Precisely what she thinks is hers and the kind of local attachment she is forming are not necessarily desirable, but she is unlikely to choose to change them when placed under attack.

A feature of many of my young discussants was their rejection of any notion that the school should, or could, change pupils' views on most matters including those on 'race'. This was normally expressed as a rejection of the teacher's right to "lecture" or moralise. Few teachers at Greenfields, if any, would argue that they do this or even that they should do this; and yet when it comes to moral or ethical issues at school this is how pupils see the transaction - being on the receiving end of moralistic "lectures": one pupil who denied having had any lessons on racism was in fact thankful; "I might find (lessons concerning racism) boring or something like that; I'd just ignore it anyway." Pupils *did* think about the issues but only in a very limited way and there seemed to be resistance to accepting that school had a part to play in taking forward or supporting their thinking. Even the 15 year old boy who confidently informed me that 12% of the British population was black (and who graciously accepted his error) seemed - oddly - to find it hard to accept that school had a role in correcting such misconceptions. Another boy asserted:

*I don't think that it should be discussed as a regular feature in class; I think it's only (purpose is) to know what, or to find out what your friends think and after that it should be left. The school should give an occasion to talk about it but shouldn't try to change your point of view (Philip).*

## 6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, I argue that if there is truth in the picture I have attempted to paint here (and I am confident that this represents a realist account of attitudes in the school, a school which nevertheless was commended by HMI for its excellent human relationships), then there are implications for the school attempting seriously to tackle racism, particularly in accepting the crucial need to avoid a moralising tone. Greenfields teachers need to acknowledge and respond to the difficulties posed by its 'isolated state' and (a connected problem) the anxiety that some pupils feel about meeting the uncomfortable outside world, summed up for many by the metaphor 'London'. Teachers need to understand the conditions of the prejudice which, we imagine, 'explains' some of the utterances and actions amongst pupils which worry us. Before we can acknowledge and respond effectively to this condition, in other words, the condition itself needs to be understood.

The 'isolated state' is not only a geographical description; indeed it may even be somewhat misleading if interpreted only in that sense. It is primarily a psychological condition which Gaine (1987) and others rightly describe as not confined to a 'rural' hinterland. It seems to me tied up with a reluctance to engage with the uncertainties of a complex wider world which feels threatening. Geography has a particular responsibility to introduce children to this diverse and challenging subject matter in a manner such that open mindedness and a willingness to engage in "conversation" (Jones 1987) or "deliberation" (Walsh 1994) are enhanced. Ironically, as I have indicated in Chapter 3, the content of school geography - in terms of the way in which the 'other' and the 'other place' are presented - may unintentionally nurture feelings about the complexities and uncertainties of the wider world: urban problems, development issues, quality of life issues, population control, migration patterns...in what ways are topics such as these introduced in a manner to discourage conversation and deliberation? At the very least, there is no evidence from my informants to indicate that such deliberation has been encouraged or even that pupils perceive subjects like geography as having a role that could be described in anything close to these terms.

One way in which formal curriculum subjects, especially geography, can begin to clear the ground is to think about the nature of the model explanations they offer; in other words, they should not so much seek out ways of 'getting anti-racism into the syllabus', but critically examine the contents of existing programmes of study in terms of the knowledge and understanding that pupils are said to acquire (see Lambert and Matthews, forthcoming). Reference to Figure 6.1 (p131), which shows the (non statutory) aims of geography in the national curriculum, demonstrates that it is possible to construct aims in geographical education which require a 'sensitive' handling of the

'other' and the 'other place'. Aim (g) is arguably the most pertinent in this respect, but aims (c), (d), (e), (f) and (h) also focus in various ways on the significance of location, distance and diversity. There is, however, little elaboration on *how* such well intentioned motives or goals should be addressed, or even how the (statutory) contents may serve such aims. This interface, between aims and practice, needs more attention rather than less since the introduction of a nationally prescribed curriculum. For example, should geography educators, developing the "values education" work of the last twenty years or so, begin to ask a new set of questions which would recognise "positive prejudice" for 'home' and acknowledge, after Gadamer (1975), the role prejudice may play as a threshold or foundation, rather than a barrier or limit, in coming to new understandings (or as Said puts it, "reconciliation")? As Philip, a sixth former, said to me (in 1990) reflecting back on his earlier years at school, "...most of us had fairly narrow minded views and from perhaps families which may have...racist views". He continued,

*I have to say sadly that there was a conformity on racism and there was probably racist attitudes within the group, definitely...I'm trying to say (that in school) we'd never really questioned anything of any real importance.. (Philip)*

These quotations come from a person who, intriguingly, was described to me in confidence by a classmate as "... racist, or at least he was". The evidence indicates that if so, he was one who was coming to an understanding of his thoughts and actions; he was willing to deliberate. As a sixth former he acknowledged the role of one of his subjects in helping him; not geography as it happens, but philosophy.<sup>56</sup>

The questions for geography in education I believe arise from the above discussion are:

- \* can geography help pupils to think and question in a manner that assists 'deliberation'?
- \* is there an identifiable and distinctive way of handling information in geography - particularly that which introduces the 'other' and the 'other place'?

In order to answer such questions it seemed to me that a more complete understanding of prejudice and its role in learning, alluded to in the above discussion, would be required. The key to this, which (simultaneously) identifies a root of racist attitudes and

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<sup>56</sup>I acknowledge this case as a "success", not only for his teacher of philosophy, but for the school as a whole: his prejudices may not have been eradicated (this in my view unlikely to happen so rapidly, but in truth we cannot tell) but they are evidently acknowledged and their potential to harm understood. I have, however, no way of telling the relative impacts of the curriculum subject mentioned (attributed by the student as having had impact) and the whole school ethos of a 'caring community' giving the school some of the characteristics of "potency" described by Wilson (1972).

actions, and enables us to broaden the discussion out from racism, is to investigate with pupils (and their teachers) *their* understanding of the concept prejudice.

It is in this way that my conversational interviews were to change emphasis the next time I met the pupils in the academic year 1989-1990.

### Figure 6.1 Geography in the National Curriculum : Aims

The Aims for geography from 5 to 16 were set out by the 'Geography Working Group' as follows. To:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a acquire a framework of knowledge about locations and places that will help them to set local, national and international events within a geographical context, and that will support their development of geographical understanding;   | f acquire knowledge and understanding about the physical and human processes that bring about changes in place, space, environments, and a critical appreciation of the consequences of those changes;  |
| b understand some of the important characteristics of the Earth's major systems - its landforms, weather and climate, hydrological and ecological systems, and the interaction among those systems;   | g develop awareness and appreciation of the ethnic, cultural, economic and political diversity of human society, and its geographical expression;   |
| c understand the significance of location and of distribution patterns in human activities and physical processes; how places are linked by movements of people, materials and information, and by physical, economic, social and political relationships; and the interdependence of people, places and environments throughout the world; | h acquire the knowledge and develop the skills and understanding necessary to identify and investigate important cultural, social and political issues relating to place, space and environment, with sensitivity to the range of attitudes and values associated with such issues; |
| d understand some of the relationships between people and environments, including both: i) the influence of environmental conditions on human activities, and ii) the varied ways in which societies with different technologies, economic systems and cultural values have perceived, used, altered and created particular environments;   | i acquire techniques and develop skills and competences necessary for geographical enquiry, and of value for other purposes, especially the making and interpretation of maps, the use of information technology and the conduct of fieldwork;                                      |
| e develop a sense of place: a feeling for the 'personality' of a place and what it might be like to live there;   | j develop intellectual and social skills, including the ability to observe, analyse, and communicate  |

Source:

(DES 1990 p6 -7)

## Part 2: The Academic Year 1989-1990

### 6.7 Introduction and Background

During the Autumn and Spring terms of 1989-1990 I held another round of forty-minute conversational interviews with ten pupils, 6 of whom were individuals I had met in 1987. All were individual interviews, four of which were transcribed verbatim; in addition I conducted a number of *group* conversations, one of which I have transcribed, giving a total of 50 A4 transcription sheets. As on previous occasions I wished to give pupils the opportunity to lead the conversation where possible, though I focussed the content to some extent by informing pupils that I was interested in pupil group dynamics in the school and attitudes to other people. My rather more hidden agenda was to attempt to engage pupils in what I have called 'philosophising' about prejudice.

### 6.8 Presentation and Analysis of Conversations

As expected these conversations were not always wholly successful in terms of the criteria relevant to this research. Sam, for instance, an open minded boy of low academic attainment (and for whom, by 1990 when he was in Y11, the chief motivation was the desire to finish his schooling) found it difficult to conceptualise any difference between prejudice and strong dislike; on being asked directly what he thought it meant if someone was prejudiced the conversation continued:

*S: Well I don't really know what it means. I think, is it a bit like racism, is it?...or when you dislike something really strongly...I don't know, when people like really hate, like , some people, like some people really hate coloured people and are really against them; but I don't think that's really necessary.*

*R: You're not against blacks.*

*S: No, they're alright.*

*R: Do you know any black people?*

*S: Met some, like, and I think that if they don't harm me (they're OK), but a lot of people jump to the conclusion that they'll be out to get them or something.*

*R: Why do you think-*



*S: I suppose people think like it's their own country, like there shouldn't be, have people like different colour or something; shouldn't really belong in their country...*

I accept at face value Sam's open-mindedness, though in line with what we have come to expect from earlier conversations, there is clearly a residue of racialised understanding linked to his defensive instincts, the likes of which we also met in Part 1 of this Chapter. The extract takes our enquiry a little further, however, in that it is interesting to note that his conversation did *not* attach (at any stage) a perjorative meaning to prejudice. Even in this short extract although prejudice is seen as strong negative feelings (including hatred) the condition itself is accepted with remarkable neutrality. It is not in itself a bad thing or a good thing: it just is; there are people one gets on with and there are people one does not get on with and one's response to individuals is, apparently, justified on these grounds alone.

Emily, also in Y11 and only marginally more academically successful, was more circumspect but like Sam immediately linked 'prejudice' to 'racism'. Unlike Sam she seemed a little confused over how to respond on a personal level. She asserted that "...there are a lot of people who are racist in the school" and that "...it's (racism) terrible in this place." When pressed on the matter she responded:

*E: Well, well...not this place but, because we haven't got some..any..because in a London school there's sort of like Indians and .. different .. all different culture children but here it's someone comes in who's different, not in sort of like (personality) but different in the way they appear, then say someone came to school with a turban on their head he would get.. he or she would get so much laughs, it would be (?) so many cracks, because they're so.. we live in a sort of like place where we know everybody and we know all about them, and when someone comes in that we don't know it's sort of like, I think it's school people who sort of like reject them...*

*... But I find it horrible when I .. say I'm talking to a coloured person I find it really uncomfortable to talk to.*

*R: Why's that?*

*E: I don't know why. Because I've never been around, I haven't had any coloured friends so that when I talk to someone it's really hard to make, to feel comfortable.*

*R: But why exactly? Is it because you might say something wrong or embarrassing?*

*E: No, it's just when I look at their face it's different and it's not what I'm used to; it's really horrible to think that I feel like that but it's true I do, it's because I've never had many people around me...*

*R: Interesting; why do you think it's horrible?*

*E: I don't think it's horrible, but it's horrible to think that you think that...*

Emily is quite clear that racism is unacceptable though she can explain (or predict) certain kinds of racist behaviour that (would) occur at Greenfields. Her personal difficulty seems associated with her discomfort with the unfamiliar: there appears to be a tension between her cognitive disposition, arrived at (at least partly) by rational thought, as a non-racist and her feelings of discomfort. One feels the tension is exacerbated by the moral position she has adopted; on being pressed further to say what she thought racism was she argued:

*(a racist is) someone who doesn't really give them a chance to say what they really like. Like I think, my opinion is that we're all like the same blood-brothers, we've all got blood in us. Therefore we're all human; it doesn't matter what the creed (?) is..everyone's still human so it's nothing to do with colour or culture.*

It is as if this version of 'colour blindness' (which incorporates ethnicity, creed and culture) has created for Emily a real difficulty in accommodating difference and diversity. This was also noted by Grant and Sleeter (1987) who went on to observe that "teachers were doing very little to broaden the students' understanding of racism and cultural pluralism" (*ibid* p236). It is possible that Emily's position could be partly accounted for by a similar, if inadvertent, tendency at Greenfields.

## 6.9 Furthering the Analysis

Sam's and Emily's are not untypical of the range of views at Greenfield School. Add these to the picture I began to construct in the previous section we can perhaps see why human relationships within the school were considered by HMI to be very sound and why, at the same time, teachers in the school harboured some reservations about the attitudes of pupils to human diversity in the wider world. Furthermore we have gained insight into mechanisms influencing Greenfield pupils' responses: for example, 'isolation' and the school's inward lookingness; anxiety over threats to known and loved comforts; inexperience with a wider world. But my intention to pursue more 'philosophical' conversations only partly succeeded: it proved difficult for pupils, but not, in my view, as a result a general lack of 'ability', a notion too dismissive when applied to pupils as a whole. Clearly some children have greater talents, say, in commanding their thoughts and expressing them in the English language, than others. In Gardner's (1983; 1994) theory of multiple intelligences, they have greater "linguistic" and "inter-personal" intelligence - both of which can be developed, a not insignificant point in relation to the current discussion. But very few pupils were at ease with this kind of conversation; it was strange to them both as a use of the conversational process (that is, talking 'philosophically') and in the nature of conversational topic. I concluded, confirming an earlier indication, that although pupils were *aware* of racism, often conflating it with prejudice so that the two were seen as meaning just about the same, their *thinking* about it had proceeded only a limited extent. There was little, if any, evidence of pupils being able to think of prejudice in a more sophisticated way than "having negative feelings", and although there was recognition of issues arising from being introduced to, or coming into contact with, the 'other', there was absolutely no link at all with the possibility that geography in the curriculum might have a role to play. I stress, I was not surprised at this; but I increasingly wondered what would be the range of response to these kinds of issues with teachers rather than pupil discussants.

## 6.10 Another Pupil Perspective

Before moving on to examining teachers' views on prejudice, I wish to continue the present chapter by quoting extensively from Sandra, a black girl a year older than Sam and Emily (and a contemporary of Philip quoted near the end of the previous section). Though quite reluctant to speak at first - "I don't think I'm the right person to ask...to discuss my opinions because I'm black because I will tend to have basically the same opinions as any other person in this area" - she agreed, and quickly established that her

views *were* distinctive from others I had encountered, primarily I believe precisely *because* she had thought about the issues beyond the level usual for pupils at the school: she was also prepared to 'philosophise'.

She acknowledged that she had experienced racism though she dismissed this as "just kids...something which can be ignored, I think...Just name calling really, and apart from that I haven't had any reason to think that this area's particularly racist." With little prompting she was willing to generalise out from this rather particularised perspective and revealed her philosophy:

Did people at the school, I wondered, harbour racist attitudes on a general level?

*S: Well yes. But I think that's natural where anybody's concerned. Everybody does have to a certain extent built in prejudices, and some of them may be based on race, and I don't think that.. well I suppose you can do something about it but I think it's always going to be there just because we are human beings and...*

*R: ...some people would argue that prejudice isn't natural in the sense that growing teeth is natural; it is learnt. They would say that yes, most human beings are prejudiced about something or other, but it is not natural, it is learnt.*

*S: I suppose it can be learnt. I suppose sometimes it is learnt, but we all build up opinions about things anyway, that's natural, and along with those opinions we all tend to think, well this is right, this is wrong, along with that will come prejudices and I think whether or not you use that prejudice.. I'm losing my.. I think if you use that prejudice that's not necessarily good, but I don't think you can actually ever get rid of them, so I do think it is natural.*

*R: You cannot get rid of prejudice.*

*S: I think you can only get rid of prejudice if you can always hold an objective opinion about everything. I don't think you can always hold an objective opinion about everything.*

In this exchange Sandra has (with a certain brilliance) established her view that

\* prejudice is *universal*,

\* prejudices are probably *immutable*,

\* a *cause* of prejudice is to be found in the relativity debate - the fact that much knowledge is subjectively manufactured makes the formation of prejudice inevitable.

She was also willing to make further distinctions:

*R: ... I mean, what is racism?*

*S: I think.. it's just..*

*R: Good question isn't it?*

*S: I think it's more than just victimising a particular 'race'. I think it's just treating them as an inferior set of human beings, and feeling that an opinion is justified just because of their 'race'.*

*R: Is that distinct, what you've just said, is that distinct from, say 'race' prejudice. Is this different?*

*S: Yes. I think if you think.. I mean you can be prejudiced about things just by thinking it's.. if you're like employing somebody and if you'd rather employ somebody who's white than somebody who's black then that's just prejudice, and you just feel that the white person will do a better job. But if you're actually being racist about it, you actually feel that the black person is an inferior human being and shouldn't even have the opportunity to have that job, and I think that's a subtle difference between them.*

Of course, the issue this distinction between what we might term 'hard' as opposed to 'soft' racism fails to resolve the question of how the *evidence* can be assembled on which to base a judgement of this sort. For practical reasons organisations, and indeed the law, have to base policy on *manifestations* and can scarcely make the sort of distinction that Sandra would like, as they are essentially invisible. On the other hand, for educational purposes to distinguish a 'harder' from a 'softer' form of discrimination could be useful: the immediate outcomes may be the same but the intentions are different. A focus on intentions (though these are rarely self evident) links this discussion with Gadamer's hermeneutics; seeking to identify people's intentions is the essence of understanding and, as we have seen, Jones (1987) suggested that education for conversation was the means to achieve such understanding.

Or, is Sandra merely (perhaps understandably) trying to exonerate the social setting in which she finds herself. Of her classmates, and using her definition, she states:

*S: I think there are still a couple of people who are racist. And I think that anybody else who would normally be called racist would be just prejudiced.*

*R: Do you ever meet these people*

*S: I know one person personally.*

*R: ...Do you get on with him or her?*

*S: It's strange. This person holds his opinions , but I never, I never know when to take him seriously or not, because sometimes he uses opinions for jokes, and he's consistent in that, so it's obvious he does hold some kind of opinion, and I'm not sure how far he takes that opinion seriously, so I get the impression that he could very well be racist, but whether he's just getting a cheap laugh, I do not know. But he's not violent.*

*...I usually just ignore it, and sometimes I laugh along with it, because there's not a lot else I can do. If I stand up and suddenly make a big scene and protest about it then he can just as easily turn around and say he's just having a bit of fun - that puts me in a position of looking the idiot.*

*R: Very isolating. Wouldn't any of your friends support you in making a stand like that?*

*S: Well I don't know...*

Clearly Sandra found little to commend confrontations on this issue, claiming to understand the humour in racist jokes - although with the proviso that if she were not living in a predominantly white area she would probably "view things completely differently". She seems to imply, once again, the importance of recognising, and taking into account, intentions. We began to discuss the school's response:

*S: In a school like this the problem isn't a large one, it's just the minority who hold opinions that are like racist. I think the school has to be aware of it and.. keep an eye on it. I don't know whether the school can do much else than do that. Because unless, if it's just poking fun.. I don't suppose there's a lot that the school could do about it, but if there was some sort of violent outburst, then they really would have to do something...*

*...If the school did do something about it the only way to do that would be say through some RE lessons and just make people.. I can't suggest how, but.. make people aware of their own prejudices, I mean I know I have my own prejudices, but -*

*R: - How are you aware of your own prejudices?*

*S: Because of the jokes that I make...*

*...I think the school can do something about prejudice.*

*R: Does the school do anything?*

*S: Well during my time at school I only recall one lesson where we talked about prejudice and racism....But the film was so old and because it was like from the seventies and a lot of things have changed you ended up thinking more about how rubbishy the film seemed than actually*

*what was being said...(It may be that) at the end of the lesson everybody realised that they have prejudices; they didn't go out of that lesson thinking Oh should I do something about it.*

Sandra used the telling phrase, in my view, that the school should "make people aware of their own prejudices". This needs to be done expertly and there is possibly an implication, in Sandra's words, that this is something that is not effectively accomplished by the special set piece lesson; rather it is the cumulative result of learning over a prolonged period. Though she has gained such awareness herself, she is not able to say how pupils at Greenfields in general should be taught. It is also worthwhile noting, however, that 'awareness' in her view appears to be a positive means to counter prejudice. Like Boddington (1995), she implies that prejudice awareness effectively neutralises the condition: "Prejudice that offers itself up to examination, correction and comparison cannot really be seen as prejudice" (*ibid* p29).

#### 6.11 Concluding Comment

In presenting and analysing conversational data with pupils I have chosen not to (simply) apply my conceptually derived hypothetical 'dimensions' of prejudice as if to empirically 'test' them. We have, nonetheless, seen that the seven dimensions (*cause, feelings, manifestation, mutability, purpose, universality, value*) could serve as analytical categories. We shall be concerned increasingly with this, and in so doing refine the meanings of these 'dimensions' in succeeding chapters. What has begun to stand out from the present analysis is the potential significance of an eighth, possibly subject specific 'dimension', namely *place*, the nature of which we can briefly as follows.

Prejudice is not merely a mental condition located in the individual. It is of course to be found inside people's heads, but people themselves are located in time and space. In relation to the latter, pupils positively did not link racism, for example, to a place such as Kingsford, their home; the same was said of Sweden. London, on the other hand, was different - as was Birmingham according to Annie-Rose. The pupil conversations sometimes echoed the teachers' oft heard view that Greenfields (and Kingsford) was an isolated place. Such isolation is not wholly, or even mainly, geographic, being a psychological disposition common to many suburban school 'communities'. However, it seemed to be particularly keenly felt at Greenfields, and it could have been this that caused teachers to feel such a lack of progress as described in Chapter 5 (section 5.4). Issues such as racism were too readily displaced to the 'other place'; it in the 'other'

where problems such as poor housing, health and unemployment fail to be resolved. This is seen to be a lack in the 'other', and only rarely a lack in ourselves, at 'home'.

Salecl (1995) picks up on the same point and would agree that for pupils to find out about their own prejudice (or as Sandra would say, to become "aware") learning has to dispense with the distance of "impartiality". In her review of Salecl's book, Lacey (1995) identifies the central message as being the creation of democratic politics in which there is political space such that racist fantasy can exist, but to have no effect (*ibid* p29). The prerequisite for this, Salecl argues, is an understanding of the "role of political discourse in playing upon our most unspeakable fantasies" (*ibid*). To transpose Salecl to an educational setting, we might argue that in our aims we should recognise not only the existence of such racist or nationalistic fantasy but provide young people with the space and the means to deliberate on them, to understand their potential - to do harm, but also possibly as platforms from which to learn. This requires above all young people learning the capacity for *self* critical thinking - and in this I include the capacity to evaluate 'home' critically.

Geography, as a school curriculum subject, has a key role to play in the task outlined above. Yet it could be that geographers in education have not adequately addressed the issues: how do we encourage a critical account of home, without threat? How are the 'other' and the 'other place' introduced and explored critically without putting in place negative values, given by distance (which offers friction), difference, complexity and uncertainty, in the minds of pupils? How do we make "unspeakable fantasies" *allowable* in the geography classroom, rather than ignore them which is to let them go unchallenged and ill-understood? To what extent are popular conceptual pedagogical models, which provide the beguiling "distance of impartiality", responsible for nurturing, rather than challenging, certain kinds of responses in young learners?<sup>57</sup>

It seems to me that what each of these questions has in common with the others is a need to engage the learner in some kind of meta-discourse and thus encouraging within them a meta-cognition; an understanding of how we think and why we think as we do. A fuller understanding, and a map, of the concept prejudice will, I contend in Chapters 10 and 11, help teachers facilitate such learning. But first we can listen to the teachers at Greenfields talking about prejudice in the next two chapters.

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<sup>57</sup>For example: in former times, judging from a browsing of nineteenth and early twentieth century geography text books, teaching the 'other' was more straight forward: there were clear hierarchical relationships and questions concerning, for example, who studied whom were simply not raised. In the late twentieth century there is now more fear: there is an implicit knowledge that a 'global community' does not exist (despite at least one current geography text book (Bunce 1992) using this slogan as its title); and there may be an assumption of a competitive, 'winner-takes-all' global economy, with the apparent need to repell the 'other'. Simple and popular models of migration, such as "push and pull factors" could, without care, be seen as implying "they're coming to get what's ours".



## Chapter 7

### Listening to Teachers at Greenfields: (1)

#### 7.1 Background and Introduction

This Chapter, and the next, report on my analysis of data derived from staff<sup>58</sup> at Greenfields School during the academic year 1989-1990. In the course of its implementation, this empirical aspect of the research study evolved from an emphasis on "listening to the *learner*" (Dee Fink 1977; Walford 1979) to one which increasingly came to realise the importance of gathering and interpreting the collective experience of the teachers (as well as pupils) in coming to an understanding of prejudice in this school setting. Though not articulated in quite such explicit terms at the time, I intended to engage teachers in conversations in order to 'philosophise'; I wanted to explore with teachers the meaning they attached to the concept of prejudice, its relevance to them as teachers (as subject specialists and as individuals with more general responsibilities towards children) and their comments on the present or the future role of the school as a whole in relation to educational aims involving prejudice. I was scrupulous not to introduce these conversations in terms of 'combatting' prejudice, 'reducing' or 'eradicating' prejudice, in terms that is, which made *a priori* assumptions concerning the nature of the concept, that prejudice was something that teachers should normally be 'against'.

A series of conversational interviews resulted in tape recorded data which was subsequently transcribed and analysed. The principles for analysis were somewhat different from those applied to the transcribed pupil conversations discussed in Chapter 6. There, I opted to select significant - and sometimes quite lengthy- quotations from the pupils, preserving something of their conversational quality, whereas with the staff interviews it appeared far more appropriate to look for patterns of meaning across the data. This issue, and the processes employed to categorise the data, are discussed in more detail under the heading 'The Aims of Analysis' below (section 7.3). The chapter then goes on to develop and describe these categories with the use of evidence drawn directly from the raw data. The following chapter (Chapter 8) continues this form of

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<sup>58</sup>All staff discussants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity. A full list is given in Appendix 1.

analysis but with a particular focus on what the teacher conversations can tell us about the 'dimensions' of prejudice.

Taken together, this chapter and the next emphasise the substantial range of opinion among the staff on the concept prejudice, but also their willingness and ability to 'philosophise' - to accept, in one sense, their involvement as teachers in "intellectual adventure and questioning" (Hargreaves and Goodson 1995). Teachers sometimes resisted falling into this idealistic stereotype, citing the more mundane but powerful pressures of syllabus or examinations which, they claimed, prevented them:

*...you have to prioritise your various responsibilities... If it came down to attacking prejudices or getting good exam results I know what most of us would do (Jack)*

But even these teachers recognised that 'prejudice' was a concern that possessed wider meaning than it at first appeared to have had, and that it raised important educational questions. The teacher just quoted, for example, confident that the school was in fact coping quite well with "attacking" prejudice through encouraging open-mindedness, restated what he took to be one of the school's goals in an unusual and interesting way:

*By (some) definitions this school might be considered very successful. I think most visitors to this school would say that on the whole the challenging and exciting learning of argument is introduced here, and if that's the most successful way of tackling prejudice then the school's doing well. (Jack)*

What he meant by the "learning of argument", how it was taught and the way in which it "tackled" prejudice, were for him legitimate and relevant questions. What seemed crucial for him also was the question of whether such "challenging and exciting" learning goals and good examination results were mutually exclusive. The essential point, however, is that he accepted that teachers have a responsibility, or at least an interest, in asking such questions. My evidence showed me time and time again that what Eraut refers to as "theorising" (Eraut 1994 p60), that is teachers at one and the same time drawing from and interpreting their experience, is not only possible to establish but is also potentially valuable; when colleagues are able to share the products of their theorising, as they did with me, it becomes what we might describe as particularly *practical* form of theorising. It was undoubtedly valuable to the school staff as part of the "intellectual adventure" of teaching, but in relation to the present research, it proved to be helpful in clarifying and developing my conceptual map of the concept prejudice. Through the use of my existing, conceptually derived 'dimensions' of prejudice (universality; mutability; value; cause; purpose; feelings; manifestations; and place: first discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, I

was able to extend discussions of their validity in the context of how teachers talked about prejudice (in the next chapter). As I emphasise in the following paragraphs, these 'dimensions' had not been derived at the time of the staff interviews (excepting for 'mutability' and 'universality', and in these cases they were not yet conceived explicitly as analytical categories) and so in themselves did not consciously guide the conversations.

## 7.2 Data Collection: the teacher conversations

A total of 21 teachers were interviewed by me during the Autumn and Spring terms of the academic year 1989-1990. The staff as a whole knew of my occasional presence in the school<sup>59</sup> during this time, my interest in talking to them in relation to my researching prejudice and that I was also interviewing pupils. They were selected in the following ways: first, teachers were encouraged to talk to me, to volunteer, as it were, to be interviewed, and in one instance such a request was received and granted. In addition, I interviewed all teachers who had been involved with the prejudice working group (eight teachers) and requested interviews from a representative range of the wider staff of the school - from all faculties and including experienced senior members of staff (including two from the senior management team) as well as one newly appointed 'probationer'. The entire 'humanities' faculty, including three geography teachers, was interviewed. In all, 21 teachers represents over 50% of the staff of the school.

My methodological discussion (Chapter 4) provides the rationale for 'conversational interviews'. In practice the method adopted the following characteristics. Interviews lasted about 40 minutes though on a few occasions they continued well beyond an hour; this was entirely at the (usually implicit) behest of the interviewee. All were tape recorded and all were transcribed resulting in 177 single spaced A4 sheets. Several of the conversational interviews were arranged with pairs of teachers with me, giving a three sided discussion with colleagues firing off one another. This technique worked well, essentially decentring the researcher and enabling a more naturally developing conversation. In one case a member of staff was interviewed both as a member of a three and, at a later stage, as an individual; this was entirely in response to his request as he felt he had not been able to finish, or develop, what he had wanted to say in the group of three.

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<sup>59</sup>My allocated day for work at Greenfields was Friday, but with a 6-day timetable, my Fridays were usually different teaching days; this was a useful factor in facilitating arrangements convenient to the commitments of individual teachers.

The conversational interviews were conducted in a location chosen by the teacher(s), where they felt comfortable. They were open-ended; teachers were given the possibility of taking the conversations in directions which were unpremeditated, at least by me. As in the pupil conversations, my intention was to avoid as much as possible the feeling of the subject being interrogated according to a predetermined agenda, or worse that the interviewer had a clear anticipatory sense of the 'answers'. Once again I am emphasising here the notion of developing *exchanges* during which subjects were to be encouraged to explore, refine or even speculate on meanings; what I have repeatedly referred to as experiments in 'philosophising'. The chief benefit of this approach was that I believe I obtained a high level of validity in what respondents had to say in the sense that what they said was what they wanted to say. The data, though difficult to claim technical reliability for (in the sense that they would be readily repeatable with a different interviewer), are truthful and dependable; they represent what a range of teachers in a given context and circumstance can and do think. Chapter 4 (section 4.2) provides a more detailed discussion on both the validity and reliability of the methods adopted as well as introducing a third methodological touchstone, namely 'fitness for purpose'. The latter is, arguably, the most fundamental of the three; the data collection methods adopted here entirely appropriate to my underlying concern to value teachers' 'philosophising'.

To employ such a form of open-endedness involved some predictable costs in addition to the likely low level of technical 'reliability'. Occasionally, a transcript has proved relatively unhelpful in terms of its contents in relation to my main research question; one teacher, for example, appeared to be willing to talk freely about the school, her job within the school, the stresses and strains of the day to day functioning of the school *etc*, but not directly about prejudice or the attitudes of pupils to other people. On being pressed a little on the longer term impact of the school on its pupils, she responded:

*I mean I would like to think that they would leave having a sense of what's fair in the world if you like, in that they came away from here feeling that everybody had had a fair ride through ... had given them the idea that whatever had gone on things had been done fairly, they had been fairly treated...(and that) within a community there must always be space for negotiation, so they would build up a sense of responsibility to other people, and some kind of caring attitude. (Jill)*

This is laudable, and certainly captures the essence of the school's ethos to which HMI responded so positively (DES 1988), but, apart from one brief mention of the 'insular' nature of the school ("although we live very close to London (the pupils) don't all get out and about into London and a lot remain in this area"), this was the only comment beginning directly to explore my 'agenda', in 341 lines of transcript; even this quotation

is in fact heavily inward looking (that is, Greenfields focussed) and was concerned (as the school's 'hidden curriculum' would predict) largely with the individual.

The dangers of such 'data wastage'<sup>61</sup>, attributable to the informal data collection strategy, was not unpredicted. As a measure to limit the risk of incurring this kind of cost, but without imposing too rigid a structure, I prepared a short discussion paper which was given to respondents some time (normally one week) before the conversation was to take place (for a summary, see Figure 7.1, or the full text in Appendix 7) This was not meant to be followed or dissected during the conversation (although a few teachers did choose to do this); it was meant more simply to orient teachers to my interest in prejudice and perhaps offer a "way in" to the conversation. I am satisfied that this strategy was successful: three conversational interviews were relatively unhelpful (though, like the one quoted above, were nonetheless revealing in indirect ways illustrating, say, the individualism inherent in the 'hidden curriculum', or the very strong subject-centredness of many of the staff), but the rest provided a rich and textured exploration of the concept prejudice within the Greenfield's context. Although several of the conversations were influenced initially by my discussion paper, I was impressed by the willingness of teachers to accept my invitation to follow their own interests and draw from and interpret their own experience; the conversations had a dynamic feel to them, a sense that they were moving thoughts. The following remark, made near the beginning of my conversation with Vince, perhaps captures this spirit:

*Prejudice is first of all a normal part of being human. Hmm. Two weeks ago I wanted to resist this, but now, yes, I agree with it.*

The teacher quoted above, apparently started with the assumption that prejudice in all its forms was negative and something which education should avoid or, when encountered, stamp out. He had by his own admission made an important discovery; and of course, if we *can* accept that prejudice is universal, this itself influences other ways in which we think about it and respond to it.

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<sup>61</sup>I use the term 'wastage' here to indicate material which, as the analysis proceeded, was found to be of limited direct utility or relevance. This is not to imply, however, that the data was discarded, or that it had no relevance to the building of a rich and textured understanding of the school and its workings.

**Figure 7.1: Discussion Paper: Summary of the main components of the argument shared with teachers prior to conversational interview.**

- a. definition from Swann Report ('immutable', unlike 'preferences');
- b. prejudice is fixed, pre-set, irrational, perjorative;
- c. there is a distinction between prejudice and prejudgement (latter can be modified);
- d. culturally vouched-for prejudgements are reasonable to expect; it is rational for people to have them;
- e. the basis for a successful pluralistic society is one in which there is widely shared knowledge of all such foundational prejudgements;
- f. it is impossible to resolve differences between culturally vouched for prejudgements through 'truth and logic';
- g. it does not follow from (f) that total immutability is inevitable;
- h. but immutability may be the effect if 'belief' replaces thinking;
- i. such 'beliefs' could emerge as a result of a strong feeling for 'home' and a loyalty to what is known and familiar;
- j. strong feelings for 'home' could thus become dangerous; but they may also be valuable? Ask, "why not?" They help give an individual perspective;
- k. the need for perspective is universal and cannot be eliminated;
- l. an 'education for conversation' may help individuals understand the perspective of others;
- m. school is the place where the personal and social skills required for 'conversation' can be learned;
- n. such an education does not aim to establish 'objective truth'; but it may help to see through surface variety and diversity to the humanity underneath

**Questions:**

- \* is this line of thought convincing?
- \* does it help us to understand racism or other forms of prejudice? can we distinguish levels or types of racism ?
- \* on the basis of this line of thought can some forms of prejudice be eradicated?
- \* what potential do we see in the idea of an education for conversation?

*Note: the above was written with acknowledgement to Jones 1987;*

*(Full text to be found in Appendix 7)*

Vince's admission illustrates a further point: there is no doubt that I influenced him, either directly or indirectly; after all I was a participant in the conversation (and, indeed, a participant observer of the prejudice working group of which Vince had been a member). However, the data themselves were not meant to yield an objective view or profile of the staff, more they were the product of explicit deliberation and reflection: I expected to influence discussants on occasion, just as I also expected others to object to my line of thought and influence my thinking. I was not after empirical 'evidence'<sup>61</sup> to 'support' or 'prove' some hypothesis so much as making a recording of the practical (or "intuitive" [Pope and Denicolo 1986]) theorising arising out of teachers and researcher engaged in purposeful debate. This echoes the economist McCloskey's view in his discussion of the death of logical positivism: that the persuasiveness of an idea or theory is not just a matter of logic or appeal to empirical 'proof', but depends on "the whole art and science of argument, the honest persuasion that is good conversation" (McCloskey 1994, cited in Snowdon 1995 p 23).

### 7.3 The Aims of Analysis

So far I have merely noted that, unlike the pupil conversations, my conversations with teachers were analysed by searching for categories of description across the data. In doing so I have had to sacrifice a little more of the integrity of each conversation as a unique entity, a relatively small cost in fact, as my judgement was that there was less of interest inherent in the *way* that individuals expressed themselves at this level (in comparison to the pupil conversations) - I was assuming that most teachers were proficient in conversational skills. In what follows, therefore, though I quote my evidence quite freely, I am less inclined to quote the *conversational* exchanges.

The analytical strategy adopted was steered by a number of aims concerning what I hoped the data would yield. First, it is worth emphasising what I was *not* intending. I was not intending:

- \* to get to a phenomenological 'essence' of the meaning (amongst Greenfield's staff) of the concept prejudice - such a goal would be out of keeping with the assumptions which have underscored this study, notably the designation of the

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<sup>61</sup>McElroy (1993) makes the point that it is perhaps unfortunate that in Habermas' (1974) classification of research (empiricist, interpretive and critical) empirical is linked to positivist, objectivist understanding of knowledge creation: "Empiricist is an unfortunate label as most research is based on data from the 'real world'" (McElroy 1993 p 67)

concept as "complex" and the suspicion that my hermeneutics would reveal significant variance in the meaning attached to the concept, describing dimensions which could be mapped;

- \* systematically to hone down my data to an irreducible, phenomenographic 'outcome space' consisting wholly discrete categories (for one thing the way in which the data was collected did not lend itself readily to this approach - interesting though such an 'outcome space' would be)<sup>62</sup>;

- \* to give a full and 'reliable' account of where the staff of Greenfields had reached in terms of their development *vis a vis* the prejudice working group, for which a complete ethnography of the school - including probably some lesson observation - would have been required;

The above list of 'notes' is a useful reminder of the self imposed limits to the scope of this research. But just as this includes some of what this part of my research has not set out to accomplish, I need to be equally clear about what it *does* aim to do:

- \* to illuminate a number of key aspects of the staff development process in relation to handling prejudice (of course, in the explicit context of Greenfields School);

- \* to stimulate the group of teachers into reacting, as educators, to idea of prejudice by engaging in practical, intuitive 'theorising' or 'philosophising' and, in recording and describing the outcomes of this process, add to a wide ranging conceptual analysis of a "complex idea";

- \* to gain insight into the configuration of the 'morphology' of prejudice at Greenfields; in other words, though I have assumed that we can identify the *general* dimensions of the concept, I also recognise that the particular shape of the concept may well be to some extent place specific.

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<sup>62</sup>Phenomenography, a methodology which had some initial attraction as it claims to discover conceptual understanding, is discussed more fully in Chapter 4 .



#### 7.4 The Procedures of Analysis

All conversations were transcribed verbatim. The first reading of the transcripts (with the tapes available for clarification if necessary) was designed to 'get to know' the data and to identify, by induction, possible descriptive categories. This was done with the use of a marker pen on the transcripts and by copious memo writing. The 'long list' of descriptive words was reduced by discarding those which seemed less relevant to my primary interest (such as elements of conversations which touched upon, for example, individual colleagues or pupils or general descriptions of the school - covered in Chapter 5). Furthermore, those categories to do directly with 'prejudice' I decided to 'clarify': what I mean by this is overtly to compare them with, and if possible subsume them under the guise of my conceptually derived 'dimensions'. This was important in order to avoid creating and using a second and overlapping form of words to describe the geometry of prejudice. This, then, was an important moment in my analysis: if my 'dimensions' could serve effectively in categorising my conversational data then this would add to their viability. Though it would have been surprising not to find extensive 'fit' of the data and my 'dimensions', I would have been less surprised to find elements of the data which were difficult to place satisfactorily. In fact, the application of my 'dimensions' did not prove difficult, but I decided I had to return to the original, raw data to check that my assignment of inductively derived descriptive categories to my 'dimension' headings was appropriate. The raw data were, therefore, read for a second time.

My second reading of the data, which forms the basis for the analysis reported in the next chapter, concentrated on expressions and passages which had already been identified from the first reading, as being concerned with prejudice. These were checked for meaning by examining once more their context, and then allocated to one of my 'dimensions'. To a degree this allocation was often a matter of judgement as, predictably, utterances were capable of being interpreted in more than one way; as made plain in Chapter 4, the 'dimensions' were not conceived as hermetically sealed categories forming a rigidly defined and discrete taxonomy. Furthermore, a single utterance frequently had a multidimensional quality, particularly on occasions when the teacher was exploring meaning, pushing back, so to speak, the frontier of his or her understanding. For example, take the following statement which arose from a discussion of racism and prejudice:

*I think prejudice is absolute in pure definition, (and) is probably not (the same as racism). Prejudice means prejudging, and what does the 'pre' refer to? Is it the previous to meeting black people, pre to learning something, or is it previous to*

*learning anything? And we are brought up, you know, the idea is that prejudice implies that it is something wrong, something acquired. I don't know if that is right, but prejudice is something that we acquire through our society, so we acquire almost like the desire to discriminate. And people will often say 'yes' we're prejudiced, but we might be prejudiced into some form of natural xenophobia, but we do not discriminate. But as I see it everything is discrimination. I'm beginning to see it. Again it's not.. they're not two words (racism; prejudice) that I have sat down and really thought about. (Vince)*

A passage such as this yields much. On a general level it serves as evidence, should it be needed, that prejudice is a "complex idea": and, judging from his final remark the teacher is acutely aware of this, indirectly confirming, perhaps inadvertently, the danger of an over hasty imposed definition (which has been apparent in some schools and Local Education Authorities [LEAs] succumbing sometimes to the temptation to ensure that 'common meanings' be established by the whole school staff (or imposed?) as a prerequisite of anti-racist policy making (see, for example Newham 1988). The teacher above is tentative and seems consciously lacking a clear framework or mental map of the conceptual territory.

On a more detailed level we can see that he does nonetheless carry certain assumptions: he begins by saying candidly that prejudice is *immutable*; he feels quite strongly that there is a distinction between prejudice and discrimination or its *manifestations*; he also suspects that prejudice is learned or acquired, showing an interest in its *cause*; there is a hint, however, in his use of the word "natural" that there may be another dimension - a *feeling*, perhaps, of xenophobia that people can in fact control and thus eliminate xenophobic behaviour; finally, he apparently does not see a significant enough distinction between prejudice and prejudgement to bother about (in fact, most of my discussants felt that any such distinction was artificial and/or unhelpful) and sees both in negative terms - to hold prejudices "implies... something wrong" - it has negative *value*.

In one paragraph, then, this teacher touches upon five (out of my seven) 'dimensions'. It would have been possible to allocate the paragraph to each of the five 'dimensions'. Alternatively, the paragraph could have been disaggregated and short phrases allocated to the appropriate 'dimension'. I did not exclusively favour either of these strategies: in the former case I felt anxious to avoid (in contrast to what I have referred to earlier as data wastage) data overload, or repetition; in the latter case I felt that the disbenefits of unpacking 'whole' utterances outweighed any (real or imagined) potential gains arising from perhaps spurious precision in category allocation. My decision with a passage such as the above (though this is in fact a longer uninterrupted passage than many) was to allocate it to one 'dimension' and simply to note links with others. As we shall see,

identifying links itself became an important analytical concern, one which seemed to be especially appropriate in contributing to a 'map' of the concept prejudice. In view of this discussant's readiness to accept the negative value of prejudice, which seemed to me to underpin much else of what he said (for example, that people acquire prejudice, but are able to control it, thereby - he seemed to say - obviating its assumed negative effects), this particular statement was allocated under *value*.

## 7.5 The Results of Analysis

This process, once the principles outlined above had been established, worked smoothly and efficiently, and resulted in the categorisation of the data on which the following analysis was based. Taken together the first and second readings of the data provided the following six analytical headings:

- i. Lack of Definition
- ii. The School Policy
- iii. Classroom Processes
- iv. Conceptual Development
- v. Dimensions of Prejudice
- vi. Place and Prejudice

Each of these will be justified in due course. It should be noted that although place is in fact one of the conceptually derived 'dimensions', it accumulated such significance in the teachers' conversations that it seemed appropriate to take it as a separate category in this analysis. The first four categories on this list are somewhat 'contextual' and I shall deal with them first, in this chapter. The final two are explored in some more detail, in the following Chapter (Chapter 8) as they have a direct and particularly significant bearing on the main concern of this thesis, the construction of a conceptual map of the concept prejudice.

**i. *Lack of Definition*:** This category arose from the manner in which my briefing sheet (Figure 7.1) invited teachers to explore distinctions and definitions such as those suggested by the Swann Report between prejudice and prejudgement (DES 1985 p13). Clearly there is potential overlap between this category and my fuller discussion of the 'dimensions'. The main purpose of the present category, however, is not to come to

definition of prejudice, more to establish how in teachers' minds there is lack of clarity over definition and a ready acceptance of its status as a "complex idea". The quotations chosen to illustrate this part of the discussion are usually from the early parts of conversations, the starting points, so to speak, of the respective explorations of prejudice.

Like most of my pupil discussants, many of the teachers talked about prejudice *as* (firstly) racism but also sexism and other forms of discrimination, displaying the need, perhaps, to concretise an abstract idea but also demonstrating very forcibly the generally perjorative meaning given to the concept prejudice:

*There are some very liberated and emancipated souls in this school amongst the students but there are also - right up to, say, the upper sixth, there are a lot of boys who live off racist and sexist humour in the pubs. (Vince)*

*There's a lot of prejudice (at Greenfields School). There's very strong anti-female prejudice... (Alan)*

*The school is not self-evidently racist in the same way that it is self-evidently elitist or sexist. It may be, there may be.. no you can't really say we're racist in the sense that we're sexist.. we don't have enough ethnic people here to say we're racist in the same way that we're sexist. (Vince)*

The second of Vince's statements shows an awareness that prejudice/racism is not always overt, implying that at Greenfields it was more subtle forms of racism that were both more important and more difficult to handle.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, I suggest there was some resistance to thinking in the more conceptual terms that this implies, not because it was not recognised as a worthwhile thing to do, but because it was difficult and had not been attempted before:

*I've always thought of prejudice as an active sort of thing...I just don't like the word prejudice. (Stuart)*

*... I'm not happy with the term prejudice at all because I think it is ill-defined. (Philip)*

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<sup>63</sup> Vince described at length a recent occasion when he and Philip spent most of a day using English coursework scripts to trace and match the handwriting of the perpetrator of a racist graffito in the library (successfully). This serious commitment by members of staff, though very important to the establishment of the desired school 'ethos', was in Vince's mind not enough; tackling racism also required a formal curriculum response and it was how to achieve this that exercised him the most.

Philip in particular also felt that attempts to make distinctions between prejudice, prejudgements and preferences were unhelpful and "going nowhere", even though he went on to say that,

*The thing I like about the idea of preferences as opposed to prejudice as a term is that if one has a concept of what we mean by preference, it is less perjorative.*  
(Philip)

Several other teachers also preferred not to get entangled in definitions on the grounds that it was "just semantics" but (like Philip) nonetheless assumed various distinctions:

*I say we all have prejudgements and it just doesn't necessarily lead to prejudice*  
(Stuart).

Philip, in fact, was of the opinion that

*... preference I think is where a lot of this starts; you have a gut feeling about.. (or) I like that, I don't like that.. and then you assemble a whole paraphernalia of pseudo-rationalism that says why you must carry on liking this and not that, and that's why in the end it is not accessible to plain reason, because it's based on what I prefer to call preference - it's based on liking, not liking, and you do not want your likes and dislikes to be challenged.* (Philip)

One problem with this interpretation is that it seems to put the onus entirely on the individual, a view that several colleagues in the school disagreed with. Another is that it takes us no closer to identifying 'prejudice', though it does perhaps signal the commonly held (but by no means universal) view in the school that prejudice consisted of nothing more than disagreeable views that people developed and which we all have to put up with - rather like Joan's description of racism as it is understood amongst the pupil body of the school:

*Racism for them (children) is violence and that's how for our students it seems to be on a personal level; it is just general unpleasantness.* (Joan).

To summarise, then, though some of the *manifestations* of prejudice were understood and agreed to be unacceptable in the school - both racist and sexist *behaviour* were seen to be intolerable and were treated seriously - clear definitions of the term prejudice were (unsurprisingly) not easy to find. Some teachers seemed to say that it was something we simply had to live with ('accepters') while others seemed almost to resist accommodating the term into the discussion favouring perhaps more neutral terms such as preference ('resisters'). And yet others apparently understood prejudice as an

undesirable condition which the school had a duty to respond to on moral and educational grounds ('responders').

This sort of diversity of opinion and position was the backdrop to the establishment of the prejudice working group (1986-1988), about which teachers had things to say and it is to this we now turn. But my final comment here should be to emphasise that virtually all my discussants, including both 'accepters' and 'resisters', developed their thinking during their conversation, in some cases changing their minds quite radically. Albert, for example, refused any distinction between prejudice and prejudgement, the latter being a "kind of dummy thing that was there just to build an argument", but ten minutes later found that he needed the two concepts in developing his interpretation of prejudice using the analogy of paradigms in scientific thinking (see below: iv. Conceptual Development). Not only does this illustrate the utility of the form of teacher 'philosophising' I was attempting, during which practical theory is developed, it suggests that insofar as the concept prejudice is concerned, its meaning and significance in education had been under-researched by teachers.

**ii. The School Policy :** This category encompassed thoughts that were predictably to the forefront of many teachers' thoughts, particularly those who had been directly involved with the work of the so-called 'prejudice working group'. The activities of this group were described in Chapter 5 (section 5.5). One outcome was the development of a Greenfields School policy, *Equality Through Education* (Appendix 6 part B). Soon after its adoption Joan, a leading light on the group wrote to me (dated October 1988) outlining a number of anxieties:

*...we're in danger of waffling on for years about how complicated and traumatic the whole issue is and changing, or really challenging, nothing in school, because when it actually comes down to it, we're afraid of being in the firing line on this issue... I cannot deny its (the policy) value, and splendidly careful, thorough thoughtfulness, but I'm not sure whether a little curriculum and resources management might not be needed to get the policy statements enacted in the school.*

*... what, if anything should we be doing to change the curriculum, not just embroider around it? (Joan: letter dated October 1988).*

Similar feelings were evident more widely as my conversational interviews were to reveal. Bill, for example:

*I think that anything the school does is almost like sticking a plaster on a broken arm...it's a problem of society more than the school. (Bill)*

And Vince:

*... here's our document on equality - this is what we do; but does anyone understand it and does everyone agree with it. I know teachers who don't.*  
(Vince)

When asked directly what he thought the impact of the policy had been he retorted, "Sadly, bugger all. I think partly because those who have been involved... don't have the time to follow it through" and, "... the hidden curriculum of this school is not informed with the spirit of equality that we should be aiming at." Perhaps more tellingly still, Chris averred;

*... I think (at this school) a lot of the issue is easy to ignore and it is easy not to get concerned... In a city school you couldn't, you have to be more active... When the document was produced it didn't meet with much (positive) approval from the staff because they could see us not..they couldn't see it as a matter of great importance.* (Chris)

Jack, supported by Alan, felt that part of the problem here lay in the working party mechanism, establishing an "in group"; the resulting policy appeared

*... a bit heavy handed... at a practical level staff shied away a bit because..Oh God, here they go again, I think.* (Jack)

Such scepticism was by no means universal. Alan, a senior member of staff, claimed that the policy had brought awareness to maybe over half of the Greenfield's staff, and that it

*... has certainly been useful to me, and I think for others, (though) I cannot quote any evidence to support that... (Racism seems) absent in the staff and to becoming less with the pupils... I am more aware of it than I was before, more explicitly aware.* (Alan)

Josh, a recently appointed teacher in Alan's department and a member of the former working group, came to a judgement which can serve as a conclusion to this part of the discussion:

*I think we got a long way to start with... But I think now we have got to the point where what we've got to try and make people realise that (matters raised in the policy) have to be part of their everyday educational function in a way that I don't think it is.* (Josh)

To arrive at this kind of point, coupled with the fairly widespread doubts concerning the impact of the policy, was certainly not unique to Greenfields School; the doubts and resistances noted above are, for example, documented by Chris Gaine (1987) writing at about the time Greenfields was establishing its policy. As Josh indicated, the process embarked on by the working group had raised awareness of the issues, and yet, as Joan expressed in her letter, there was now a keenly felt need for this work to make a difference in the classroom. There was, however, little idea of how now to proceed: Josh suggested Inset to encourage teachers to examine "bias in their own teaching (and to) decide what they wanted to do about that." I am convinced, on the basis of the evidence presented so far, that this would, though, have marginal additional impact - being essentially 'more of the same' (more 'raising awareness').

What this discussion began to suggest to me was that for progress to be maintained, teachers needed to, as it were, 'appropriate' the issues into their own professional spheres. This means delving below what we could think of as the surface issues (of, say, bias in text books, or racist 'joke' telling - vital though it is to respond to these things positively) and asking what broader educational goals our subjects are able to serve (and whether in fact they achieve these): what, in other words, do our subjects do for children? The emphasis would very definitely be on improving teaching and learning generally and not on how to tackle one particular set of issues ("equality") which, as we have seen, many teachers at Greenfields apparently felt able to ignore. This resonates with Ferguson's (1993) critique of media studies approaches to anti-racism; he states in relation to anti-racist policies,

*Up to a point such policies have had some success, but they have not been able to work on or even comprehend the fears, fantasies and general thinking processes of either staff or pupils. (Ferguson 1993 p25)*

As a contribution to the development of the knowledge and understanding which Ferguson implies is necessary, my suggestion is that a clarification of the concept prejudice could be of assistance to teachers of specialist curriculum areas. For example, would it be possible to see a way in which teachers of geography could make distinctive use of a clarified concept of prejudice in their role of introducing children to the 'other'? Like Ferguson, the majority of teacher discussants at Greenfields School projected scepticism towards policy, no matter how carefully drafted, on the grounds that it could not *per se* cause the necessary reflective thinking to take place.

As we might reasonably have expected, teachers had much to say about classroom practice in relation to issues of prejudice. Their comments allow us to take further the discussion of the previous paragraphs, and it is to these we can now turn.



iii. *Classroom Processes* : Teachers expended considerable time during their interviews drawing from and interpreting their classroom experience, as I had hoped they would. Following the principles outlined earlier in this chapter, I was able to allocate many of their classroom based reflections to categories of description other than this particular one. Statements which *were* allocated to "Classroom Processes" were those which seemed to be addressing directly either the potential of the classroom to influence pupils' thinking or attitudes, or the inherent difficulties of classroom based processes to exert influence of an adequate strength to counteract what was often seen as the malign impact of the press<sup>64</sup> and other popular media. A few teachers took up and briefly explored the idea of education for conversation but, as we shall see they often found practical and procedural obstacles to its successful implementation.

On the whole teachers seemed to be more conscious of problems rather than possibilities in so far as the classroom activities were concerned in effecting change in pupils' thinking. Though I do attach significance to this - many teachers were plainly frustrated (and occasionally acutely self critical) in their perception of the resistance of pupils to be touched by classroom experiences - I am aware of the need to be cautious: undertaking my research, I was in effect inviting teachers to identify problems.

A small number of comments were made supporting what we might think of as a traditional Enlightenment view of education which trains minds and opens up the world to rational questioning and enquiry (and thus 'reducing' prejudice). For example, Philip referred to the briefing sheet and argued that:

*Differences in culturally vouched for prejudgements cannot be resolved through argument based on truth and logic".. is different from.. it does not follow that they cannot be resolved. They can on occasion be changed through argument and experience. (Philip)*

This is impossible to deny. But as Philip himself went on to say plenty of people resist new experience and fail to accept arguments; why they should do this, he felt, was a "different matter". He argued that a school must adopt a "moral stance" against certain forms of prejudice but finally ended very

*...pessimistic of the ability of any institution to change attitudes... (Philip)*

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<sup>64</sup>A survey conducted with the entire Y9 cohort in the autumn term of 1987 revealed which newspapers were available to the pupils at home: Sun 44 (26%); Daily Mail 36 (22%); Locals 28 (17%); Mirror 21 (13%); Express 9 (5%); Telegraph 5 (3%); Today 3 (2%); Guardian 2; People 2 Observer 1; News of the World 1; Independent 1 Times 1; NONE 13 (7%) Several teachers at Greenfields were strongly motivated to work actively against what they saw as the negative impact of some popular media influence on children, only to feel deeply frustrated at their lack of success. As Bob Ferguson observed, "The ... missionary zeal, by which I mean the desire to convince the children of the (potential) wickedness of the media, has had little effect on the children. (Ferguson 1993 p24)

He may be right but it seems to me that an over simple view of prejudice (we saw earlier that Philip "preferred" the term preference and seemed to deny other shades of meaning) forces such a pessimistic view. Assuming prejudice to be entirely pejorative in meaning would precipitate a similar outcome. Ferguson can help me illustrate this point in relation to some widespread anti-racist responses of recent years:

*Teachers have often felt that racism is such an evil in our society that they should ensure their abhorrence of it should be apparent in everything they do and in every small detail of their educational work. This type of approach has led to a vigilance on the part of such teachers and a constant readiness to pick up on racist remarks or possible racist attitudes in children. It has also sometimes meant that children have felt (rightly or wrongly) that they were being preached at by moral prigs. Teachers, in turn have had good cause to become disturbed as they have perceived racist attitudes in so many of their students. (Ferguson 1993 p24-25)*

Alternative perspectives may lead us to question several assumptions including that which seems to have been made by many teachers that effective education should have to *change* attitudes. As Tom observed in his interview,

*... yes, I think, perhaps, rather than prejudice reduction, prejudice awareness could be the key. Making people more aware that their viewpoints are prejudiced... (Tom)*

What he seemed to be advocating (in this unconscious and inadvertent echo of the sixth former Sandra's similar statement - see section 6.10), was an approach which made prejudice explicit, in a non threatening way; prejudice would only be perceived as a problem if it obstructed learning. The unsaid concomitant of this suggests an interesting link, unconsciously made, with Gadamer's (1975) notion of prejudice being a *platform*, or threshold, for learning rather than a block (see also Warnke 1987 p4). In a different interview, Bill thought that,

*We need to teach children constantly to understand that knowledge is very often contingent. (Bill)*

which is to me suggestive of a similar intuitive understanding, though he added "...which is extremely difficult in a school with an eye on examination results". The approach implied here by Bill (though by no means adequately described) is to teach about prejudice so that individuals can acknowledge their own and those of others. This is not, however, a matter simply of designing bespoke lessons, as Bill (a member of the geography department) recognised:

*In geography, if the kids don't know where Birmingham is... you can easily teach that; ...next lesson we can all go mad with maps. With prejudice you don't do that. (Bill)*

I am suggesting that there was a hint - it was little more than that at this stage - of a practical educational response to prejudice which could break with the commonly held view that it was a fundamentally unhealthy and undesirable condition which needed to be tackled, defeated or eradicated (or, as we have seen, a condition about which a school can do little other than adopt a moral position). Vince related an incident in his classroom which illustrates the search for such an alternative classroom response; it was a lesson which incorporated some work on gender, and was observed by an HMI:

*... the boys were aggressive, violent, joined together for the first time and very, very childish, and I... asked (HMI) where do I go from here? She said you've succeeded because they have no other defence... I think she's wrong, because what's happened is, she'd made the issue girls v boys - one to argue about and one to be aggressive and almost militant about. (Vince)*

Put into Malcolm Jones' (1986) terms (used in the production of the interview briefing sheet, Figure 7.1), what Vince could be saying is that he had failed to establish a "conversation" in which girls and boys listened to each other. Unfortunately in *our* conversation I chose at the time not to follow this line of thought. In other conversational interviews, however, I did pursue the idea of an "education for conversation", finding a somewhat cool response. On being asked whether he found it a convincing idea, Jack (a science teacher) responded:

*No... it is people talking about these things to confront their prejudice... It would be a one-sided conversation; it would tend to deepen prejudices... (and) if you get people to talk and they haven't got sufficient facts, they tend to go back to their own arguments and become more prejudiced. (Jack)*

Whilst we may readily accept his point concerning the futile and possibly damaging "pooling of ignorance" (Ruddock 1986 p9), we should also note that Jack seems locked into an understanding that the conversation would primarily be designed to "confront" prejudice and to *change* people's views. And yet, elsewhere in the same conversation, Jack advocated classroom approaches which didn't try "to get rid of something (prejudice) which will just replace itself". He continued that teachers need to set up systems

*... whereby differences can be accommodated rather... and that's not attacking prejudice by trying to prevent them, it's trying to make them allowable. (Jack)*

Again, there may be a hint here of an alternative approach which did not, for example, simply see prejudice in a negative light. But it seemed to have the status of an ideal rather than a strategy, however, with no clear concept of how prejudices could be made "allowable" (and therefore discussable) in the classroom; conversation, remember, had been rejected as a practical possibility by this teacher.

Other teachers added further reservations to the idea of 'conversation'. John, a teacher of foreign languages, asked whether it meant literally a conversation between members of different cultures. My affirmative answer led to several further queries concerning the constraints of a 'monocultural school', the difficulty teachers may face having to "come clean" about *their* prejudice and the general appropriateness of such a concept in secondary school. With regard to the latter:

*... this is.. I don't know, is this a particular problem in schools because of the age of the people... I mean adolescents seem to need to cling together in groups, don't they, where they feel strong and secure... Thinking in practical terms of how to sort of arrange this kind of cultural conversation, if you were going to do it with a group of thirteen year olds, would it be successful? I mean are they responsive to that kind of idea, or do they actually need the comfort that prejudice gives to feel secure?...*

*...I'm not a good enough psychologist to know. It... may be that once, you know, they grow older and towards the end of their teens they're much more accepting of other ideas in any case. (John)*

John thus found reasons to reject an education for conversation, partly I suspect as a result of mistakenly thinking of the "conversation" as a special 'set-piece', or specially arranged 'one-off', whereas what seemed to be emerging in the minds of others (such as Bill above) was the possibility of an approach to permeate the teaching of (in this case) geography in such a way to provide access to and development of the requisite skills in conversation. Key amongst these is learning to agree to respect difference. This could be encouraged by an approach to learning which 'allows' (not necessarily accepts) anothers' prejudices and understands the contingency of information and thinking, a perspective, it would appear, not appreciated by John. This theme is taken up in more detail in Chapter 11.

In talking about classroom processes, both those regularly experienced by teachers on a day to day basis and those more speculative ideas about "conversation" and such like, reflective teachers were not slow to raise further issues and obstacles to dealing effectively with prejudice. Vince looked back on his early years as a teacher and

admitted that "throughout the year they (the children) realised that they can make some racist remark and wind me up." In a different interview, Ruth discussed the strain of knowingly putting at risk one's "professional control" when teachers make serious attempts to "plug into" the "dissonances and discrepancies in the personally constructed knowledge of the students" as set against the classroom knowledge introduced by the teacher. Part of the strain, she argued, was not so much the risk of losing control in the eyes of the children, but the fear of failing colleagues, or, in having one's actions judged and being misunderstood, a notion I interpret as being as close to ideas of 'political correctness' as those of professional competence:

*(this fear) shows that there are not just ways of interpreting the world, but there are accepted ways that the sophisticated and intelligent like to think of themselves not only subscribing to, but being seen to subscribe to. (Ruth)*

It is possible that in a school such as Greenfields, which as we established in Chapter 5 (section 5.3) may be described as possessing a certain "potency", the pressure for teachers to behave in certain ways is very strong indeed: this alone may explain some teacher resistance to accommodate readily notions such as "conversation". It may also, to some extent, account for a pupil related issue observed by several teachers, that the pupils "know what the school wants" when it comes to classroom performance; most are able to 'deliver' but in doing so keep it, as it were, in quarantine, separate from their 'real lives':

*It's like the smoking problem, isn't it? I can give a lesson to the kids on how bad smoking is... and they can all write down a jolly good essay on it... (But) I'm never going to stop anyone smoking am I? (Vince)*

However, Vince was more inclined to examine what he saw to be the deficiencies of his teaching approach than to search for external effects such as to imply, say, duplicity amongst the children or some whole school effect too powerful to resist. Not only in his anti smoking lessons, but in his teaching units on various equality issues, he was concerned to find a way to explore these topics without a superstructure of negativism and induced guilt. He wanted to find a way to involve children in thinking about prejudice and discrimination without, as it were, entitling the lessons 'racism', or 'sexism' - "Because the word causes problems."

At the same time, in his keenness to have children engage with the subject matter, but most of all to *change*, and thus to bring their attitudinal responses into line within acceptable limits (which he defined), he felt aware of what he thought was a dishonesty in his teaching style and its goals:

*In a way... that pretence of exploration (but) non acceptance of a certain way of.. I mean, in a way you could argue that when you're teaching prejudice you're forcing another way.. you're forcing a prejudice onto (the children)... and that would be a bad educational model; but certainly it's one I think I've done and I've had done to me...*

*...To me, I'm forcing my views on students and I'm trying to use whatever methods I can to get those views through, so I'm just as sinister as anything else I've condemned. (Vince)*

This seemed to have been a crucial moment of self discovery for this individual. As a reflective teacher he was aware of limitations of technique, but he occupied an uncomfortable world in which the next steps available to him were far from clear.

It is difficult to conclude from the assembled data on classroom processes any generally held viewpoint, but they do point to a number of relevant questions: is prejudice to be attacked and if so how is this best achieved? or is prejudice to be "allowed" and if so what may be the consequences of this? should teaching and learning goals be reviewed? how can teachers best be supported? and finally, how can teachers' focus be directed more to possibilities and potential rather than, as seemed to be the case at Greenfields, on the problems and constraints of classrooms?. My concluding questions once again indicate the potential utility of clarifying the concept prejudice. Such a clarification itself may point to a teaching and learning "model" (such as that proposed in Chapter 11), which will assist teachers in their deliberations over how to deal with prejudice in the classroom.

**iv. *Conceptual Development*** : This research was motivated by, and finds its overall sense of direction from, geography in education: amongst its various roles, geography has a responsibility in the school curriculum to introduce children to strange and foreign people and places - the 'other'. An exploration and clarification of the concept prejudice will help, it is thought, geography teachers discover ways to do this more effectively. However, I deliberately have taken a broad research approach both in my conceptual analysis and in my case study of Greenfields School where I held conversational interviews with pupils and staff from across the *whole* curriculum. This decision was taken in the realisation that, though of central importance to geography, prejudice is a concern of teachers in *all* disciplines; furthermore, given geography's oft described virtue of sitting across curriculum divides such as 'art' (human geography)

and 'science' (physical geography), giving it a kind of 'synthesising' role<sup>65</sup>, I considered it essential to seek the perspectives of teachers across a range of subjects.

The previous sections of this chapter have included contributions from 14 teachers, though they are dominated, in quantitative terms, by teachers who could be roughly classified as having their roots in the 'humanities'. This section is rather different: it is dominated by just three teachers (interviewed on separate occasions), all from 'science'. Independently from each other, they linked my interest in prejudice with a general pedagogic concern with conceptual learning. This gave these conversations a distinctive epistemological basis, one which I equate with natural science.

For example, Ruth commented that

*(Science teachers) will set up activities and experiments... to demonstrate what might be to those children a completely new version of the truth. Some children find it difficult to accept that these... knocking down what they already 'know'.*  
(Ruth)

My response to this at the time was to ask for clarification. Was she suggesting that the issue of prejudice, as manifest in perceived racist or sexist behaviour, essentially no different from the issue that challenges all teachers, which is how to introduce new ideas in a way in which pupils can learn - so that they may, in Peters' (1965) well known phrase, "travel with a different view"? Her affirmative answer was framed in her distinction between teaching and learning and her belief that learning has to be "personally constructed":

*You can get away with small differences, but quantum leaps in what is being presented... [in comparison with where the learning is up to] makes assimilation very difficult... . I think the other problem is that even if you create a learning situation as opposed to a teaching situation, you are going to have many people coming up with so many different aspects that actually having control over the situation is very difficult.* (Ruth)

Albert made a similar interpretation of the issue but took the argument much further after initially claiming that

*this prejudgement business struck a chord with me with the work I'm doing about scientific concepts* (Albert)

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<sup>65</sup>There are many references to this in the geographical literature. A favourite and formative one for me was William Bunge (1973) who wrote "Mankind starts out trying to conquer nature then ends up learning to live with it, or else. Physical and human geography had better not split." (*ibid* p 328-329)

He was interested in the way children describe and learn scientific concepts (see, for example, Marton 1981) and the links between this and the 'Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education' (CASE) project (see for example, Adey, Shayer and Yates 1990)<sup>66</sup>. According to Leat (1995), CASE activities are built on three basic concepts derived from cognitive psychology: cognitive conflict (sometimes termed 'dissonance' and referred to by Ruth implicitly in the above quotations), metacognition (to be aware of one's own thinking) and bridging (similar to transferability in the learning of skills and concepts). The CASE project therefore exemplifies a constructivist theory of learning, and Leat adds to the three guiding concepts by acknowledging the significance of language in learning (see Slater 1989). It is perhaps easy to see how science teachers at Greenfields, aware of this well established research within their own disciplinary fields, made the link they did between prejudice as a concept and (to them) the familiar ideas of dissonance, thinking skills and transferability. Albert likened the ideas, in relation to the conceptual development of children, to the 'paradigm': teachers he thought needed to invite children very often to change paradigm. This is how Albert (A) developed the theme in conversation with me (R):

*A. You're not just teaching kids facts. You're teaching them the paradigm as well. You may paint yourself into a corner which I think all my electricity teaching does;... the kids have a picture of electricity which is very difficult to change, because it explains so much about our immediate experience, and they see no reason to change. You can show them a nice experiment, but ...*

*R. Don't you have a, sorry to interrupt you, ... a kind of advantage in science in that... you can demonstrate that (the paradigm shift) works?*

*A. Well no you can't. That's the definition almost of a paradigm; there's no logical argument from one to another...*

*...I had a wonderful conversation with the Y11 who could get all the right answers on this worksheet but could not explain why... she was still operating in her first paradigm and she knew her paradigm didn't work at a certain point, and she knew contingency plans for sorting it out; which is fine... it would sort her out in science lessons and exam papers.*

This characteristic observed in the Y11 pupil seems similar to those observations noted earlier whereby pupils were seen to be capable of responding to information in at least

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<sup>66</sup>For a discussion of the interface of CASE research and potential applications in geography education see Leat (1995). Leat's work is, however, heavily focussed on the improvement of "formal operational thinking" in geography. This may lead to relatively undervaluing the emotional (or what I have called 'feelings') dimension.



two ways, separating what they saw as the required 'school response' from the everyday 'real life' one. Rather than seeing this in terms of an emotional need, however, resulting in a form of conscious duplicity, which is how other teachers seemed to interpret it, Albert saw the issue of parallel paradigms as fundamentally a conceptual problem:

*And what they actually need is 'spanners', a sort of intellectual spanner...The way you're going to change people from one paradigm to another is by giving them spanners, and the question is (finding the appropriate spanner). (Albert)*

There are two observations to make at this point in order to test, or perhaps preserve, crucial distinctions between the science teachers' line of thought and broader arguments concerning prejudice. The first is that in science education a good number of specific, and often physical, concepts, such as 'electricity' or 'the Earth', have been mapped in detail. This is in contrast to more general (and perhaps yet more abstract) concepts pupils hold about, say, the 'other', or, putting it more concretely in the realms of geography education, unknown people and places<sup>67</sup>. Secondly, when Albert talks of intellectual spanners, he refers to specific instruments designed to help the pupil overcome *particular* mental blocks in their understanding. Again this may be in contrast to the more general approach being sought by other teachers such as Vince wishing to encourage a greater open mindedness amongst his pupils towards the 'other'. I need to explore each of these distinctions in turn.

First, as Albert described in some detail, there is considerable research evidence which provides clear delineations of pupil understandings of numerous specific scientific concepts. One source of such knowledge is phenomenographic research which is predicated on the belief that there is a limited number of qualitatively different conceptions which people hold and which can be ascertained by a particular methodology (for example, see Marton 1981; Marton 1988). Bold claims are sometimes made for the utility of such knowledge, claims which appear to have convinced Albert: "teachers...need... to oblige students to face the practical consequences of their conceptions, perhaps through techniques such as cognitive confrontation..." (Ramsden *et al* 1993 p314). Indeed the notion of such intellectual challenge seems generally a pedagogically attractive one. Further attraction of the phenomenographers' theories lies in their view of what knowledge is and how it is made:

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<sup>67</sup>I am not forgetting research in geographical education on images, preferences and perception (reported in Chapter 3) My judgement however, is that there a qualitative difference between pupils conceptions of, say, what electricity is and their attitudes towards human diversity. Deliberation on this matter has, on the other hand, led me to consider whether in geography teachers need to know more about how children conceptualise key specific concepts in geography. Though beyond the scope of this research to develop fully I pick up on this issue in my conclusions; the central question it raises is to identify which are these supposedly 'key' specific concepts in geography education - on what criteria can we decide?

*If we ask ourselves: 'where is our knowledge of the world located?' phenomenography replies that it consists in relation between the person experiencing the world and the world itself. Pace Descartes and Piaget, there are not two worlds (an objective outside world and an internally constructed subjective world). There is only one world to which we can have access - the world as experienced. (Ramsden et al 1993 p 303).*

The task that falls to teachers therefore is to design particular experiences that enable learners to make sense of the world appropriately; according to Albert's understanding, this would often involve creating conceptual dissonance in the pupils' minds and encouraging them to make a 'paradigm' shift. Using such language he speculated on the nature of prejudgements and prejudice:

*... you could say that anyone will naturally prejudge; that's the action of using that paradigm. Prejudice is what's actually involved in the paradigm. If you could write out the paradigm, which by definition you cannot... it's like part of the programming language that you are using; it's not something you've decided.*

*...the paradigm idea seems to explain why you can reason with a prejudgement, because that's what it is, the construction of data using logic or whatever... and you can contradict it with counter arguments. But ... prejudice is part of the language, part of the ideology, that paradigm... and that's not going to be open to (reason). (Albert)*

The crux of this argument lies in the inherent difficulty in cross paradigm communication - a result of the impossibility of writing down a definition of a paradigm in terms that someone operating in another paradigm would comprehend (though it should be once more acknowledged that Kuhn [1970a; 1970b] himself relaxed this view in a later edition of his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*). Albert's conversation points to a reasonable assumption that the limited number of qualitatively different conceptions of the way components of the world work are rather like paradigms; for example, once a world view begins to be established it becomes hard to shift, becoming in Albert's words the "programming language". I have argued earlier that the response of pupils to the 'other' are indeed quite predictable (similar to paradigmatic interpretations of scientific ideas), and difficult to shift. To what extent is this a useful convergence of concepts, enabling us to see prejudice as paradigms?

Though the notion of the paradigm may seem an attractive metaphor, it is doubtful whether it can encompass the breadth and complexity of prejudice as described by my

emerging conceptual map. It is useful insofar as it gives teachers reason to "allow" prejudice: prejudice can be assumed to be *universal*, serving the *purpose* of helping the individual make sense of the world by providing a language, a set of assumptions - in fact *perspective* (see my discussion on Gadamer's (1975) use of 'perspective' in Chapter 10, sections 10.1 and 10.3). The paradigm metaphor also enables us to set aside *value* to an extent (in the sense that a paradigm is not by definition, say, perjorative in meaning) and invites us also to reject *immutability* (though in doing so, also reminds us of the resistance usually apparent in individuals to changing paradigm).

On the other hand, moving to my second general observation on Albert's conversation, we can see that the paradigm metaphor may imply something too cognitively precise for our purpose, and possibly underestimates the significance of the *feelings* dimension. It is one thing to accept the need individuals may have to simplify and categorise the world in order to gain an 'intellectual foothold' or perspective (this has a neutral value), but it is quite another to find prejudice as an adverse reaction to the strange, the foreign or the unknown, what Haile (1988 p33-34) has described as "culture shock". Thus the significance of the frequently mentioned (by both teachers and pupils) 'isolated state' of Greenfields goes some way beyond merely being the result of inexperience or lack of information; it is also associated with a 'fear' or anxiety about the complex and dangerous outside world sometimes associated in individuals' heads with identifiable ethnic groups and often described by the metaphors 'London' or 'inner city'. Meeting prejudice located on this dimension needs to have a regard for concerns beyond the cognitive.

Albert's interpretation of the paradigm metaphor may have a further flaw insofar as understanding prejudice in its widest sense is concerned. His contributions seemed to suggest that the teacher's job, once tuned into the pupils' paradigm(s), was to find a way to teach the *correct* alternative one. We have already seen Vince's concerns over the difficulties this caused him, the feeling he had that his teaching objectives were increasingly understood by him to consist (partly) of, as it were, replacing the children's prejudices with his own, a concern echoed by another teacher of science, Jack, who was cautious about a teacher's potential to precipitate change in pupils' way of thinking.<sup>68</sup> In his conversation, Jack had explored his understanding of the concept prejudice; "I think kids have very strong prejudices... which they use to run their lives... You need

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<sup>68</sup>This could be seen as something of a virtue: Jack asserted that "60% of primary school teachers teaching science think about the laws of motion in a way that is in fact at least 600 years out of date." Without wishing to pursue the veracity of this claim it is nonetheless not unusual to find teachers geography propagating outdated or false models and concepts, possibly, as Hicks (1981) found, supported by commercially produced learning materials in the form of textbooks.

prejudices... it's the only way to survive in an incredibly complex environment." He continued:

*I don't mind the word using (prejudice), but the thing that worries me a little bit is changing. Because if you're intending to change someone's prejudices you're talking a little bit about social engineering; you've got to know you're coming from a secure base for a proper reason.... I'm also interested in how prejudices change, because I tend to think they change in a catastrophic manner rather than in some sort of linear manner;... a lot of teaching assumess...that if you put an increasing number of facts in front of a person which contradict their prejudice then they will gradually change. I don't think things happen like that. (Jack)*

This person's comments, though exhibiting fairly clear links to Kuhnian philosophy, did not directly refer to the paradigm concept. He helpfully relaxed Albert's apparent tendency to centre on the need as he saw it for teachers to cause paradigmatic shifts in thinking from incomplete or false understandings of particular, *specific* concepts. Though not actually denying this need to help pupils to more complete and accurate understandings, Jack saw that the programming language or paradigm had a "network web" (see following quotation) which runs very deep; picking on one aspect of the pupils' understanding of the world would inevitably engage the whole web:

*... if you therefore say that people have prejudices... these are things are almost building blocks upon which they (decide upon) the way they run their life. If they're building their lives in a way that depends upon these things as their foundations, then if you attack a foundation prejudice in someone you're in danger of bringing the house down. (This is) because further more complicated things are built on lower down prejudices, and so if you're saying to someone I want you to think in a new way, you may be attacking more than just one item. It may lead to attacking other things that have a whole network web type affect and you're asking a person to totally rethink . You can't do this because you haven't got the time; you may not have the capacity. (Jack )*

What particularly interests me about Jack's utterances quoted here is the seemingly intuitive sense which the speaker has for the educational potential of *using* prejudice. In calling prejudice a "building block" we provide it with the possibility of being the foundation for future learning. This, then, is a refinement of the paradigm metaphor; we no longer need to think in terms of *shifts* (though Jack did not preclude the notion of catastrophic change in a person's world view) and instead can possibly imagine *platforms* on which to develop understanding. This reminds us of the insights brought to us by Gadamer's hermeneutics: prejudice Gadamer argued, needs to be rethought so

that it can be seen as a threshold as much as a limit to understanding, forming "perspectives from which a gradual development of our knowledge becomes possible" (Warnke 1987 p4).

It will be noted, however, that Jack did not see prejudice in *quite* so radical terms. The reason is crucial to identify, namely that despite his intention stated earlier in his conversation not to see prejudice in "black and white terms" he nevertheless cannot free himself from the perjorative view of prejudice as something-to-be-attacked. Seconds after the above utterance he asserted that "...if you're going to talk about prejudice you're inherently talking about right and wrong it seems to me". Of course this position, to paraphrase Gadamer, is itself no more effective than the prejudices it presupposes. The belief in progress and the disciplined march towards greater truth and understanding via the scientific method was one gift of the Enlightenment, but, again to paraphrase Gadamer, it was the Enlightenment which in this way also gave prejudice a bad name.

This discussion, under the heading Conceptual Development, has described an approach to understanding prejudice which seemed qualitatively different from the way the majority of teachers handled the concept. It relates in my mind to a natural science epistemology and seems heavily influenced by notions of developmental models of children's thinking and learning which underplay the emotional dimensions of learning (and prejudice formation). Nevertheless, I have found a number of interesting insights around the paradigm metaphor which seems to hold potential for establishing tentative links with the notion, derived from Gadamer, that prejudice can be seen as the basis for learning, rather than as a barrier. For such links to be made, however, requires that the nature of prejudice, particularly the assumption that it is by definition a condition which is essentially negative, is re-examined. The following chapter pursues this goal by focussing on the elements of Greenfields staff conversations which illuminated my *post hoc* identification of 'dimensions' of prejudice.

## Chapter 8

### Listening to Teachers at Greenfields (II)

#### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the analysis of teacher conversations at Greenfields School. The analysis moves on to consider the ways in which teachers, in "philosophising" about prejudice, illuminated the 'dimensions' of the concept of prejudice. The dimensions identified in what follows are those derived conceptually and have been applied *post hoc* to the data (this was explained more fully in Chapter 7 (especially section 7.4))

#### 8.2 Dimensions of Prejudice

Discussions of the analytical categories used in the previous chapter have inevitably encroached on my consideration of the 'dimensions' of prejudice. I have attempted to show that no matter how teachers conversed about prejudice - whether under my previous headings of "definitions", "the school policy", "classroom processes" or pupils' "conceptual development" - there was variety and some uncertainty in the way they conceptualised it, reinforcing my conclusion that a conceptual map, aiming to identify and clarify the dimensions of the concept and its morphology, would assist teachers in their future deliberations. In part fulfilment of the task to draw such a map, I also wanted my conversations with teachers to *inform* me, and, as the previous chapter has shown in a substantive way, my dimensions have become useful descriptive terms. The aim of this section is to show how and in what ways they are useful, taking each of my dimensions (other than 'place' which is dealt with separately) in turn. My comments can be traced back to the previous chapter but I do also use, illustratively, fresh excerpts from the data. The 'dimensions', in alphabetical order, are as follows:

- i. Cause
- ii. Feelings
- iii. Manifestations
- iv. Mutability

v. Purpose

vi. Universality

vii. Value

i. *Cause* : The main purpose of my conversations with teachers was to clarify the concept prejudice: what is prejudice? Speculations about why people hold prejudices inevitably formed part of the discussions: what causes prejudice? The what and the why are distinctive question although only one teacher explicitly wanted to emphasise the difference, arguing in fact that "looking for cause is not very fruitful" (Philip). Most others showed no such hesitation, often describing the concept in relation to its supposed origins. As a result this dimension is probably the least distinct in my list, there being obvious overlaps with 'universality', 'purpose' and 'feelings'. There is also substantial overlap with my category 'place and prejudice', considered later in this chapter (section 8.3). I have retained 'cause' as a distinctive dimension, however, because from the totality of my data, I perceived that when considering 'cause' Greenfields' teachers seemed to distinguish either *individual* or broader *societal* origins. This forms the basis of a bipolar 'dimension', though I would not wish to suggest that teachers hold either one or the other pole as their favoured explanation; the picture expressed by my data is not as clear cut as this suggests on an individual basis.

We have seen in previous sections of this chapter teachers referring to pupils' fear or anxiety of the unknown, on the one hand, and their desire for the comfort and security of the familiar, on the other. This axis, describing individuals attempting to make sense of the world, forms the heart of what I deem to be the individual origins of prejudice. Of course, individuals do not operate in isolation of wider community and societal forces which help shape the way individuals respond, but the impetus or need to categorise, simplify and discriminate information and experience is the individual's. Even so explanations of this kind were seen by several teachers to be less than straight forward. Ruth in particular mentioned what she saw as an "inherent paradox":

*...you have this inherent drive to prejudice against..., which is bad in simplistic terms, and yet we know that there is in many a natural tendency to look at a situation and learn and create for themselves their truth, and that seems good.*  
(Ruth)

She also found problems in reconciling what she understood to be two "filters" that result in prejudice, the "sensory" and the "rational": is there, she wondered, a way

*...to influence the emotional emotive side of this (need for) security through rational debate?... or are they forever parallel and therefore non-meeting, non-convergent lines of argument? (Ruth)*

Her question sounded rhetorical, but serves to remind us of an important distinction - that understanding prejudice is not, to paraphrase Jack, "just a mechanical thing" which can be put right by checking your facts.

Other teachers looked at the individual with a slightly different emphasis. Some were interested in why some children appear to be 'more prejudiced' than others. Judgements of this sort are risky of course, for it is difficult to determine with reliability precisely what thoughts are present inside people's heads. Nevertheless, several teachers felt able to make such assessments, based upon detailed informal evidence such as conversations taking place during residential field courses and such like. Don, for example, seemed convinced that there was a link between prejudice and "ability" or "intellect", on the grounds that 'less-able' minds were less capable of accommodating and assimilating new information and were therefore more reliant on prejudice:

*Well it goes back to what I was saying about the skeleton idea<sup>69</sup> of prejudice, and the.. again here comes a prejudiced statement, but I always think that people with the least security are often the people with least intellect, who have to have the skeleton in place. It's the same problem when you're trying to teach people things that they're unhappy with and they would rather cling to their old ideas - especially if you're talking about abstract concepts...*

*...perhaps they (the 'less able') are automatically slightly more prejudiced than the more able; I've been shocked by some of the kids I've talked to one to one.*  
(Don)

It can be seen that Don is aware of his own potential prejudice in uttering this view, perhaps aware also of the deeply problematic notion of general 'ability', or of the tendency for some children, equipped with certain social and communication skills, to be more adept at concealing the more grating or direct expressions of the way they think or feel. What is perhaps even more significant is that from my small sample of Greenfield pupils (reported in Chapter 6) the claim that Don makes is impossible to substantiate; pupils who were confident and articulate (see Annie-Rose) could not conceal their prejudices for long during an extended conversation. There is, though, perhaps a modest point to emerge from this: that although it would be tendentious to attempt to relate prejudice causally to some simple notion of 'ability', it does not seem

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<sup>69</sup>That is, a framework of ideas that people need in order to live with a comfortable level of certitude.



unreasonable to suggest that to understand one's own prejudices, and those of others, requires a range of intellectual skills and attributes which are not necessarily evenly spread amongst children and are more difficult to teach to some children than others.

So much for individual causes of prejudice. Teachers also referred to wider, societal causes, such as media influences of various kinds, and the potential which exists for interest groups (including some political parties) to exploit individuals' uncertainties and feelings of insecurity by nationalistic and xenophobic sloganising. Some teachers at Greenfields were acutely aware of, say, the politics of 'racialisation' (Smith 1993) and the insidious nature of what passes in certain newspapers for political analysis. Many teachers, particularly I think those of geography, were also aware of bias in textbooks and other learning materials, another potential contributor to prejudice - at least to its maintenance if not, strictly speaking, a 'cause'.

Two teachers added a further spin to this general theme, relating to the centralising moves forced upon the education service as a result of legislation, particularly the 1988 Education Reform Act leading to the introduction of the National Curriculum. It would be unnecessarily far fetched to suggest that the National Curriculum was, in itself, a 'cause' of prejudice; and yet, Ruth, for example, was convinced that its formation was such that implicitly prejudices would be at least reinforced, if not nurtured:

*... as soon as you've got a National Curriculum that has got assessable targets, you necessarily are going to have some notion of contract that this is the truth and this is a public truth that everybody's got to know. You therefore have got punctuations to the process of learning which may distort it completely in the name of assessable assessments; whereas the more esoteric skills of literally creating knowledge for yourself as a learner is almost...even if it's assessable, it isn't moderatable... (Ruth).*

This is a view we touched upon in Chapter 3 where we examined some of the assumptions which result in a geography as purveyor of the 'certified facts'. Powell (1995) has astutely observed that, in the geography national curriculum documents, people are seen as interacting with the environment rather than making it with their beliefs and commitments (*ibid* p2).

**ii. *Feelings*** : The 'feelings' dimension of prejudice serves to emphasise the distinction between what Reid (1986) has identified as the two ideally converging ways of knowing and understanding: "cognition" and "feeling". There is a tendency, widespread in education (a legacy of a certain kind of Enlightenment thinking), which places the former of these categories above the latter (see Slater 1994 p151-152) resulting in some

kind of denial that feeling experience is part of knowing. Reducing learning to the propositional or 'objective' is, however, destructive of a part of our capacity for understanding and knowledge. If the exploration of feelings or the 'subjective' domain is not encouraged then understanding in some aspects of learning will "remain raw, chaotic, often infantile" (Reid 1986 p2).

As is the case with all my dimensions I do not claim that 'feelings' is a wholly discrete category; it spills over to others, particularly 'cause' and 'place'. It remains as a separate dimension partly because of the ease with which feelings can be trampled by an education service dominated by cognitive aims. If feelings were made a subset of, say, 'cause' there would risk of it being subsumed and given low prominence. It was evident in my interviews with teachers that though several recognised the significance of emotions and feelings, few felt compelled to develop the matter beyond a fairly rudimentary level. It is possible that my briefing sheet (unintentionally) steered conversation away from a feelings dimension, but it was as if there was a tacit assumption that though pupils have an emotional side to their development, the school's role was essentially a pastoral one reinforcing, by example and actions, principles of fair play, compassion, care and so on. It seems that this was seen as something different from a concern with prejudice, the issue at the heart of my conversations, which was perceived largely to be a formal curriculum related, intellectual matter. As we have seen, a few teachers even understood prejudice as almost exclusively a cognitive process, putting faith in procedures such as "cognitive acceleration" in order to stimulate the appropriate paradigm shift in thinking. Successful though such procedures may be in their own terms, they leave a gap: as Slater writes of "education through geography" in a fragmented world, "We need to view the world not only with neutral objectivity but also from within our feeling experience" (Slater 1994 p163).

When teachers did acknowledge a feelings dimension to prejudice it was usually in the context of people's attachment to familiarity, their security in the known and their (consequential) resistance to the strange. Ruth, for example, described prejudice as "an inherent drive" for security which is both rational and emotional. She was not sure whether the two "filters", the rational and emotional, were parallel or convergent, and therefore undecided on whether the emotional could be addressed through "rational debate". It is pertinent to note that the rest of the conversation steered away from the emotional; though wide ranging, touching on, for example, classroom processes, the importance of "tuning in" to children's existing knowledge and the impact of the National Curriculum, the conversation was concerned largely with cognitive learning.

Other teachers intimated that it was difficult for teachers to contemplate addressing emotional issues beyond the general forum of the 'school ethos'. In a sense it seemed to

be implied that such issues were beyond the teacher's control; teachers simply had to do their best. For instance, Jack observed hypothetically and unrealistically the "culture shock" that would be suffered by pupils and teachers at Greenfields if there were a sudden change engineered to the "safe environment" of the school as a result of the erection of "a huge new buliding site...full of problem people"; "they probably wouldn't be able to cope. It's like an old grammar having to go comprehensive." Don (D) and Bill (B) (both geographers) were less fatalistic taking the opportunity to discuss the school's responsibility, as they saw it, to enrich pupils' "multicultural experiences":

*R. But isn't that a bit sort of goldfish bowl like? I mean.. I mean I don't know about you but I've taken kids from this school down to London and they can be extremely difficult to handle.*

*D. Embarrasing sometimes.*

*B. And in a way that's not an experience in terms of experiential learning.*

*D. It's a reinforcement of prejudice.*

*R. It could well be, yes. ...*

*B. It's actually saying, no matter how carefully you set it up, I think it's saying there's a problem in Brixton, let's go and have a look at it; and it's not saying that there is a problem in Greenfields School.*

Again these teachers' acknowledgement of a feelings dimension is really implicit. They have identified a part of a problem but do not take us in the direction of how to address it. They are, of course, perfectly aware of this but in the end do not see it as essentially an educational problem: two minutes later Don asserted that "it is a problem of society in this area more than the school."

I conclude from this discussion that 'feelings' need to be rescued for the formal (as well as hidden) curriculum. My evidence as a whole leads me to suggest that the establishment of a 'feelings' dimension to my map of prejudice is essential, partly because of the tendency for it to be sidelined in teaching and learning agendas: the latter was indicated to me by the relative reluctance of discussants to develop the theme confidently and with understanding. I would therefore fully support Slater's view that:

*...a vocabulary of value laden words needs to be built up; we need to be able to use more fluently the language of feeling and ideas to express values. Students cannot dig deeply into values if they do not have the language for expressing them. (Slater 1994, p156)*

I would also, however, include teachers as well as students in the final sentence.

**iii. Manifestations :** The dimension 'manifestations' reminds us of the distinction between thoughts which if unexpressed remain, by definition, locked in the mind, and actions which have both intended and unintended effects. Actions can have direct or indirect impact on individuals alone or in groups; they can be monitored and if necessary controlled. Partly because of the difficulty in observing and recording people's thoughts and the relative ease with which this can be done for people's actions, it is the manifestations of racial prejudice which has, for example, been the goal for pressure groups and policy makers to first understand and then moderate.

There is little doubt in some quarters (for example, Evans 1993) that the concentration on manifest discrimination, leading to a 'race relations' legal framework, has resulted in substantial, but by no means complete, success in easing some of the tensions which have arisen in British society as a result of racial prejudice. In education too, concentration on undesirable behaviour of children has resulted in major gains, although there have been lessons to be learned on the way (symbolised maybe by the Burnage Enquiry report [Macdonald *et al* 1989]) and at Greenfields, as we saw in Chapter 5, the proposal to monitor 'incidents' proved controversial and was never formally implemented. The motive for many of the staff at Greenfields was to understand better what underlay much of the worrying observable behaviour which itself was recognised as possibly being open to misinterpretation.

As discussed in Chapter 2, David Milner has written of the dangers of focussing on prejudice, making it "a psychological phenomenon with a life of its own" (Milner 1982 p2), preferring to concentrate on a racial prejudice which "is simply the individual manifestation of social, political and economic forces." Although wary of the dangers Milner points out, it seems to me, from an educational perspective, essential to clarify prejudice as a concept in a way that could provide additional insight to teachers who wish to respond to *individuals* playing out their parts in the social milieu that Milner dubs "institutional racism". To what extent did teachers at Greenfields make distinctions of this sort, and in what ways did they talk about the manifestations of prejudice?

My analysis earlier in this chapter has shown a staff conscious of its collective duty to 'set an example', to correct undesirable behaviour and encourage "fairness" (a point made repeatedly by Jill). But there was also widespread pessimism about the capacity of the school to effect what was occasionally termed "real change"; that is, change of underlying and deeply held attitudes<sup>70</sup>. We can set aside for the moment the prickly

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<sup>70</sup>As if to illustrate the complexities involved in this Vince volunteered an interesting ambiguity in the way he perceived the potential of the school to influence children's attitudes;

question of whether the school, or individual teachers within it, *should* set out consciously to change attitudes, although brief consideration of what is implied by "real change" leads us to the related question of whether we can know what the conditions are that we attempting to change.

I can be reasonably sure that most Greenfields teachers would subscribe to Slater's remark that "In articulating the immediate attitudes we do not always articulate the deeper ones, the values which inform them" (Slater 1994 p155). Indeed, it is this that explains to some large extent the frustration felt by some teachers at their 'lack of progress' in reaching beyond the point at which they felt many of their pupils were (literally) 'performing': in Vince's words, "...they know what the school wants." It appeared that several of these teachers were also unwilling to adopt simple procedures such as recording all "racist incidents" for the school policy, on the grounds that even if it were successful in its own terms and helped the school stamp out undesirable behaviour (such as name calling, racist humour, graffiti and so on), it would probably impede any serious attempt at engaging both staff and pupils with the identification and articulation of the 'deeper values'.

Vince distinguished prejudice from discrimination, admitting that the former does not inevitably result in the latter, and that it was the latter on which a school should concentrate its energy. On the other hand, seconds before stating this he implied a yearning to be able to reach deeper and move beyond a sort of cataloguing of overt and perhaps in themselves stereotypical images:

*The students' idea of racism was a few of them pointed to the problem of jobs, the problems of politics (neither defined more than this) and so on, and nearly all of them were giving examples of violent racial attacks...Racism for them was violence... (Vince).*

Philip was yet more pessimistic, denying that there was any point in attempting to reach deeper values on account of their resistance to influence, confirming what may have been the majority staff view. My conversation with him had begun to cover the responses that a school or individual teachers could or should make in the light of what Philip had already identified as quite rigid "preferences":

*R. But teachers are in a position to help young people...understand that... actions based upon (their) preferences can be socially unacceptable.*

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*I don't actually think..believe that education's particularly good at changing people's attitudes, but it does form people's attitudes...we have schools full of racist literature...old fashioned geography books and even in the way we do geography - it's 'let's look at Brazil' (and) 'let's look at these shanty towns and these very poor people'; so poverty is a third world problem, where black people live... (Vince)*

*P. They can be socially unacceptable but this leads you no closer to altering them. I think this is the dilemma.*

*R. OK, but it might help you stop people engaging in actions which are socially unacceptable.*

*P. Yes, you would then be no nearer to altering the fundamental preferences. That I think is the dilemma. If you look purely at the symptoms if you like, the social actions you can take all sorts of stances, and you must, because we're not dealing with cabbage we're dealing with people; rejection of cabbage is of no harm to anybody, rejection of people is quite different so you must take action. But I believe that in many cases by actually taking that action you're actually reinforcing the prejudice..you're forcing the cabbage down people's throats if you like, and that doesn't make them like it any more.*

One thing we learn from this is that the particular line chosen by the Greenfields School prejudice working group was not universally supported; this quote reveals lukewarm support for systematising the school's response to discriminatory behaviour and an apparent refusal to proceed further in the search for new pathways to understanding the concept of prejudice. On the other hand (as we have seen in the previous chapter, section 7.5 part iii), Philip went on to suggest, later in the same interview, that "rather than prejudice reduction, prejudice awareness could be a key", a statement which invites further search. The idea of prejudice awareness echoes the similar point made by Tom (Chapter 7, section 7.5) and the sixth former Sandra (Chapter 6, section 6.10).

To conclude, a dimension of 'manifestation' gives to the concept prejudice (in the collected eyes of Greenfields staff) an axis running from the overt (actual behaviour) to the hidden (inside people's heads). This matches Milner's view of prejudice as "shorthand for the psychological dimension of racism" (inside people's heads) and the "social processes, overt and covert, by which black people are (intentionally or effectively) devalued and disprivileged in a systematic way" (Milner 182 p2).

Unlike the position Milner appears to adopt, this dimension is just one of seven (eight if we include 'place'), which allows us to be somewhat less clear-cut - and dismissive - of the concept: "Prejudiced attitudes ... are irrational, unjust or intolerant dispositions towards other groups" (*ibid* p5).

**iv. Mutability** : This dimension is concerned with the capacity for prejudices to change or be changed. My briefing sheet, which suggested that perhaps there was a distinction between prejudices (which it was proposed - after the Swann Report [DES1985] - were immutable) and prejudgements (which were considered to be more

open to change), invited comment on this dimension. There was, on balance, little appetite amongst my discussants for pursuing any such a difference, partly as a result of a natural hesitancy against the risk of being washed up in semantics. It is interesting to record that, even so, several teachers did, as conversations progressed, find that that degrees of 'mutability' could be distinguished and that this was sometimes quite helpful to them. For example, Vince, as we have seen, began to question the efficacy of his implicit aims as a teacher to change pupils' views (in a certain direction) on 'race' and gender and apparently committed himself to a search for perhaps more limited but also more realistic goals; he began to reflect on his own teaching and the design of lessons involving certain kinds of content.

Adding further weight to the notion of mutability as a dimension on a sliding scale, rather than one possessing a fixed value, Philip seemed to deny and confirm immutability almost in the same breath: people "can modify their prejudices in the light of experience" and yet their prejudices are "irreversible in the face of evidence". He explained,

*...you see the evidence I can present to you against your prejudices may have no bearing on you whatsoever... you are taking a standpoint which I can't share, and therefore I can't see how to approach your prejudice.*<sup>71</sup> (Philip)

In other words, a person may be resistant to evidence presented to them, but this does not mean that they cannot change as a result of their own experiences. Emphasising that there may powerful reasons why people can also resist having new experiences, he nevertheless appeared optimistic. To illustrate, Philip created this analogy:

*How many of us now don't use garlic? Now that's what I mean by broadening your preferences imperceptably, harmlessly, without destroying your culture and finding that, yes, you like it, and yet still being afraid of the rest.* (Philip)

Later in the same conversation, however, the tone confirmed his pessimism about the "ability of *institutions*... to change attitudes", though again with a caveat which seemed to indicate that it was the manner in which institutions tried to effect change which conferred failure:

*You don't make people like cabbage by forcing them to eat it. (It is better to) present things in such a way that whatever is threatening or unacceptable eventually becomes acceptable... You don't tell people...* (Philip)

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<sup>71</sup>I acknowledge a possible link here with the paradigm metaphor introduced in the previous chapter. There, we saw (Chapter 7, section 7.5 part iv) Albert exploring the inability of individuals operating in different paradigms to "talk" to each other; they do not share the same "programme language".

My judgement is that this sentiment had widespread and growing support amongst teachers at Greenfields. There was reluctance to accept the immutability of prejudice, but also awareness of a range of reasons why people will resist change. At Greenfields there was anxiety over the possible undesirable impact of overtly setting out to effect change in the attitudes of the pupils. Don admitted (referring to the difference hypothesised on my briefing sheet between prejudice and prejudgement - see Figure 7.1), "I'm not sure of the way prejudgement is being defined here is any different from the way I see prejudice." His co-discussant, Stuart, continued,

*...it would be sad if we accepted it was irreversible; we might be fighting against the odds in many ways. I think you've got to do something about that..very much in a hidden way rather than a very (overt) or open way. (Stuart)*

It is worthwhile noting once more the assumption underlying such a lot of the staff talk on prejudice, present in this quote; that it is a condition which has to be "fought" (albeit, in this case, covertly).

**v. Purpose :** The dimension of 'purpose' describes the end(s) which prejudice serves. I do not wish to argue that people consciously hold prejudices for an expressed purpose (though I do not discount this as an occasional possibility), mainly because this would seem to render prejudice to be too fickle or readily maleable. Rather, I intend articulating a clearer understanding of the often unconscious reasons *why* prejudices are held and are fairly resistant to change.

We have seen Jack articulating a widely agreed viewpoint that prejudice is ultimately

*the only way to survive...you generalise and pigeonhole, and as soon as you do that you're prejudicing if there's such a word. (Jack)*

It is true that my briefing sheet in effect prompted this kind of response as it suggested to the reader the universality of prejudice and its rational basis. It was nevertheless significant how readily teachers picked up on the notion in their different ways. Ruth, another scientist, expressed this in perhaps the most concise manner:

*...prejudice as a .. an inherent drive to understand and interpret the world to make an individual comfortable; security follows from that, and that security is both rational and emotional... (Ruth)*

She continued,

*What's interesting ... in the wording (on the briefing sheet: Figure 7.1) is when a person comes to believe in their truth... Truth in an absolute sense, you could*



*say, is no one's in the sense that it exists out there, immutable. But unfortunately, given the cognitive apparatus that we've got you rely on individuals to interpret the world, but (they search for) common accountability in order for it to become an accepted truth. (Ruth)*

So powerful is this felt need individuals have for "common accountability" (akin, I have thought, to 'peer group pressure' and 'group identity', or even 'political correctness'), the "accepted truth" can "close down" on the possibility of accepting alternatives. This, then, was prejudice and its purpose was to establish (to "secure" maybe) identity.

There were relatively few comments which I felt able to place in this dimension. Partly this was owing to the difficulty discussants had in articulating or imagining a 'purpose' for prejudice distinct from comments relating to cause, feelings or place. However, Ruth's utterances here are illuminating and persuasive, leading me to retain this discrete category. The dimension is also valuable as it enables us to retain the possibility that there may be *positive* purpose to holding prejudices, linked to Gadamer's (1975) reworking of prejudice as perspective providing individuals with thresholds for, rather than barriers to, future learning.

**vi. *Universality*** : The dimension of universality addresses the question of incidence; whether prejudice is a condition experienced by all or only by some. It is an important dimension for if we can accept the former it could influence other ways in which prejudice is conceived - we would be able to say not so much that prejudice is 'natural' (and by implication something that we can do nothing about) but that it is natural to expect to find prejudice shaping people's views of the world. If, on the other hand, we were to assume that prejudice was not a universal condition we would logically have to accept that some people were free of prejudice - in which case, educational goals expressed in terms of *eradicating* prejudice would not appear to be unreasonable.

At Greenfields School there seems to have been a commonly held assumption that the school's job, amongst other things was (as in any school) to eliminate prejudice. Don, for example, described the challenge facing secondary school teachers in this way:

*You've got to be able to realise that they're arriving at school with all this preconceived baggage that they've picked up from their experience of life. School in a way is saying 'come on let's open these, let's throw everything out, let's see what we want to put back in' . (Don)*

This I read as a kind of post-Enlightenment overhang on teachers' professional identity, the traditional though, ironically, unexamined position which ascribes greater wisdom and fewer prejudices to the educated mind. Several teachers admitted having never

thought about such questions before the establishment of the prejudice working group, and some not even before the research conversation itself. Not one teacher, however, came to the end of their conversation in any doubt that prejudice could be understood as a universal human condition. This realisation was, I believe, initially the source of some frustration amongst some of the teachers on the working group who had to face up to modifying their implicit aims involving prejudice reduction or elimination, the expected outcomes of such work being change in pupils' attitudes.

General acceptance of universality does not imply uniformity in the way individuals rationalised this position (which for several was new). Teachers variously attributed prejudice as a "need", as "inevitable" or "unavoidable". For example, Don stated that,

*I've always thought that certain prejudices... hold a framework up for some people of their own ideology of life, and that they need to have certain prejudices in order to justify the way they live almost. (Don)*

He also acknowledged, *a propos* his previous quote above, that although schools may have the intention to 'open minds', other considerations such as public examinations usually manage to pervert this: "(pupils) will always view school as being a sausage machine really, ahead of everything else." During the same conversation, Bill thought that at a school like Greenfields there was an inevitability about certain kinds of prejudice linked to inexperience and the unknown:

*It's the old existentialist bit, you know you've actually got to experience it through living... to actually take it on board. I think I can talk to kids about racism and prejudice and they don't take it on board because they do not see it as affecting them. And with something that does become very personal like this, very individual, I think in many ways it is very difficult to teach. (Bill)*

Finally, Josh seemed pragmatically to come to an acceptance of universal prejudice in arguing to himself,

*... education against prejudice naturally assumes that the educators themselves are perfect really, and I wouldn't consider myself as totally unprejudiced by any manner of means. I'm sure I have all sorts of subconscious and subliminal thoughts about certain peoples and I must get negative images on certain things. (Josh)*

To accept that prejudice is universal, which strongly suggests that it cannot be eliminated (though not that prejudices are immutable), forces teachers to reflect on other assumptions, not least the next dimension on my list, 'value'.

vii. *Value* : The dimension described by the term 'value' refers to the value vested in the concept prejudice. I have understood this as a single dimension running from positive to negative and predictably I found most teachers assumed that prejudice was located towards the negative end of this continuum; that is to say, they thought of prejudice as undesirable, with perjorative meaning.

This dimension seems to operate in some tension with some of the others, notably 'universality'. Whereas all teachers could accept prejudice as universal, many could not, apparently, break through to an understanding of prejudice in anything other than a negative condition - akin to 'original sin' perhaps. Some teachers, like Philip, relaxed this tension for themselves by adopting an alternative term ('preference' in Philip's case). Many claimed not to like the word, because of its perjorative sound, but as we saw repeatedly in earlier sections of this chapter, could not finally rid themselves of metaphors of attack when talking about meeting prejudice in school or the classroom.

Others tried to work through this dilemma concluding that the assumption of negative value had resulted in classroom and whole school approaches which had brought defensive response from pupils, precipitating on some occasions entrenchment rather than emancipation. Vince, for example, examined a recently acquired GCSE textbook:

*... it talks about prejudice as attitudes we have about certain types of people. In the same paragraph it says once our prejudices are established we build up stereotypes which are crude mental pictures of the appearance and character of groups we dislike... it talks of unacceptable behaviours, of subcultures, and it's a feeling of superiority, it's got scapegoating..fear... which is then developed into xenophobia, and it's all coupled with Jews and linked with genocide. Now I'm not saying this is a bad book... but straight away the idea behind it is that prejudice is bad... (Vince)*

Vince had already reflected on the deficiencies (as he saw it) of his own teaching; in connection to the above analysis he merely added that "...whenever I've sort of done prejudice it seems it can be done in ten minutes, by saying...'don't prejudge'!...I mean the aspect of prejudice is actually ignored." Implicit in his thinking-out-loud is the possibility of developing a fresh way of teaching about prejudice, but in a less prejudicial (*sic*) atmosphere. Ferguson has made a similar point in relation to anti-racist teaching in media studies which has had counter productive impact with the children "by teaching them that they bare the guilt of their exploitative forbears and that they should feel duly penitent. This is not a successful pedagogic strategy" (Ferguson 1993 p 25).

**viii. Dimensions of prejudice : Summary.** This section has described seven dimensions of prejudice. I have drawn partly from the evidence collated under my analytical categories (occupying sections of the previous Chapter) and partly from evidence specially excerpted from my data to provide further illustration of the dimensions.

My list of dimensions has been presented alphabetically, implying a non-hierarchical arrangement. Clearly, though, there are links between individual dimensions. For example, when discussing 'cause', it is difficult not to stray into other considerations such as 'purpose' and 'universality'. Links are explored more fully in Chapter 10 in which I discuss my conceptual map of prejudice. Before arriving at a position to do this, there is one further 'dimension' which, like 'cause', has several links with other dimensions but which I consider separately below. Partly because of my ultimate focus of geography education and partly because the Greenfields teachers speaking so freely on this topic, 'place and prejudice' emerged as an analytical category of its own. It can be understood as an eighth, perhaps *subject specific*, 'dimension'.<sup>72</sup>

### 8.3 Place and Prejudice

We have seen in Chapter 5 (section 5.2) that a prominent theme to run through teachers' descriptions of Greenfields School ('what Greenfields means to me') was the significance of place. This theme was repeated many times in relation to prejudice as an issue at the school. As Jack stated, "...it's very much about geographical location"; the purpose of this section is to substantiate more fully this contention and in doing so explore the theoretical and practical possibilities provided by a place oriented 'dimension' of the concept prejudice.

We can commence this analysis with the simple observation that individuals have prejudices for or against people (and their cultural products) and that unavoidably such prejudice is located in space. Prejudice, therefore, becomes transferred to place by a process of association. Sometimes the place can be specified on a variety of scales: district, town, region, nation, continent. Frequently place can be generalised into a type in much the same way that a person can be allocated into a stereotypical group, having the effect of "damning the identity into a generalisation" (Lambert and Slater 1992

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<sup>72</sup>It might be interesting to speculate about the nature of other 'subjects' and my emerging conceptual map of prejudice. Geographers may be particularly interested in the 'other' place whereas historians, for example, may be able to identify a parallel concern with time, requiring careful handling by teachers; Bob Ferguson, for instance, noted that in studying slavery in certain ways children were unconsciously made to "feel gratitude that civilisation has moved forward since those awful days. There will be no cross comparison with, for example contemporary Columbian or South African miners" (Ferguson 1993 p34)

p160): terms like suburbs, inner city, periphery, core, North, South and third world all come to mind. Philip illustrated the point inadvertently when attempting to demonstrate the *universality* and apparent *immutability* of prejudice - and, incidentally, the harmlessness of the form of prejudice he describes, so long as the individual was aware of it:

*You know I am extremely prejudiced against Yorkshiremen, and I'm sure they are extremely prejudiced against everyone else - that's my prejudice straight away. There was a very interesting article in the paper...and it was fascinating because it actually accorded with all my prejudices against Yorkshiremen, which I am fully aware are prejudices; some of my best friends are Yorkshiremen and that doesn't alter my prejudice one jot....*

*...I deal with it on two levels...because he's a Yorkshireman I have certain expectations and, I won't deny it, and those expectations are fulfilled often enough for me not to set them aside...On the other hand, despite all those expectations I hope I can talk to Yorkshiremen on a one to one basis that means I can allow for my prejudices. ...But if you were to present me with a hundred and one arguments why all my prejudices against Yorkshiremen are wrong my experiences are sufficient to leave me with the residue... (Philip)*

One senses a certain playfulness in this utterance, though it was stated in order to make some serious points, which it manages to do. My present purpose in using this passage, however, is merely to illustrate the ease with which people and places are (predictably and unsurprisingly) linked together. What I shall now go on to discuss are the possible significance and implications of this.

Many teachers spoke of Greenfields as an 'isolated state'. I have understood this in a metaphorical sense rather than literally partly because a purely literal interpretation would be difficult to substantiate; though Kingsford has a rural hinterland it is essentially a commuting town with north London very much in its orbit - boys and girls normally support Tottenham Hotspur as their natural local top team. Greenfields School, then, is no more geographically 'isolated' than most outer urban schools. The location is significant but it is in psychological and cultural aspects of school life that I believe the school feels 'isolated' (and again I do not ascribe uniqueness to Greenfields in this matter); the myriad activity, ranging from examination performance to sporting achievements, is all said to be for 'the good of the school' which forces a certain inward gaze and exclusive, or 'isolated' feel. The introduction of the 'market' by the introduction of examination league tables in the early 1990s may have exacerbated this.

It takes strenuous effort for students or their teachers to lift their eyes above the horizon of the school gates and it was partly this realisation that exercised the reflective powers of Vince as he looked back on recent years working with children trying to extend their experience and encourage them to understand different cultural contexts:

*...all the time you're within your.. within your culture, you're always going to be making prejudgements within that cultural boundary unless you can remove yourself, which I don't think you can do. (Vince)*

His term "cultural boundary" nicely captures the 'isolation' of the school community as I have tried to describe it. It can also refer to a larger scale: E M Forster's devastating comment regarding "the home counties posing as the universe" (cited in Allen 1958 p236) seems apposite. John, a teacher of modern foreign languages, speculated on what he thought was a commonplace adolescent thought whereby pupils believed themselves "lucky" to be born British;

*I mean it's very clear to me that the kids at the school by and large are unquestioning in their belief that this is the best place for them to be... and it's that comfortable position which makes it possible for them to put other civilisations down. (John)*

We have noted in the previous section (under 'feelings') the impact of this phenomenon on measures taken up by teachers trying to break down, or at least cross, cultural boundaries with their pupils. Children taken on fieldtrips to London were said to be "very difficult to handle" (in contrast to Duff and Turnbull (1987) who claimed to run a "successful" day trip to Lambeth with children from an all-white school in Reading). Children were said to be resistant to discussions on 'race' and prejudice "because they do not see it as affecting them," and one teacher admitted that anxiety about his ability to handle the children's response had deterred him from introducing a more diverse content into his lessons. At least one teacher confessed being attracted by the approach 'to let sleeping dogs lie':

*The truth is that the vast majority of kids leaving this school will not end up living in a district of Britain which you would describe as racially mixed. (Don)*

The further twist that such an attitude would give to the isolationist tendency I have attempted to describe is something to be concerned about as it would reinforce other spatial divisions in society. Even one of the most energetic and optimistic teachers was implicitly aware of these powerful inertial forces:

*I think differences between people are marvellous, and I think what we should be trying to do is set up an environment, a challenging environment, where actually we appreciate the differences between each other. In the end there may be problems of a practical nature that may be difficult. (Jack)*

Another kind of pupil response described by staff, contrasting slightly with that noted above (whereby children mix a vague sense of national pride with an urge to "put down" others), is their denial of the problem in the home orbit. The corollary of this is to *displace* the problem to a more fitting location, and we have met this aspect earlier in the analysis of both pupil and staff conversations (in Chapters 6 and 7). Vince suspected that children would do this to "any moral problem (they) don't really own". Nevertheless, concerning pupils writing about racism, he felt strongly that for the pupils

*...it's something which belongs to London, and there is no understanding of Britain as multicultural...*

*...I've marked 60 projects so far and there were only 5 of them that drew attention to the fact that Kingsford was monoracial, predominantly monoracial, ... and of those 5, two of them are from mixed ethnic backgrounds. (Vince)*

We are increasingly familiar with the usage of the 'other' to denote the outsider; the term is used effectively to signal the marginalisation felt by, say, women or blacks excluded from the mainstream or denied access to positions of influence or prestige. There is in a sense a parallel term to emerge from my analysis, *the 'other place'*, which may have particular relevance to geography educators. Like its root form (the 'other'), the 'other place' forms one side of an essentially bi-polar construct which can be expressed in a number of ways giving the term several variants:

us : them

in : out

insider : outsider

home : away

near : far

It is interesting to note the pejorative tone often associated with the right hand side of this bi-polar list, connected with assumptions of strangeness or difference, foreign-ness, unfamiliarity and separation. These are all words which in different ways are central to geography, with its constant interest and concern to understand distance and diversity.

Put like this we can see the nature of the special responsibility which falls to geography. Expressed simply, this is not only to 'introduce' children to the 'other place' - after all children from a very young age have gained through the televisual media impressions and information about distant places (see Wiegand 1992; 1993) - nor do I see the discovery of place, in the way Daniels (1992) argues, as simply a way to nurture the geographical imagination (as a kind of end in itself). It is more to introduce children how to think about places, particularly the 'other place' but with the realisation that how children relate to familiar and local places plays an important role in shaping their response (see for example Spencer and Blades 1993).

The teacher at Greenfields who most clearly came to this realisation himself, through the process of conscious deliberation via reflective conversation, was not a geographer (vindicating my decision to engage in 'philosophising' discussions across the curriculum and not confine myself only to geography). His concern was with 'patriotism' which he imagined was part of the same equation which seemed to cause pupils to formulate racism as a problem associated with the 'other place' (often expressed by the Greenfield children through the metaphor 'London'):

*I've got this stuff George Orwell wrote on patriotism. Now I regard myself as highly patriotic; I do want my society to be a good place to live in, and this form of patriotism is a positive prejudice...The best form of patriotism is being highly self-critical...*

*the thing we have to say is 'Britain is a good place to live. I am proud to be British but there these awful problems; so what we want to do is make our society even better' ... I admit what I've been saying is 'Oh don't we live in an awful country'... (Vince)*

What Vince is doing here is expressing his realisation (described in much greater length than this single quotation allows) that by centring his teaching on 'racism' (based on his assumption that children have prejudice *against* the 'other') it is difficult not to sound accusatory and that, however implicitly and subliminally, children are being asked to think in negative terms about *belonging to* a society or nation in which they have been brought up; what Vince called "positive prejudice", a natural and unexceptional feeling associated with 'belonging', is turned into something which is not favoured, something for which there is an implied sense of guilt.

When faced with the vexed question of how to provide children at Greenfields with a wider experience, Vince, in the same conversation, almost seemed to contradict himself:



*Of living in a multicultural society? I don't know. I really have no idea. I think it would have been more positive if I'd had students who were actually prepared to criticise the structure of (their own) society. (Vince)*

Like charity, perhaps, criticism should begin at home. What seems essential is a sensitivity to how this is handled and in what ways it is encouraged. Vince seems to me an example of a reflective teacher for whom answers to the questions he had raised were not expected by him to be self evident. He had recognised that the approach he had adopted had become frustrating and did not appear to have produced deeper understanding in the pupils. He was not in search of a magic formula solution to his concern but a fuller comprehension of the problem.

Vince's dilemma outlined in my selected quotations may be expressed within a geographical education remit: how to encourage a critical approach to the understanding of people and places without submitting to the morally bankrupt academic overburden of the kind exposed so forceably by Edward Said (1978). Said persuasively showed, in his book *Orientalism*, how academics have tended to give authority and status to certain knowledge and knowing, and in so doing have legitimised prejudice as 'objective' and blameless fact. Johnson (1995) argues that western understanding has been "*bounded* (my emphasis) by malignant prejudice" (*ibid* p 20-22) in this way. Commenting approvingly on a passage from Hugo of St Victor<sup>73</sup> Said points to a way forward:

*The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily one is able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance.* (Said 1991 p259; cited in Johnson 1995 p22)

#### 8.4 Conclusion: in Search of a Map

Is there a simple model approach which could possibly help codify how, in geography, we may deal with distance and diversity (places and people) with consistent standards of enquiring, learning, knowing and reasoning? Such a question goes beyond the scope of my research conversations. Summaries of my findings, in the form of my conceptual map of prejudice may, however, provide some clues to ways forward. Like Ferguson's (1993) discussion of ill prepared image analysis in a moribund media studies, I am

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<sup>73</sup>"The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land" (cited in Said 1991 p259)

concerned to ensure that my analysis of prejudice is such that teachers may develop strategies

*which are challenging and open ended, rather than formulaic and closed. This means that ...teaching needs to be guided as much by the formulation of questions as it does by the imposition of answers (ibid p27).*

On the face of it this does not seem to offer anything new to geography teachers used to strategies of 'enquiry learning' stipulated in the 1995 national curriculum 'programme of study' and 'level descriptions' (DfE 1995). On the other hand, I suspect that in relation to the key responsibility I have identified for geography (that is, thinking about and understanding distance and diversity), the geography education community needs to develop a way to engage children's critical thinking about information concerning 'home' and the 'other place'. In advance of achieving this they need a language. Though the example of media studies is not exactly parallel, it is close and we can draw this chapter to a conclusion by describing the challenge in Ferguson's words:

*It is necessary for both teachers and students to recognise the complexity of the issues with which they are dealing... (this) can help one to guard against simplistic and formulaic approaches. It can also help avoid the pitfalls of ideological certitude.*

*...The educational experience needs to be one of exploration and discovery of what needs further explanation, further clarification or is apparently opaque!...It is ...a process which has to be undertaken over time and not in that magic lesson or project which will somehow change all students' perceptions of the world. (ibid p27-28)*

It seems to me (stepping back from my conversational data in order to achieve a synoptic perspective) that several teachers, perhaps Ruth, Bill and Vince to name three, had reached a point not dissimilar to that expressed in Ferguson's final sentence of the above quotation. The problem, which takes us a little way beyond the scope of the present study, was to identify how exactly to respond.

My intention, then, is to construct a map of the concept prejudice which will show the morphology of a complex idea, and form a basis on which to take forward the kind of professional development described above. This I do in Chapter 10 and 11 respectively. First, however, I report, in Chapter 9, an experiment undertaken in 1991 which provided additional clarity to the categories being used in the analysis of my data. Essentially, the experiment gave me the opportunity to engage in conversational

interviews ('research conversations') with a number of educationalists completely outside the particular setting of Greenfields School.

## Chapter 9

### Research Conversations in Another Setting

#### 9.1 Introduction

This Chapter reports a small scale 'experiment' involving four 'expert groups'<sup>74</sup> of educators based at the Institute of Education, University of London, plus one group of post-graduate trainee teachers. This experiment was conducted in 1990-1991, after my research conversations at Greenfields School but before the main part of my conceptual analysis was undertaken. The purpose of the experiment, described in the following section, was to attempt to clarify, from as broad a base as possible (including philosophical, sociological and psychological perspectives) some kind of orientation and perhaps some limits or boundaries for a map of the concept of prejudice.

Where it has proved most helpful was in reaffirming the efficacy of the dimensions, but also in differentiating between them. Though the dimensions had not initially been seen as hierarchical, the further perspective offered as a result of this experiment indicated which of the dimensions were to form what I term the "structural foundations" of the map.

#### 9.2 Learning from an 'Experiment'

This episode of the research process resembled an open ended experiment in the sense that in order to observe and record the nature of a set of outcomes, a series of fairly controlled situations was established. Put simply, the aim was to discover what would happen if colleagues from various specialisms were asked to converse with me and each other about the nature of prejudice. Colleagues had part of the same stimulus, or preparation, as did teachers at Greenfields (see Figure 7.1). The long Annie-Rose extract (Chapter 6, section 6.5) was also provided as illustration and stimulus. Discussions all took place during a three week period on the Spring Term 1991. In fact,

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<sup>74</sup>In all, 10 individuals featured in this experiment. The groups consisted of two pairs and two groups of three. They have been referred to as colleagues A-J to protect their identity.

the aims of the experiment were twofold. First, I was interested in *how* colleagues, using a common starting point, talked about prejudice, including any similarities and differences in relation to the Greenfields conversations. But secondly, I wanted the opportunity to 'practice' analysing discursive, conversational data in advance of tackling the Greenfields data which had grown to be quite bulky.

The experiment, then, consisted of a series of four, hour-long conversations with small groups of colleagues (2 - 3 people) at the Institute of Education<sup>75</sup>. Having gained experience in conversational interviews at Greenfields School, the objective now was to discover the way in which colleagues drawn from different fields of academic work in education, including individuals with specialist expertise in multicultural education, would talk about prejudice. In what ways would their conversations be different from the teachers'? What new insights might they offer? Examining these conversations was also an opportunity to explore ways to analyse a relatively small data set of this 'discursive' type. The experiment, together with substantial excerpts from the taped conversations, is described more fully in Appendix 9.

Earlier analysis (see Appendix 9), initially identified:

*...five general categories to describe what was going on in the conversations:*

- \* Descriptions of prejudice*
- \* Reasons for prejudice*
- \* Effects and manifestations of prejudice*
- \* Solutions and their difficulties*
- \* Distinctions in types of prejudices*

(Lambert and Slater 1992 p 258).

We can perhaps see immediately how these general categories could feed into what have become, in this thesis, seven 'dimensions' of prejudice. There were several direct parallels: for example, "reasons for" became *cause*, "effects and manifestations" became *manifestations* and "solutions and their difficulties" became *mutability*. But each of the general categories was also the repository or organiser for the many more specific descriptive points to emerge from the conversations. As a result it was found that the general categories "descriptions of prejudice" and "types of prejudice" could be

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<sup>75</sup>The research conversations that form this experiment have been reported more fully in "Sharing our Sense of the World", Lambert and Slater, 1992; (see Appendix 9).

rearranged and further unpacked to provide 'content' for the subsequent seven dimensions. Appendix 9 provides some detail of this; in summary, the two general categories to be analysed in full (in Appendix 9) were found to have the following descriptive 'contents':

i. "Descriptions of Prejudice"

- \* not entirely negative
- \* not an unusual condition
- \* cognitive attitudes involved
- \* false beliefs
- \* sense of exclusiveness
- \* sense of group belonging
- \* stereotypes - 'damning the identity into a generalisation'
- \* limited view - jumping to conclusions
- \* comfort with the familiar

ii. "Solutions and their Difficulties"

- \* need to build up self esteem
- \* countered by rational argument
- \* raising awareness of assumptions
- \* tackling outcomes
- \* negotiation...on a social and personal level
- \* 'prejudice reduction'

These descriptive categories and their contents were openly acknowledged to be "tentative and provisional" (*ibid* p262). However, they can be placed without much difficulty into the seven dimensions of prejudice. The following summary demonstrates this, the 1991 'experimental' content headings having been allocated under the appropriate 'dimensions':

### *Cause*

false beliefs  
a limited view: jumping to conclusions  
cognitive attitudes involved  
need to build up self esteem

### *Feelings*

sense of exclusiveness  
sense of group belonging  
comfort in the familiar  
need to build up self esteem

### *Manifestations*

tackling the outcomes (the actions)

### *Mutability*

raising awareness of assumptions  
countered by rational argument  
negotiation between children and educational institutions on a social and personal level  
'prejudice reduction'

### *Purpose*

sense of group belonging  
comfort with the familiar

### *Universality*

not an unusual condition  
stereotypes

### *Value*

not entirely negative

There is a sense in which the compatability of the 'experimental' headings and the seven dimensions of prejudice can be taken as further evidence supporting the validity of the dimensions by adding to their "credibility" (see Chapter 4). Temptation to overstate such a claim is, however, resisted; compatabilty 'proves' nothing. The dimensions, intentionally, exhibit a certain 'fuzziness' in their definition and the experimental categories even more so, to the extent that it would have been most surprising for there not to have been some measure of fit.

As it stands, the fit is comfortably loose, some of the experimental categories overlapping and some being capable of sitting in more than a single dimension. For example, in the above list I have indicated explicitly content headings which overlap the dimensions of *purpose* and *feelings*, and also of *feelings* and *cause*. What this compatability exercise achieves, therefore, is primarily to add meaning and definition to the dimensions: the fact that a simple process of allocating the 'experimental' categories to appropriate positions on a list of 'dimensions' (which were independently derived and are more robust than the experimental categories), reaffirms areas of overlap between those dimensions, is considered significant. Are the connections between *purpose*, *feelings* and *cause* of particular significance in the construction of a conceptual map of prejudice? We return to this discussion in Chapter 10 in which I propose these dimensions as the 'structural foundations' of the map.

Perhaps more significantly, the 'experiment' potentially provides additional texture to the analysis of prejudice and to the way in which individual dimensions may be understood. There are two key examples which can be used to illustrate this which have had bearing on the creation of my conceptual map. The first concerns the "locatedness" of prejudice (related to the subject specific dimension, *place*) and the second *value*. I can explore both of these together, and in so doing I return to the original experimental data.

### 9.3 The Texture of Place and Value

We have observed from the Greenfields analysis the strong association in the minds of teachers and to some extent of pupils, between *place* and aspects of prejudice. This was manifest most obviously in the metaphor of the school as an 'isolated state' consisting of a comfortable, inward looking community, juxtaposed to that of 'London' as the complex, problematic outside world. This gave rise to list of bipolar axes of particular interest and significance to teachers of geography (see Chapter 8, section 8.3) leading to the question (identified but not tackled directly in this thesis), "how does geography teach about distance and diversity?"

Related to such a "locatedness" is the question of *value*. Individuals have been described in conversational interviews as finding comfort in the familiarity of 'home' and being anxious about the uncertainties of the 'other place'. This, it is supposed, leads to understandable and innocuous positive feelings for 'home'. By no means inevitably it can also lead to negative feelings about the unfamiliar 'other place'. Questions that may be raised here include those that seek understanding of the relationship between feelings for 'home' and the 'other place': when and in what circumstances do harmless, positive



feelings for 'home', as it were, 'flip' and become also negative or malign feelings towards the strange and foreign? Indeed, when and in what circumstances do positive feelings for 'home' cease to be innocuous? For example, patriotism can be seen in many circumstances as being a normal and healthy disposition associated with the good life. In other circumstances, it can turn to become associated with xenophobia and racism. The same can be said for nationalism or even parochialism. And as we saw in Chapter 8, section 8.3, Vince suspected that, contrary to orthodox expectations of playing down nationalistic and patriotic feelings in order to encourage open mindedness and tolerance, undervaluing positive feelings for home might in fact stimulate negative responses to the 'other'.

This broad theme emerged in two of my four staff conversations at the Institute of Education as a concern about 'Englishness':

*Perhaps Englishness needs to be made more of... so that people can feel an attachment to a community that is important to value... I don't see why these attachments to local communities need involve prejudice. (Colleague H)*

And in a different conversation,

*It is normal for someone who lives in England to feel English. There are certain things that go with being English... People ought to have common-sense understanding that locates them, that makes them feel what they are . (Colleague B)*

These brief extracts make essentially the similar point which equates with aspects of the *feelings* dimension (which, as we have found, can be seen to overlap with both *purpose* and *cause*): what is being spoken of here are the feelings of comfort in the familiar, attachment to 'home', self identity and the such like. Colleague H, however, proceeded to contrast the basic healthiness, as he perceived it, of such nationalistic identity in some smaller nations ("like Denmark") with the way it can be perverted in others such as England. As fellow discussant J continued,

*...a big task for education is to see if a sense of belonging - I agree with you it has many positive things about it - can be fostered without a sense of exclusiveness. (Colleague J)*

B also pursued the argument, but slightly differently, by adding qualification to his use of the Gramsci-derived term (Gramsci 1971 p323-333) "common sense understanding";

*...I feel that normally when we talk of common sense it's seen as a malignancy. To a large extent it can be because it is based upon accretions of unstated assumptions. (Colleague B)*

Later in the conversation, he restated and then continued further:

*It is natural for someone who lives in England to feel English. There are certain things that go with being English - these categories exist. Perhaps someone who works in education may say how do we, in fact, if it strengthens a person, affirm their notion of being... help them move into something else. What is problematic are persons who think of themselves as English "glorified", which is a misperception of who they are. It is dangerous for them. The categorization is faulty. Maybe the role of education is to get those categories nearer to what they are. (Colleague B)*

These discussants, in identifying such *place* oriented aspects of prejudice (which had been categorised provisionally under the headings 'sense of exclusiveness' and 'self esteem') have embellished considerably the identity of several of the dimensions of prejudice. Notably, their comments have drawn attention to the ambiguities to be found under *value*. This cannot be considered a clearly demarcated axis or continuum running in a simple, linear fashion from negative to positive; both negative and positive values can be found in a single (but not singular) concept such as 'nation'.

Perhaps, responding to B's final remark above, geography educators need to enquire, in addition to the research on "preferences" which has a long pedigree in geography education (see Chapter 3), what stimulates thoughts and value responses of different kinds. For example, insofar as the school subject geography is concerned, does the tendency for geographical studies to make comparisons<sup>76</sup> militate against the kind of learning advocated by B above (that is, enabling pupils "to move into something else")? As Powell (1995) has observed, "Comparing is best done by those who stand apart". In standing apart the student is safe to remain untouched by anything new and to leave their assumptions about what is 'known' unchallenged. I return to this point once more later in Chapter 10 and in the Conclusion (Chapter 11). For the moment, we can leave this matter by signalling what seems to be at its heart, a concern that teaching in geography incorporates a broad view of education which can incorporate the view of knowledge

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<sup>76</sup>For example, The 1995 National Curriculum Order for geography requires, at Key Stage 3, that pupils study "Two countries other than the UK in significantly different states of economic development" (Rawling 1995 p 60), strongly implying that comparisons are made with 'home'. In his published advice to teachers Ranger goes further, advocating that a key enquiry question for the study of places is "How is it similar to and different from the place where I live?" (Ranger 1995 p 68)

articulated by Reid (1986) as a product not only of the mind but of inner feelings and personal experiences. Frances Slater (1994) captured the point perfectly:

*In our teaching is there a congruence between what we aim or intend to do, what we organise and present and consequently what we achieve? If we adopt the view of being more particular about bringing thinking and feeling together in geography teaching and learning, then perhaps we need to ask, "Is our accepted repertoire of teaching strategies/learning activities/bodies of so-called data and resources comprehensive enough to permit a congruence between intentions and outcomes?" Perhaps our concept of inquiry is rather narrow. We could begin to think in terms of inquiring into the text and meaning of a novel, poem, or play since such expressions of human thought and feeling are by their very nature that combination of our two selves which Reid would have us educate. (Slater 1994 p 160)*

It is significant to note once more that in considering values, as we have begun to do, we have spilled over, unsurprisingly, into *feelings*. This latter dimension is itself one that we found overlapping with the dimensions of *cause* and *purpose*. To what extent is this linkage a key principle to the creation of a conceptual map of prejudice? This question, and others raised in this analysis of the Institute 'experiment', are pursued further in the next chapter.

#### 9.4 Conclusion

In terms of an autobiographical account the Institute conversations took place after most of the Greenfields data collection but before the majority of these had been transcribed or analysed. The 'experiment' reported here was set up in order to 'test' the exploration of knowledge through 'philosophising', away from the context of Greenfields School and in the contrasting academic community of a higher education institution. The initial analysis of the conversational interviews, with experts expressing an interest in the broad field of prejudice, yielded categories of response which at the simplest level confirmed my interest in examining prejudice as a multidimensional, 'complex' idea. This in turn tended to reinforce the notion that a conceptual map, which could identify appropriate dimensions and how they relate to each other, could be of potential use to teachers responding to prejudice.

Moreover, in comparing the Institute and Greenfields data, the proposed dimensions themselves were given additional clarity and some significant linkages identified, providing to some extent the intellectual tools used in the subsequent analysis. The next

chapter goes on to synthesise these findings and to construct a conceptual map of prejudice.

## Chapter 10

### Creating a Map of the Concept of Prejudice

#### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the conceptual and empirical search for the 'dimensions' of the concept of prejudice. From this synthesis I then go on to construct a map of the concept, presenting a configuration of the dimensions which should help reveal and explicate the complexity of prejudice. What the map claims to do should be understood. It does not pretend to represent the definitive analysis nor the absolute 'essence' of prejudice. What it does claim to do is to reveal an arrangement of the dimensions of prejudice, such that readers will be encouraged to understand prejudice in a new way. The intention is that this arrangement of the concept may ultimately be of assistance to educators understanding prejudice and in guiding their responses when encountering prejudice in the classroom; suggestions on this are made in Chapter 11, the Conclusion.

The fundamental suggestions made by the map are twofold. First, to accept the multidimensionality of prejudice and secondly, that an understanding of the dimensions of prejudice (and how they configure) provides for individuals a notion of the role of "perspective" in their making sense of the world. The latter is derived directly from the hermeneutics of Gadamer (1975), who argued that all historical understanding is perspectival, being "historically and practically embedded" (Warnke 1987 p42); we might add, geographically as well. Precisely what an individuals' perspectives turn out to be<sup>77</sup> depends upon a range of influences, from deeply held value positions (inner feelings) to 'real-life' experience, and the map attempts to show this.

In reaching the point of creating a conceptual map it is as well to be mindful of the methodology which has guided this research. In addition, it is useful to bear in mind

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<sup>77</sup>Here I am referring to either, or both, the individual learner and the people that the student may be learning about. Perspectival understanding is, for Gadamer, not about things-as-given, as in when a pupil comes to understand the truth content of certain subject matter such as the laws of Euclidean geometry (*die Sache*), but about meaning which involves the revealing of "intention" (Warnke 1987 p8) or the understanding of contextual contingencies of phenomena and events (without which they are impenetrable). Most intercultural understanding is perspectival. Gadamer's crucial passage runs as follows, demonstrating the dialogic essence of this form of understanding: *Understanding is first of all agreement. So human beings usually understand one another immediately or they communicate until they reach agreement. Reaching an understanding is thus always: reaching an understanding about something.* (Gadamer 1975 p158)

what Pope and Denicolo (1986) describe as "a paradox and the researchers' dilemma" (*ibid* p161). The methodology is pluralistic combining a range of methods of data collection and analysis, but heavily influenced by an underlying assumption concerning my belief in the need to capture the results of staff and pupils "philosophising". This has resulted in data which is rich and textured, subjective and 'fuzzy'; not suitable, in my view, for easy tabulation or reductive summary. But, as Pope and Denicolo point out, for any qualitative research with a declared aim of having some practical utility there remains a strong temptation to,

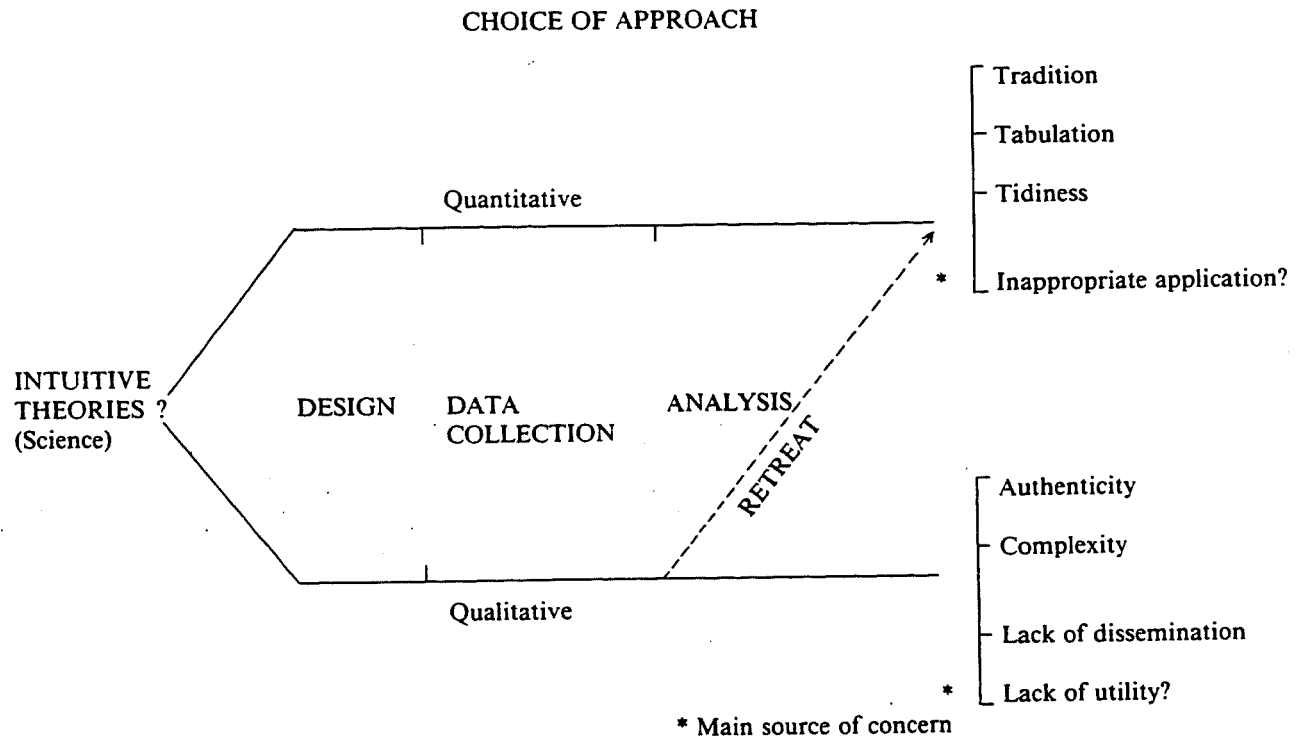
*retreat...into the quantitative paradigm, via extensive data reduction (which) would entail reneging on the original aims and ethics of the hermeneutic approach we value (ibid p161).*

Figure 10.1 demonstrates how the authors conceptualised such a "retreat". While not wishing to renege on the intentions of this research it is perhaps worth noting that even the very notion of a 'conceptual map' may in itself represent some form of retreat; after all, a map's very purpose is usually to reduce 'reality' into something more 'readable', according to some specified rules, say of geometry. To be sure, a map does not have to account for every detail to be true or to have utility; in other words, a map can tolerate a degree of uncertainty or ambiguity and still be of use. Indeed, there comes a point when adding to the detail of a map reduces its utility, on account of the quantity and diversity of 'background noise' which may conceal the underlying shapes and patterns. A map, then, is a form of model; as Norman Graves stated,

*...one way in which theory is gradually developed, is to put up tentative simplified 'models' of reality which help the research worker both to clarify his (sic) own mind and to point the way... (Graves 1980 p35)*

The problem facing this research, therefore, is achieving the appropriate balance between detail and simplification, between 'fuzziness' and clarity, so as not to distort the findings or pervert the nature of the research. This is a problem, in other words, of 'fitness for purpose': the present chapter, the purpose of which is to present a multidimensional and complex conceptual map, remains at a level of detail which arguably reduces its practical utility. Chapter 11, on the other hand, which concerns the practical implications of the map, presents research findings in a very different manner; some simplification, for example, has been necessary.

Figure 10.1: The Researcher's Dilemma



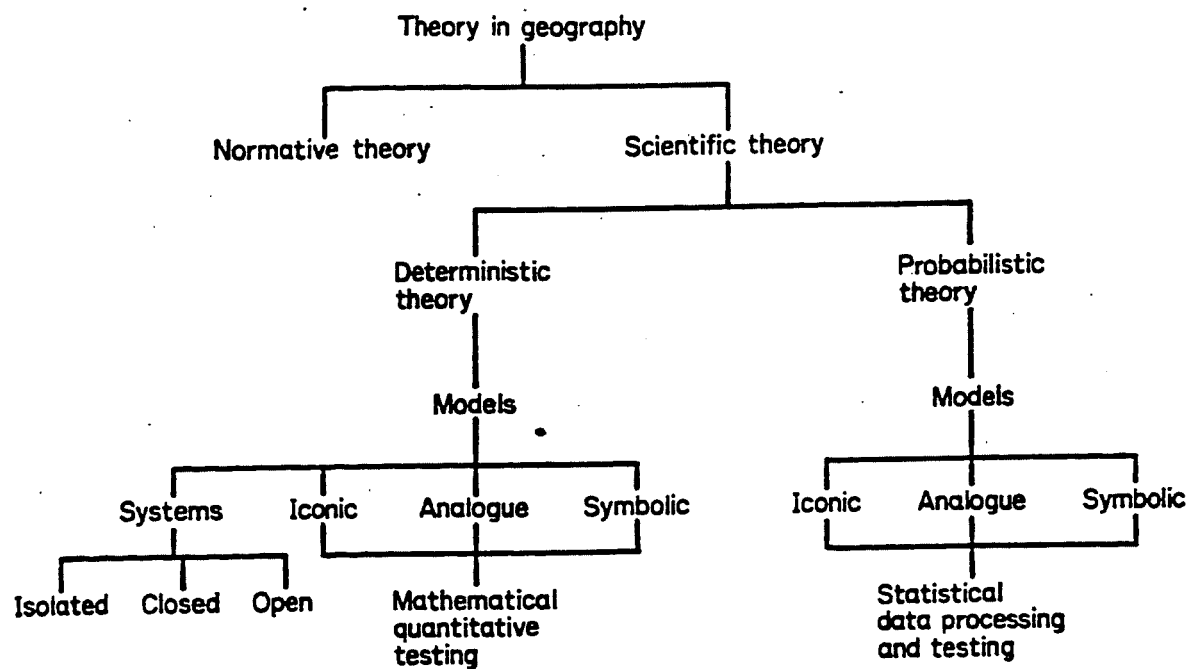
Source:  
Pope and Denicolo (1986)

Graves' arrangement of "geographic theory", shown in Figure 10.2, places 'models' of all kinds (whether symbolic, analogue, iconic or systems) under the guise of geography as 'science'. This is possibly too rigid a definition, and may be particularly so if we transpose it from the realms of geographic enquiry to educational research. As I have proposed in the explanation of the methodology guiding the process of this research (Chapter 4), there is much to be gained from adopting a pluralistic approach - in much the same manner that Graves advised in respect of the nature of geography itself: "... if all present trends in geographical endeavour are to be accommodated within the subject, there seems little alternative to accepting (a) pluralism of paradigms" (*op cit* p43). The notion of a model may have been derived from thinking within the 'scientific' paradigm, therefore, but under the principal of 'fitness for purpose', it can be consciously adopted, and adapted, in order to "clarify...and point the way" (*op cit*). This, then, is how I justify the creation of a map of the concept of prejudice in the present research.

The map I go on to construct may be likened in some respects to the way Graves describes a model 'system': "...defined as a whole consisting of elements which interact" (*op cit* p37). This definition freely deploys the language of science. We can, though, straightforwardly relax the usage of terms like 'elements' and 'interact': the conceptual map, for example, could be considered to represent a '*whole consisting of dimensions which merge, link and overlap*'. It is a means of furthering the analysis of the concept prejudice and communicating a picture of the whole. It is not in any sense deterministic and, indeed, has been constructed in such a way that it may be 'read' in different ways. It is in fact highly dynamic and suggestive of principles which may help those who wish to address prejudice in school. An example of how the map may be adjusted slightly, to become more 'subject specific' to geography, is also suggested. This, it is argued, can stimulate thought on the question of place and prejudice in geography education.



Figure 10.2 Geographic Theory



Source:  
Graves (1980)

## 10.2 Mapping the Dimensions of Prejudice

The dimensions of prejudice, identified through a process of conceptual and empirical analysis, described in Chapters 2 and 3, and 6 - 9 respectively, are:

*Cause*

*Feelings*

*Manifestations*

*Mutability*

*Purpose*

*Universality*

*Value*

My analysis also proposed an eighth, subject specific dimension, *Place*. This we will leave to one side for the moment in order to concentrate first on the general dimensions, upon which a geography subject specific dimension can subsequently be built.

The analysis of dimensions, in particular the linkages between them revealed in Chapter 9, has suggested a basis for differentiating between the seven dimensions. As a result it is proposed that the following dimensions, which appear to display particularly strong 'organic' linkages, form the 'structural foundations' of the conceptual map of prejudice:

*Cause*

*Feelings*

*Purpose*

*Value*

I examine this proposal in detail below. But first, what of the remaining three dimensions? My evidence and earlier conceptual analysis indicated that of all the dimensions, *universality*, *manifestation* and *mutability* were the most straightforward to comprehend and perhaps the least problematic or controversial. Together they provide a number of broad parameters or assumptions (or a 'context') in which my conceptual map can be drawn. I shall briefly review each of them in turn.

### 10.3 The Broad Parameters of Prejudice

**Mutability:** Though there was some discussion about how readily, or not, people may be able to change their world views, there was nevertheless general agreement that change is not only possible, it happens. "Experience" was thought by many to be the key, although it was acknowledged that people may resist experiences (this links back to *cause*); they certainly resist being *told* that their views are deficient or wrong. It was also noted, for example by Philip (Chapter 8, section 8.2 part iii), that human beings were capable of paradoxical attitudes and behaviour which, though difficult to account for, should nevertheless be taken account of: people, he claimed, were able consciously to hold prejudices against others and yet were still capable of open mindedness, as it were setting aside prejudices for the sake of argument. The key, both for Sandra (pupil) and for Tom (teacher), was a person's *awareness* of their prejudice (sections 6.10 and 7.5 part iii respectively).

**Manifestation:** There is perhaps a link between the remarks of the previous paragraph with this dimension; such a connecting thread could be labelled 'intention' maybe, or 'awareness'. Though my description of the Greenfields School prejudice working group revealed a general propensity to conflate 'prejudice' and 'discrimination', individual pupils (for example, see Chapter 6, section 6.8) indicated an understanding that prejudice *in itself* was not necessarily a bad thing. Furthermore, Sandra distinguished 'harder' and 'softer' manifestations of prejudice, to do with a person's intentions, and attached great importance to people being aware of their prejudices. This dimension makes the useful distinction, therefore, between actions and behaviours in society which, though clearly influential in shaping to some degree people's experiences, are not the same as the thoughts and feelings which they have inside their heads. It is the latter which I identify as what is involved in prejudice - what David Milner (1983) called the "psychological dimension of racism" (p 2). The manner in which the Greenfields policy on prejudice (Appendix 6 part B) appeared to retreat from this realisation towards a somewhat negative sounding list of imputations illustrates effectively the difficulties in dealing, in terms of policies, with what is inside people's heads; the 1989 policy failed to resist the temptation to concentrate on the measurable or surface manifestations or behaviour<sup>78</sup>, at the expense of engaging with pupils' thinking and feelings about the new, the difficult or the strange - that is, the 'other'.

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<sup>78</sup>The same could not be said of the Headteacher's succinct 1995 redraft (Appendix 6 part C)

**Universality:** There is an important link between the previous dimension (*manifestations*) and the next, *universality*. From Chapter 6 on, the point has been made that although individuals (both pupils and teachers) were able to distinguish prejudice from discrimination, the difficulty in delineating the former and the apparent lack of a model or language to enable the development of practice in relation to prejudice meant that, in practice, the tendency was to conflate the two. The County policy document (Appendix 4) and the subsequent Greenfields policy (Appendix 6 part B), with their emphasis on disciplinary responses to undesirable behaviour, probably reflected this (and also reinforced it). The problem that this causes is essentially that the one is damned by the other: the school is correctly against discrimination but, by association, has to be against prejudice as well. If, however, we accept that prejudice is a universal condition, the rather final (and negative) position, to be against it, begins to look unhelpful. Teachers, in Chapter 8, talked of prejudice as being "inevitable" (section 8.3), "unavoidable" (section 8.2 parts vi and vii) and "necessary" (*ibid*), and, although one of the contributors to the Institute conversations (Chapter 9) seemed to deny that prejudice was any of these things<sup>79</sup>, accepting the universalist line of thought affects everything else we may think or do concerning prejudice. Accepting the inherent capacity for the human mind to use prejudice does not, however, imply approval of prejudice, but there is clearly a difficulty in adopting a position such as this, for it may be perceived by some that if one is not 'against', one must be 'for'. This thesis does not argue for greater prejudice as a desirable educational outcome, only that prejudice be better understood and (to use Jack's words) "*allowed*". This is so that, first, individuals can identify the occasions when the categorisations they employ to make sense of the world can be said to be prejudiced and secondly, they can learn to converse or deliberate on these and those of others.

The three dimensions (*mutability*, *manifestations* and *universality*) of the concept of prejudice outlined above, provide a number of initial parameters or assumptions to guide the construction of a conceptual map:

first, we can see that the concept is dynamic, one in which change is understood to be a possibility;

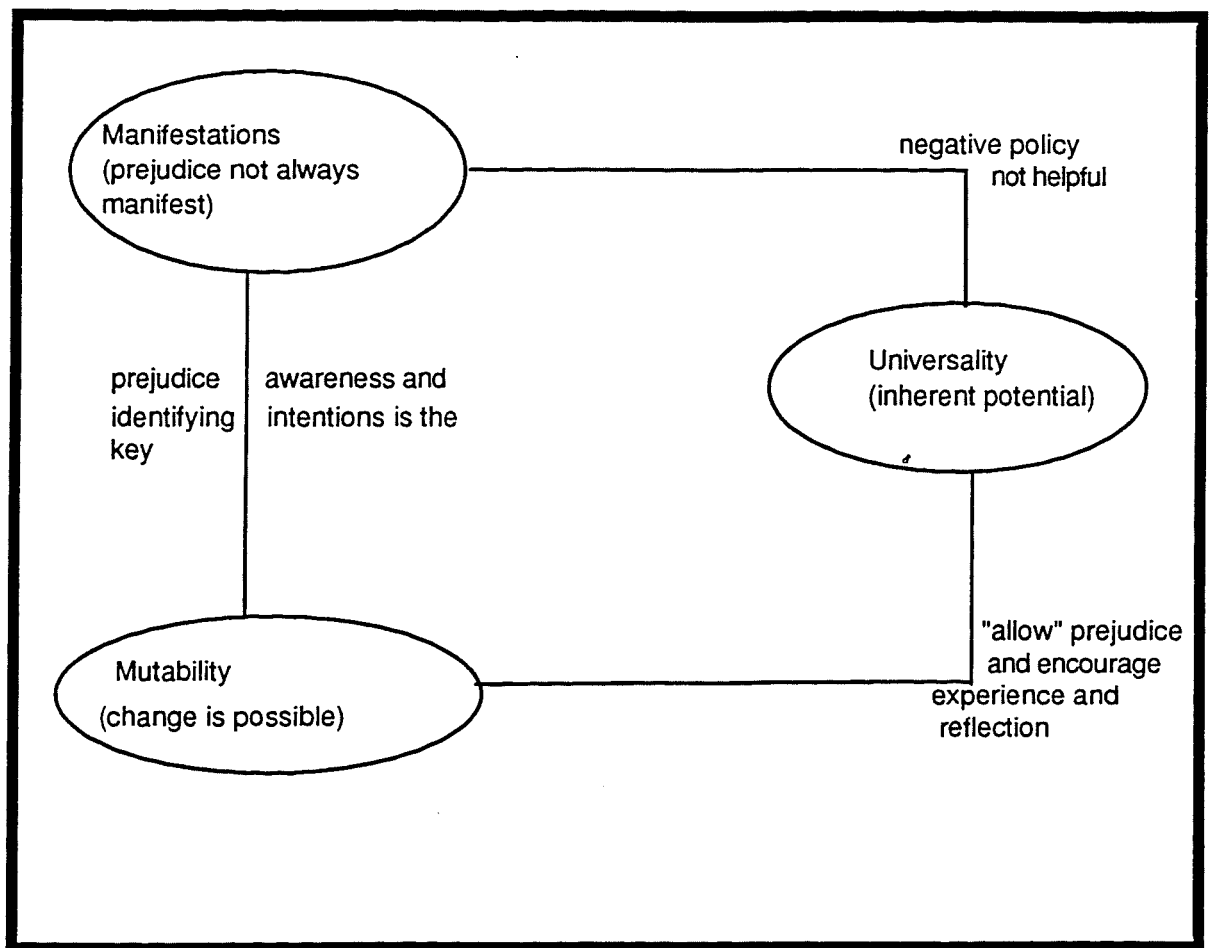
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<sup>79</sup> Colleague G stated that "(Prejudice) comes from that way of making sense of individuals. It's very much a crude sociology...trying to make sense of people - I say you've got to use categories." But, he went on, "People do not have to have prejudice. The risk of prejudice, the potential for prejudice is inherent in the way people make sense of the social world..." (see Lambert and Slater 1992 p258). It was not clear from this conversation how successful people are, in general, in resisting the inherent potential. It seemed to me that G (supported by his fellow discussant F) was arguing that prejudices were not *immutable*; but this is by no means inconsistent with the idea that people "need" prejudice - which is perhaps what G was implying when he talked of people *having* to use "categories".

secondly, the map we are seeking is one which not only emphasises surface shapes or manifestations of prejudice, but one which also depicts underlying structure - the difference perhaps between a physical geography map showing only 'relief' and one which depicts 'geology' as well;

thirdly, the map must have very broad limits. It should be applicable to all and not designed with only certain groups in mind, for human beings have inherent potential for prejudice.

Figure 10.3 summarises the configuration of the three dimensions forming the broad parameters of the concept of prejudice.



**Figure 10.3** Three parameters of the concept map of prejudice showing key links between them.

#### 10.4 The Structural Foundations of Prejudice : "perspective"

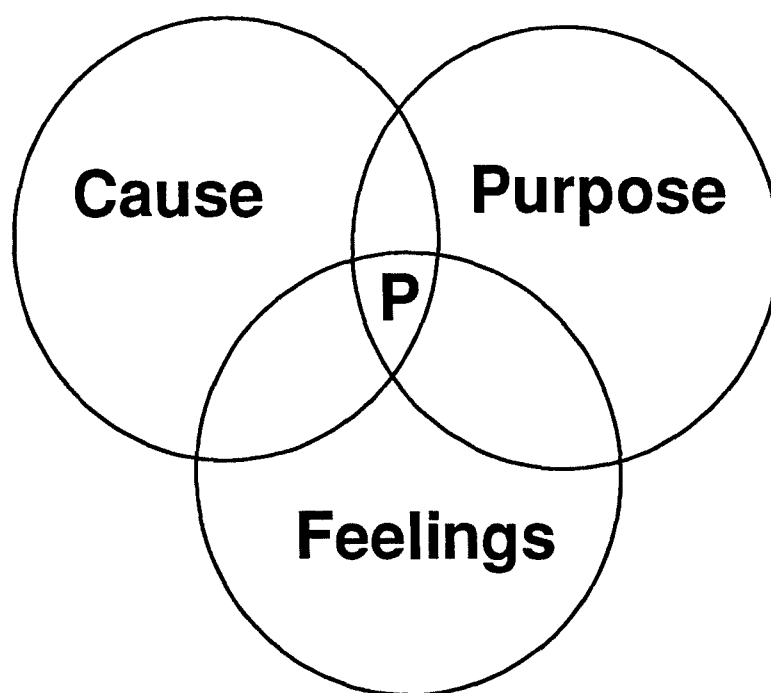
In this section I consider the 'structure' of prejudice, resting on my analysis of the other four dimensions of prejudice, *cause*, *feelings*, *purpose* and *value*. My analysis has identified the key role of 'perspective' in describing its underlying nature. Perspective can be thought of as the zone of overlap (first noted in Chapter 9, section 9.2) between three dimensions: *cause*, *purpose* and *feelings*. This is shown in Figure 10.4 below.

Perspective is a term derived from Gadamer's (1975) hermeneutics in relation to that form of understanding (to which I briefly referred at the beginning of this Chapter) called 'intentional'; that is, when understanding has to involve a knowledge of conditions leading to a claim for the truth rather than a substantive understanding of *die Sache* (the thing itself). Understanding of this sort, according to Gadamer, is based on more than simply 'context' which is often reduced to a mere surface description of circumstances. Perspective is what gives understanding its "embeddedness", "the historically and culturally situated character of all scientific efforts " (Warnke 1987 p36). Thus,

*...it is when one cannot see the point of what someone else is saying or doing that one is forced to explore the conditions under which that person says or does it: what this person might mean, given who he or she is, the circumstances of the time and so on. (ibid p8)*

In connecting this view to the concept of prejudice, my analysis shows an interweaving of *cause*, *purpose* and *feelings* in the following way (Figure 10.3). In my descriptions of each dimension which follows the diagram, I have attempted also to provide an indication of negative and positive *value* through the use of illustration. The *value* dimension is therefore seen as pervasive, in effect qualifying the other discrete dimensions; they can have negative or positive value, or both.

**Figure 10.4** "Perspective" lies at the heart of the 'structural foundation' of prejudice. See text for details.



**P** = Perspective

**Cause** : The idea of *cause* can be related to both 'rational' and 'emotional' aspects of a person's being. Ruth, in Chapter 8, section 8.2 part v, doubted whether these sides of people could ever truly interact (they were said to run parallel to each other). However, either or both could result in "anxiety" (against) or "comfort" (for), depending on the circumstances and outlook of the individual. We have noted the significance of such dispositions as comfort in the known and familiar together with the associated tendency in individuals to repel the unusual or strange. To re-emphasise, this can be seen, at least in part, as a rational response to a complex and seemingly dangerous world. In addition, limited information, biased mediated images or propaganda could result in false beliefs or understandings. Understanding this dimension of prejudice, particularly the interface which it highlights between the rational and emotional, is revealing of certain strategies

employed by extreme politically motivated groups designed to manipulate and exploit people for political advantage.

**Feelings :** The emotional aspect of *cause* clearly overlaps with this dimension, and the political groups alluded to above can usually be described as working largely on people's *feelings*. Such feelings include those of 'attachment' to (for example to particular places especially 'home'), and 'resistances' against (for example, rejecting the worth of foreignness, the unusual or strange). The feelings dimension is often undervalued and sometimes barely acknowledged in formal schooling: there was a strongly held view emanating from Greenfields staff, for example, that 'the syllabus', with its cognitive aims and content predominated. One senses that the desire, expressed on occasions earlier in this thesis, to make prejudice "allowable" is in some way also a plea to legitimise the freer<sup>80</sup> expression of feelings within the context of the curriculum.

**Purpose :** At the simplest level *purpose* can be thought of as a requirement of individuals to make sense of the world - using, as one Institute colleague put it, a form of "crude sociology" (G) in order to select and categorise information. Individuals adopt, by necessity, a "programming language" or paradigm, which in Albert's view (Chapter 7, section 7.5 part iv) is akin to explaining their prejudice. Others have understood purpose to be more associated with individuals' need for identity, or positive self image, which they often achieve through a feeling of group belonging (for) which itself can become linked to feelings of exclusiveness (against). The impression gained from Greenfields was that needs such as those expressed here were strongly felt.

**Dicussion :** Clearly there are explicit overlaps between what I have defined as *purpose* and both *feelings* and *cause*, and Figure 10.4 shows this. My contention is that these dimensions combine to underpin the disposition usefully identified as perspective. Perspective, it is emphasised, is not held to be synonymous with prejudice. But perspective, in the sense that it denotes the view, the vista or the horizon of the individual can be seen to be the basis for prejudice; that is to say it can lead to prejudices. Perhaps more significantly, prejudice can be seen to influence a person's perspective - a person's perspective cannot be understood completely without comprehension of what could be at its root, the prejudice from which it could have been derived. I consider these to be useful insights partly because of their pedagogical potential. It helps us to see how to 'allow' prejudices without automatic censure because we can begin to trace their origins; moreover it is possible to begin to see

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<sup>80</sup> I emphasise here that though 'free' may mean without censure, it does not imply that freely expressed views are to be left unchallenged.



how awareness of this type could provide the basis for new and perhaps deeper learning, a matter we come on to in Chapter 11.

The identification of perspective (the 'origin' or basis of prejudice) leads directly to our next consideration. Pupils and teachers at Greenfields occasionally observed in their conversations that prejudice *itself* cannot be considered to be a 'bad' thing. This linked often with the notion of *universality* which was widely accepted. In other words, individual prejudices may be deemed 'bad' but the human tendency to have prejudices cannot be said to be so - not unless human beings themselves were considered intrinsically 'bad'. It was also widely agreed that 'prejudice' in general is considered to be perjorative, and this caused something of a dilemma for discussants. As we saw in Chapter 7, section 7.5 part i, teachers dealt with this in different ways; they could conveniently be grouped into 'accepters' (those who accepted prejudice as something we simply have to live with), 'resisters' (those who preferred to use other terms which presented less difficulty, such as preference<sup>81</sup>) and the 'responders' (those who wished to act - usually *against* prejudice).

The seventh dimension, *value*, contributes to the easing of such difficulties. It does this by allowing for a range of value, on a scale from wholly negative to wholly positive, to be possible. That is to say, the perspective that can form the basis for an individual's prejudices may consist of a confusing variety of information and impressions which it would be crude in the extreme to categorise collectively as either positive or negative.

In a simple manner this can be illustrated by the paragraphs above on the dimensions *cause*, *feelings* and *purpose*. Each of the dimensions was expressed in such a manner that *value* was brought into play, by qualifying outlooks and outcome by examples with positive and negative value. Thus, the condition called prejudice can be thought of as 'natural' and is *in itself* neutral, but is based upon perspective acquired through a complex of negative and positive influences. Some of these are overt and realised. Some are unconscious. Education, I will argue, can increase the self-conscious awareness and understanding of this.

For example, the greater a person's awareness the less (I contend) is their perspective based on, for example, unconscious negative *feelings*. Such feelings may be *caused* by the perceived fear or 'threat' of (let's say) human migration. The 'need' to maintain solidarity with the group or to strengthen local attachments ('Because it's mine'<sup>82</sup> - see

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<sup>81</sup>I acknowledge the irony of labelling as resisters people whom others would probably see more as collaborators with the apparatus of a racist society. On the other hand, there may be a link here with what Leicester (1989) called the "anti anti-racists" embodied by, for example, Palmer (1986).

<sup>82</sup>The idea of "mine" appears to be important, arising in the literature in different though connected ways. For example, Wilson's (1992) use of this phrase was to point out that it can lead to both desirable and undesirable

Wilson [1992], cited in Chapter 2, section 2.13) can provide focus or purpose to a person's perspective.

'Awareness' is, in this way, related to an individual's outlook: we can talk of a person's perspective being "broad" or "narrow". The role of education is often stated to be concerned with broadening the recipient's outlook and sometimes this is achieved by providing alternative perspectives. But more generally it may be attempted by encouraging the effective use of the appropriate skills and information. This reminds us again of Slater's question: "Is our accepted repertoire of teaching strategies/learning activities/bodies of so-called data and resources comprehensive enough..." (Slater 1994 p160).

This discussion is continued in Chapter 11 in which the utility of the conceptual map under construction here is examined. Before coming to this, however, it is instructive to examine further the 'map' from a somewhat different view.

### 10.5 A Cross-sectional View of the Conceptual Map of Prejudice

The next stage in explicating my conceptual map of prejudice is to combine features of the first two stages illustrated in Figures 10.3 and 10.4. I denote this stage as the production of a 'cross-sectional' view partly for metaphorical reasons: whilst previous Figures can be likened to providing a plan view, showing spread and overlap, the next stage can be said to take a vertical slice of the plan in order to reveal further dimensions, particularly *value* (as a grossly simplified horizontal axis) and *manifestation* (given as a vertical line). Implicit in the cross-sectional view is the understanding that the model incorporates the assumption of *universality*. The model also implies prejudice as *mutable* in that perspective is subject to change as a result of influence from both the manifest outside world and the thinking and feeling that continues inside the subject's head.

The primary aim of this projection of my map is, however, to identify and locate certain aspects which have emerged in the previous discussion, notably the nature of information and skills in geography education. Returning to the analogous 'physical geography' map example used earlier (in section 10.3), if perspective provides a part of the 'structural foundation' of prejudice (rather than the surface relief features), then the

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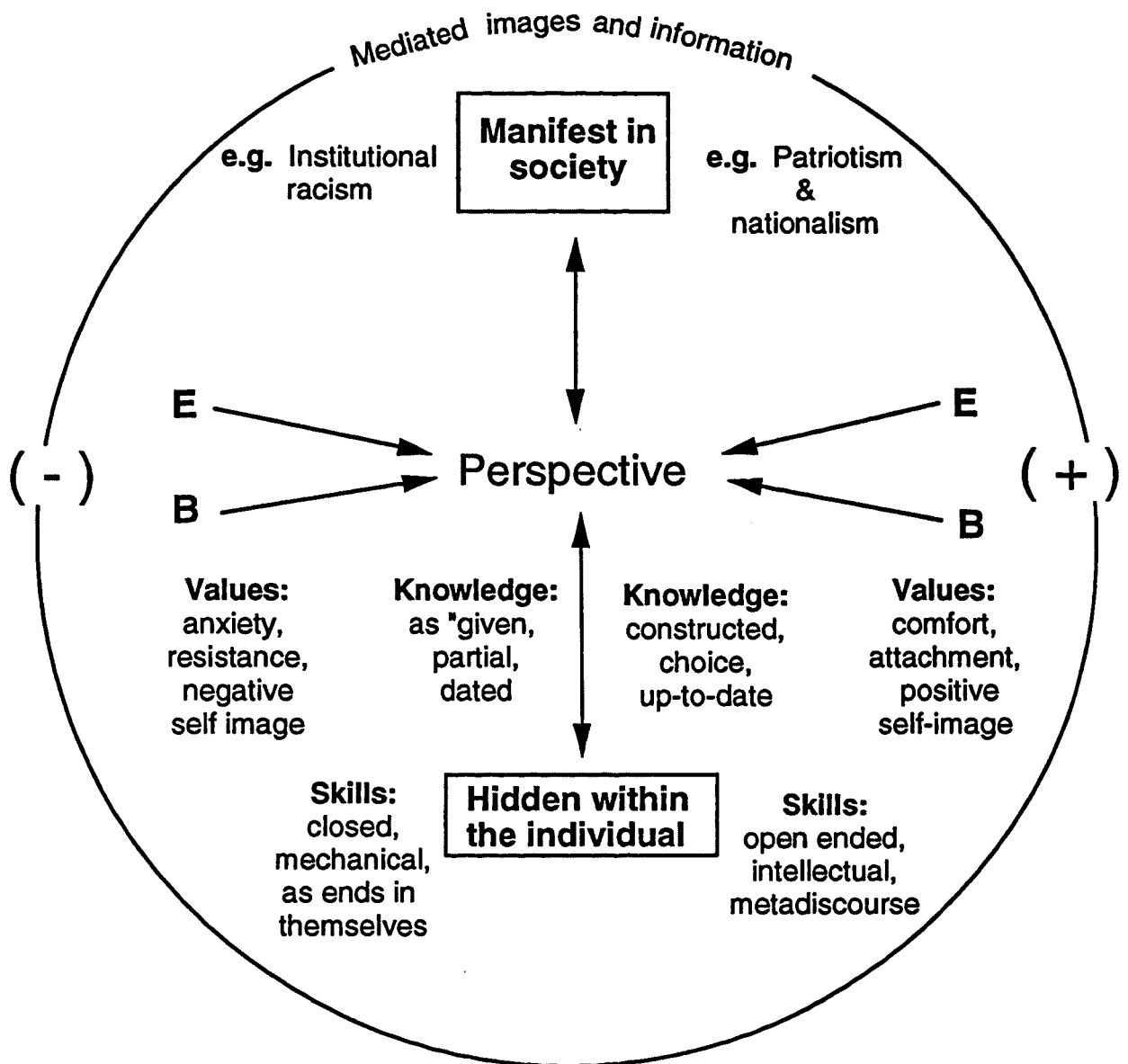
outcomes. What seems to be crucial to Wilson's arguments is the "ability to make judgements of merit" about local attachments (*ibid* p303-304). Warnke (1987) points out that Gadamer uses the notion of "thrown projection" in explicating perspective. This, she states, has its origins in Heidegger's interpretation of human life having the character of "mineness" (*Jemeinigkeit*): "...human beings understand themselves in some way or other in simply living their lives, in acting out some future and in having acted in the past in one way or another" (*ibid* p39).

aspects I am now concerned with can be likened to the *processes* which act on - and to some extent shape - the structure.

Perspective, the diagram shows, gives the individual their 'eye' on the world. It is derived from a combination of formal and informal formative 'experiences' (some of them overtly educational) and processes hidden within the individual's head (the person's 'Being'). Experience and being interact, helping to shape each other and to provide perspective in surprising and unpredictable ways. For example, in relation to the oversimplified (for the sake of clarity) horizontal plane *value*, a positive and innocuous patriotism is able to 'flip' under some circumstances towards the negative and malign xenophobia. In the other hemisphere of the model (the 'hidden'), I have suggested a division of knowledge, skills and feelings according to their supposed value, but I do not wish to imply rigid categorisation. I certainly do not wish to suggest any causal links which may inadvertently be stimulated in the reader's mind.

For example, placing "knowledge as given" on the left hand side of the diagram does not inevitably lead to racism. apart from the argument that some knowledge is perhaps best treated in this way (what Gadamer calls *die Sache*), there are far too many other influences at play, both on a person's being and through the experiences they have, for such a reductive suggestion to be substantiated. However, the left hand side is significant. If knowledge is consistently treated as 'given', this likely to combine with other assumptions in predictable ways: a low level of intellectual engagement perhaps, a partial view of the world (in both sense of the word) and possibly a learned resistance to information that appears dissonant (and capable of upsetting the apple cart).

## Prejudice: a 'cross - sectional' view



E = Experience  
B = Being

**Figure 10.5** An individual's perspective is fed by both the manifest and hidden sides of their learning. This has an antecedent in Dee Fink's early work: "The character of a person's being influences and is influenced by his (sic) experiences" (Dee Fink 1977 p.10; cited Chapter 6 of this thesis ) Note that the elements of the person's 'being' (such as knowledge, values and skills) can have, but need not have, linkages with each other.

The above sequence (p232) is entirely hypothetical and such a sequence cannot be deduced directly from evidence; but my argument rests on accepting that such a sequence is possible and lies within the parameters of available evidence. It contrasts with the alternative case of a person who has learned that knowledge is constructed and, indeed, that feelings and skills are part of the process of construction: in this case there is high level intellectual engagement and a natural hunger for new information and ideas. This person is likely to be *aware* of the idea of perspective in helping understand their own and others' attitudes and opinions, lifestyles - and prejudices. Whereas our believable first case is a person who, being unaware of the contingent nature of much of their understanding, fails also to understand the concept of prejudice and its role in their being, the alternative case shows a person who, to use Jones' (1987) phrase, has been educated for conversation - having been involved (possibly) in "deliberation" (Walsh 1994). The latter person will have their own beliefs, but also a mechanism for "making judgements of worth" (Wilson 1992).

The model (Figure 10.5) can be read as one with general applicability, being possible to apply to the teaching and learning contexts of several school subjects, including geography. We can, however, add to the model a more subject oriented specification. In the case of geography, the model may be redrawn with special reference to the eighth dimension of prejudice, *place*, and it is to this we can now turn.

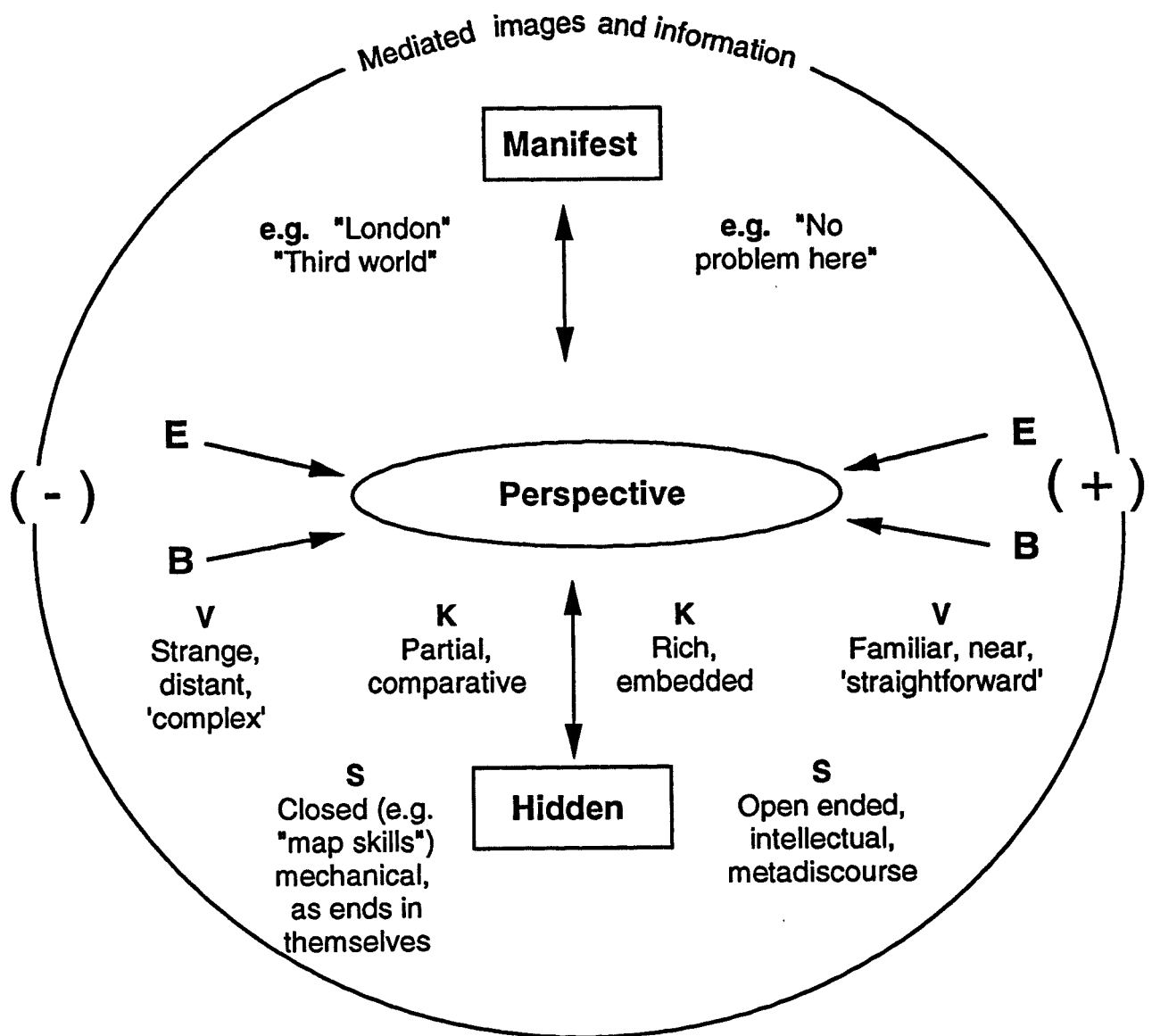
#### 10.6 A Subject Specific Map: the dimension of place

This research has revealed that place is of significance in understanding prejudice. Geography as a discipline has, since Relph's (1976) influential work, reasserted the affinity people seem to have for place, which is manifest in various ways (and by no means always positively). In other words people's relationship with place is a subject for legitimate study in its own right. But more than this, place seems to matter in terms of accounting for people's feelings and associations. Thus, as we have seen, "London" is associated by many at Greenfields school with 'race', economic and social problems and violence; the big city has been used since Henry Fielding's time, and perhaps especially by the nineteenth century novelists, as a metaphor for many of society's complexities and problems, and, it seems, this is a metaphor still useful - at least to the corner of suburban England I have called Kingsford. It is useful as a distancing device, for the issues associated with a pluricultural society are, apparently, thought not to be associated with Kingsford by some of those who live or work there.

As Binns (1995a) argued (see Chapter 3, section 3.2), geography education has an acknowledged role in teaching for international understanding, but unfortunately is often trapped in an comparative approach to understanding the wider world which, perhaps inadvertently, seems designed to confirm the status of 'other'-ness to a range of places (at a range of scales) such as the "inner city" and the "Third World". Thus, place is a subject specific dimension not because it is only in geography that 'place' becomes an issue, but because geography has a particular curriculum responsibility to teach about and for other places, and in so doing must respond to pupils' positive and negative feelings. The latter are part of the pupil's 'being', but, as the model (Figure 10.5) reminds us, they are also influenced by 'experience'.

Figure 10.6, which introduces the *place* dimension to the 'cross-sectional' conceptual map, can be 'read' in the same way as the previous, more generalised version (Figure 10.5). A person's 'being' and 'experiences' both contribute to perspective, or what we might refer to in this model as their *geographical* perspective. For example, positive feelings associated with nearness and familiarity can be mixed, possibly in complex ways, with negative feelings associated with distance and unfamiliarity. Following this interpretation, a cumulative world geography relying heavily on superficial and partial comparative studies of the exotic in relation to 'home', for instance, is unlikely to challenge the assumption that "issues" and "problems" are associated more with the former (for example, the "Third World" on Figure 10.6) than with the latter ("here" on Figure 10.6).

## 'Cross-sectional' view of prejudice and geography



E = Experience  
B = Being  
V = Values  
K = Knowledge  
S = Skills

**Figure 10.6** This is a slight adaptation of Figure 10.5 to incorporate 'place' as a dimension. The element of the individual's being (knowledge, values and skills) all refer to place(s).

The question which now arises for geographers in education is how to respond to this multidimensional and dynamic model of prejudice. We can conclude from the previous analysis that there would be certain advantages if ways could be found to "allow" feelings into geographic study (Slater [1994] suggests a few, using literature, for example, to achieve a greater sense of "embeddedness" of people's attitudes and values). This would be a route to increased awareness of the nature of perspective and its links with prejudice. This in turn may serve to encourage teachers to "allow" prejudices, the only circumstance, it seems to me, that permits them really to be challenged. But what the model suggests above all is the need to engage more successfully in a *meta-discourse* with pupils concerning the purpose and rationale of various learning activities, and geography's broad goals in learning about distance and diversity. This has its analogy in the CASE project (Adey *et al* 1990) which teaches thinking skills in science and which has been adopted by Leat (1995a; 1995b) in geography. My proposal would be to transpose the idea from its predominant interest in raising cognitive performance, to investigating its potential in bringing pupils to a greater awareness of prejudice as gateway to greater knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

The following, concluding chapter pursues these ideas further. The project thus far has been to 'explode' or break up and disaggregate the concept of prejudice. As a result, the map in its present form has limited practical utility, being complex, somewhat unwieldy and divorced from common practices of curriculum design and 'delivery'. A legitimate question therefore remains concerning the map: what use can it be put? Does it have a clear message and purpose for teachers? Such considerations lead on to more specific queries: is it possible to repackage the outcomes of this research in a form which is both true to its findings *and* convincing on a practitioner level? What are the implications for teachers and learners of understanding prejudice, as I have claimed, in a new way?

I develop this line of thinking in Chapter 11, and in doing so I make a number of suggestions as to how this research may be continued.



## **Chapter 11**

### **Conclusions**

#### **11.1 Introduction**

Chapter 10 presented a conceptual map of prejudice. The map is not seen as an end in itself, it having been prepared partly as a tool for use by teachers, directly and indirectly, in their deliberations on how to respond to prejudice. How this tool may be used is not yet necessarily self-evident, however, and for this reason there is a need to take further the discussion of the map: how might a configuration of what I have proposed as the disaggregated parts of the concept of prejudice have utility for teachers and educators? The map has been derived in part from the deliberations of pupils, teachers and colleagues conversing about prejudice and is in this sense of interest in itself. But if claims are made for the efficacy of such deliberation, and how a map might, in turn, assist this process, then suggestions need to be made as to how this can be achieved.

To take the discussion forward to such a point, this chapter briefly reviews the essentials of my thesis, by taking stock of its main trajectory and arguments, thus providing a form of synoptic overview. In doing this the map is simplified slightly, its main contours taking precedence over the finer detail which Chapter 10 overtly attempted not to lose or conceal. This is followed by a section spelling out yet more clearly the practical utility of the map. Finally, I conclude with evaluative comment on the thesis together with suggestions on how this study can be taken further.

#### **11.2 Taking Stock**

This research was stimulated, and was initially driven, by what was identified at first as a form of 'performance gap' in the educational experience of pupils at Greenfields School. My awareness of research in geography education on matters such as bias (for example, Gill 1984; Hicks 1981a) and images (for example, Robinson 1987) had done little to alleviate the feeling that, as it was expressed informally by me at the time, the curriculum experience was failing to 'touch' pupils in a certain manner. Narrow or even negative attitudes towards human diversity seemed resilient, being resistant to change, leading me to an understanding that "prejudice reduction" (Lynch 1987) was an elusive

goal and a *feeling* (it was no more then this at that time) that maybe it was also ill-judged. This perception was shared with other teachers and resulted in the establishment of the 'prejudice working group' which started work shortly after I left the school; a description of the school, an account of the work of the group and a discussion of the substance of concern surrounding pupils' attitudes, opinions and understandings are provided in chapters 5 and 6.

Chapters 5 and 6 noted that Greenfields School was a strong, or "potent" (Wilson 1992) one, at the same time inward looking, but proud of its success academically and artistically. It was nonetheless apparently less effective in preparing pupils for the world outside their immediate and day to day experience. It is not that pupils were found to be closed minded, or that they lacked basic skills or confidence (quite the reverse, in fact), but evidence was found to suggest that some were relatively ignorant, or conceptually weak in their preparedness to deal with a complex, diverse and changing world; it was difficult, even on the basis of the 'products' of a popular and well thought of school such as Greenfields, to disagree with McGurk's (1987) conclusion that

*... we urgently need to ask what it is about British education which allows such ignorance and prejudice to be so widespread among young people, and what needs to be done about it. (McGurk 1987 p 6)*

Evidence was also discussed in Chapter 6 which highlighted the emotional dimension of pupils learning about the world outside. Pupils can be said to have been learning what Webster (1993) called the "paradox embedded in all living"; human beings, he argued, "live their lives in 'a gap in the clouds': the gap between certainty and doubt, acceptance and questioning..." (*ibid* p 102). This was manifest in the pupils' responses, not only in their flat rejection of the 'the school' (through its teachers) telling them what to think, or how to act and behave, but the desire (expressed by a small number) to have their awareness raised and to be taught how to think.

In developing this point further, chapters 5 and 6 pursued and illustrated the tension which exists between the comfort that can often (though not always) be found in the local and familiar, and the threat of the distant, the unknown or the strange. Such feelings, I argued, cannot be ignored, particularly if the declared educational aims in, say, a sequence of lessons include the notion of critically appraising 'home' at the same time as encouraging empathetic understanding of the 'other'.

This kind of thinking takes us back to the initial conceptual analysis in Chapters 2 and 3. There, the idea of prejudice was related to different concepts of education, examining and rejecting notions of an unrestrained cultural relativism, and in effect agreeing the

efficacy of the Enlightenment project. We concluded with Wilson's (1992) two broad aims for a multicultural education, namely to enable pupils to *form healthy "attachments"* (such as a love for 'home', but not to imply that this should be unconditional or uncritical) and to *make judgements of merit*. We further noted that despite the fact that the discussion of wider goals "has become unfashionable" (Webster 1993) with the introduction of the market place into schools and a nationally regulated curriculum, a precondition for success in relation to Wilson's aims was a broadening of the matters encompassed within the formal educational experience. Pupils need to understand the role of values, emotions and beliefs in the process of knowledge creation - not only better to understand their own response to people and places, but to assess those of others.

From my original perspective as a school teacher it seemed that the most fruitful object of research, given the nature of the problem I had identified, was the pupils. If only I could get inside their heads, I had assumed, in order to understand them better, I would know how to teach them better. As reported in Chapter 4 and 6, this emphasis changed substantially as the research evolved. As the object of the research became focussed on the concept of prejudice, not the children *per se*, it was the teaching staff of Greenfields who increasingly became my informants. Teachers at Greenfields School displayed an attitude close to what Woods (1986) referred to as 'open certainty' (*ibid* p3), *having* to tackle their day to day responsibilities with a high level of certainty but openly acknowledging relative failure and searching for improvement. Chapters 7 and 8, based upon conversational interviews with over half the staff of the school, demonstrates this through the analyses of what I have called the teachers' 'philosophising'. These data helped to establish and to illuminate eight 'dimensions' of prejudice which had begun to emerge from the conceptual discussions in chapters 2 and 3. These dimensions had already formed descriptive categories in relation to material on Greenfield School (Chapter 5) and, to a larger extent, the analysis of pupils conversations in Chapter 6.

In one sense, what the conversations with teachers achieved *at the time* was to confirm 'prejudice' as the issue around which this research could focus. In other words, a pedagogic problem (how to 'touch' the pupils) was being translated into a research question: what is prejudice? It became evident to me that there would be potential gains from conversing with reflective teachers about the concept because although we may have an everyday usage of the term, 'prejudice' was capable of being understood in different ways. Moreover, it could be that everyday interpretations of the concept could possibly give us an erroneous or misleading grasp of what the condition we call prejudice entails. This, in turn, may lead us to respond to certain kinds of attitudes or behaviours we encounter amongst pupils in inappropriate ways.

In his discussion of education and its meaning, Walsh (1994 p 24) introduces the analytical device of contrasting 'open' and 'loaded' meanings, distinguishing more 'standard' (open) and less 'standard' (loaded) uses of the word<sup>83</sup>. This is useful, for the analysis of teacher conversations in Chapter 8 reveals that 'prejudice' also comes in less and more loaded forms. What was also significant in those conversations was the possibility, demonstrated on occasion in my data, of teachers changing their minds about their understanding of prejudice. Discussants such as Vince acknowledged that their changed understanding was a direct result of the conversations: that his standard use of the word prejudice was challenged by a less standard or loaded interpretation. This answers to an extent Walsh's important question concerning 'loadedness': "How then is communication possible in the medium of loaded uses?" (*ibid* p25). For a truly "contested" (*ibid* p30) concept such as 'education', communication of meanings is perhaps more difficult than for 'prejudice' which possibly has more common features amongst various competing uses. Nevertheless, the potential gains from constructing a conceptual map of prejudice were considered worthwhile; if a map could assist a usefully more nuanced discussion of what I consider to be a "complex idea" (see Chapter 2), then measures to refine the educational response to prejudice may be possible to identify.

Chapter 9 reported a further component of this thesis, the insights gained from the conversational interviews conducted with small 'expert' groups of colleagues shortly after the main data collection phase at Greenfields School. The goal to explicate the morphology of prejudice, by means of a conceptual map, coupled with the adopted strategy of conversational interviews with both pupils and teachers, led naturally to this 'experiment': what insights might result from engaging philosophers, sociologists and psychologists in education in similar sorts of deliberative discussions on prejudice? The relatively crude analysis of data yielded from these conversations provided a useful counterpoint to the Greenfields data, effectively enabling the analysis to proceed further than a mere list of 'dimensions': as reported in Chapter 10, all seven dimensions were clearly linked (they are dimensions of the same concept), but some now seemed to show closer, perhaps more functional and significant, links than others, resulting in the identification of what I called the *broad parameters* and the *structural foundations* of the concept of prejudice.

The 'broad parameters' (Figure 10.3) demonstrate a number of simple points regarding prejudice which, nevertheless, were not self evident to teacher discussants and needed to

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<sup>83</sup>By way of illustration of this distinction, Walsh writes: "On one side of it there is the much more open '(formal) education', taken to mean 'the sustained systematic induction of people into some substantial proportion of whatever is deemed to be essential to know... On the other, ie the loaded, side there is that use of '(formal) education' which carries a built-in contrast with 'indoctrination'" (Walsh 1994 p24).

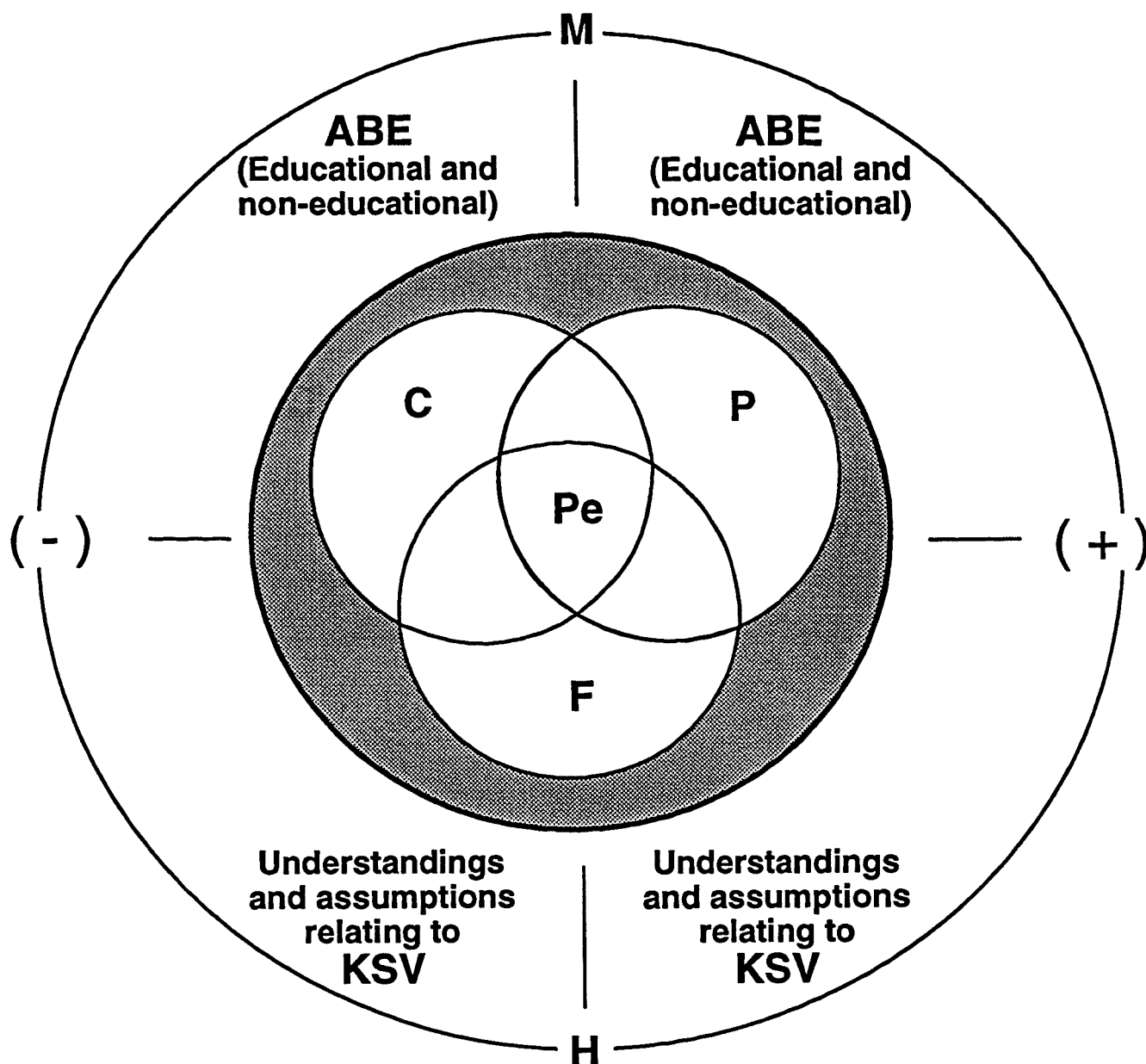
be established. Experience from this research shows that it is not difficult to reach agreement, for example, that prejudice is universal (in the sense that human beings have an inherent potential to be prejudiced), and that it is not immutable (people can and do change). To these two was added a third dimension, manifestation, which concerned the distinction between prejudiced thoughts (inside people's heads) and discriminatory actions. As we noted in Chapter 5, there was initially a tendency amongst Greenfields teachers unhelpfully to conflate the two. So important it is to keep these separate - for we must respond to them in different ways - that 'manifestation' has also become one axis of a dual dialectic in the conceptual map (see Figure 11.1).

The second dialectic concerns the value charge that attaches to uses of 'prejudice'. Walsh (1994 p20) notes that

*... it is very often the case that to call something a 'work of art' is to praise it (though it remains that sometimes it is only to identify the kind of thing it purports to be). 'Literature' and 'democracy', - and 'education' - are further examples of terms often and very naturally normative . (ibid)*

When stating "naturally normative" Walsh is contrasting the positive value charge that such words have acquired with a merely or solely "descriptive" usage (which presumably is value neutral). But the point here is that, in a similar kind of way, it is clearly the case that 'prejudice' is not only descriptive in its deployment and normally carries a value charge. This time, however, the value is negative rather than positive. It is therefore not surprising that we commonly read of prejudice (often in the same sentence as discrimination) having to be 'combatted', 'not tolerated', 'challenged' and such like. For example,

*All schools, whether monocultural or multicultural, agree that racially prejudiced remarks and behaviour cannot be tolerated under any circumstances... (Craft 1986 p 77)*



C = Cause  
P = Purpose  
F = Feelings  
Pe = Perspective

A = Actions  
B = Behaviours  
E = Experience

K = Knowledge  
S = Skills  
V = Values

H = Hidden  
M = Manifest

**Figure 11.1** The dimensions forming the conceptual map of prejudice

or,

*Teachers have a central role in preparing future citizens who accept and respect cultural difference, and who will challenge prejudice and discrimination wherever it occurs. (ibid p 81)*

What is missing from these statements is any sense that prejudice, or what Milner (1983 p 2) called the "psychological dimension of racism"<sup>84</sup> from which he tried to remain aloof, itself has to be *understood*. Giving prejudice the status of a negative condition or affliction, to be avoided or even 'treated' as some form of malady, is unlikely to be the route to understanding as it fails to take into account not only positive prejudices but also positive reasons individuals may have for holding certain prejudices. To give the conceptual map a second dialectical dimension, describing value charge, was therefore considered important in opening up ways of seeing prejudice in terms other than simply perjorative. This, I argued (taking the lead provided by Gadamer) could be useful in helping us see prejudice, on occasion, as a positive threshold to learning rather than a barrier to be eliminated (the latter being a goal which was, I also argued, unattainable).

The 'structural foundations' of prejudice (Figure 10.4) are built on the interlinking dimensions of 'cause', 'purpose' and 'feeling'. These have been linked together in such a way as to indicate an explanatory range to the conceptual map, in contrast to the 'parameters' which are more descriptive. These dimensions overlap, each being concerned in different ways with prejudice being born from the individual's need to select, categorise and simplify in their task of making sense of the world. The precise manner in which such intellectual processing takes place is influenced by both the person's 'being', (their capacities, intelligences and imaginations) and their 'experiences'. Though difficult to separate out quite so readily as this implies, it seemed appropriate to link these influences to the dialectical dimension of 'manifestation' (see Figure 11.1), the 'hidden' pole of the dialectic being associated with what is inaccessible to the observer (as it goes on inside people's heads) and the 'manifest' end indicating more concrete actions and behaviours. The models shown in Figures 10.5 and 10.6 attempt to show this by means of the vertical axis dividing the map into two hemispheres.

My main point here is to argue that, from whatever dominant 'influences' (that is, a person's 'being' or 'experience'), the outcome of the mental processing engaged by the

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<sup>84</sup>Milner was wary of a "growing realisation of the dangers in the psychologist's concern with 'prejudice'. Psychologists have reified 'prejudice' so that sometimes it is seen as a psychological phenomenon with a life of its own" (Milner 1983 p 2). Could it be that this influential work has perhaps unintentionally diverted attention away from prejudice to the extent that it has been treated rather as a 'given', together with unchallenged assumptions concerning, for example, its negative value charge?

individual is the acquisition of *perspective*. To understand (and respond to) prejudice, following this schema, means that a person's perspective needs first to be identified, what may have shaped or constrained it, and then described, in terms of how it may itself help shape or constrain the individual's actions and reactions to information and events (or, to put this in Wilson's [1992] words, the forms of "attachments" they make and their ability to make "judgements of merit").

It is pertinent to emphasise the close (though not necessarily straight forward) link here with Reid's (1986) point (discussed in Chapters 3 and 8, section 8.2 part ii, of this thesis) about the two complementary ways to understanding, the product of an education in which "*cognition and feeling work together*" [my emphases] (Slater 1994 p153). What this tells us is that in order to make judgements of merit, or what we might call moral judgements, individuals' perspectives are guided as much by feelings about a particular context, place or set of circumstances, as by information acquired as evidence:

*Moral knowledge is centred... on particular holistic experiences of human persons in factual situations. In such and such circumstances, can we say that this is, humanly speaking, inherently or intrinsically good, or bad (or evil)?*  
(Reid 1986, cited in Slater 1994 p157)

Geography in education is usually seen as an information rich subject: indeed, in the form the subject was manifest in the 1991 national curriculum statutory order (DES 1991), with 183 largely content based "statements of attainment", geography seemed to proclaim itself as such. But one question which Reid and, in a slightly different way, the conceptual map of prejudice raise is whether 'information rich' can adequately describe a school curriculum subject in the context of its role as a medium of education. Judging the merits of opinions, beliefs and judgements (and, indeed, making healthy attachments, to take Wilson's other aim) are not simply the result of the individual responding to information received in the sense that he or she engages a neutral 'respect for evidence'. For example, feelings become bound up in the mental process because information always belongs to a context; it has origins; it is given and received in a certain ways; and it is transacted in a wider framework of school and societal experiences and behaviours. This, then, leads directly to two further questions: are schools, and more specifically, teachers, sensitive to such a feelings dimension and secondly (and to paraphrase Slater 1994) do teachers teach and pupils learn enough of an appropriate vocabulary in order for them to develop their thinking *and* educate their feelings? Slater continues:

*It may be that in our geography teaching we need not only continue to build, more consciously and deliberately, vocabularies for recognising and expressing*



*value-laden situations and positions, but we need also to ask questions about how to create and understand the contexts in which the issues and questions we ask are located - located as they are in cultures and societies, groups and classes of people.* (Slater 1994 p 158)

In unpacking the multidimensional nature of prejudice, this thesis is able to propose how to respond to Slater's call. "Recognising... value-laden... positions" is aided by an understanding of prejudice which *allows* it and enables it to be analysed or 'diagnosed'. Admitting to its multidimensionality enables teachers to retreat from notions that prejudice may be simply removed or eradicated; it encourages the apparently more modest, but educationally more powerful, notion that it needs to be *understood*. By locating the role of "perspective", the map provides a way to understand prejudice which in turn should be helpful in coming to a critical understanding of context ("cultures and societies, groups and classes of people" [Slater *op cit*]).

At the very least, I would argue, the map (Figure 11.1) shows the significance in learning an understanding of *perspective*, arising out of a complex (and individual) mental process. It is influenced by experiences, observed actions and behaviours (the manifest hemisphere) and a range of knowledge, intellectual skills and values (in the more hidden hemisphere). It is also subject to a range of possible value charges which, as in the case of Reid's (1986) feelings axis, is an undeniable (yet often ignored) component of understanding. For example, when introducing the 'inner city' or the 'third world', how often do teachers unwittingly pander to negative imagery by presenting definitions which themselves emphasise negativity: low per capita GNP, derelict land, environmental degradation, poverty. This is not to argue for some sanitised or romantic (and equally untrue) alternative version. Teachers have a responsibility to avoid the propagation of myth<sup>85</sup>, whether negative or positive, and the conceptual map of prejudice, by identifying the role of perspective and what shapes it, helps teachers and learners understand this.

Put another way, understanding prejudice is nothing more, or less, than understanding the "embeddedness" (Warnke 1987) of people, cultures and societies. But for the teacher, or individual learner in, say, the geography classroom, the map or model is also an invitation to understand their own prejudices: what have been the dominant influences shaping their perspectives? In what ways, if at all, are resulting prejudices manifest in the form of particular actions or behaviours? And for teachers reviewing course

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<sup>85</sup> One such myth, by way of example, is the existence in the 'third world' of the *subsistence farmer* - too stupid, we may imagine, to understand the concept of the market. This person is hard to find any where in the world (Binns 1995 b), but the idea comfortably fits a pattern and a caricature of the geography of 'us and them'.

syllabuses, what aspects of the teaching content and strategy (knowledge, skills and values on Figure 11.1) need less emphasis, and which need more?

This section has now begun to discuss the utility of the conceptual map of prejudice. The process of taking stock has inevitably led us therefore to the following section in which I explore in more detail the potential use of the map.

### 11.3 Using the map

It was noted in the Chapter 10 (section 10.4), as well as in the previous paragraphs, that an educational response to prejudice needs to consist of more than simply offering pupils alternative perspectives. Even the pupils at Greenfields acknowledged that such an approach, particularly if it were delivered in a manner that seemed to tell the pupils what they were to think (a form of moralising), was doomed to failure, unlikely to have its desired impact. And yet some teachers at the school also acknowledged the difficulty in avoiding, despite their best efforts, a moralising tone. These observations help structure my discussion in this section under two broad headings: first, how the map informs a pedagogical response to prejudice and secondly how it may support continuing teacher education.

**i. *Informing a pedagogical response*** : In what ways is the map and the supporting discussion helpful in pointing to appropriate and appealing pedagogy in response to prejudice? We have firmly established that understanding and awareness should be our goals, which includes finding ways to "allow" prejudice so that it may be considered openly. The map (Figure 11.1) also reminds us that teachers and the formal school curriculum may have limited impact on individuals and the precise nature of any impact teachers may have are subject to complex processes some of which are not under the control of the teacher. Nevertheless, it also points (together with Figures 10.5 and 10.6) to certain understandings or assumptions relating to learning and experience which can be deemed desirable, and those which may not. For example, Figure 10.6 contrasts knowledge which is 'partial' and dependent for its legitimacy on comparison (see Binns 1995 below) with that which is 'rich' and true to its context (it is sufficiently 'embedded'); it is not too speculative to make the link between the former and the manifest attitude (recorded frequently at Greenfields) relating racism to "London" and other large metropolitan areas whilst claiming "no problem here" (in Kingsford). Also in Figure 10.6, we can contrast 'closed, mechanical' skills, seen as 'ends in themselves' with the more desirable, broader concept of skills as 'open ended, intellectual' - which would certainly include the facility of 'metadiscourse'. The latter, characterised by Leat

(1995a) as "thinking through geography", is examined later. First, I briefly consider what are the appropriate approaches and information that should be given more prominence in a geographical education.

The identification of my analysis with Gadamer's notion of perspectival understanding and the concomitant dialogic route to understanding, discussed by Jones (1987) in terms of "education for conversation", provides, on a general level, an answer to this question. In Chapter 2, I likened the idea of conversation to Paddy Walsh's (1994) notion of an "education in deliberation", and, like Walsh, I would presume that the only education worthy of such a description would be that which engaged pupils in deliberation, or conversation<sup>86</sup>, for real.

Mechanical exercises, ones which see a certain level of information acquisition as the goal, or those which pay lip service to establishing realistic context (what Warnke [1987] refers to as "embeddedness") are unlikely to satisfy the above criterion, instead legitimising in geography the constant, repeated comparison of 'home' with the 'other'. Binns has confirmed the existence of such a trap, despite the years of commitment in geography education to teach for improved international understanding, leading to the portrayal of an oversimplified "us and them" geography of world development. On the subject of development issues based around various 'quality of life' indices, he writes:

*...too often we find it convenient to ignore the existence of such problems at home, probably because these issues are too controversial when considered in a local and more familiar context. Instead, we prefer to focus teaching about such issues on distant and less familiar Third World countries, portraying them uniformly full of "doom and gloom", in contrast to our own apparently problem-free domestic scene. (Binns 1995 pii)*

Binns advocates two responses to this (which fundamentally are to do with *information* in geography education). First, to develop a more critical approach to 'home' and secondly, to develop a much richer study of distant places which would be more textured in the sense that it would recognise diversity within the 'other'. We can refer back to Slater's query (which she answers), "...how to create and understand the contexts in which the issues and questions we ask are located..." (Slater 1994 p 158), and identify what is perhaps one of the most demanding and knotty problems facing teachers of geography. To be sure, pupils *will* compare the 'other' and the 'other place' with 'home'. How can they avoid it? Familiarity, nearness and the comfort of 'home' is

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<sup>86</sup> I am treating 'deliberation' and 'conversation' as almost the same on the grounds that they have similar aims, seeking to engage individuals in reflective activity which gets below the surface. I do acknowledge differences however: deliberation could possibly be a solitary activity whereas conversation requires an interlocuter.

one set of influences on the pupil's perspective and the conceptual map shows this. Binn's argument, then is surely not that comparisons are not made or that they can be avoided (an impossibility), but that in geography lessons teachers take steps to encourage learning in such a way that strange and distant places gain legitimacy in their own right and not systematically in terms of how they measure up to 'home'<sup>87</sup>. I do not claim this to be a new insight, but my thesis reaffirms the vital importance of the point: the 1991 national curriculum statutory order (DES 1991), with its apparent preoccupation with the locational framework, described by some as an over zealous concern with the notion of 'cultural literacy' (Dowgill and Lambert 1992), seemed to encourage a different approach to geography in which the required breadth of coverage seemed sure to result in superficiality and little challenge to 'us and them' comparisons.

Insofar as *skills* are concerned, I propose the utilisation of a wide range of enquiry skills such as that shown in Figure 11.2. I readily agree with and advocate the raised profile in day to day teaching of certain *intellectual* skills in a list such as this (for example listening skills, thinking skills and the skills of argument and making "judgements of merit" [Wilson 1992] which implies skills of evaluation). But I do not see such skills as items on a checklist to be ticked off when encountered (or 'mastered'), and, as we have noted earlier, Frances Slater herself (1994) has acknowledged the limitations of a list such as this, ignoring as it does the role of feelings in knowledge making. In taking the list forward, what my research suggests is that benefit might accrue from engaging pupils in some kind of skills related meta-discourse which, as the conceptual maps show, would need to take in a feelings dimension. A concern to engage learners in thinking about how they think (meta-cognition) would, I believe, find a parallel in the CASE project cited in Chapter 7, section 7.5 part iv, though those original approaches and materials were dominated by the goal to improve cognition and little or no regard to feelings.

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<sup>87</sup>One way to do this suggested by Slater (1994) is to use literature and plays in geography in geography lessons which provide a rich data source which may change an individual's perspective.

## Figure 11.2 : Skills Used in Geography

### A Bank of Possible Data Processing Skills/ Strategies/Tasks

#### *Intellectual skills*

1. perceiving and observing
2. memorizing and recalling
3. understanding instructions/information
4. structuring information, classifying and organizing
5. questioning and hypothesizing
6. applying information and ideas
7. elaborating and interpreting
8. analyzing and evaluating
9. identifying and synthesizing
10. thinking logically, divergently, imaginatively
11. thinking critically and reflectively
12. generalizing, problem solving and decision making
13. clarifying and analyzing attitudes and values
14. communicating facts, ideas, concepts, arguments, results, values, decisions, feelings.

#### *Social skills*

15. communicating and planning with others
16. participating in group discussions
17. listening to other viewpoints and opinions
18. adopting a role
19. exercising empathy
20. working independently
21. helping others
22. leading a group
23. participating in field or research work
24. exercising choice and discrimination
25. behaving responsibly and courteously
26. accepting responsibility for learning
27. initiating and organizing a learning task

#### *Practical skills*

28. talking, reading, writing, drawing, acting . . .
29. manipulating instruments and equipment
30. finding books and resources
31. walking an urban trail
32. using a map
33. organizing a field investigation
34. preparing a wall display
35. administering a questionnaire
36. interviewing a town planner
37. designing a graph
38. taking photographs
39. sketching a building
40. presenting statistics
42. writing a report.

Source:

Based on an idea from the New Zealand geography curriculum renewal programs, in Slater (1993)

The aim of meta-discourse, by which I mean an on-going dialogue between teachers, and between teachers and pupils, would be to clarify the purpose of lessons (their content and strategy) in the context of learning goals. In the present context this would be not only to encourage in pupils a self-awareness of their own changing perspectives<sup>88</sup>, but to demonstrate the existence, both at 'home' and 'abroad', of a diversity of perspectives and (thus) an understanding of prejudice. In this way prejudice may be rescued, so to speak, and treated not as a barrier to learning but, as Gadamer would say, a threshold "from which gradual development of our knowledge becomes possible" (Warnke 1987 p4). My contention is that the concept maps of prejudice will help facilitate such a discourse amongst teachers, and I take this up in the final section.

To encourage discourse between teachers and *pupils*, I propose a model approach which, as well as providing a form of synoptic planning - or evaluation - tool for teachers, can be shared directly with pupils. It has been derived from the deliberations and analysis which have shaped the conceptual map, with the intention to, as it were, translate the messages in the map into a more accessible "curriculum language". It can be reduced to a three stage sequence denoted by the keywords: *informed*, *contingent*, *developing* (see Figure 11.3).

The model does not apply to any particular topic in geography; it applies to any content in which pupils (and their teachers too) have to make judgements regarding distant, strange, complex or simply new information or experience. The keywords, once understood, can be used often, and informally, to stimulate conversation or deliberation not only about the subject matter at hand but about the learning in a more synoptic sense: hence the term "meta-discourse".

The model is not overtly about "prejudice reduction" or "anti-racism". My contention, however, is that because it is based upon an analysis of prejudice which *places the idea of perspectival understanding at the heart* of the multidimensional conceptual map, and therefore facilitates teachers in classrooms to "allow" prejudice, it can serve the aims of an intercultural education well. Though I am tempted to make claims for the universal application of the principles underlying the model, I am not able to do this without further research efforts: it may be the case that the analysis upon which the thesis is based is applicable only to virtually 'all-white' suburban schools like Greenfields. Even

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<sup>88</sup>Geography has a particular role to play in this respect. As Hicks (1980) and Taylor (1985) have pointed out in entirely different ways, scale as well as place provides distinctive perspective on events and phenomena. Furthermore, as Hicks stated, "Whilst geography has always played a major role in providing a global perspective in the curriculum, there are still questions to be asked about the nature of that perspective. Good world studies or development education materials are most emphatically not just about other places, but about the interconnectedness, the interdependence and dependency of people and places." (*op cit*; cited in Andrews 1994 p 62)

so, the potential contribution to intercultural education through applying these principles in the geography classroom could be substantial.

The model is presented in the form of a 'worksheet', addressed to pupils. This is to provide a sense of immediacy and directness, and to illustrate how pupils may be helped towards a comprehension of perspectival understanding. This, in turn, will help individuals learn to 'allow' and seek to understand prejudice.

Walford (1981 p215-216) notes that in geography education, as in education at large, the use of unchallenged, general statements of intent, describing what is and what can be accomplished, has become commonplace. A good example, in geography, is the following:

*Most people are inherently curious and they want to know more about the world in which they live. It is our duty, as geographers, to satisfy this curiosity.* (Hart 1982, cited in Walford *op cit*)

Setting aside the rather sweeping assumptions made at the start of this statement, what we have learned from the foregoing analysis and the model (Figure 11.3) is that satisfying geographical curiosity is not only a matter of locating, using and applying new information about the world. It also requires learning about the contingency of geographical information and the nature of perspective, what shapes and influences it, and how it develops.

## Making Sense of the World

Geographical information is plentiful. In fact, there is so much of it there is usually a need to simplify and select from it - whether the purpose is to write a textbook, a CD Rom or a TV documentary.

The information we have about the world is, therefore, often *partial* and has always been *mediated*. We therefore have to be careful how we use it. We have to be careful what we understand from it

This sequence should help you understand how to think about geographical knowledge:

### Geographical Knowledge

#### Stage A

**We are *informed*:**

We are informed by partial and mediated images and information, which come to us through the TV screen and computer monitor, newspapers, textbooks, teachers, family and friends.

#### Stage B

**Our knowledge is *contingent*:**

This means the attitude we take towards the information we have is conditional, dependent and uncertain. This is because,

- a) our experience (or lack of experience) may have shaped how we feel about the information in particular ways. Our experience and feelings may change;
- b) our information is usually incomplete. Further evidence or information can substantially change what we know about the world.

#### Stage C

**Knowledge is always *developing*:**

What we know about the world is shaped by our perspective. Our *perspective* can change as a result of learning more,

- a) through our experiences (what we see, hear and can touch) and,
- b) through our inner thought processes (how we think and feel about our various experiences).

**Figure 11.3** Making Sense of the World: a model to guide meta-discourse in geographical education



ii. ***Supporting Continuing Teacher Education*** : The model (Figure 11.3), though designed for use with older pupils, is also a device which may be used to stimulate conversation and deliberation among teachers. The way in which the empirical component of this research developed - away from the pupil conversations and closer to the conversations with teachers - reflects partly my autobiography, developing a career in teacher education on leaving Greenfields School as a teacher in 1986. But it also reflects a realisation, or finding, in its own right, namely the potential which existed within the staff of Greenfields to engage in what I have called "philosophising".

The conceptual map of prejudice which has emerged in the manner shown in Figures 10.3-10.6 and 11.1, in large part results from my conversations with teachers 'philosophising'. In retrospect, we can see that the art of the conversational interview, in which participants were expected to challenge each other, is a method well suited to exploring the inner thoughts and assumptions of individuals. We saw in Chapters 7 and 8 that ambiguities and inconsistencies in what people said were not uncommon, and that there were occasions when meanings gained clarification during the conversation (causing the occasional 'changing of mind').

Within this context of teachers' deliberation, it is significant to realise and acknowledge that the map is not seen as a final end result. This is in accordance with the map metaphor having been chosen, for few maps can confidently proclaim universal knowledge and accuracy. The map is proposed as a stimulus for future and continued teacher deliberation; features on the map can be clarified and links established and explored, in relation, say, to the characteristics of "being" and "experience". The nature of perspective which individuals themselves bring to tasks can also be explored. At worst, conversations and deliberations merely directed to understanding the dimensions of the map may challenge the individual and cause him or her to develop their own mental map (or perspective) on prejudice, which takes them closer to acknowledging and understanding its 'complexity'.

There is no need to open up the whole field of teacher education in order to signal the potential to be unlocked by the approach adopted here. I share McIntyre's (1994) worry about "...the readiness of those engaged in professional education to rely so heavily on slogans such as 'reflective practice'..." (*ibid* p ix). Eraut (1994), in his critical examination of this term, reworks Donald Schon's (1983; 1987) model of the *Reflective Practitioner* and concludes that "...it is necessary to take the term 'reflection' out of his theory, because it has caused nothing but confusion." (Eraut 1994 p 148). Instead, he proposes a theory of *metacognition*. Within metacognition it is possible to distinguish

between analysis and decision making which is rapid and requiring instant response, from what he calls deliberative analysis and decision making which follows and is separate from the action on which it is based. He writes:

*Several reasons are given why deliberation is important in professional work, indeed essential for maintaining its quality. hence a major problem for all professionals is making sufficient time to engage in deliberative as well as rapid and intuitive modes of thought and action. (ibid p23)*

There would seem to be a close link between the distinctions suggested by Eraut, and Woods' (1986) double edged notion of "open certainty" introduced earlier in this Chapter (section 11.2). It was noted that teachers know they have to function on a day to day basis with a high level of certainty, but that effective teachers maintain an openness to the evaluation of the decisions and actions for which they are responsible. This, I implied, explained the willingness with which Greenfields teachers took to "philosophising", a form of deliberation which assisted in the *construction* of the conceptual map, but also (I am suggesting here) a form of deliberation which may be stimulated further by the map.

To summarise, though teachers in training are often stimulated by the prospect of information, ideas or materials having immediate impact in the classroom, a healthy and dynamic staff room needs also another form of what is often called reflection: this has a different pace and purpose and is essentially deliberation on matters which defy rapid and intuitive thought. Such a matter is prejudice, and a conceptual map which suggests ways in to explore the parameters and foundations of the concept is, I contend, of use to the continuing education of teachers.

#### 11.4 Concluding Comment

In making a final comment to conclude this thesis I can make two observations which will be indicative of possible future research directions.

First, I wish to restate the central roles played by conversation in this research. Cullingford (1995), in his report of research investigating children's country preferences (thus continuing a long tradition in geographical education, as we saw in Chapter 3), remarks,

*The question remains why children should have such a strongly positive attitude to the US. It is as if the place were marketed. In one sense it is. (ibid p6)*

He therefore answers his own question. But the map or model I propose, which emphasises the multidimensionality of the concept of prejudice and the role of perspective, provides a resource which is capable of taking Cullingford's remark much further. The map is probably not readily used as a stand alone resource, but as a stimulus to *conversation* it has potential. Thus from Malcolm Jones' initial (1987) advocacy of an education for conversation, this research has utilised the idea in three distinct ways:

- i. for data collection, through conversational interviews;
- ii. contributing to data analysis - for refining the conceptual territory, particularly through conversations with 'experts' in the Institute experiment (see Chapter 9);
- iii. for making an educational response to prejudice by developing the *discussion* on the utility of the conceptual map, in proposing a form of *meta-discourse* with pupils and in pursuing Eraut's (1994) notion of deliberation in *encouraging metacognition* (for example in identifying the goals of geographical education) in the education of teachers.

Putting (iii) above to the test, and especially my claim that the conceptual map has potential in this way, is a clear possible future research direction.

My second observation follows naturally on from this. One idea on which this thesis rests is that prejudice is of great importance to educators in general, and geography teachers in particular. The arguments have established that prejudice is a condition that can be, and often is, understood in quite narrow and negative ways. Identifying dimensions and attempting to set out a conceptual map, as I argue in this chapter, can help teachers deliberate on the concept and ultimately, as I show in Figure 11.3, provide a means for pupils to do the same (albeit indirectly). This, it is argued, will help pupils and teachers engage in a meta-discourse, to think about their thinking, which will contribute meaningfully to a intercultural education - providing a framework for arriving at judgements of merit and for forming healthy attachments.

The further research question this immediately raises is whether there are other concepts which, like prejudice, could be considered "key" to geography in education with its concern to enable pupils to deal with distance, diversity and complexity effectively.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Names Used in this study**

## Conversational Interviews at Greenfields School

Names used for **Pupils** featured in this thesis

The following list shows the fictionalised names of pupils I interviewed and whose transcriptions I have used in this thesis. The Year group indicates the pupils' age when I first began this research in 1987:

Annie Rose:	E year
Caroline:	E year
Emily:	A year
Gemma:	A year
Jane:	I year
Karim:	A year
Liz:	E year
Mark:	E year
Marie:	I year
Philip:	I year
Sam:	A year
Sandra:	I year

Note: under the Greenfields School system, A = admission, I = intermediate and E = examination year. This is equivalent to Y9, Y10 and Y11 respectively



## Conversational Interviews at Greenfields School

Names used for **Teachers** featuring in this thesis

The following fictionalised names have been used to indicate members of staff. As I cannot totally guarantee the anonymous status of Greenfields School, I have not identified the teachers by subject department, preferring the more general category of 'faculty'.

Albert	Science and Maths
Alan	The Arts and English
Bill	Humanities
Chris	The Arts and English
Don	Humanities
Dave	Humanities
Jack	Science and Maths
Jill	The Arts and English
Joan	Humanities
John	Langages
Josh	The Arts and English
Philip	Humanities
Ruth	Science and Maths
Stuart	Science and Maths
Tom	Humanities
Vince	Humanities

## **Appendix 2**

### **Headmaster's Report, Speech Night 1987**

I want you to recall those memorable words from the Old Testament about everything having its purpose and its time. That there is a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to break down and a time to build up. Which is where I pause. And the prophet goes on to talk about that regulated existence that knows the appropriateness of weeping and laughing, getting and losing, being silent and speaking, at the proper time. A time to keep and a time to cast away. My thoughts turn to this sequence in particular: a time to break down and a time to build up. A time to keep and a time to cast away. Never in all my life as a teacher have we, in the education service been subjected to so much pressure for change. It seems that the very nature of schoolmastering itself is under review. And of course professionally we are always faced with a good deal of necessary decision-making; we have to make a choice. Many choices. As to what we teach and how we teach. We ask ourselves perennial questions. Is the teacher essentially an academic specialist? How far is he a social worker, or a spiritual doctor, or on what level does he actually meet his students? What degree of formality exists between the teacher and taught? Where exactly are the boundaries that the student must never breach and where are the grey areas?

A time to break down and a time to build up. I have no doubt that one of the most far reaching and potentially beneficent changes that has taken place over the years I have been teaching has been the modernisation and, if I may say so, the humanisation of the examination system. The hallowed system of O Levels, almost beatified over the years, latterly complemented by the Certificate of Secondary Education, for those not quite as bright, died in June. And the last rites will be carried out in November when the final re-takes operate. Now far from deriding them, I believe that examinations and assessments have their place. Most of you will know that Ward Freman is particularly good at them and indeed as we salute the demise of O Levels I can inform you that across the board the school this year achieved the finest results at sixteen plus in its entire sixteen years' history. More of that later.

You will understand how proud one feels at being able to record this achievement and what great credit it reflects not only on the abilities, but the commitment of the staff. But of course these days so much more is required of the staff than being able to help talented students fulfil their potential, since as I have reported to parents and Governors before at Speech Night, quite properly under a genuinely committed comprehensive system the attributes and achievements of the entire student population are now fittingly examined and recorded.

I am now, what I wasn't quite so much perhaps a dozen years ago, a wholehearted and committed believer in the good, yes - the good comprehensive school. Nothing can do more for the future harmony of our country than the establishment of such good schools where rich and poor, the able and the less able, the good and the bad, the active and the passive meet, learn, play and co-exist within one framework and I like to feel that Ward Freman at its best is making a special contribution towards society, towards England, in this way. In an educational community, however, where the attempt is made to value everyone at his or her true worth and to attempt to realise the potential that I believe exists in all human beings - and one doesn't for a moment claim that at Ward Freman we are successful with everybody

- one must come to the conclusion that the potential stresses and increasing burdens, placed on staff in a world that is constantly changing, and where sometimes even the goal-posts appear lodged in grey areas, are immense. Whatever burdens they might be, they are undertaken at this school, I should say, not only competently and uncomplainingly, but with a positive view to doing and finding the appropriate course, the right avenue, the sensible pastime for any given individual.

So when the school is congratulated on its very fine Oxbridge record and its proud achievement in University Entrance, one looks also to the examinations of the courses devised at other levels where the valid questions are, what has this student achieved? What skills has he or she acquired? Why not allow coursework - that is work done in school and at home, without the pressures and constraints of formal examinations, form part of the final assessment? What understanding does he or she possess? In other words, in underlining my point about the humanisation of exams, to go for the affirmed rather than the negated. It's right, isn't it, that we should judge a student on what he can do - not erect a series of barriers and blocks to find what he isn't capable of. I think this is a decent and helpful way of considering people. It is the spirit of GCSE. And if I may say so, to take this stance does not mean that standards decline. Far from it.

Of course examinations which aim at finding out what people are capable of, are of seminal importance and thus as we proceed through this second year of the operation of the General Certificate of Secondary Education, we have an enormous change upon our hands, one that is requiring our closest analysis and attention and one that will claim a larger proportion of our time than normal. It was right for the barriers between O Level and CSE and CSE and the 'have-nothings', to be broken down. It was time for the Hertfordshire Achievement Schemes and nationally, the GCSE to be built up. Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope it is clear from what I have said so far that these are radical and enormous changes to which we must become accustomed, if we are to serve our students well; to which we wish to become accustomed; and these are changes enough at the moment. I repeat - these are changes enough. And yet, nationally and, locally the agenda for further - swift - change shudders ominously. Tests at seven, eleven and fourteen, possibly on a pass-fail basis, which goes quite against the spirit of GCSE. A national curriculum. Management skills. Heads as Managers. The advance of technology - welcome, stimulating, liberating (and Ward Freman is rightly in the vanguard of much development in this field) but for some a substitute God, a sine qua non of any intelligent move forward.

Now then, some of these changes proposed by the Secretary of State for Education would appear to militate against the Ward Freman Experience of things, and there is so much within this school which has proved itself over the years since the school was born, which in my view we must conserve. What does that mean? Well true conservation in such matters is maintaining the place and the role, for instance, of minority subjects; fostering our musical and dramatic traditions; keeping our network of competitive sports fixtures, understanding the role of the school within the community. And perhaps I should add that such vital areas of the school's life are only healthy if continuing imagination and vigour are expended on them. We must be allowed the time to do that.

So if some of the current national proposals are implemented, I fear for our ability to minister to the diversity of human nature. And, although much of what I want to say to you tonight, might not appear to impinge directly on the education your son or daughter is receiving, face to face in the classroom as it were, textbook, bunsen-burner or hockey-stick in hand, we have serious issues to consider. In the space of a few weeks a national curriculum has been evolved, decisions on which are shortly to be taken. The implications of this - manoeuvre - are immense. Every student, it would appear, will need experience a smattering of most things. And one problem lies in the fact that it might be a smattering, nothing substantial. One effect of this curriculum would be on minority subjects; and it would appear to be dramatic.

The essence of running a successful school - well, that makes certain assumptions, doesn't it! - but the essence of running a successful school would seem to me to lie partly in recognising the diversity of human kind. One of my themes for tonight. Although we are small, we have an incredible variety of student. And staff. And I'd be the first to argue that variety is the spice of life. Many of the school's successes derives from the way in which the expertise of this staff is given expression both on and off the timetable. Our policy for instance in something like music where, in a sense, in a small school such as ours we could get by with one musician - might ease a few problems, actually - is in fact slightly to skew the curriculum, to ask perhaps for one or two compromises from the music staff, in terms of their timetable, but to ensure that music is given every chance to succeed through the inevitable rapport, cross fertilization of ideas and communication that ensue, because we possess two fine musicians. The chances of satisfaction in the job become higher because of the sharing of burdens and I know there is a wider impact on the life of the school as a whole. Under the new proposals, as I understand them, music would be pushed even more to the fringes.

Last May, we mounted an inspiring production of Purcell's opera, Dido and Aeneas. Not the kind of stuff you see on the box every night, but written (many, many) decades ago, as it happens for a girls' school. It is a wonderful work. Our students were rubbing noses with it for the first time. Prematurely, perhaps. But this is an opera that gives 'civilisation' credibility. And there are not many schools in Hertfordshire, or England, that could have come anywhere near Messrs Sackman's and Beale's achievement. The same goes, to give another illustration, for the second language we employ, which in Ward Freeman happens to be German. It is given space on the timetable; many pupils are given a chance to study it. There is a real Department at work: two to share the Exchanges. Again recently we found it possible to increase the Religious Education staff and this has succeeded in making even more exciting what was possibly the most invigorating (one-woman) department, in Hertfordshire. It is the attempt to understand the needs of such staff as these that enables us to go forward. Are our arrangements and our students' opportunities imperilled by these new proposals from Mr Baker? I suspect so; I hope not. Compulsion has never much appealed to me in terms of getting the best out of one's students and it ill behoves the Secretary of State, in the job for only two years in educational terms, so quickly to devise new panaceas, placebos, or solve-alls, as if what we have been doing is inadequate.

The essence of the richest experience of education is to get the balance, the tension and the chemistry right between the teacher, the taught and the subject that is taught. It does seem to me that one of our greatest challenges is to spot the potential, discover the individual talent and I have to say that excessive prescription appears to me not to take the schools', teachers' or students' individuality into account. After all there is so much in this world of such diversity to study; And what is success? For me, engagement in - not even distinction in - engagement in one small exciting area of experience, whether it is becoming a good goalkeeper, taking a genuine interest in the animal world, becoming committed to a charitable cause such as Help the Aged, evolving a fascination for motor-cars, or even raising money for the Ward Freman PTA - anything that is active, outgoing, life-giving rather than passive and hum-drum. Such interests you note may happen at any level of academic ability; they are not primarily to do with the possession of fine intellect.

A major case against a national curriculum is that it will not allow schools to be themselves; it is distrusting; there will be more emphasis on accountability and filling in the right boxes. And of course the proposed national curriculum is not national at all: it is a curriculum for State Schools. It does seem to me that on such a contentious issue as this, that what is right for the large majority of the population surely ought to be appropriate for everyone. A comprehensive school, properly run, is as serious and credible an institution as a public school; a distinct philosophy of education will have evolved and the practical means of imparting that education will have been devised. It does appear to me that the new reforms that Central Government are suggesting will have the effect of diminishing our individuality and clipping our wings in possibly harmful ways. The public schools will maintain their routes to Oxbridge, and the higher echelons of the Civil Service. What do the new proposals do to help our students? Or are they devised to keep State School teachers in check? I have found over the years that the more space you give your staff the more initiatives and responsibilities you allow them, the quicker they grow and the greater the impact they have on the lives they educate, and if I may say so without being presumptuous, I think the more fulfilled they, the staff, become.

I have two further anxieties that I wish to share on the subject of change. One I have mentioned to you before and that is the increasing tendency within various authorities and I think also at a national level, to rationalise and economise in education. The conventional wisdom for the sixteen plus brigade is that we should move towards a system of Sixth form colleges. One or two education authorities are dismantling three tier systems similar to our own. That is another aspect of change that frightens me. And perhaps we should remember the conventional wisdom of one decade becomes the foolish heresy of the next. It seems to me that our principles should always be that where there is something good we should preserve it and cultivate it, and I certainly stand before you absolutely committed to the three-tier system. And in particular, to Ward Freman. In a school such as ours there is the feel of a family. Our size and structure enable us on the whole to become a meaningful community.

Our system enables new horizons and a fresh start at thirteen which is precisely the point at which so often I have understood there to be a turn-off in the eleven to sixteen or eleven to eighteen school; and the way of course in which we organise the school in tutor groups and house activities enables a particularly rich experience for thirteen year old students who mingle with the sixteens and eighteens, learn the spirit of the school and then end up in positions of leadership, whether it is directing house drama or simply patrolling the corridors in the lunch hour. It seems to me no accident that the vast majority of Public Schools are based on the three-tier principle. Now I happen to believe that the comprehensive principle is nobler, more efficacious in achieving the kind of society most of us would wish to live in and ultimately more satisfying than experience within the Public School; but it would be foolish to argue that there is nothing we can learn from the way in which good public schools conduct themselves. The fact that the three tier principle is their cornerstone should also commend itself to the notice of the Local Education Authority and that of Mr Baker himself. Unless, of course, their concerns are first and foremost financial.

Lastly on the subject of change I wish to talk about the nature of headmastering itself. The buzz word today is Management. The Head must learn to be a manager. He must be good with money. He must be well trained in organisation. It has even been suggested to me that I should go off on a management course, after thirteen years here. Taking twenty two school days! Goodbye A Level students for five weeks of your course! Goodbye my slower-learners whose literacy is equally important. Goodbye the School Play! (Blessed relief for some, no doubt!). Goodbye keeping an eye on the staff for those twenty two days.

Now then, I have something revolutionary to propose. I suggest that Heads should try to be good with students, and get to know their staff. I suggest that Heads should develop the love of their subject in which they were trained and in which they spent their first years teaching, and that they should wish to continue to impart their enthusiasm for it to students. I suggest that Heads should involve themselves in the life of the classroom and in the life of the school after four o'clock. Of course, other skills are necessary. Of course schools need to be well managed, but heresy of heresies, dare I suggest that these skills, the skills of managing are possibly acquired from a continual working together with people in practical and meaningful situations, so that the Management team in a school actually shares genuine educational experience; the palpitations that your young twenty three year old starting a new career experiences when the examination results arrive; the exhilaration of teaching a topic in a novel way; winning the District seven a side senior rugby, for the third time in succession, which the school did yesterday. Et cetera, et cetera. Well here is my prophecy for the nineteen nineties. The further management teams in schools move away from the classroom and all that touches the lives of their students at first hand, the less successful and the less happy our schools will become; the more social problems will increase, and the better and the bigger the copy that will be provided for some newspapers. Notably the Sun. And then the Star.

I hope you will forgive me ladies and gentlemen for my going on at length about what might appear to be national concerns, but they are busy working their way through the system and I fear for the future. There is indeed a time to keep much of the style, much of the expression we have built up here at Ward Freman over the past years. It is not a time to cast it away.

Because - because there is so much here to celebrate. I have mentioned the coming of GCSE and I am increasingly convinced that it is something to be welcomed. You will be reassured to know that all appropriate training has been undergone by our staff and that (characteristically) in many areas it is Ward Freman staff that have given the lead to teachers in neighbouring schools, in helping them come to terms with the new curriculum. Examination results this year speak for themselves with a pass rate at Advanced level in excess of eighty two per cent and some very high grades achieved by our candidates. The University record is most impressive and now includes fourteen students having proceeded to Oxford and Cambridge over the last four years, a quite remarkable achievement for a school of our size, and it is nice to note that from Oxford and Cambridge, students in their second or third years, by and large achieve either first class or upper second degrees, an indication of their quality and perhaps of efforts we make on their behalf here. At Ordinary Level the results were overall the best the school has ever achieved with grades that were quite outstanding in Chemistry, Physics, Latin and Graphic Design, the latter being one of our new courses. And if I mention these four subjects it is certainly not at the expense of others. It was truly all round a tremendously satisfying year. But even though these are the best ever, I also wish to draw your attention to something of equal moment: another change, perhaps that the school has willingly embraced - the new courses now being developed in the first year sixth for those for whom A Level is perhaps inappropriate.

The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education has found champions at Ward Freman. I was a sceptical Headmaster to begin with, and I have now turned into an admirer of those staff and students who have put so much imagination and energy into a previously neglected area. One approaches CPVE from a different perspective from normal, and it operates differently. The idea of how we should see school changes (another indication of our receptiveness to new ideas), with some students leaving naturally during the course of the year before the year is up, and in terms of the practical experience of work that students experience, real help in the transition between school and work whilst enabling students to benefit from other aspects of the school. Here was an area that needed building up, to use my opening metaphor, and I would urge all parents of examination year students to consider taking advantage of this scheme, rather than advise that your son or daughter leap into the first job or the first college based course that comes along. And I speak from one who has benefited personally within my own family.

One indelible memory of last year is in fact the Open Day that the CPVE students organised complete with buffet where their absorption and confidence in their work and their obvious belief in what they were doing commended themselves to all those who toured their exhibition.



One of the highlights of last year certainly emanated from the CPVE area where the group responded to the challenge of the Electricity Board's 'Energy Factor' competition and entered the local competition, and in fact won the East Anglia award; and to show that there are some compensations in school life, the team had provided their own luxury coach, complete with coffee service, as they drove to a top hotel in Cambridge to receive it.

Many of our staff, particularly in the Craft, Library and Computing areas, oh yes, and Physical Education; where two of our girls are having netball trials to play for England on Saturday! deserve especial thanks for their strenuous endeavours to effect improvements over the last year. Improvements, I should add, that require their giving up time when they might have been with their family, or around the television set, or whatever. I single out these, and I neglect others, equally deserving.

It's invidious of course to single out anybody where the staff I am lucky enough to have around me works so well together, and as a couple of new recruits to the staff who have had experience in other schools informed me only last week, there is an unusual spirit of co-operation and a real eagerness to help within that staff room.

I have to - I want to thank them all, each and individually, for their contribution to the last academic year. Whatever difficulties on the national scene and of course within the school from time to time, because any large community throws up its problems, it has been an invigorating year, a busy year, a successful year and a happy year. A time to keep, not to cast away. I am grateful.

### **Appendix 3**

**"What Greenfields means to me"**

## **A: Experienced Head of Subject**

Greenfield school has become a very important part of my life, being the 'situation' I've remained in for the longest period of time. It has produced my wife and therefore family (!) and has given me roots in terms of social relationships and my own development which have largely replaced or perhaps augmented ones of childhood, family and university. I feel this is not a one-way process by any means as I have been able, and encouraged, to put a lot of me back into and through the Greenfield experience.

Clearly it is a rural school and its isolation geographically works in two ways; in isolating us (staff and students) from others in a negative sense that we are inward looking but also in generating an independence and vigour of having to get on with ourselves. Location-wise and in its social structure, the school is very middle class: we do like to think of ourselves as a true comprehensive in that our clearly defined catchment area includes all social strata but I often think this is an oversimplification of reality. Again location is significant: many are stuck in small villages with nothing. Putting the lot together, students in general are well disciplined, bright, have good parental support, are keen to succeed academically, are prepared to be involved in a variety of activities laid on for them, tend to take an awful lot for granted, are narrow minded and unaware of broad issues/current affairs and readily accept 'the system'. From a teaching point of view, the key points here are the 'taking things for granted' and expecting everything laid on for them, and their ignorance of the outside world. Students respond to the approachable relationships of the majority of staff but this is within a quite formal, but hidden, structure.

Staff at Greenfield have always been young and it is a place for bright young things to show vitality and imagination in their early teaching years. They either move on quickly elsewhere for promotion, or rise up the Greenfield ladder fairly steadily. Both of these mean that the staff are not stale and resigned to the accepted; nevertheless, Greenfield does rely a lot on 'traditional' structures, practices and relationships which nearly all slip into quite easily. This may be summed up as a sort of cosiness which permeates many aspects of school life. Structure within the school offers and encourages delegation and informal communication and it is possible for any member of staff to take up initiatives. Despite our inward looking approach it is surprising how successful this has been in many areas with Greenfield staff setting examples etc for much wider groups.

The general public's view of the school is good, supported by some good publicity, but is perhaps clouded by the belief that we serve the top and bottom ends of the ability range well but don't deal so well with the middle; perhaps GCSE will do something to change this. Outside agencies also view the school as a 'good one' in performing its social/disciplinary/academic functions to good effect.

The students' views of the school are of a well organised and well ordered establishment which will do the basics of teaching them in a clearly structured way without ever really pushing them too far or really challenging them too much. The safe atmosphere may stifle some, the emphasis on examination work produces their own initiatives (or is this a typical teacher imposition?), many slip the net of involvement as they are able to do enough to get by and get away with it, social problems are usually of parental separation which may hardly (unclear handwriting): social issues are not made much of.

Overall, after 11 years, I still find it a most enjoyable and rewarding place to work in. It clearly suits my characteristics of wanting a conservative approach to change, of being willing to fit into a well defined system, of wanting and being able to explore new initiatives within that system and, perhaps fundamentally, wishing to work in a 'friendly' environment where the challenges are of my own making, not

external. I would actually suggest that I represent many key aspects or features of the stylised Greenfield teacher. What is it like outside in the real world?!

## **B: Experienced Teacher**

### **GREENFIELD SCHOOL**

Greenfield exists - but I defy anyone who's been there over ten years (or four) to come up with much more than that about it. Obviously academic reputation (shrewd use of Cantab connections) has something to do with it, so does a remarkably able, young, enterprising, committed staff (Head's shrewd staff picking, largely). It became at one stage known as a 'fur-line rut', but I have yet to experience in another place of work (heard about or attempted) anything like these crises and demanding expectations that you pull together. The senior management, who hasn't stood back in amazement at THEIR care and extraordinary principled people care - this idealistic leader surprises all of us sometimes - one feature of Greenfield for myself (I suspect also for others) is that when I wanted/want to do something or try something out, no-one stops me - initially! It doesn't matter if it's my subject department or any other initiative, you certainly get enough rope (to hang yourself?!). Careers work, the middle of the academic range, recreational, material and vocational needs: I still feel my demands can't be heard despite vociferous, largely useless? discussion - weak links causing or threatening rather a great upheaval (for the Head and the curriculum). TVEI and National Curriculum apart, Greenfield's exceptional weaknesses come, I suspect, partly from the same roots as the strengths (oddly distinctive and in some ways exceptionally enterprising and boldly innovative). Communication between a sensitive, young(ish) and highly principled staff (male majority) can be difficult and emotional support in a crisis often has perhaps necessarily to be difficult to find at times (especially when, in County/LEA meetings and support groups you always feel as if Greenfield is a mysterious 'loner' of a leader to boot, and that you're going to be asked any minute to lead another meeting). Altogether we have managed, supported by interdependence, values, luck and isolation so far to seize, mould and produce (by a marathon effort) strength and a proud schooling community from a very limited start structure. However, change is now coming and quite how much of that original creative urge it must grow beyond I am unclear at present.

Painfully, I think, I hope, 'growing up' of this kind may occur. However I may be overprotective of the Head (this had better be confidential!) but some younger staff need to be aware of growth of a radical kind as a complex progress... one or two of us have seen it all through once... it is surprising we may find it hard if people (sometimes apparently rather arrogantly) start overriding, disregarding and (probably unintentionally) superficially rejecting, some of our first generation attempts at changing a school for the better. What are you left with? Go with the flow? Resist or retreat? Leave it to another 'generation' of bright sparks? Swallow your pride in past achievements and start all over again? Hard work either way... even if luck is still in Greenfield's favour and nobody scuttles us, forces us to 'opt out', kills the curriculum by over-centralisation or causes so much moral hassle over money/TVEI/politics that 'the best' give up on it altogether, tired out.

## **C: Newly appointed Head of Subject**

### **GREENFIELD SCHOOL**

The following description is designed to give a personal reflection of the structure, organisation, order and type of students attending Greenfield School - it will hopefully highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses of the establishment.

The school has a generally young and fairly efficient staff - the advantages are that these staff (in general) devote considerable energies into making the school work and are serious about both their teaching and their career plans. Staff are happy and motivated but tend to become overworked or 'take on' too much which may be reflected by inefficiencies in certain areas of personal development of interaction with students. Because of staff devotion to work 'over and above' the name the school has an active extra curricular base - sports, drama, music, field trips etc. Staff 'turnover' is relatively rapid but there are young staff who may stay too long and either find themselves in a 'rut', somewhat disenchanted or tired to the school on occasions\* - some only have known Greenfield and therefore lack a yardstick to gauge wares elsewhere, or are waiting for young HODs to move on.

A balance of sexes on the staff and a wider age range would probably be a benefit to certain students. Older staff have a valuable, experienced role in discipline and organisation. The SMT are similarly devoted to the school, work long hours, teach over and above that which most heads or deputies do and, I believe, genuinely have the interest of development. There appears no risk of the hierarchy 'holding on' to staff who are valuable. The members of the hierarchy seem to work well together and have fairly well defined roles although distribution of workload may sometimes appear incorrect (maybe due to the hierarchy having different pressures of work at different stages of the term).

Communications between staff and hierarchy (and staff and staff) could be improved - a problem due to lack of time in the school day!

Students at Greenfield are (generally) 'well-heeled', middle class, white children. They are rather parochial, racist, somewhat spoiled and rather 'blinkered' in their approach to life. They are generally friendly and positive about school, enjoying the experience, but their social and personal development may be rather sheltered by the rural environment. The school has a good reputation in the community.

\* This may in some part be due to their being single in many cases and therefore with no 'commitments' other than school!

## **D Newly qualified teacher (post probation)**

### **WHAT GREENFIELD MEANS TO ME**

By the third week in January, the holidays having come and gone, the agreement to produce this gentle piece of personal analysis was beginning to seem like just another deadline to be met. However, the more thought I gave the question, the more complex and intangible it seemed to become. The school, in less than three years, had already become inextricably woven into not just the fabric but the pattern of my life, and this I shall try to explain, attempting to achieve on paper a clarity that is almost certainly artificial.

It was the sight of the school itself as I drove in one morning, presumably with this task in the back of my mind, that set the ideas and the descriptive words flowing. The view of the low, white buildings, with their large, unsecretive windows was the same that had met me as I arrived for 'interview'. The meaning this place now held for me was, as it were, silhouetted by the unchanged, physical backdrop. Tucked away, but not isolated, compact and functional but not without a certain pleasing style, the school's appearance reflects the accessible, independent, unimposing character of the institution.

I was 27 years old when I arrived, in need of both a time to settle my life down and a new start, teaching being my second career and Greenfield my first school. I was looking for an institution, or rather a working community, to which I could commit myself but which would not seek to mould or control me. I was fortunate. In the classroom and in the staff room at Greenfield personal style is allowed to flourish. This has been a constant source of enthusiasm and enjoyment which, together with the discovery of the unpredictable charms and energies of adolescents, has made me a younger, less cynical, yet more mature person than I was five years ago. Such wing-clipping as does go on in Greenfield is done constructively and discreetly. This is also true of any point-scoring among the staff, which must be rare amongst a group of self-confident and ambitious professional people.

It is not difficult to feel in tune with the friendly purposeful bustle of a staff room which offers intelligent conversation, practical assistance and recreational fun, all with a relaxed take it or leave it approach.

All sweetness and light then? Not a bit of it. For the staff, even more than for the pupils, Greenfield means hard work: long marking sessions at weekends, evenings with textbooks spread out on the carpet and pencil-ends thoroughly chewed, earnest discussions in after-school meetings, endless report-writing and, last but not least, a daily routine that seldom lets up. The result is a sometimes confusing mixture of annoying trivia and interesting incident, of steady drudgery and spontaneous reward. This in turn gives rise to a sense of involvement twinned to a sense of frustration. Too many lessons become merely workmanlike; grand schemes, work-related and otherwise, are set aside; time for reflection is at a premium; personal leisure interests are pursued at the price of feeling guilty, even reading for scholarship and enjoyment is curtailed.

Furthermore, a sense of fulfilment is difficult to maintain. Too often it is undermined by the more negative aspects of British youth culture (though at these moments I think of teachers in troubled inner cities etc. and count my blessings). This and tiredness breeds resentment at low social status and a feeling of being taken for granted by pupils and even the senior school staff. A pat on the back once a year at Speech Night can seem small compensation when attempts to improve conditions of work or lighten the burden are treated with mistrust and/or a 'don't let's rock the boat' attitude.

Occasionally, too, when I consider the number of 'could-do-better' reports that I write, and the compromises I make, the public face of Greenfield can seem somewhat complacent. The yearly calendar meeting comes disappointingly close to being merely a diary-filling exercise, the underlying assumption being that a successful formula has been found and should be adhered to. In recent weeks problems in the pastoral arrangements have been widely discussed and improvements are likely to result, and Greenfield has made great efforts to embrace new courses, but perhaps more self-doubt, self-criticism and even a readiness to encourage argument are needed to make this open-mindedness really productive and meaningful.

If mention of the pupils seems curiously absent from this account, it is because relationships with them, as groups of individuals - working relationships and relationships of trust, affection and mutual respect - are so nebulous and varied as to defy categorisation. Being at Greenfield has revealed to me the paradox of the occidental generation gap, which is that a major part of the motive force in our society is that its young people must to some degree confront, ridicule and reject the wisdom that experience and hindsight has given their elders. Education, in its widest terms, has its limits both on a shield against social evils and as an instrument of progress. When I have left Greenfield then what its pupils have taught me and what 'they' mean to me will, I feel, become clearer. Certainly I am a far more affectionate, patient and giving person than I was. I also understand far more about how lives fail and about my own failures.

I am now planning to leave Greenfields soon. During my time there I have married, lived in my own house for the first time, spent more than two years in the same place for the first time, and re-learnt the joys of family life and of living in England, with a renewed interest in its politics, sport and culture. I left school, University and the Services without a backward glance, but to leave Greenfield will be a wrench.

So why leave? Essentially, Greenfield is too busy an environment in which to find wisdom or to fully develop creative talents, too well-run and stable to find challenges for leadership qualities and too small a world to find high adventure. Whichever of these holy grails I happen to end up seeking, I feel, as I hope many of the 13-18 year old pupils feel, that my time there has prepared me well for the task.



## **F. Experienced former 'House Leader' (left school in 1985)**

### **WHAT GREENFIELD MEANS TO ME**

What Greenfield means to me: warmth, vitality, care and compassion - or are these rosy images remembered in the post-prandial afterglow of Christmas excess? I find, as I write spontaneously, a number of difficulties, some of which I shall begin by outlining ( and, as you say, contextualising - surely an Americanism of a word if I ever saw one!)

Shall I write of what Greenfield means to me now or what it meant to me as a member of staff? Shall I write of my impressions of Greenfield as an institution, as an affector of pupils or of staff, or from a personal point of view with respect to my own development? Perhaps I shall touch upon all of these, and maybe upon others besides - so here goes!

From the distance of nearly two years, Greenfield is seen as a hazy image most of the time, sometimes brought into sharper focus by comparison with my present school. I did find a throbbing vitality there - both pupils and staff tended on the whole (and perhaps more than many institutions are alleged to do) to work very hard in much the same direction and with a very positive and mutually supportive attitude. There were criticisms about direction at times, but it would be surprising if it had not been so with a collection of fairly independent-minded people. Academically the school was seen to be successful - at the end of the ability range which is usually publicised or inspected. I am not convinced, however, that we did all that was possible or desirable for all of our pupils (though I believe that staff did all they could within the curriculum - in its widest sense - available). I need not expand upon the examination successes - the pass rates, the Oxbridge entrances, etc - these are well documented and speak for themselves. What concerned me (increasingly) was the curriculum balance offered to all pupils (or should I say the potential for curriculum imbalance?) By the time I left I felt that progress was being made on this front, but the greatest obstacle to such progress was the Head himself.

I see him now (and indeed did so then) as the arch-typical traditionalist who was a shrewd manipulator of image in a middle-class (white) society. Indeed I would suggest that he was too involved in image, in drama (and music), to the extent that certain strategic issues (eg racism, sex/moral education, commonality of curriculum experience and potential, co-ordinated management) were often put to one side. Such issues, when they were addressed at all, were addressed by others in a rather piecemeal manner, somewhat unconnected from a whole school perspective.

In this respect the management of the school was dependent upon the often outstanding support given by senior or middle management staff. You may gather (or have already known) that I am a believer in team management, where the person at the top of the team is very much a part of the team and not apart from it. I feel (increasingly so on reflection) that Greenfield followed the latter model too often - perhaps this was not the case.

I had, and still have, great respect for the Senior Management Team (or the "Gang of Four" as they were named) and also for the House Management Group (as I call it) - both groups were, I feel, well-respected among the staff as a whole. However, it seemed rather incongruous that a school which publicly and rightly proclaimed academic success should give such little voice to its academic heads - the only times I recollect that Heads of Faculty met were at the annual discussion of 4th Year Options - and this was by voluntary attendance and open to all.

Here again I would be critical of the management strategy, though not of all of the managers themselves. I observed successful attempts at line-management in the House System, but I am not convinced of its effectiveness on the academic side. For example did the Humanities Faculty meet? Was the Design Faculty co-ordinated in its understanding of each other's contributions? Was the Science Faculty managed? Where did PE or Expressive Arts fit into all of this? The criticism implied points to a lack of coherence in management strategy.

The House System was a raging success (is this an impartial comment?) on most fronts - the relationships developed between pupils, between staff and between pupils and staff often endured the test of time. I will never cease to be amazed at what pupils can achieve given the opportunity, the framework and the encouragement to take responsibility. I would have liked to have seen other opportunities offered - it seems to me that the community at large became the poor relations in time (especially when you consider the potential that the school as a resource has for them). I am convinced that "Community Projects" for each House would have found a worthwhile niche - but is this an example of lack of imagination, a lack of planning, or a recognition that the "boat was in danger of becoming swamped"?

The phrase "poor relations" immediately brings to mind the overt and the covert aspects of the curriculum. One would always say of Greenfield that the ethos was splendid, almost tangibly good - but why was there such a high incidence of graffiti, of petty vandalism, of fights, of bullying, of school-phobia, etc? This question is raised in stark contrast to my present school. It is situated in an old working class area on the edge of Dudley. Our pupils are certainly noisy (and there's a story to explain that) and apparently rude, lacking in certain social niceties often associated with middle class communities. However, we have practically no vandalism, graffiti, fights, bullying or school phobia to speak of. Over the four terms I have been here the incidents have totalled 2,3,3,2,1 respectively. The school is as spotless as you could realistically hope for (in a badly designed building), the corridors and classrooms are filled with display work - and all of it is unmarked!

In summary what have I said? I certainly have very fond memories of staff, pupils and experiences - let not my criticisms cloud my memories. The school was well respected by staff, pupils, parents and the community for its academic standards (at the top end of the ability range especially), for its music and drama (for a minority of pupils), and for its caring atmosphere (for all pupils). In this last statement I identify some of its shortcomings - it was not all things to all pupils, and did not try hard enough to be so. Here I would lay the responsibility firmly at the Head's feet as a manager. There is a danger that whilst staff care for all pupils, all pupils may not have access to the same range of opportunities. One might ask was the quality of the curriculum/academic experience the same for all? Was there the same opportunity for drama or music for all? I feel that the school focused its attention on its various elites at the expense of a coherent and comprehensive policy of education for all. In this I would not advocate equallness for all, but equality of opportunity, which I must say I did not perceive to be adequate at Greenfield. Nor indeed did I perceive a co-ordinated approach to certain issues: rather a hope that they might be addressed, and as a consequence when they were it tended to be in a rather piecemeal fashion (SKIT was a prime example).

I wrote these thoughts down the day I received your letter and have hardly altered a word in the typing of them. However, I feel it necessary to add a few words on reflection. The staff were as professional a group of people one could ever hope to work with; the atmosphere they created was truly superb - warm, positive, and very industrious. The support given by staff to the school was matched by the intense feelings of loyalty shown by pupils to both school and House - and this was often

evident at evening functions with former pupils of all sorts in the audience still exhibiting their loyalties. Here the Head's ability as a visionary was demonstrated clearly, and he deserves enormous credit for changing a school in the way that he did (through staff selection as much as anything else). Certainly if I were ever in the position of running my own school I would aim for many of the things which Greenfield achieved - and indeed I have introduced many ideas here which originated in Kingsford. Certainly the experience I gained there has made adapting to my new role here as painless as I might ever have hoped, and for that I am truly grateful.

## G. Recently Appointed Head of Subject

### Impressions of Greenfields

There are many detailed aspects of GS which I find a lot less than satisfactory and a highly suspect general 'philosophy' which is such that if I were asked whether I would send my children to the school I would unquestionably answer "No".

The following points are not in ranking order.

1. I find that **the school is excessively male dominated** and there is little apparent opportunity for that domination to be questioned. The staff is grossly male dominated and, although the relative male/female pupil numbers may be balanced equally, it is distressing to see so many girls endlessly pushed to one side by the boys, especially the thuggish element. I suspect that I detect an implicit acceptance and approval of this state of affairs by many staff (including management). The coarse and crass attitude demonstrated towards the girls by the boys, is in its own way, just as reprehensible as the 'racist' problem, yet it would appear to receive even less attention or concern. The girls are, unless remarkably self-confident, treated like lumps of meat with only one useful purpose. The school's inability or unwillingness to deal with this male attitude makes the school appear, to my eyes, as fraudulent.
2. The school seems to believe it is a reincarnation of the grammar school ethos of the 1950s. In particular, management is so preoccupied with the school's public image that it is effectively ham-strung in its ability to deal with unacceptable behaviour by the pupils. I sometimes think that there is no imposed standard of discipline within the school. We get by on the hope and assumption that the pupils will behave acceptably. When they don't, the House system is highly ineffective in dealing with problems, especially if the 'problem' is more than one pupil in the class and therefore needs multiple Heads of House to act in concert. Whereas Scale I or II teachers may be strongly supported and backed up by their Departmental Heads, there seems to be a gaping void lying behind the Departmental Heads, a fact which is perceived by the pupils. Specifically, the Deputy Heads and indeed the Head himself are not seen as part of the discipline structure of the school. I have yet to be in a school where the Head actually uses some of his extensive free time to monitor and/or act upon unacceptable behaviour around the school - GS is no exception.
3. I find the atmosphere of GS to be less than honest. I happily acknowledge that I have never met a staff so intelligent, skilful or hard-working, yet I also wonder why the staff are so unwilling to speak up for their own beliefs and opinions. The overbearing personality of the Head (with his intimations of moral blackmail) is not conducive to happy staff/management relations, and I find that my recent elevation to the post of Union Representative (in conjunction with my unwillingness to keep quiet) is placing me very much out on a limb especially when it comes to Staff Meetings. I don't particularly care about being isolated, **but why does everybody else shrink back from potentially fruitful discussion?** By comparison, my previous school in Eltham was a non-stop battle between staff and management with continual accusation, counter-accusation and unmitigated hatred (but then it was also the time of the most intensive teachers' pay-dispute action). In Hackney, however, there was a remarkably free and open atmosphere with no 'playing for time'

or 'confusing the issue by appealing to staff's better nature' etc., - techniques which are used quite frequently by GS management.

There are many creditable and fine aspects of GS and the education it offers. The problems and failings are, in my opinion, just as great and are not reduced by being swept under the carpet or dismissed as irrelevant.

**Appendix 4**  
**County Statement on Racial Harassment**

THIS ISSUE WILL BE THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT STAFF MEETING

## STATEMENT ON RACIAL HARASSMENT

### INTRODUCTION

In October 1985, the Education Committee considered a report on current provision for ethnic minority children and on the then recently published report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups: The Swann Report

Attention was drawn in that report to the dual approach which the education service was urged to take by the Swann Committee of Enquiry; firstly to ensure that the needs of ethnic minority children were fully met by providing language support, an appropriate curriculum, and developing home school links; secondly to combat racism and prejudice by attacking inherited myths and stereotypes, countering racist attitudes amongst pupils, and providing a curriculum which prepares all children for life in a multiracial, multicultural society. This dual approach gave the report its title 'Education for All'.

After consideration of this report, the Education Committee resolved 'That the general principles in the Swann report be commended to schools and colleges as a basis for examination of their curricula in respect of multicultural education'. In January 1986, the County Education Officer sent a copy of the summary of the Swann report prepared by the Runnymede Trust to all schools and colleges asking them to consider the implications of the report. Many schools and colleges in have considered the report and have begun to implement curricular changes in line with the report's recommendations.

### Racial Incidents in Schools

The Swann report recognised that racism plays a part in the experience of ethnic minority children in school and that racist attitudes are not uncommon amongst school pupils. Indeed the Swann Committee's investigations led them to the conclusion that the impact of such racist behaviour is much greater on ethnic minority pupils in schools where they are present in relatively small numbers (as is the case in many schools) and thus less able to be mutually supportive. In recognising that in , as elsewhere, there will be racist attitudes and racist incidents in schools, the Committee wish to offer clear guidelines to schools and colleges on responding to such behaviour.

The Committee support the recommendations of the Swann report that the best way of countering prejudiced attitudes and racist behaviour is to develop a school ethos and curriculum that actively encourage positive attitudes to racial and cultural differences. The Committee will continue to carry out their duties under the 1976 Race Relations Act "to promote equal opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups". Accordingly teachers should ensure that they carry out positively the Committee's commitment to good race relations. In this respect the Committee have already commended the Swann report to schools and have asked schools to consider their response.

The Committee recognise that despite the changes recommended in the Swann report in the curriculum and school ethos, racist incidents may occur. In this event it is important that schools and colleges respond in a firm and consistent way.

The Committee wish to ensure:

1. That school and college staff, both teaching and non-teaching know how to identify racist behaviour.
2. That schools and colleges review their disciplinary structures for pupils and students, to ensure that firm and consistent procedures are followed in responding to incidents of such behaviour.
3. That a record is kept of such incidents and of the school's and college's response to enable both them and the Committee to monitor the occurrence of such behaviour.

#### Identification

Racist behaviour can be defined as any act or expression intended to harm or cause offence, directed by a member of one racial group to others where the motivation includes racial dislike or hatred.

Such behaviour can take many forms. The following are examples of unacceptable racist behaviour.

1. Threatened or actual physical assault.
2. Verbal abuse.
3. Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend others, or to influence the behaviour of others.
4. Racist graffiti (on school furniture, walls or books).
5. Distributing racist literature.
6. Wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known racist organisations.

#### Response

Individual schools and colleges will have a variety of different ways of dealing with disciplinary matters. The Committee wish to ensure that within this framework the following aims are met:

1. That it is made clear within the general ethos of the school or college, for example, by inclusion in the stated pastoral curriculum, active tutorial work, or through stories in primary school assemblies, that racist behaviour is unacceptable.
2. That should such an incident arise those responsible will be dealt with so appropriately, so that (i) the school's or college's opposition to such behaviour is made clear (ii) the reasons for the school's or college's objections to such behaviour are explained (iii) steps are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that such behaviour is not repeated, and that parents of offenders are informed of the school's or college's policy not to tolerate such behaviour.
3. That the victim of the incident should be supported.



4. That the nature and response to the incident is made known to other staff through agreed channels and that the possible impact of the incident on the school or college community is considered and responded to.

#### Recording

To assist schools and colleges and the Committee in monitoring and dealing with such incidents in an appropriate way it is important that records are kept of racist behaviour and the school's or colleges' response.

Schools and colleges are asked to keep a record of incidents of racist behaviour. The record should include a brief description of the incident and of the school's or college's response. Such information will be collected in aggregated form by the Committee from time to time to assist in the monitoring process.

#### Conclusion

The Committee recommend that, as part of schools' or colleges' continuing development of responses to the Swann report, the issue of racial harassment is discussed by teaching staff, non-teaching staff and school and college governors to ensure that the aims and objectives of this paper are met.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Discussion on the County Document on Racial Harassment**

## Policy Statement on Racial Harassment

### Greenfields' Staff Discussion

This document was discussed in an open meeting by a cross-section of Greenfields' staff, 4.00-5.15 pm on Tuesday 3 May 1988.

#### A. Reaction to the Document

1. It was agreed that the document does set out issues which are of legitimate concern to all schools, including Greenfields. All those present at the meeting could cite incidents - of graffiti, verbal expression, reacting to classroom learning materials - which were cause for concern.
2. It was acknowledged that GS does not have a "policy" for dealing with such incidents. Nor does the school record such incidents.
3. Although some teachers noted that they sometimes felt the need for a clear direction on how to deal with incidents it was also acknowledged that there are many complexities involved that a disciplinary code, for example, could not adequately address. For instance, although it is absolutely necessary for teachers to correct language that denigrates (sic) or prejudices members of a "racial group", the best way to deal with it is not necessarily according to a "firm and consistent" disciplinary structure.
4. The document seems combative, negative in tone and, in the context of the whole school life, rather narrow. Prejudice, although undesirable, is part of being human. Understanding prejudice, acknowledging one's own feelings and altering one's own behaviour is part of learning - about oneself and the wider world. Pupils may learn better if they are supported in this learning process, rather than solely attacked or disciplined. Furthermore, the issue of "race" is but one focus for prejudice; whilst it has certain unique characteristics it would be wrong, even counter productive, to single out this issue. Other foci of prejudice that were mentioned at the meeting include: gender, disability, clan, rich and poor.

#### B. The Greenfields' Prejudice Working Group

5. This is well documented in the form of minutes and various discussion papers. It involves a core group of around 12 teachers.
6. In a nutshell, the staff involved feel deeply that there is a need, at Greenfields, to find a way to teach more effectively for prejudice reduction amongst all those attending the school. Teachers in a number of curriculum areas deal with topics which explicitly attempt to address this aim (notably, English, RE, History, Geography) though not always with a high level of success.
7. The group has aimed to understand better the variety of teaching approaches adopted by staff in different departments. This has involved, for example, teachers observing and evaluating each others' classes, a rewarding activity for all those who take part.
8. The group is approaching the end of its "data collection" stage.

9. We have a policy in preparation - for the 'A' year brochure.

C. Some Recommendations

9. The meeting rejected the idea of permanently monitoring incidents of racist expression. It was felt, however, that occasionally (maybe once during the year) all staff should engage in a week long monitory exercise (not necessarily during the same week). Perhaps the main benefit of this approach would be that the exercise would have more meaning to individual teachers.
10. There is an urgent need for an INSET day based upon issues of equality (of which "race" is one). Half the day to be spent in the Faculty (a curriculum perspective) and a half day in-House (a pastoral perspective); it is important to examine the topic through the eyes of the tutor and the subject teacher.
11. It is the responsibility of individual teachers to respond to incidents - and to devise and teach their pupils in the manner that they judge to be most appropriate. There are many, and possibly conflicting aims involved here, and it may be helpful in the longer term to establish a broadly agreed equal opportunities position which will be clear to all partners, including parents and pupils.

Signed - May 1988

**Appendix 6**  
**Greenfields School Policy Statements**

**A. Policy Paper for Discussion: presented to the Working Group  
June 88**

**EDUCATION THROUGH EDUCATION:  
A Policy Statement**

1. This school believes that all people are equal, irrespective of race, sex, religion, sexuality, class or disability. Discrimination against individuals or groups on grounds such as these is unjust and unacceptable.
2. This school also believes that education is, by its nature, opposed to prejudice and discrimination. Good education creates a habit of independent thought and evaluation, and a respect for the rights and identity of others.
3. Greenfields School will therefore ensure that all aspects of learning are equally available to all students, within the curriculum and outside it.
4. In addition, staff should:
  1. reflect the diversity of our society in their teaching, resources and the curriculum.
  2. avoid stereotyped images.
  3. promote understanding, tolerance and positive attitudes towards the beliefs, customs and cultures of others.
  4. present the content of their subject teaching in a factual and unbiased way, avoiding excessive concentration on the views and achievements of one particular culture or society.
  5. develop pupils' ability to recognise, question and oppose bias, prejudice, discrimination and injustice in all their forms, including institutional prejudice.
  6. help students to acquire the skills to mix freely in any social situation in which they may find themselves.
  7. personally avoid prejudiced language and behaviour, and should discourage its use at all times.

Education for equality must be fully integrated into the curriculum.

5. Pupils must not:
  1. indulge in displays of prejudiced attitudes, particularly where these attitudes concern people of different race, sex, religion, sexuality, class, or people who have a physical or mental disability.
  2. indulge in jokes which reinforce such attitudes and stereotypes.
  3. display prejudiced graffiti, badges or insignia.
  4. bring into school or distribute any propaganda or other prejudiced literature.
  5. tease, abuse, or harass other pupils on grounds of race, etc.

6. Disciplinary procedures will be established to deal with these types of behaviour.
7. Following HCC guidelines, a written record will be kept of incidents of racist behaviour, and of the school's response.
8. The progress of the implementation of this policy statement will also be monitored within the school.
9. All members of the school community are expected to adhere to the requirements of this policy statement, and the school requests parents and the local community to support it.

**B. Second Draft of policy**  
**(After consultation with staff and governors, dated July 1988)**

**EQUALITY THROUGH EDUCATION:**

**A Policy Statement**

1. This school believes that all people are equal, irrespective of race, sex, religion, sexuality, class or disability. Discrimination against individuals or groups on grounds such as these is unjust and unacceptable.
2. Greenfields School will therefore ensure that all students will be given equal opportunity to develop their abilities and interests throughout all aspects of the school's life.
3. This school also believes that education is, by its nature, opposed to prejudice and discrimination. Good education creates a habit of independent thought and evaluation, and a respect for the rights and identity of others.
4. Following on from this premise, staff:
  - a) should reflect the diversity of our society in their teaching, resources and curriculum.
  - b) should avoid stereotyped images.
  - c) should promote understanding, tolerance and positive attitudes towards the beliefs, customs and cultures of others.
  - d) should present the content of their subject teaching in a factual and unbiased way, avoiding excessive concentration on the views and achievements of one particular culture or society.
  - e) should develop pupils' ability to recognise, question and oppose bias, prejudice, discrimination and injustice in all their forms, including institutional prejudice.
  - f) should help students to acquire the skills to mix freely in any social situation in which they may find themselves.
  - g) must personally avoid prejudiced language and behaviour, and, at all times, discourage its use.

Equality through education must be fully integrated into the curriculum.

5. Pupils must not:
  - a) indulge in displays of prejudiced attitudes, particularly where these attitudes concern people of different race, sex, religion, sexuality, class, or people who have a physical or mental disability.
  - b) indulge in jokes which reinforce such attitudes and stereotypes.
  - c) display prejudiced graffiti, badges or insignia.
  - d) bring into school or distribute any propaganda or other prejudiced literature.



- e) tease, abuse or harass other pupils on grounds of race etc.
- 6. Disciplinary guidelines and procedures will be established to deal with these types of behaviour.
- 7. Following HCC guidelines, a written record will be kept of incidents of racist behaviour, the school's response and parental involvement.
- 8. The progress of the implementation of this policy will also be monitored within the school.
- 9. All members of the school community are expected to adhere to the requirements of this policy statement, and the school requests parents and the local community to support it.

**C. The 1995 Re-draft of 'Equality through Education'**

**RE-DRAFT**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

**GREENFIELDS SCHOOL : EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

Greenfields believes that all within the school deserve to be treated equally and seriously. It recognises the differences in perception and being that are generated by issues of gender, religion and race, and enjoys the diversity of experience that such distinctions allow. It accepts that every human being has a right to his or her own views, but that that same human being has a need to understand the constraints, the opportunities and the culture of the society in which he or she finds himself or herself. Naturally, it will be the intention of all those in authority within the school to release and fulfil the potential of all those educated at or involved in the life of Greenfields.

## **Appendix 7**

### **Briefing Note to the staff at Greenfields School**

## Investigating Prejudice in an "All-White" School

(Dated September 1987; from David Lambert to the Prejudice Working Group)

- "Prejudice":
- (1) an opinion formed beforehand, especially an unfavourable one based on inadequate facts.
  - (2) the act or condition of holding such opinions.
  - (3) intolerance of or dislike for people of a specific, race, religion etc.

(The New Collins Concise English Dictionary, 1984)

- "Prejudice":
- (1) bias, preconceived notion, pre-judgement, warp.
  - (2) intolerance, narrow mindedness, bigotry.

(The New Collins Thesaurus, 1984)

The "All-White" school is a phenomenon which would be difficult to define with precision. It is better, as a term, than "mono-cultural" which is even more an oversimplification. Such schools exist in environments which exhibit a large degree of ethnic homogeneity and were recognised in the Swann Report as often being slow in recognising the need to address questions of equality.

This research project has grown out of a school-wide action research project - of the same name - aimed at enhancing the understanding amongst teachers of the nature of prejudice amongst children at Greenfields.

The Project has the support of the LEA, has involved awareness raising workshops (at the behest of the Multi-Cultural Adviser) and will continue, over at least a period of eighteen months, in classroom observation, interviews with children and the development of classroom materials, faculty policies and possibly whole school policies. Although initially concerned with Prejudice in all its forms, the project has become focused, understandably, on racism in particular. The overall aim is to be able to create a "product" of some kind that will help teachers reduce prejudiced responses in the teaching and learning environment, as well as outside of the classroom.

To quote from the initial discussion document:

".....we feel that the way in must be to develop activities that increase amongst students an awareness of their own feelings, which draw upon their own common-sense knowledge, meanings and understandings, and which create a positive working environment in which new meanings and understandings are possible."

This present research project seeks to develop considerably from this practical and perhaps short-term basis. The Greenfields' work, with its need to produce practical outcomes in terms of teaching strategies, for example, actually begs a number of questions. How do children attempt to relate their common sense knowledge (or received wisdom?) to the intellectual experience in classrooms? Are teachers aware

of their students' social and psychological settings and to what extent do these dimensions impinge on the predominantly intellectual activity of most classrooms?

A model has been expressed which may summarise the tension implicit in these questions:

Before the Course the Course	During the Course	After
"Being" (B)	B'	B"
"Experience" (E)	E'	E"

From: 'A Model of the Experiential View of Course Learning' in L Dee Fink, 1977, *Listening to the Learner* : an exploratory study of personal meaning in college geography courses", University of Chicago, Department of Geography, Research Paper no. 184. "This model suggests that there is an inner self, the condition of which is here referred to as "Being". The character of a person's being influences and is influenced by his experiences." (D Fink p10). The author of this model also expressed a personal value belief "which is that any learning experience ought to be related to other experiences in a student's life in such a way that it contributes to growth and development. Growth and development can be defined ..... as increase in the capacity to differentiate and integrate one's experiences". (L Dee Fink, 1977, p11) Dee Fink's interest was the student evaluation of college Geography courses, and in particular fieldwork components thereof. For the present author, Dee Fink's work seems to have identified a way in to our investigation of how children react to classroom experiences; in the sense that - as is now widely acknowledged - much classroom information and activity remains "inert" unless it involves and engages students. The feeling is that there may be highly significant discrepancies between what students feel they have experienced and what their teachers believe they have provided. The origins of these discrepancies could be found after an investigation of the nature of the broader teaching and learning contexts (the social, psychological and intellectual dimensions of the processes, relating to Dee Fink's model). This will be attempted through focussing on the children themselves and seeking out their perceptions of learning experiences in the classroom, through interviews.

To focus entirely on children would be quite inadequate and it seems that certain identified lesson sequences will need to be observed by the researcher, and teachers too will be subject to extended interview. By relating qualitative evidence collected from these three major sources, the researcher hopes to be able to gain insight into the complex world depicted by Dee Fink's model. It is though that the study will have to be longitudinal in the sense that the students interviewed should be revisited on possibly three occasions over a period of at least two years. Only in this way will a study of growth and development be possible.

## **Appendix 8**

### **Pupil Interviews**

## **Appendix 8a : Interview 'Crib Sheet'**

### **INTERVIEWS : STUDENTS**

#### **SCHOOL**

- \* If a person, your age, arrived new to the school how would you describe it to him or her?
- \* What are your feelings about school so far? (this school, previous school)
- \* Describe what you think a good school ought to be like. Why? Is this a good school?
- \* In what ways do you hope this school will be good for you? What do you hope to achieve?
- \* What do you like least about this school? Why?
- \* How important are grades or marks to you? to the school?

#### **TEACHERS**

- \* How would you describe a good teacher? Why?
- \* What don't you like about teachers?
- \* What is your favourite subject? Why?
- \* If you could tell a group of teachers what you thought was the best way to teach, what would you tell them?
- \* Are teachers usually right?
- \* How well do you think your teachers know you?

#### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

- \* What really good classroom activities can you tell me about? Why were they good?
- \* What kinds of lessons do you feel you really learn most from?
- \* Ditto least from?
- \* What kinds of lessons are the hardest/most tiring? Why?

#### **OWN EXPERIENCE**

- \* Do you think school/lessons are relevant to your life outside school, to everyday like? Why? What?
- \* What about homework? Is it relevant? Is it useful to you? Do you like it?
- \* Are you ever asked about your own opinion on things in lessons? What? When?
- \* Do you feel that your opinions "count" in lessons?
- \* If a new person - say from London - came to live in Kingsford, or your village, how would you describe the place to them?
- \* What kind of person, or family, do you think would like to live in Kingsford?

## ASPIRATIONS

- \* Where will you be/what will you be doing when you are 16 years old?
- \* Ditto 18 years old?
- \* When you leave school, will you also start thinking about leaving home?
- \* Do you think you would have to think very carefully about where to live? Why?  
Where would you like to end up living? (no holds barred)  
Where would you definitely not want to live? Why?
- \* Are you ambitious to "get on"? What do you think "getting on" depends upon most? What reasons explain why some people "get on" with more success than others?

## HUMAN DIVERSITY

- \* Do you learn about different people in your lessons? What? Which?
- \* How many different groups of people can you think of? Name them  
.....Describe them.
- \* Do you think it is helpful to divide people (the people of the country, the world ...) into groups? Why?
- \* Do you think in terms of different kinds of group? (rich/poor, clever/stupid, polite/impolite, lazy/hard-working, etc.) Do you think that this is harmful in any way?



## **Appendix 8b: Memo to Working Group and Tutors**

### **Selecting Student Subjects**

I am concentrating my research efforts on listening, and attempting to interpret, what students say. My aim is to engage a number of students in conversation (individually) at intervals over a quite protracted period (three years). These conversations will be wide-ranging, but I shall endeavour to "keep my eye on the ball" and not lose sight of my primary purpose: namely to gather information on how children acquire and develop their attitudes (principally toward people and the diversity within and between societies). I am working from the notion that attitudes arise, at least in part, from deeply held values and that the two are closely linked. I hope to be able to gain a greater understanding, through this research, of:

- \* the nature of this link
- \* the sources of acquired values and
- \* the relative impact of children's schooling on these processes.

I need to be able to select a number of student subjects. Their parents will be consulted from the very beginning. Total confidentiality, of course, will be observed; any information that may arise from these conversations, for example in a research report, will not be identifiable to a specific source.

In the first instance, I would like about a dozen names, 6 boys and 6 girls. From this list I shall try to identify six (3 girls and 3 boys) who will become my student subjects. The remainder I shall keep as reserve in case some of the chosen ones drop out for any reason. It is possible that the chosen six will be self-selecting - after they hear more about what it involves for them, when I have contacted parents and when they have met me! (It is essential that they feel at ease with me.)

Criteria for selecting the 12:

1. I would like, if possible, at least one from each A-year group.
2. If possible, two from AF, two from AM and two from the penultimate group (AG?).
3. Each person should be articulate and willing to talk.
4. Each person should be personable and self disclosing.

These are very wide criteria. Try to avoid selecting people on "academic" grounds. Asking for volunteers is fine; a student has to want to do this, or at least not be pushed into doing it against his or her will.

What to tell the students:

1. Please do not tell students that it is "about racism". It is much more complicated than this and this kind of shorthand can lead to all sorts of misconceptions.
2. It is about discussing with me what they are getting out of school, what they are learning, how they feel about homework, different subjects etc. and also their thoughts about the "world outside", their interests, their ambitions etc.. Tell them that I *could* find out about the school by talking to teachers but I do not want to do that; I specifically want to listen to them.
3. It will probably entail one meeting, on average, every half term. This would take place in the lunchtime or after school, in which case I would run them home if need be. Each meeting would be 40 minutes absolute maximum, though usually shorter than this.

## **Appendix 9**

### **The Institute Experiment**

# Sharing Our Sense of the World

*David Lambert and Frances Slater*

## Origins

"When I come to think of prejudice, I always think in terms of Malcolm Jones's paper, which I think you know." This is how one of our colleagues opened a discussion on prejudice. In arranging conversations about prejudice with small groups of colleagues and students we also had Jones's (1987) paper in mind. As well as mapping out a meaning of prejudice, Jones in his paper moved to the position that:

once the universality of prejudice is accepted we can hold a conversation between members of different cultures based on the idea that we are all emotionally tied to culturally-vouched-for prejudgments some of the most crucial (to our world views) of which we cannot (as a matter of contingent fact) show to be true. The aim of such a conversation would be that the participants should work towards understanding one another as emotionally committed members of various forms of life, together with some understanding of what each is committed to, what each sees as important social issues, how crucial the importance is and why (pp. 50–51).

From advocating the holding of conversations Jones went on to suggest that school is the place where people should be given the understanding and skills necessary for participation in such talk, and so he put forward the notion of education for conversation.

It seemed that in trying to understand and further unpack the meaning of prejudice that our own research and education could be further advanced by holding seminars with small groups of people. This would be part of a preparation for dealing more ably with conversations about prejudice with students and school children.

## Conversations and Eavesdropping

We organized talks with small groups of colleagues (2–3 people) and some of our students, with the minimum of imposed structure. The talks were taped. Although it was tempting to provide evidence of prejudice, or examples that could be discussed, we opted for a more abstract way into conversation.

In effect we had devised an experiment from which we hoped would emerge data about what is perhaps the underestimated complexity of this condition called prejudice. Conversations were held in the same location, invitations and context were of a similar nature for all participants, and the same person convened each conversation. But conversations were allowed to develop naturally.

The intention was for all participants to do the talking with the least intervention or guidance (conscious or unconscious) provided by the convener. In the case of the two student conversations this intention was taken to its logical conclusion, the convener withdrawing completely after about 4–5 minutes. In these cases the research worker–convener had almost no impact on the outcomes, no responsibility to keep the conversation going, and no chance to steer the thinking of participants. We might refer to our use of the student conversations as semi-structured eavesdropping in contrast to the participant conversations that yielded the greater part of our data. In all cases, conversations lasted between forty minutes and one hour.

## Conversation Maps and Emergent Categories

The dilemma faced in analyzing these kinds of data is the tension between not wishing to lose the richness and texture of the spoken word and the need to categorize, which carries the risk of being reductive.

Our approach, therefore, contained two essential components. First, each conversation was mapped. This technique provided the means to assign categories (what is being expressed here?) and the means to identify links in conversations. In listening to the conversations one becomes aware of overarching or "generic" classes: namely, talk about concepts and talk about processes.

For the purposes of this working paper we assigned five general categories to describe what was going on in the conversations:

- Descriptions of prejudice
- Reasons given for prejudice
- Effects and manifestations of prejudice
- Solutions and their difficulties
- Distinctions in types of prejudice

Two of these groupings, "Descriptions of Prejudice" and "Solutions and Their Difficulties," were selected for reporting here and the sub-categories contained within them are illustrated by quotation.

But let's go back to the beginning and listen to part of a conversation. In the early stages of the conversation "G" has begun to explore an important distinction, namely, that between prejudice (more an "attitudinal thing") and discrimination (a "behavioral thing").

G. . . . In this day and age there is a lot of prejudice around but not so much discrimination because of legislation.

Convener. They are distinctive?

G. Yes, they're very different. But they are related. There has always been an interesting relation from a research point of view. Prejudice is more attitudinal and it depends on notions of what is called a reasonable view—and that includes values and beliefs, attitudes—mainly in relation to other people, or other social groups—blacks or Jews or those with mental disability or whatever, or the very wealthy.

F. Prejudice depends for its existence on a category typing, doesn't it? Prejudice is literally prejudging. You prejudge something or somebody and that's usually on the basis of their belonging to a particular category.

Convener. Yes, I follow that. Is there also a distinction between prejudging and prejudice?

F. Prejudgment assumes a sort of conscious debate. I think prejudice actually comes into being in a variety of ways; some of it is conscious in that some people think about—deliberately think about—their attitudes to certain social groupings, people within certain categories. It is also acquired, in another sense, in a much more diffuse mechanism. . . .

Convener. What, prejudice?

F. Yes, and it is not necessarily there at a direct level of reflection. It arrives as common sense.

G. Yes, and I would go further. I would say it is inherent in our condition and never to be eradicated in any ultimate sense, because it is to do with partly a social developmental but also personal developmental, to do with how you deal with people, how you think about people. It arises very much from treating people as homogeneous members of a group, so all blacks are the same, all rich people are the same. It comes from that way of making sense of indi-

viduals. It's very much a crude sociology, a folk sociology. Uhm . . . trying to make sense of people—I say you've got to use categories.

Convener. Is there a divergence between the emotional and cognitive? There seems to be a sense where people have to have prejudice or else they'd go berserk . . .

G. No, no. People do not have to have prejudice. The risk of prejudice, the potential for prejudice, is inherent in the way people make sense of the social world and of their personal relationships. So, I can have a prejudice against my family, for example. But this is not the same as racial prejudice. It is a different type of relationship. I might have a peculiar view of my brother and his occupation, which might be a prejudice. And this may be quite different from my views of Catholics or of those with mental illness.

F. The way in which the individual enters into that very much depends upon the nature of category systems of the social world in which they're living. You were inferring earlier that the explanation emerging here was a rather individual one. I would not go along with that because I think it is highly dependent on how the individual interacts with a system of socially derived categories of persons.

G. Sure, there is an internalization of social ways of making sense, but ultimately there is probably collective prejudice around. Families can have prejudices about their neighbors. Teachers can have prejudice about parents.

Convener. Let's keep to individuals. This question of socially defined categories: Are you saying that these categories shape our perception of others?

F. Yes. This is not necessarily static or immutable. The process of organizing categories . . . those systems change. It has changed here, for instance, in terms of racial prejudice, which has gone on since the 50s, where . . . anyone who was black . . . It has evolved in terms of different types of prejudice, as the population of . . . uhm, largely people who have come here . . . and have been born here now [have changed]; but the public perception is not of the same category system of the 1950s. It is a different form of category now. The point is that the category system has evolved and individuals work on them as well so they are not "traps." There is inevitable linkage of some form between the way the social world is organized and is organizing itself . . . and the way the individual contrives the social world itself.

This part of the conversation may be mapped (Figure 23.1). Categories and a line of argument fall out.

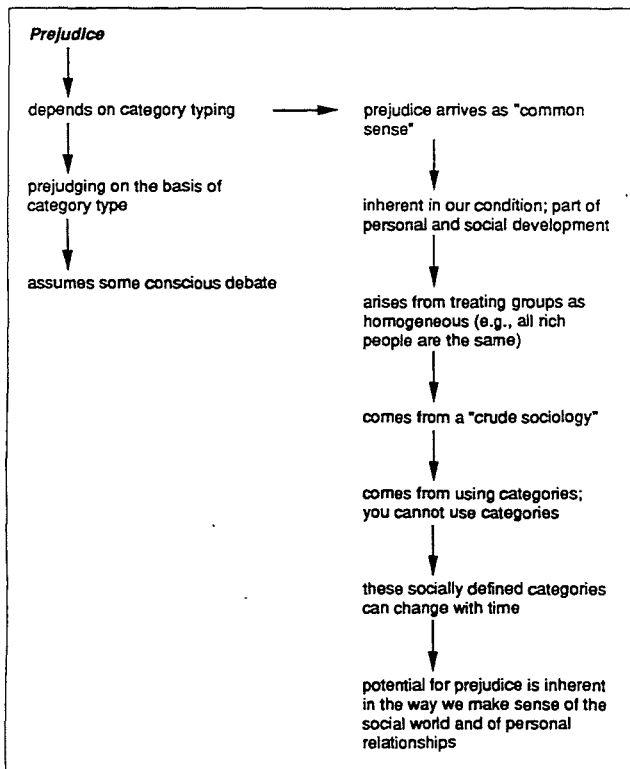


Figure 23.1: Map of Conversation Among Convener, "F," and "G."

## "Descriptions of Prejudice"

In the second component in our approach, we attempted to rebuild something of the richness of the original conversations by relating a number of quotations to the general categories derived from the conversation maps. First, we show examples from conversations under the general category, "Descriptions of Prejudice."

### 1. Not entirely negative

A. All people have prejudices and not all of them are axiomatically harmful. Prejudice in favor of the English cricket team is not harmful. So everyone has prejudice, and in that sense I'm not too worried about it. It is acts that follow having prejudice that are significant.

### 2. Not an unusual condition

B. It is normal for someone who lives in England to feel English. There are certain

things that go with being English. . . . People ought to have common-sense understanding that locates them, that makes them feel what they are. . . . I feel that normally when we talk of common sense it's seen as a malignancy. To a large extent it can be because it is based upon accretions of unstated assumptions.

## 3. Cognitive attitudes involved

A. There are sets of beliefs\* (inside people's heads), e.g., there are 3 million unemployed and 3 million black people and, therefore, blacks have taken our jobs. . . . Now it seems to me . . . you can knock down beliefs using rationality. But when you've got the attitude, e.g., I don't like blacks—you cannot get to that through rationality.

J. There is a question of what kind of cognitive attitude is involved—whether it is held as an issue of belief or simply as a preference. Take the case of someone liking cricket and disliking baseball. It may not even be a case of closed-mindedness, but simply a case of preference and is no harm to anyone. . . . But if somebody says that cricket is the only game worth playing then this is towards a system of belief where you think you are right and the other person wrong. This doesn't happen if it is simply an expression of preference.

\* Belief here seems to be used in the sense of knowledge and understanding in contrast to belief in the sense of faith. Jones (1987) stated that the latter kind of belief cannot be examined in terms of "truth and logic."

## 4. False beliefs

I. Isn't prejudice when a person will hold onto a particular "preference" even in the light of evidence or argument that convinces him or her on one level that the position is not sustainable?

J. That kind of case sounds like it must be self-deception for it to be possible at all. . . . There are cases where people do recognize evidence. White kids have black friends and get on very well with them; and yet that doesn't seem to count as evidence to counter the belief of general inferiority of blacks. There is also a kind of prejudice that closes a person's mind to even considering evidence.

## 5. Sense of exclusiveness

H. Perhaps Englishness needs to be made more of . . . so that people can feel an attach-

ment to a community that is important to value.

This doesn't necessarily go along with prejudice in the sense I first outlined as involving false beliefs that are hard to shake. . . . I don't see why these attachments to local communities need involve prejudice (closed minds) . . .

J. . . . A big task for education is to see if a sense of belonging—I agree with you it has many positive things about it—can be fostered without a sense of exclusiveness.

## **6. A sense of group belonging**

J. I've actually realized myself, with my son (7) and a couple of his friends, how it feels slightly more comfortable to be with one of them rather than the other. The one I feel more comfortable with is Asian, but also identifiably middle class. I feel less comfortable with the white boy whom I identified as working class. As far as I have these feelings, the class thing is there more than the race one.

## **7. Stereotypes: damning the identity into a generalization**

A. We make sense of the world by categorizing. What we must do with prejudice is link it in with stereotypes. In other words, we have to categorize, but at what stage do the categories become stereotypical? . . .

B. What is problematic are the persons who think of themselves as English "glorified," which is a misperception of who they are or what they are. That I think is dangerous for them. The categorization is faulty.

F. To what extent could you say you were, say, prejudiced against people who dribble. If you stop that particular person dribbling, then the prejudice would not be against the person, but against that way of behaving.

G. But in a sense isn't that what prejudice means? Prejudice isn't that you dislike a behavior . . . prejudice is something about a characteristic that is used to damn the identity into a generalization.

G. The process of prejudice is not always negative. You can have a halo effect. . . . I think the processes can work both ways, positively and negatively.

A. Positive stereotypes of Asian girls (work hard, etc.) are negative in that they can channel these girls down certain paths.

## **8. A limited view: jumping to conclusions**

D. Children in society have no control over the prejudices they form. . . . When you're grown up . . . we all jump to conclusions, and you can choose, as an adult who thinks about things, you can think about "where did that come from?" or "why do I think that way?" whereas as a child you don't.

J. Prejudice cannot be avoided. It seems to me that it is not too far away from Popper's basic point, which is that you cannot observe without preconceptions; you have to approach the world with some system of assumptions and expectations. Then I think what becomes most important is to make the distinction between "open-mindedness" and "closed-mindedness."

. . . A person who is not prejudiced is not someone who is lacking preconceptions altogether but someone who has a greater preparedness to take on other points of view and compare them with their own preconceptions in a more provisional way.

## **9. Comfort in the familiar**

J. A big task for education is to see if a sense of belonging can be fostered without a sense of exclusiveness. . . . On that point, some anti-racist education has tended to be counter-productive. This illustrates the downside as well as upside about encouraging a sense of belonging. What some anti-racist education has been doing, often successfully, has been encouraging a sense of belonging amongst black communities, which is encouraging a sense of self-esteem and, as a community, they can do something. But the downside of that, as in the Burnage\* case, seems to have been that often groups like the white working class were being undervalued and their voice wasn't being heard.

\* In this district of inner-city Manchester in 1986, a young Asian boy, Ahmed Ullah, was murdered in a school playground by a white youth of similar age. All evidence indicated this to have been a racially motivated attack.

## **"Solutions and Their Difficulties"**

Our second set of examples, under the category, "Solutions and Their Difficulties," contains more descriptions of processes (as well as concepts) than the definitions themselves. Following each numbered category is an illustration, followed by "difficulties."

## 1. Need to build up self-esteem

### Illustration:

I. I've experienced prejudice as far as sexism is concerned. But anyone who is British must have experienced it in social class terms.

H. Conceptions of class come into this. If you see education "academically" then in attacking children who are deeply prejudiced might be inclined to work on their beliefs. But it may not be a question of belief; it may be more to do with a greater need for greater self-esteem or something like that. On a different conception of education, which places personal concerns much more at the center of education, perhaps one might get further in locating the problems.

### Difficulties:

B. It is natural for someone who lives in England to feel English. There are certain things that go with being English—these categories exist. Perhaps someone who works in education may say how do we, in fact, if it strengthens a person, affirm their notion of being . . . help them move into something else. What is problematic are persons who think themselves as English "glorified," which is a misperception of who they are. It is dangerous for them. The categorization is faulty. Maybe the role of education is to get those categories nearer to what they are.

## 2. To be countered by rational argument

### Illustration:

A. An example in this area—"there are 3 million unemployed and 3 million black people and, therefore, the blacks are taking our jobs; and anyway, they're all living off social security, etc. etc." Now it seems to me that these beliefs towards groups can be countered using rational arguments, using cognition. . . . You can knock beliefs down using rationality.

### Difficulties:

E. But is prejudice anything to do with "fact" and what you see because surely what you see is based upon your prejudice, on how you interpret something. Even if you've got all the facts . . . you can still have that prejudice.

D. But that's not prejudice.

C. Yes, that is prejudice.

E. You cannot distinguish prejudice based upon the amount of facts you have. Two people

can be exposed to the same information and see it differently.

## 3. Raising awareness of assumptions

### Illustration:

E. Isn't there a difference between having prejudice and not knowing about it and *realizing* you're prejudiced. How important is it to realize you're prejudiced and to work against it? Is that a different sort of prejudice then? . . .

C. . . . I suppose like whites in South Africa for example who have it pushed into them from day one that they are superior. They perhaps don't think about this as we might.

D. . . . and this is repeated in this country in terms of sexism . . .

E. . . . and we have mind-sets about Muslim women in particular.

### Difficulties:

E. So why do people hang on to their prejudices so strongly?

D. In Britain, with the British Empire and all that, we're all encouraged to think we're better than anyone else.

E. So you generalize, don't you . . . and it depends on the company you're with—and what prejudices they have. You can talk in different ways to different to different people.

### Illustration:

M. In the village I come from, there's just one black family. I suppose they, everyone, was a bit prejudiced towards them . . . My parents and grandparents say some crazy things. Very racist.

K. Yes?

M. But it's just ignorance, isn't it? Like AIDS, isn't it.

K. Often it's not being nasty. It's caused by, uhm, ignorance . . .

L. . . . or repeating what other people have said to them.

K. It's not really nasty racism.

L. The worrying thing is if they actually believe it—people are dirty or less intelligent or whatever.



M. I suppose it's that they are not used to them. It comes right back to where we started. Being wary. If my parents had been brought up in a multi-cultural society, they wouldn't be like they are.

L. As the generations go on then, given that, they will become less prejudiced.

Difficulties:

B. Can we really talk about attacking people's integrity in terms of their prejudices. Aren't people autonomous? . . . Some attitudes are within oneself (that is, not interactional). Can anyone really do much to change this? . . . If people bring to their behavior certain aspects or beliefs that impinge on other people or the environment, can you work from outside to be subconscious and say what may be the kind of phenomena that spurs or feeds that prejudice? Can you tackle that without attacking the person's autonomy?

A. You can only infer in terms of what is going on in people's heads. In terms of racism and sexism, I know as a result of my socialization, I am deeply sexist. Now on one level I don't want people going on about what is inside my head. They don't know. What they have every right to go on at are my actions, which can be observed.

#### 4. Tackling the outcomes (the actions)

Illustrations:

G. What do I understand by prejudice? . . . Probably . . . the notion that . . . there is a reasonable range of acceptable views or beliefs, and I distinguish *prejudice* from *discrimination*. Prejudice is more an attitudinal thing rather than a behavioral thing. So, you can be prejudiced but not necessarily discriminate.

A. In education we do not know what goes in kids heads in terms of race and gender. We can infer it. But what I think we must do is tackle the actions. The problem is if we just say "don't do it," you know they'll just do it somewhere else. In tackling actions, ultimately, I guess, over time you might start to change what's happening inside people's heads. . . . I've been lucky enough to work in "race" for twenty years, although the racism is still there in my head—my socialization—my actions have improved greatly and do not reflect that. . . . We still make errors, but over time far fewer.

Difficulties:

B. Correcting prejudice is a complex business. We can take action (as "A" says) and that is legitimate. Mechanisms to tackle actions are useful. This does not prevent "A" from being devious: he is English, he is a man! He internal-

izes that and comes out with a more formidable way of dealing with sanctions. It may become less obvious. You can have institutional practices that ban racist language. Sure! But people then do other things that will not allow the practice or custom to disappear. It just becomes more obscure.

B. One thing is peer group behavior. Take "politically correct" behavior in U.S. universities. You can really get people for certain kinds of language perhaps. I'm not really sure in the long term this works. It's crazy to imagine people will not be sexist because it is part of their culture to be *anti-institution*—anti-PC. People resist what institutions tell them to do. Same in schools. Male cultures are not corrected by sanctions.

#### 5. Negotiation between children and educational institutions on a social and personal level

Illustrations:

B. What I'd like is "common-sense" understanding to be based upon certain kinds of interaction between educators, areas of knowledge, that allow children to develop certain concepts that inform the common-sense understanding better. In other words, rather than "common-sense" understandings based on . . . rationality. If there is a way in which that negotiation can take place between children and the educational institutions then their "common-sense" understanding is better informed. It better locates them in seeing what or who they are.

G. I think there is tension between what people come to accept as people's rights (there's an element of learning involved here that schools can do something about) and the personal sense of how do I feel about this; how it affects me is a much more intimate form of learning. I think this is very much bound up with *experience* . . .

F. In the school I worked in the 1970s, the only way I felt anything was going on, among the majority of white working class kids, in changing prejudice was interaction by the children themselves rather than from teachers. . . . There was almost a form of ideological propaganda from the staff; it was seen as such and rejected.

Difficulties:

F. It's that period of personal change that is so difficult. To use a cognitive psychology analogy: You may come across knowledge trees of the way things are structured in the head that have prejudice woven through them. So it's not like pulling a prejudice out and disposing of it.

... You can wipe out the prejudice from one aspect of your functioning but when you change it slightly and involve another cognitive structure, another knowledge tree, then you've got it there as well. ... There's also situational cognition: everyday learning versus school learning and the tension between them and the difficulty people have in applying "school" knowledge to outside situations.

A. There is a danger to think that it is all individual. ... There are institutional practices that are discriminatory. ... Society has a whole series of practices that sustain discrimination.

I. The *structure* explanation is there—where your prejudices are supported ...

J. There is a possible philosophical dimension of peer group pressure and so on. You could take it in a Wittgensteinian direction where ultimately the whole possibility of using language at all depends on people's agreements and judgments.

## 6. "Prejudice reduction"

Illustration, with difficulties:

A. As part of the oppositional culture in schools, children will use fascism and racism as a legitimate weapon of attack against teachers. "Up the NF\*" will, with a bit of luck delay the start of the math lesson ...

B. And Asian kids can replicate this. At what point does all this become unacceptable?

Convener. The teacher may react in the name of reducing prejudice; but is this missing the mark?

A. Lynch wrote a book, "Prejudice Reduction." There is a danger to think that it is all individual, like a disease. If you tackle it, it will go away. There are institutional practices that are discriminatory. There is a danger, with psychologists, whereby you "treat" people and it, the problem, will go away. Well it won't because our society has a whole series of practices that sustain discrimination.

\* NF, or National Front, is a neo-fascist political party in Britain. It is small and ineffectual, but its graffiti may be seen in some parts of the country.

## Concluding Remarks

Because this is a working paper, it would be premature to make concluding remarks that were anything but brief, tentative, and provisional. We have a host of questions that will cause us to reexamine our data

and provide clues for the next stage in our research. We are conscious, for example, of the need to return to our categories, sharpen their meanings, check on their origins in the data, and look for links between them. Closer analysis of the "maps" may prove beneficial.

The Swann Report (1985), which was an inquiry into educational disadvantage in Britain's schools, surprisingly did not discuss prejudice at any great length. It described prejudice as "a preconceived opinion or bias for or against someone or something ... rigid, immutable and irreversible" (chap. 2, paragraph 2.1). The data that we have described here suggest that the concept of prejudice is not so straightforwardly passed over. It is a problematic word and a troublesome concept. It has received a lot of attention but largely through relatively sharply focused studies on matters of immediacy, with rather less critical reflection on the assumptions that underpin our own categories of meaning. What our experiment perhaps shows above all is that we need a broad perspective and eclectic outlook if we are to take on the scope and complexity of this fundamental challenge facing all teachers.

We do, however, believe that in our work with students the research, even at this early stage, gives us practical ways forward. In listening to conversations and leading conversations we will be more able ourselves to *hear* what people are saying. We have become more sensitive to the way people talk about prejudice and some of the distinctions and processes that are delineated. The categorizing/mapping technique we used has further alerted us to the variety of definitions and explanations offered. We can use these ideas to raise questions or to make statements as a way of trying to take conversations forward or indeed have people think more deeply on what they might be saying. We believe that listening to and analyzing the conversations has increased our experience and awareness. This can be passed on to students.

## Afterword

G. I would distinguish rational from reasonable. Reasonable is a value judgment. Rational is much more to do with logic. In that sense prejudice is not so much to do with logic. Only very partly is it to do with logic. It is more to do with what your feeling towards people are. ... Can you cope with your more conservative feelings? That's why I would say prejudice is unreasonable; to be a mature, educated, developed person, you've got to be able to cope with your conservative side, emotionally and so on. You've got to move on.

