

This book deals with fundamental issues for religious education:

- ◆ How far is it possible to understand someone else's religious position?
- ◆ By what techniques can religious data be understood or interpreted by outsiders?
- ◆ How should 'religions' be represented?
- ◆ What is the relationship between the religious traditions and the cultural life of modern Britain?
- ◆ Should RE deal primarily or even exclusively with developing an understanding of the symbols and practices of different religious traditions? Or should it go further in helping students to formulate their own religious positions?

It gives a constructive critique of phenomenological approaches, which have been common in religious education since the 1970s, arguing for an interpretive approach, drawing on ideas from anthropology and hermeneutics.

The discussions are related to curriculum development and the practice of religious education. They will be of interest to teachers and university students of RE and Religious Studies, as well as to teachers and scholars concerned with multicultural, intercultural and antiracist education.

Professor Robert Jackson is Director of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, Director of Graduate Studies in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick and Editor in Chief of the *British Journal of Religious Education*.

Hodder & Stoughton

ISBN 0-340-68870-X



9 780340 688700

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION an interpretive approach

ROBERT JACKSON

Hodder & Stoughton

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

an interpretive approach

ROBERT JACKSON

RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION
an interpretive approach

ROBERT JACKSON

Hodder & Stoughton

A MEMBER OF THE HODDER HEADLINE GROUP

The publishers would like to thank Trentham Books Ltd for permission to reproduce material from *Hindu Children in Britain*.

To RHJ, SRJ and EBJ

Orders: please contact Bookpoint Ltd, 39 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4TD. Telephone: (44) 01235 400414, Fax: (44) 01235 400454. Lines are open from 9.00-6.00, Monday to Saturday, with a 24 hour message answering service. Email address: orders@bookpoint.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this title is available from The British Library

ISBN 0 340 68870 X

First published 1997

Impression number 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Year 2004 2003 2002 2001 2000 1999 1998

Copyright © 1997 Robert Jackson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher or under licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited. Further details of such licences (for reprographic reproduction) may be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited, of 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE.

Typeset by Fakenham Photosetting Ltd, Fakenham, Norfolk.
Printed in Great Britain for Hodder & Stoughton Educational,
a division of Hodder Headline Plc, 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH
by Athenaeum Press Ltd, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

Contents

Introduction	1
1. Phenomenology and Religious Education	7
2. Anthropology and Interpretation	30
3. The Representation of Religions	49
4. Cultural Issues	72
5. From Ethnographic Research to Curriculum Development	95
6. Implications of an Interpretive Approach	121
References	144
Index	153

The publishers would like to thank Trentham Books Ltd for permission to reproduce material from *Hindu Children in Britain*.

To RHJ, SRJ and EBJ

Orders: please contact Bookpoint Ltd, 39 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4TD. Telephone: (44) 01235 400414, Fax: (44) 01235 400454. Lines are open from 9.00-6.00, Monday to Saturday, with a 24 hour message answering service. Email address: orders@bookpoint.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this title is available from The British Library

ISBN 0 340 68870 X

First published 1997

Impression number 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Year 2004 2003 2002 2001 2000 1999 1998

Copyright © 1997 Robert Jackson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher or under licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited. Further details of such licences (for reprographic reproduction) may be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited, of 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE.

Typeset by Fakenham Photosetting Ltd, Fakenham, Norfolk.
Printed in Great Britain for Hodder & Stoughton Educational,
a division of Hodder Headline Plc, 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH
by Athenium Press Ltd, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am especially indebted to Judith Everington and Eleanor Nesbitt, my immediate colleagues in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, for their co-operation, ideas, skills, critical feedback and encouragement. Their roles in some of the matters discussed in this book will become apparent to readers. They join me in thanking all those young people and adults from religious communities in Britain who have contributed generously to our research and curriculum development over the years. Past and present colleagues and Research Associates at WRERU have been helpful in a variety of ways and my thanks go to Margaret Barratt, Jochen Bauer, Sarah Davies, Clive Erricker, Mary Hayward, Dilip Kadodwala, Carrie Mercier, Joyce Miller, Jo Price, Geoff Robson, Elizabeth Wayne and Peter Woodward. I have also benefited greatly from the comments, interest and moral support of colleagues at Warwick working in various fields in the Faculty of Social Studies, especially Jim Beckford, Davina Cooper, Sophie Gilliat, Mal Leicester, Ian Lyne, Dennis Starkings and Steven Vertovec. Beyond Warwick, Trevor Cooling, John Hinnells, John Hull, Jessica Jacobson, Tim Key, Kim Knott, Sissel Østberg, Gwen Palmer, Jack Priestley, Sven-Åke Selander and Geir Skeie have been both generous of their time and unstinting in their encouragement.

Many of the ideas in the book were tried out in conference papers and presentations, and thanks are due to participants who commented in meetings held in 1996 under the auspices of NEKRIF (the Norwegian Network for Research in Culture, Religion and Identity in a Multicultural Context), the Association Canadienne Française pour l'Avancement de Science, the European Association for World Religions in Education, the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values, and the Nordic Conference on Anthropology and Education, organized by colleagues at the Høgskolen i Bergen.

Acknowledgements for funding received to support ethnographic and curriculum studies are given in full in the notes to Chapter 5, but I would like to express more general thanks to the Economic and Social Research Council for its support of our project 'Ethnography and Religious Education' (Project Reference number R000232489) which included as one of its objectives 'To develop a theoretical framework for translating ethnographic source material from the project into material for use in religious education'. The achievement of that objective has been part of the agenda of this book. Having thanked lots of people, I should add that any inadequacies, failures and misunderstandings in this book are my responsibility alone!

Some paragraphs in Chapter 2 first appeared in 'Religious Education and the Arts of Interpretation' in D Starkings (ed) *Religion and the Arts in Education: Dimensions of Spirituality* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1993), and some paragraphs from Chapter 4 are reproduced from 'Religious Education's Representation of "Religions" and "Cultures"', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XXXIII (3), 1995. Among the sources drawn on for Chapter 5 is my report to the ESRC, which forms the basis of 'Ethnographic Research and Curriculum Development' in L J Francis, W K Kay and W S Campbell (eds) *Research in Religious Education*, Gracewing, 1996.

Robert Jackson
University of Warwick, December 1996

Introduction

As we approach the millennium, religious education remains a contested area in many parts of the world. In countries as diverse as the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Sweden, Australia, South Africa, Namibia, Canada (especially in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec), Scotland, and in other education systems, the growth of religious and secular pluralism has posed questions about the nature of religious education and its role in publicly-funded schools.

Many religious educators internationally look with particular interest at England and Wales, since the 1988 Education Reform Act, for the first time in law, stated that religious education had to give attention to the religious plurality of the nation. Section 8 [3] of the Act made it clear that, as well as reflecting the range of Christian traditions in the country (not the homogenized, 'non-denominational' Christianity of the 1944 Act), the subject should also take account of the other 'principal religions' represented in Great Britain. Whether in rural Cumbria or Cornwall or in urban centres such as Leeds, Coventry or London, children and young people in publicly-funded schools are expected to gain some understanding of the major religious traditions of the world that are now part of the nation's spiritual and cultural life. Though the debates about the nature and aims of religious education continue, it is a matter of law that local education authority conferences have to design agreed syllabuses that promote such learning. An education involving some knowledge of a variety of religions in Britain is now the entitlement of all pupils in maintained 'county' schools.

Yet the requirements of the law raise a number of important questions. What *is* a 'religion'? How should the religions be portrayed? What authorities should be appealed to in deciding how religions should be pictured or represented? What is the relationship between these religions and the cultural life of modern Britain? In addition to these issues of representation, there is a central question to do with interpretation. If RE involves understanding a range of religious worldviews, what methods should be used in order to do the job well? Moreover, is religious education only about understanding others? How far is it concerned with helping young people to clarify and develop their own views and beliefs? What is the relationship between the student's own beliefs and

assumptions and the material studied in class? This book is concerned with these questions and with further issues which they raise.

The discussions in the book are not, however, simply related to hypothetical questions. The issues were raised directly for me by working in a 'multifaith' city, and subsequently through the task of co-ordinating research studies of British children from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. My colleagues and I learned a great deal through these experiences, and some of our previous assumptions about the nature of religions and the methods for understanding religious data were challenged.

I came into the field of religious education during a time of rapid change in the subject. My first appointment as a teacher in 1967 was soon after the establishment of the first Religious Studies Department in Britain at the University of Lancaster under the leadership of Professor Ninian Smart. Smart's vision was not only to develop religious studies on the model of continental European and North American Departments of History and Phenomenology of Religion, but also to probe into the relevance of his work for those concerned with religious education in schools. To this end, he secured funding for a project to investigate the nature of religious education and to develop appropriate curriculum materials. Essentially the project criticized confessional models of RE as being inappropriate for state-funded schools in a predominantly secular and increasingly religiously pluralistic democracy and advocated a non-dogmatic, phenomenological approach in which teacher and learner alike were encouraged to 'bracket out' their presuppositions in order to attempt empathetically to grasp religion from the insider's perspective. Smart's work came as a breath of fresh air to me and to many other RE teachers who knew at first hand the resentment of students who were critical of the subject's theological assumptions and evangelistic goals, and it precipitated some fundamental changes to religious education in teacher education and in schools. It also raised a series of issues which were not addressed by the Lancaster project's inspiring groundwork, and which became of particular interest to me. My own work has included a discussion of these issues and is, in effect, both a development and a sympathetic critique of Smart's work in religious education.

The late 1960s and the early 1970s brought another significant development which profoundly influenced the direction of my work. This was the wave of migrations to Britain of people of South Asian origin, partly consequent on Africanization policies in recently independent states such as Kenya and Uganda. My move to Coventry in 1972 coincided with Idi Amin's expulsion of 'Asians' from Uganda who were given ninety days

to leave. The expansion and change in composition of Coventry's 'South Asian' population which resulted from migrations from East African countries had a profound effect on me. Unlike earlier migrations, women, children and family elders settled in Britain. My first encounter was with children who were attending Coventry's schools. The educational issues were many. There was the ever present issue of racism and there were immediate practical issues connected with language teaching. For me, however, there were crucial matters pertaining to religion and culture. Through Gujarati and Punjabi children in Coventry schools, I met their parents. Through parents, I was invited to temples and to religious and cultural events. I became particularly interested in the complex and variegated life of the Hindu communities in Coventry, and for the first time in my life I was immersed in the religious culture of a community very different from that of either my upbringing or my university education in theology and philosophy. It soon became apparent that Hindu tradition, as expressed by my new friends and acquaintances, was both diverse and different in many ways from that portrayed in academic texts used in universities, colleges of education and schools. My mentors, for the moment, were mainly male elders in the Gujarati community (key figures in establishing public Hindu practice, just as the women I would meet later were in establishing domestic religious ritual). The issue of the gap between academic accounts of 'Hinduism' and the varieties of religious life among Hindus in Britain has continued to intrigue me (1996b), while a consideration of the gap between Western academic representations of 'religions' generally and more ethnographic and personal accounts of religious life is one of the themes of this book. I should add that learning about Hindu tradition at first hand did not prompt me to want to *become* a Hindu, but it did challenge various presuppositions and made me look afresh at aspects of my own way of life. It also taught me that human communication is possible across what appear, in theory, to be profoundly different worldviews. Both of these issues are pursued in connection with religious education in Chapter 6.

I was fortunate to meet Eleanor Nesbitt, a gifted Religious Studies scholar and fieldworker, around this time and we have collaborated on research projects ever since. Our interest in religions, coupled with a professional involvement with education, led, in 1984, to the development of a new field of research, namely the transmission of religious culture from parents and faith communities to children. For Hindu parents whose children were born in Britain in the early and mid 1970s, the issue of the perpetuation of the tradition had become a major concern. Very little research was being done, however, to ascertain what steps parents and communities were taking to address the issue. As a first step, we conducted

research into the teaching of religious culture in Hindu supplementary schools (Chapter 5).

From the perspective of religious education theory, the research challenged the sharp distinction generally made between religious education and religious nurture. The current orthodoxy, derived from Smart's work and elaborated by John Hull (e.g. 1984), was to draw a sharp distinction between religious education (non-dogmatic and with the aim of increasing understanding) and religious nurture, a term used by Hull to connote the transmission of religious culture from one generation to the next within faith traditions. In the literature, the distinction was made both conceptually and institutionally, with county schools regarded as the forum for religious education and religious (e.g. voluntary aided) or community-based independent or supplementary schools being the purveyors of religious nurture. To use the terminology of Smart's project, religious nurture was perceived as 'confessional' while religious education was presented as 'educational'. Our findings blurred the distinction somewhat since, in Smart and Hull's terms, some of the activities of supplementary schools were 'educational' and some of the RE curriculum of county schools was regarded by some Hindu community leaders and parents as contributing positively to the religious development of their children. Here we have a subtext of the book: specifically, the ways in which religious education and religious nurture might sometimes be seen as complementary, and, more generally, the various roles that members of religious communities might have in religious education (Chapters 5 and 6).

It was also clear from our findings that, in concentrating on what we called 'formal religious nurture', we had barely scratched the surface of the question of transmitting religious culture. We decided to design a piece of research examining the ways in which Hindu tradition was passed on, mainly informally, in the home and community. Initially, this was conceived as a phenomenological study. It was only when approaching the practical task of selecting appropriate methods that I began to realize some of the inadequacies of phenomenology as a tool for investigating religion in the field. Few field studies described by their authors as phenomenological had much to say about methods, and those that did (e.g. Knott 1986) used methods derived from ethnography. The difficulties in employing the methods of phenomenology in fieldwork prompted a critique of phenomenological approaches in religious education, which appears in Chapter 1.

The issue of research design took me back to my own introduction to anthropological work during a secondment to the School of Oriental and

African Studies at the University of London, and forward to recent developments in ethnographic theory and methodology. My on-going reading in ethnography (reflected especially in the discussions in Chapters 2 and 4) influenced the research design and its development in later projects, as well as a reconsideration of methods for use in RE. The methods of interpretive anthropologists were particularly suggestive of ideas for religious education, while discussions of 'culture' by social anthropologists provided insights into the educational debates about cultural development, especially in responding to closed portrayals of ethnicity and culturally restrictive views of nationality (Chapter 4).¹ The work of writers charting the emergence of Western ideas of religion and drawing attention to political and cultural factors in the shaping of Western perceptions of religions complemented my ethnographic studies and suggested some new ways of representing religions in RE (Chapter 3).

This theoretical work, together with the practical fieldwork methods of ethnography, underpinned a two year project on the 'nurture' of a group of children from Hindu communities in Coventry and a series of subsequent ethnographic studies, four of which were conducted between 1990 and 1993, sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). These were a study of Christian children from some diverse denominational and ethnic backgrounds, together with studies of groups of Jewish, Muslim and Sikh children in two cities. Outline sketches of these are included in the first part of Chapter 5.

The impact of this ethnographic work on my ideas about religious education will already be evident. There is a direct connection between the two, however. The Hindu Nurture in Coventry study was a source for two children's books and for various educational broadcasts, as well as for the published ethnographic report. The data from the ESRC studies were also the basis for ethnographic writing, but were used simultaneously in preparing an RE curriculum project for schools. The first element in this process was the development of an interpretive methodology for pupils and their teachers, adapting theory and method from social anthropology. Our approach to the representation of religions, the project's second main ingredient, drew on discussions summarized here in Chapter 3, and involved the co-operation of ethnographers, curriculum developers and members of the various faith communities, especially members of families portrayed in the texts. A third element was the provision of activities encouraging pupils to reflect on matters raised by their studies in relation to their own ways of life. This curriculum development work, the Warwick RE Project, is outlined and discussed in the second part of Chapter 5.²

The development of the theoretical and practical aspects of an interpretive approach raised a range of questions and potential criticisms which are discussed in Chapter 6. The issues of reductionism and relativism, the latter especially related to the treatment of different truth claims, are considered. A discussion of aims also raised the possibility of building an element of critical distance into an interpretive approach. The question of the relationship between the learner and the material studied led me back to the social sciences in order to discuss 'reflexivity' and 'edification'. Finally, an interpretive approach raises further questions, beyond the fundamental activity of interpreting religious data. Thus, questions about the role of the teacher, as well as wider political and structural questions relating to RE policy at local and national levels, need to be discussed. A consideration of these forms the conclusion to the book.

Finally, I should say that there are many issues *not* covered in the book, and its contents are intended merely as a small contribution to the wide-ranging debates, in Britain and beyond, surrounding an exciting and demanding subject.

Notes

1 'Interpretive' is preferred to 'interpretative' and is used throughout the book. The shorter word is not entirely an Americanism, having been used occasionally by English writers since 1839 (OED). Lord David Cecil used it in writing about Walter de la Mare in 1953. 'Interpretive' has been used by ethnographers such as Clifford Geertz and James Clifford and is now standard in the international literature of social or cultural anthropology.

2 My colleague, Judith Everington, has been responsible for co-ordinating and co-editing the Warwick RE Project.

CHAPTER

1

Phenomenology and Religious Education

The issue of attempting to grasp the religious outlook of others in their own terms has been of central importance to religious education as a school subject, as well as to religious studies as an academic field of research and study in higher education. Since the mid 1960s in Britain, with the rise of Religious Studies in Universities and other higher education institutions, and with its consequent impact on schools, approaches rooted in the phenomenology of religion have been highly influential.

The phenomenology of religion has been represented in different ways by different authors, and although some of its concepts and terms are associated with the philosopher Edmund Husserl (e.g. 1931; 1970) the field has a history which predates him, and his influence on religious education is indirect. Like 'structuralism', phenomenology is a loosely knit movement but is generally concerned with the interpretation and classification of specific sets of phenomena in order to do justice to their expressed meanings, and to reveal universal 'essences' or 'ideal types' to which specific examples of activity in different religious and cultural settings approximate. The phenomenology of religion, then, is a family of approaches rather than a tightly definable single approach, influenced to a greater or lesser extent by philosophical phenomenology, and incorporating methodologies intended to present religious material in the insider's terms with the student's or scholar's presuppositions put to one side.

This chapter outlines the phenomenological approach advocated by an influential religious education project of the late 1960s and early 1970s and rejects most of the criticisms of it made by some writers on religious education. In the example given – the Lancaster-based Schools Council

Project Religious Education in Secondary Schools—both proponents and critics have a particular understanding of phenomenology, largely derived from the work of the Project's Director, Ninian Smart, rather than from a wider range of continental European phenomenologists.

In order to represent the field more fully and to explore possible defects and strengths in the approach, some of Edmund Husserl's ideas are outlined by way of intellectual background, and there are brief introductions to the work of a number of phenomenologists of religion. Although belonging to the same broad tradition, writers emphasizing phenomenology as a means to classify religious data are distinguished from those more preoccupied with the philosophical, interpretive side of the discipline. With regard to the latter, the work of Gerardus van der Leeuw is discussed as a major contributor to the field. The chapter goes on to advance some criticisms of phenomenology as a tool for understanding 'other' religious worldviews and also notes some of phenomenology's positive features.

With reference to the work of Jacques Waardenburg, ideas from what has been called 'new style' phenomenology are introduced as developments within the discipline that answer its critics. It is argued, however, that these are so radical as to bring phenomenology closer in method to hermeneutical approaches, such as that found in interpretive anthropology.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN BRITISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The issue of trying to portray religious material in the insider's terms was first addressed seriously in British religious education in the 1960s. Following the establishment of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster in 1965 under the leadership of Professor Ninian Smart, a major research and curriculum development project in religious education was established under Smart's direction and began its work in 1969.¹ The Project advocated what it called the "'phenomenological" or undogmatic approach' which it described thus:

This sees the aim of religious education as the promotion of understanding. It uses the tools of scholarship in order to enter into an empathic experience of the faith of individuals and groups. It does not seek to promote any one religious viewpoint but it recognizes that the study of religion must transcend the merely informative. (Schools Council 1971, 21)

The working paper refers to pioneering work of this type at Lancaster and Leicester (in the then Department of History and Phenomenology of Religion) and the paper's thinking is strongly influenced by Smart's earlier publications on religion and education (1964; 1968). Given that religious education, already uncomfortable with a confessional role (Cox 1966; Jackson 1992), was having to accommodate to increasing religious plurality in Britain, Smart's work and the work of the Lancaster Project had a deep and long lasting influence on religious education theory and practice, especially in secondary schools. Many textbooks emphasizing a world religions approach, Agreed Syllabuses and Local Education Authority handbooks, from around the mid 1970s, through the 1980s and up to the present, have been directly or indirectly influenced by the 'phenomenological approach'. A major Government sponsored report, *Education for All* (Swann 1985), advocated the phenomenological approach as being most appropriate to religious education in a democratic and pluralistic society. The Report rejected the idea of 'single faith' RE, as advocated by some Muslims (1985, 474), favouring a phenomenological approach in order 'to teach children to understand the nature of beliefs and a range of belief systems ...' (489), and seeking 'to "inform" rather than "convert" pupils' (498). The Report's discussion of different approaches to religious education was based on *Schools Council Working Paper 36's* distinction between the confessional, anti-dogmatic and phenomenological approaches (Schools Council 1971). The phenomenological approach was commended since it made a clear distinction between 'religious instruction' and 'religious education'.

It is . . . the function of the school [*as distinct from home and community*] to assist pupils to understand the nature of religion and to know something of the diversity of belief systems, their significance for individuals and how these bear on the community. (471)

Swann's advocacy of phenomenology followed from the Lancaster Schools Council Project. There were other influences from phenomenology of religion on religious education, however. These were much less pervasive than that of the Schools Council Project, but they were overtly closer to Continental European phenomenology conceptually and methodologically. Eric Sharpe, a member of Smart's staff at Lancaster up to the mid 1970s, but not directly involved in the Schools Council Project, mediated ideas from the phenomenology of religion to teachers through writings published in the mid 1970s (Sharpe 1975a and 1975b). Also, the Department of History and Phenomenology of Religion at Leicester University encouraged research students to use a phenomenological framework to conduct field research and to reflect on

religious education methodology (Marvell 1973; 1975; 1976). The influence of the Dutch phenomenologist Gerardus van der Leeuw is particularly evident in this work.² Outside the United Kingdom, other significant work in religious education influenced by the phenomenologists Kristensen and van der Leeuw has been carried out by Basil Moore and Norman Habel in Australia (1982).

CRITICS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Some British writers – often with very different views about the nature of religious education – have been critical of what they usually call ‘the phenomenological approach’, a version of phenomenology derived directly or indirectly from the Lancaster Schools Council Project. These critics have focused on five main characteristics of the approach.

- 1 Phenomenology’s apparent sole concern with the external actions of religious practitioners and the observable phenomena of religion and its consequent lack of concern with the motivations of religious believers.
- 2 Its over-wide coverage of religions, leading to a superficial treatment or trivialization of faiths.
- 3 Its juxtaposition of material on common themes from different religions, leading to confusion.
- 4 The remoteness of its subject matter from the experience and concerns of most school children.
- 5 Its lack of concern with issues of truth, and its consequent implicit relativism.

Edwin Cox, for example, although arguing for a liberal approach to religious education, criticized the approach, focusing on points one and four, questioning whether an ‘external study of the actions and objects of religious behaviour lead to a genuine appreciation of the motives that prompt that behaviour’ (Cox 1983). Cox asks whether ‘an understanding of what religion means’ requires ‘some more personal involvement’ and doubts the ability of younger children to work with the detachment required of phenomenology (132). Will they not want to agree or disagree with the religious people whose behaviour they are considering, asks Cox? Moreover, are they not likely to dismiss religious behaviour as unworthy of further thought if they have not grasped the motivation behind religious ceremonies? Older pupils too, says Cox, may not find religious material interesting in comparison with other, more appealing aspects of experience. Cox’s main criticism of phenomenology is as follows:

... perhaps the chief weakness of the phenomenological approach, as a

justifiable mode of religious education, is its claim to be dealing with a significant aspect of human experience. The claim may well be true, but is its truth recognized by sufficient people for religious education to be accepted by all as worthy of school time? Is religion seen as sufficiently worthwhile by contemporary men and women to compete successfully for curriculum space? Or is it regarded as a private matter, an optional hobby for the few? It may look worthwhile to professional theologians, to religious education teachers, and to religiously minded bodies and individuals, but does it seem so to the majority of the parents, tax payers, other teachers and students? Do pupils throughout their school career rate religions high enough, and find them intriguing enough to be ready to give their attention to prolonged serious study of them? If the answer to those questions is ‘yes’, then phenomenological religious education is justified. But if the answer is ‘no’, even though religion may be a significant human experience, then religious education so conducted will not receive the widespread support that it needs at present for its justification. (132)

Cox’s position is that RE should be part of a wider ‘values education’ (although he does not use the term). All values and value systems are based on beliefs about the nature of reality and of human nature. In a pluralist world, some of these beliefs are religious and some are secular. Both types should be explored, concludes Cox, probably as part of one subject, to enable pupils ‘to move towards coming to terms with their own life problems by means of a coherent and conscious set of beliefs’ (135–6).

John Burn and Colin Hart, writing from a very different position – associated with the radical right of British politics and a theological stance adopted by some evangelical Christian writers – concentrate on points one, two, three and five (Burn and Hart 1988). Their attack is part of a general objection to world religions approaches and is focused specifically on the Swann Report’s portrayal of phenomenology.

The movement for teaching world faiths is associated with the *phenomenological* approach to religious education. This is to study religion through its observable expressions. It is argued that as children learn about sacred places, festivals, rites of passage and customs, they are led to a more authentic understanding of faith. But such an approach devalues the vital ingredients of faith, belief and practice and so leads to the trivialisation of all faiths. More importantly, it denies children the opportunity of examining counter claims to truth in religion. For this reason, it is regrettable that the Swann Report endorsed the phenomenological approach, arguing wrongly that it lays the

foundation for a genuinely pluralistic society. (Burn and Hart 1988, 15)

The criticisms made by the writers whose views are summarized above are not valid as objections to phenomenology *per se*, but they are applicable to some poorly designed materials described by their authors as phenomenological. In varying degrees these critics misrepresent phenomenology and they assume incorrectly that its advocates see their approach as the only one to be used in religious education. With regard to point one – phenomenology's apparent sole concern with the externals of religion – *Schools Council Working Paper 36* recognizes the importance of grasping the connections between external features and the personal experience of religious believers:

It might appear . . . that any attempt to view a religious statement or activity as an object of inquiry would miss or obscure the very qualities that give it meaning as religious (i.e. as it appears in the mind and experience of the believer). If religion cannot be properly understood apart from subjectivity, then any satisfactory concept of objective study must somehow include that subjectivity. That is, the objectivity must be about the subjectivity; it must refer to ways of thinking responsibly about matters of intense personal interest and concern. (Schools Council 1971, 22)

As will be made clear below, similar points have been made by phenomenologists of religion, from the pioneers of the field in the nineteenth century to its most influential exponents in the twentieth.

With regard to point two – the superficial and trivial treatment of many religions – phenomenology as a methodology does not require attention to a wide range of faiths concurrently, and many phenomenological studies have been of a single religious tradition. Kim Knott's study of Hindus in Leeds (1986) and Peter McKenzie's book on Christianity (1988) are but two.

The thematic treatment of data from religions (point three) is a common though not universal feature of phenomenology. As we shall see, some phenomenologists have set out to study parallel phenomena in different traditions in order to expose basic forms and structures which give insight into the essence of religion. This aspect of phenomenology has never been widely used in religious education as a theoretical model for postulating or exposing universal essences of religion. Rather, it has been adapted by religious educators as a convenient practical tool for selecting and organizing material from a range of religious traditions. Occasionally such thematically arranged material is sensitively put together, as in Olivia

Bennett's *Exploring Religion* series for upper juniors (1984). All too often, however, thematic books juxtapose material from different traditions taken out of context and sometimes cover too much ground in too small a space. In *Family Life* and *Religious Buildings*, two books in Wayland's 'Religious Topics' series (Mayled 1986 a and b), for example, six religions are covered in each book with less than four hundred words per tradition. The consequences are superficial treatment, oversimplification and the danger that children will be confused and misled. Books like these are far distant from the intentions of the phenomenologists but have given ammunition to critics who have caricatured the phenomenological approach as either a 'mish mash' or as mere description. Some of these critics have an ideological interest in keeping different religions separate (Hull 1991).

That there are poor thematic materials available, however, should not obscure the possibilities of juxtaposing material from different traditions in illuminating ways that do not compromise the coherence of each one. Material might, for example, be arranged around common fundamental human questions or might be concerned to explore overlapping ideas or values from different groups or traditions.³

The issue of relating religious material to pupils, whether experientially (point four) or intellectually (point five) has been addressed regularly by phenomenologists who point out that phenomenological approaches need to be complemented by other techniques, such as relating religious material to issues of general human concern (e.g. Grimmitt 1987; Jackson 1987). Edwin Cox's point about relevance, for example, has some force, but there is no reason why phenomenological methods should not be combined with those likely to arouse young people's concern with moral and other issues. With regard to questions of truth, Smart advances the view that, as well as enabling students to grasp the meaning of religion from the insider's perspective, the subject should encourage them to 'enter into dialogue with the parahistorical claims of religious and anti-religious outlooks' (1968, 13) and be involved in fostering 'the production of a ripe capacity to judge the truth of what is propagated by religion' (1968, 97).

Smart's rejection of the idea that phenomenology is a 'total' approach to the study of religion, allowing no possibility of engaging with the implications of differences in truth claims, is consistent with the writings of continental European phenomenologists. For example, the French scholar Gaston Berger makes it clear that critical judgement can be applied to religious data provided that this follows a serious attempt to grasp the material from the insider's point of view.

The phenomenological method . . . teaches us that if we find it

impossible to suppress our own beliefs and our own personal feelings when studying human material, we can at least put them into parentheses, so that they become suspended, without our having to become unfaithful to them, and we can sympathize with other people's deepest emotions, without having to approve all acts into which those are translated. The phenomenologist thus stops confusing truth and meaning. He does not necessarily regard everything he describes as true or good, but through various examples, he applies himself to the task of discovering deep-lying structures, the meaning of which becomes clear to him. He is like a faithful translator who is prepared to respect the thought of his author, even when he is aware that he does not approve him. Later, perhaps, he will be his judge, but for the time being, he only wants to be his friend. (Berger 1957; in Waardenburg 1973, 665)

Thus, contrary to the accusations of some of its critics, the phenomenological method does not imply a relativistic stance on the part of those who use it.

KEY THEMES IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION

So far, we have established that phenomenological methods have often been misrepresented by critics writing about religious education. We have also introduced some of the main concerns of phenomenologists of religion, namely to grasp someone else's religious life through laying aside one's own views and presuppositions, and through empathizing with the insider's experience. The intellectual climate for these developments was philosophical phenomenology, associated with the German psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano (1838–1917), but especially with his pupil Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). General ideas from philosophical phenomenology have influenced the work of phenomenologists of religion in varying degrees, with some having a fairly minimal philosophical interest. Although the direct influence of Husserl has sometimes been over-estimated, it is still worth outlining very briefly some of his main ideas in order to sketch in the intellectual background to some of the work of phenomenologists of religion.

Husserl adopted from Brentano the intentional theory of the mind. An intentional act is always 'of' or 'about' something. When we experience something, for example, there is an object of our experience. If we want to 'know' such an object, we need to examine the relationship between our experience of it and the object itself. As a first step, says Husserl, we must

leave aside the assumptions of common sense and the natural sciences, for matter, causation etc, are *part* of our experience. In this first stage then – that of 'phenomenological reduction' – one's everyday presuppositions are put into parentheses or 'bracketed out'. This methodological suspension of judgement Husserl denotes by the term *epoché* (from the verb *epocho*, 'I hold back') taken from Greek philosophy (1931). Judgement is suspended and attention is directed towards things of which we are conscious. By way of illustration, Husserl uses the example of looking into a garden at an apple tree in blossom. Without reference to external existence we can list objects 'experienced' (e.g. 'tree', 'white', 'blossom') and 'experiences' (e.g. 'perceiving', 'enjoying'). Husserl uses the Greek term *noema* to refer to each object which is experienced and *noesis* for 'perceiving' or 'experiencing', in other words mental acts such as thoughts, attitudes and feelings.

Consciousness involves the relationship between experiences and the things which are experienced. The *noeses* – attitudes, feelings, perceptions etc – provide the key to the various types of objects that constitute the *noemata*, the objects of experience. Corresponding to 'perception' there are colours, shapes, sizes etc; corresponding to 'perceptual enjoyment' are 'delicious', 'beautiful' etc. The *noemata* may be particular (a specific tree, for example) or they may be general abstractions known through intuition (the idea of a tree). Husserl calls these abstracted, absolute forms *eidēia* (derived from the Greek *eidos*, 'that which is seen'), often translated as 'essences'. These abstracted 'essences', each of which is distinct from every other, are pure phenomena present to consciousness. The *eidēia* are, in effect, an absolute and eternal classification system. 'Eidetic reduction', then, is the second step in phenomenology, the move from particular instances to the intuition of pure, irreducible essences. For Husserl, this intuition is logical rather than psychological, akin to grasping a mathematical or logical relation.

This all too brief summary hardly does justice to the complexities and developments of Husserl's thought. It might, however, provide a key to the different concerns of phenomenologists of religion. There have been two main emphases in the field, namely a preoccupation with the classification of religious material, often as a means to comparative study, and a concern with understanding or interpreting the religious worlds of others. Some writers have been concerned with both.⁴

A Classificatory Emphasis

Those with a primary interest in classification have been called 'empiricists' (Waardenburg 1978, 96) or those concerned with 'morphological phenomenology' (McKenzie 1988, 1). Phenomenology for

them is mainly concerned with the task of describing phenomena correctly, analysing their elements and organising them into a rational classification system. Phenomena are grouped under categories and sub-categories which have the widest possible application across religious traditions and which facilitate comparisons, helping to bring out their meaning. Underpinning their ideas, however, is the assumption from philosophical phenomenology that there are universal essences of which individual phenomena are manifestations, regardless of their historical or cultural context.

This 'empirical' emphasis in the phenomenology of religion actually predates Husserl's work. Possibly the first scholar to use the term 'phenomenology of religion' was the Dutch writer Pierre Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848–1920) in his *Manual of the Science of Religion* (1891), published nine years before Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900–01, translated as *Logical Investigations*, 1970). Chantepie describes the new 'science of religion', which he divides into the philosophy of religion and the history of religion, the latter being subdivided into ethnographical studies ('... details of the religions of savage tribes ... that part of mankind that has no history') and the narrowly 'historical development of the religions of civilized nations' (Chantepie 1891 in Waardenburg 1973, 108). Chantepie introduces 'phenomenology of religion' as the bridge between the two pillars of the philosophy and history of religion. It is the 'collecting and grouping of various religious phenomena'. For Chantepie, the accurate definition of the character of religious phenomena is philosophy's task while phenomenology classifies the most important religious, ethnographic and historical material. It is not just a classification of religious practices and acts, however, but also of 'religious impressions, sentiments and states' and Chantepie comments on the dialectical relationship between the mental activity in religion and its outward expression (110). Those critics who have asserted that phenomenology is concerned only with that which is outwardly observable should realize that from its inception the phenomenology of religion was as concerned with religious thinking and feeling as with religious practice.

Other scholars who have been concerned with the classificatory aspects of phenomenology include the Norwegian (naturalized Dutch) scholar William Brede Kristensen (1867–1953), the Germans Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967) and Heinrich Frick (1893–1952), Swedes Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931) and Geo Widengren, and the Romanian/American scholar Mircea Eliade (1907–1986).⁵

Like Chantepie, some phenomenologists regard phenomenology of

religion fundamentally as a systematic means to classify the different forms in which religion is manifested as distinct from the history of religion. For example the Swedish historian of religion Geo Widengren says:

While phenomenology deals with all the expressions of the religious life, wherever they may appear, the history of religion, with its purely historical discipline, examines the development of separate religions. The phenomenology of religion attempts to give a coherent account of all the various phenomena of religion, and is thus the systematic complement of the history of religion. (Widengren 1945, 9 quoted in Sharpe 1975b, 243)

Most of the writers referred to above (with the addition of van der Leeuw who will be discussed below), however, are concerned to expose basic forms to which actual manifestations in the field correspond, although the terminology they use varies from writer to writer (ideal types; *eidēia*; essences; basic phenomena; archetypes).

Kristensen, for example, develops a classification system in which the basic 'types' are abstracted concepts:

The religious essence of sacrifice is a concept and not a reality (only the particular applications are reality), but we cannot dispense with these concepts. (Kristensen 1960, 7)

Incidentally, a typological approach influenced by Kristensen and van der Leeuw has been developed by Australian scholars for use in religious education (Moore and Habel 1982).⁶

Heinrich Frick developed a typological approach to the classification of religious phenomena employing concepts of 'stage' or 'phase' (what is common in a cross-section of different religions) and *habitus* (the unique in every particular religion) and using analogy and homology as means to reveal what he called the 'basic phenomenon', the 'skeleton' or morphological structure of every possible religion (Frick 1928 in Waardenburg 1973, 483–6). Mircea Eliade's approach starts from what he calls 'cosmic hierophanies', the sacred revealed at different cosmic levels, for example as sky, waters, earth, stones and vegetation (1958). His purpose is 'to examine as closely as possible the pattern to be found in the cosmic hierophanies, to see what we can discover from the sacred as expressed in the sky, in water, in vegetation, and so on' (1958, xvi). His conclusion is that the structure of the hierophanies remains the same despite differences in time and cultural setting:

... it is precisely this permanence of structure that makes it possible to know them ... Indeed we may go further: there is no religious form

that does not try to get as close as possible to its true archetype, in other words to rid itself of 'historical' accretions and deposits. (462).

Friedrich Heiler's work is of particular interest to English speaking readers since the publication of Peter McKenzie's *The Christians: Their Practices and Beliefs* (1988), an adaptation of Heiler's *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion (The Manifestations and Essence of Religion)* (1961), concentrating on Heiler's Christian material and augmenting it with new examples. Heiler's phenomenology uses three approaches – what he calls a longitudinal section (a geographical and historical survey of an individual religion); a cross-section (an analysis of different types of religion, classified, for example, according to their sociological and psychological character, their conception of God, or their outlook on life); and the concentric circle, an approach in which Heiler treats the whole of religion, moving from an outer circle of external manifestations (objects and actions) to a ring representing the rational element in religion – concepts of God, salvation and revelation – to a circle representing religious experience. Inside these rings is a further one representing God as 'intended object' of religious activity (associated with the concepts of holiness, love and truth) and finally at the centre of the circle is the *Deus ipse* or *absconditus*, the divine reality that cannot be captured in language. Heiler's work traces the interrelationship of the concepts constituting the segments of each ring and the relationship between the different circles (Heiler in Waardenburg 1973, 473–8). It is this method that is adapted by McKenzie in his book.

To move to more recent times, Ninian Smart's phenomenological work, which has been so influential on religious education in the United Kingdom, has also been mainly of the morphological variety, though employing six (or seven) dimensions for the purpose of description and analysis, rather than a more specific and complex classificatory scheme (eg Smart 1971 and 1989).

The essentialism displayed by most of the above writers (though not by Smart) is related to philosophical phenomenology and to theology. With regard to philosophy, there is a close similarity between Husserl's *eideia* – a universal, abstract classification scheme whose meaning is independent of historical or cultural context – and the various modes of classification used by phenomenologists of religion. Even if there is little or no direct influence from Husserl, the climate of philosophical phenomenology provided concepts and categories for such schemes. With regard to theology, most of the writers were Christians wanting to make sense of other traditions in relation to their own, and their writing, with varying degrees of explicitness, has a tendency to universalize their own theological

concepts and categories. The influence of Christian theological concerns will be returned to later.

A Philosophical Emphasis

What has been called 'hermeneutical phenomenology' (Brennemann 1982) is concerned with the analysis of religious data, observed directly by the phenomenologist or provided by academic disciplines such as history, sociology or theology. The application of phenomenological methods to the data (suppressing one's presuppositions or distancing oneself and, in turn, empathizing with the other) is intended to bring about the disclosure of significant religious phenomena. It is this wing of the phenomenology of religion that is most directly influenced by philosophical phenomenology. Some of the writers discussed above, although primarily concerned with classification, were also concerned with the processes through which the scholar attempts to reconstruct the religious lives of others. However, the 'classical' phenomenologist of religion who probably makes the most influential contribution to this aspect of the field is the Dutch writer Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950). Van der Leeuw was an original and eclectic thinker, drawing on the work of various philosophers, psychologists, theologians, phenomenologists of religion (Kristensen was his teacher) and social theorists (including Dilthey and Weber). Although he was steeped in phenomenological ideas, direct influence from Husserl seems limited. He was also an accomplished musician and he wrote on music and the arts as well as on religion. His understanding of the arts, and particularly his musical experience, gave him insights into the interpretation of religious data.

Unlike Husserl, van der Leeuw is primarily concerned with religion, and specifically with getting a better 'understanding' (*Verstehen*) of religious phenomena.⁷ For van der Leeuw a 'phenomenon' is neither an object nor is it the student to whom the object 'appears', but is 'an object related to a subject and a subject related to an object' (van der Leeuw 1938, reproduced in Waardenburg 1973, 412). 'Its entire essence', he writes, 'is given in its "appearance" and its appearance to "someone"' (413). The understanding of a phenomenon by someone else requires two steps. The first lies in grasping the person's psychological life, the contents of another's consciousness. This requires *epoché*, which is not quite Husserl's bracketing out of one's own presuppositions, but more a 'distancing' by the subject in order to allow the internal structure of the object to be 'seen' as well as its broader connections with other phenomena. This, for van der Leeuw, is a process dependent on an attitude of warmth, 'spontaneously warm, self denying devotion' towards the phenomenon (van der Leeuw 1926 in Waardenburg 1973, 403). This process can give what van der Leeuw calls a 'static understanding'.

This 'static understanding' needs to be complemented with a 'genetic understanding'. Gaining this is a creative, intuitive process in which the phenomenologist restructures, rearranges, sees the connections between the phenomena which have been understood 'statically' and perceives a 'living unity'. Van der Leeuw introduces the term 'structural relations' or 'structural connections' (derived from Jaspers and in turn from Dilthey) to refer to this process, and the term 'ideal type' (adapted from Weber) to characterize the 'essences' perceived in 'structural relations' (van der Leeuw 1926 in Waardenburg 1973, 404–95). An 'ideal type' in itself has no reality but, like 'structure', is timeless. The 'ideal type' of the soul, for example, is an idea to which all concepts of the soul relate (van der Leeuw 1938 in Waardenburg 1973, 415). Clearly van der Leeuw's ideal types correspond closely to Husserl's *eideia*. The capacity to perceive 'structural relations' or to gain a 'genetic understanding' of phenomena (equivalent to Husserl's eidetic reduction) is, however, for van der Leeuw:

an intuitive insight into what is essential, typical, meaningful. This is a faculty which is near to artistic talent . . . The ideal-typical construction may be compared to the products of the artistic mind, which likewise express a kind of dual experience in addition to the 'empirical' experience of the poet, which, however, by no means has less evidence. The ideal type is, therefore, formed indeed on the basis of experience, but it is not derived from experience – just as little as the hero of a drama. (van der Leeuw 1926 in Waardenburg 1973, 405)

In describing what Dilthey called the 'experience of a structural connection' van der Leeuw writes:

It is in fact the primal and primitively human art of the actor which is indispensable to all arts, but to the sciences of the mind also: to sympathize keenly and closely with experience other than one's own, but also with one's own experience of yesterday, already become strange! (van der Leeuw 1938 in Waardenburg 1973, 416)

The central activity of phenomenology, then, is seen by van der Leeuw as being close to an art. He also uses metaphors from the arts (specifically music) in characterizing empathy (*Einfühlung*), the activity or skill employed to grasp structural connection. Empathy is 'transposing oneself into the object or re-experiencing it' (van der Leeuw 1926 in Waardenburg 1973, 401). The process of perceiving the essence of religious phenomena is compared to that of grasping a melody:

We give ourselves over to a melody by way of empathy, we discuss its elements not as quantifiably measurable series of vibrations of the air, nor as expressions of a certain idea, but as a phenomenon, as it were as

'tonal ideas' . . . We must discover the relations which turn the melody into a meaningful unity . . . (403–4)

PHENOMENOLOGY'S WEAKNESSES

Although the criticisms of phenomenology which are commonly advanced by writers on RE have been answered, there remain some problems with the approach. With regard to philosophical phenomenology, as exemplified by Husserl, knowledge of phenomena is based on a faculty akin to mathematical intuition. Van der Leeuw is more flexible, regarding intuition as an artistic faculty. In both cases, however, knowledge is derived subjectively, with no reference to historical or cultural context. There is no room for differences of interpretation and, as with intuitionist ethics, phenomenology is open to the charge of authoritarianism. Most other criticisms relate to this fundamental point.

There are problems with the notion of *epoché*, of distancing or putting into parentheses one's presuppositions, as a methodological tool. The phenomenologists of religion introduced above say little about how to achieve *epoché*, and there is evidence from their own work that they could not go much beyond the intention to achieve it. For example, they all accept the concepts of 'religions' or 'religion' uncritically, yet, as we shall see in Chapter 3, both are relatively recently constructed notions. Moreover, their classification systems superimpose Western and Christian concepts on to other material. Most of the phenomenologists mentioned above use terminology to designate individual phenomena which are derived from their Western and Christian background (e.g. Heiler using the terms God, salvation and revelation or van der Leeuw's concepts of sacrifice, prayer and saviour).⁸

The fact that some phenomenologists had a Christian theological agenda, as well as a purely scholarly one, is also relevant. Several were keen to present a liberal, 'inclusivist' interpretation of other traditions, and their theological goals influenced their scholarship to varying extents. Heiler, for example, was active in Christian ecumenism and inter-faith relations and considered all religions at root to be a unity. Frick, who linked the study of religion with Christian mission, wrestled with the theological issue of reconciling the uniqueness of Christianity with its being one religion among many. Van der Leeuw not only employed terminology from Christian theology in giving names to phenomena, but also posited an ascending hierarchy of meaning structures within the ideal types up to Christ as the primary source of meaning (Waardenburg 1978, 223).

As far as *epoché* is concerned, perhaps one can do no more than try to be aware of at least some of one's presuppositions and to hold on to that awareness but, as we shall see below (Chapter 3), that might require some historical and cultural study, in order to assess the extent to which our personal presuppositions are conditioned by received views. Even then, the inquirer is still left carrying some baggage of past experiences, assumptions, questions and concerns (to say nothing of factors such as gender) that can influence the interpretation of another's worldview.

A related problem is the emphasis phenomenology puts on the use of empathy as a means to understanding another's way of life. Firstly, in van der Leeuw's terms, you distance yourself in order to gain a 'static' understanding and then you empathize in order to reconstruct intuitively the other's way of life, to perceive it as a living unity. In van der Leeuw's words, empathy (*Einfühlung*) is 'transposing oneself into the object or re-experiencing it'. The metaphor of transposition reveals van der Leeuw's intense interest in music and, as we saw above, he compares empathy with religious phenomena with one's experience of music. What van der Leeuw does not discuss is his own close familiarity with the grammar of the European high-culture music to which he is referring and its role in his ability to empathize with and to interpret examples of it (many of his publications were on European music; he also played the organ and had a good singing voice). One wonders what he would have made of a Balinese *gamelan* orchestra, the sounds of the South Indian *nagarwara* or saxophone solos by Sidney Bechet or Gerry Mulligan (all of which, incidentally, could have been available to him during his lifetime). This is not to say that any of these might not have 'spoken' to him or touched him emotionally, but to suggest that he would likely have made some very serious errors of interpretation had he relied solely on his familiarity with one musical tradition to make sense of them. In other words, van der Leeuw's personal experience of the arts, as with his theology, in addition to revealing sensitivities, exposes presuppositions that he would probably have found some difficulty in setting aside, and shifts 'intuition' from being a logical faculty to a psychological process.

Another general criticism, related to its subjectivism, is phenomenology's tendency to take religious data out of its original context in place, time, society and culture. It may be useful and sometimes illuminating to examine data from sources in different traditions which exhibit common features or patterns, but, unless done with great caution, the method can be highly misleading. For example, van der Leeuw's attempts to gain a 'static' understanding through distancing and a 'genetic' understanding through empathy are made without any detailed reconstruction of context. For van der Leeuw, getting a better understanding of another's experience

is an intuitive matter. It consists in interpolating that experience into one's own life, a process which assumes that there is no fundamental difference between the observation of one's own and someone else's ego, regardless of the place, time and culture to which the other person belongs. The dangers of misinterpretation are obvious.

Van der Leeuw and other phenomenologists regarded it as axiomatic that there are essences – ideal types – (*eideia* in Husserl's terms) which are universal in human consciousness, and that therefore 'religious meaning' constitutes an autonomous realm or value category. Much recent work in philosophy, the social sciences, cultural criticism and literary theory questions the existence of universal 'essences', common to widely varying ways of life, and which can be exposed through the application of a method or technique. Wittgenstein and others have drawn attention to the matter of broad context in assessing the meaning of terminology within a language. Wittgenstein's contention is that for a large number of cases in which the word 'meaning' is employed, the meaning of a word is its use within the language of the particular 'form of life' (we might say 'mode of discourse' or even 'worldview') in which it is found (Wittgenstein 1958).

An emphasis on the importance of context in understanding other ways of life does not imply that there is no commonality in human nature or experience, but it cautions us against looking for a variety of universal essences embedded in the consciousness of people, with a common meaning regardless of the culture or way of life in which they are set, and which can be uncovered methodologically. Rather, people from different cultural settings or ways of life use language and other symbols in particular ways which expose the meaning of words and practices within them. The 'grammar' of language use has to be grasped before the meaning of the terms or actions becomes evident. To posit 'essences' corresponding to one's own (or one's own 'culturally familiar') use of a term like 'religion' or 'the numinous' or the 'soul', or especially a slippery concept like 'spirituality', and then to go hunting for its direct equivalent in another way of life, is to make (to borrow Ryle's term) a 'category mistake'.

The problem does not end here, for we do not only have to be cautious of our own and our contemporaries' tendencies in this direction. As the next chapter will argue, earlier examples of culture contact have resulted in the projection of terms, assumptions and structures from one way of life on to those of others, structures that have subsequently become embedded in literature and language and which have tended to be accepted as received truth or common sense. This is not just a matter of inadvertent misunderstanding, but results from an unequal power relationship.

The conclusion of this discussion is that any cross-cultural search for religious 'essences' is philosophically dubious and lacks a grasp of historical influences on the building of concepts. Rudolph Otto's contention, for example, that the 'numinous' is a 'unique . . . category of value' and a mental state 'perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to any other', cannot be regarded as an axiom (Otto 1959, 21).

PHENOMENOLOGY'S STRENGTHS

Despite the above criticisms, the work of phenomenologists such as van der Leeuw contains some important insights with regard to understanding someone else's way of life. Phenomenologists recognized, for example, that the process of interpretation has to start where the interpreter is at, and move from there. When van der Leeuw wrote of 'structure', he was using Spranger's idea of significantly organized reality (van der Leeuw 1935 in Waardenburg 1973, 410). A collection of objects or a series of actions can have meaning to someone, but that meaning may not be evident to the outsider. The meaning needs to be reconstructed and the reconstruction starts from the interpreter's current understanding. Freed from the language of ideal types and essences, this sounds like hermeneutics, and indeed van der Leeuw refers to the hermeneutic circle – the 'sphere of meaning' – (understanding parts in relation to the whole structure) and he also regularly cites Dilthey's work (e.g. van der Leeuw 1938 in Waardenburg 1973, 414). Without the phenomenological baggage, this begins to resemble interpretive approaches that have developed subsequently in other fields such as anthropology. These will be discussed in the next chapter. Secondly, the *intention* of laying one's presuppositions to one side is methodologically important as a step towards impartiality, even though one can probably do no more than try to be aware of at least some of one's presuppositions.

Thirdly, phenomenologists were right to see the importance of empathy and also to draw attention to the capacity of sensitivity which is associated with it, though I would argue that sensitivity is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for understanding. The issue regarding empathy is not so much whether it is possible to empathize, but judging the point at which one might reasonably be confident that empathy can be genuine. I would suggest that one's capacity for empathy develops *after* grasping the 'grammar' of someone else's discourse, otherwise there is a real danger that the interpreter might project his or her own concepts, feelings or attitudes on to the situation being studied.

The phenomenologists emphasized the view that the insider's testimony is

the key source for grasping a religious way of life. Kristensen's dictum 'Let us never forget that there exists no other religious reality than the faith of the believer' is an important corrective to those whose interpretations are based solely on the application of some theoretical or ideological position to secondary religious data, even though his contention that 'we must refer exclusively to the believer's testimony' goes too far (Kristensen 1954, 27 quoted in Sharpe 1975b, 228).

'NEW STYLE' PHENOMENOLOGY

It has to be recognized that the phenomenology of religion has changed and developed as a discipline, and the work of some writers takes account of many of the criticisms of 'classical phenomenology' outlined above. The Dutch scholar Jacques Waardenburg regards himself as a 'new style' phenomenologist. 'New style' phenomenology still focuses upon intentionality, on the relationship between people's experiences and the objects or expressions of their experience. The core of understanding what a religious expression means to a person is the intention which has given rise to the expression. Thus, the aim of the phenomenologist is to reconstruct meanings with particular reference to intentions. Unlike the 'classical' phenomenologists, who largely studied other 'religions' through secondary textual accounts (as did van der Leeuw), Waardenburg regards phenomenology as being especially relevant to the contemporary study of living religions.

Like the 'classical' phenomenologists, Waardenburg makes use of the concept of *epoché*, but unlike them, he extends it to include a suspension of one's presuppositions as to the nature of religion itself and the contention that 'religion' should be studied in the context of other factors, for example, social, cultural and economic aspects of life. Empirical research and the formulation of hypotheses to be checked by further empirical research are key features of the method, as is systematic reflection on the research process. Moreover, phenomenology has to grapple with linguistic issues, for example in making translations and in the critical use of scholarly concepts rooted in a Western cultural and religious tradition (1978, 102).

Phenomenology is thus a scholarly discipline with philosophical elements, but it is also an art. Whereas van der Leeuw regards the capacity for empathy with those studied as an artistic process, Waardenburg sees the researcher's role in reconstructing the religious world of the insider as close to that of an actor playing a part:

When we speak of the reconstitution of a religious universe, as a prerequisite for any understanding of religious meanings, the implication is that in this stage of research the imaginative faculty is used. And when we mention the possibility of an active self-involvement on the part of the researcher in the facts and meanings studied, the implication is that the researcher, even if only temporarily – as an actor we might say – takes the role of one of the people he studies. (1978, 110–11)

In the same context, Waardenburg writes of the researcher needing to be sensitive to religious meanings in a receptive way, of the researcher's use of the 'imaginative faculty' as a prerequisite for understanding religious meanings and of the 'art' of interpretation. This capacity comes close to that required by 'participant observation' as developed in social anthropology since Malinowski's time.

A further artistic element in phenomenology is concerned with the researcher's conversion of others' religious expressions into adequately digested impressions. There is a creative element, says Waardenburg, not only in one's use of imagination, but in one's perception of meanings (1978, 111–12).

However, while van der Leeuw makes no clear distinction between the observation of one's own and someone else's ego, regardless of the cultural or temporal context to which the other person belongs, Waardenburg insists that:

... a rigorous methodical distinction has to be made between the religious significance which the phenomenon has to a given people in a given culture, and the religious or other meaning which the student himself, on the basis of his experience, might be inclined to attribute to it. (1978, 107)

Whereas Husserl's universal categories of classification are *eideia*, and van der Leeuw's are 'ideal types', Waardenburg refers to 'structures of intentionality'. Van der Leeuw's ideal types are categories sometimes derived from Christian theology, universally applied to other traditions, whereas Waardenburg's structures are relative to particular traditions, intimately related to the concepts of the tradition he studies. While van der Leeuw saw the artistic quality of phenomenology partly in having insight to perceive 'structural relations' or to acquire a 'genetic understanding' of phenomena, Waardenburg discards any quest to locate a universal, abstract classificatory scheme.

Waardenburg's own work includes an analysis of the scholarly work of five Islamicists (1970) in which he teases out the presuppositions about Islam

contained both in the scholars' subjective perceptions and in their scholarly methods. He has also, in the context of studying Qur'anic material recording Muhammad's discussions with Jews, Christians and polytheists, used the methods of 'new style' phenomenology in imaginative reconstructions of personalities referred to in texts (1972). He has also advocated his methods for analysis of religious expressions in particular social contexts and in analysing signification systems. In the latter case, he is interested, for example, in which parts of a religious signification system have relevance and meaning for a given member of the religion or for a group within the religion (1978, 42).

Waardenburg, in answering most of the standard criticisms of the phenomenology of religion, has transformed the discipline. With Waardenburg's emphasis on the study of living religions, his rejigging of the phenomenological vocabulary, his concern with the art of interpretation, his insistence on studying religions in their social, cultural and historical context, and his down-playing of classification, 'new style' phenomenology begins to resemble hermeneutical approaches such as that exemplified in interpretive anthropology. As we shall see in Chapter 2, his insistence on the reconstitution of a religious universe as a prerequisite for any understanding of religious meanings, and indeed as a prerequisite for empathy, brings him closer to Clifford Geertz's approach to ethnographic interpretation than to the classical phenomenologists. Even Waardenburg's use of the term *epoché* suggests being aware of factors that influence one's presuppositions rather than 'bracketing' them out in the manner advocated by the classical phenomenologists.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have shown that the standard criticisms of phenomenological approaches advanced in some of the British RE literature are misplaced, being applicable only to poorly designed materials which misapply principles from phenomenology. A closer look at the phenomenology of religion through some of its 'classical' exponents, however, revealed a field with a number of methodological and philosophical weaknesses and some questionable theological assumptions, despite having some positive features. Although the phenomenologists of religion had a deep concern for issues of understanding and interpretation, their methodologies could not provide the basis for an approach to religious education which considered material from different cultural contexts authentically in its own terms. A contemporary version of the phenomenology of religion, that of Jacques Waardenburg's 'New Style'

phenomenology, was then discussed and found to be radically different from earlier approaches, taking on board most of the criticisms levelled at the 'classical' exponents of the field. Although there are indeed possibilities for using Waardenburg's methodology as a basis for religious education, I raised the question as to whether his transformation of the discipline really represented a departure from phenomenology as a philosophical basis for interpretation, opening up the possibility of finding more 'user-friendly' interpretive approaches in other fields of study and research. The next chapter goes on to consider this possibility through examining approaches developed in the field of social or cultural anthropology. It is interesting that in a work by Edward Said devoted to showing the errors of interpretation by Western scholars of Islam (1978), the author praises the work of Jacques Waardenburg (209–10) and the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (326). Some of the points they have in common will be discussed in the next chapter and, later, a modified version of Geertz's methodology will be applied to curriculum development in religious education.

Notes

- 1 The Project's aim was 'to evolve research and materials relevant to the construction of a satisfying programme of religious education in secondary schools, which takes into account the existence of voluntary schools and the presence of non-Christian populations in this country'. (Schools Council 1971, 83)
- 2 An important phenomenological study of Christianity also comes from the Leicester Department, adapting the work of the German phenomenologist Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967) (McKenzie 1988).
- 3 It is ironic that the model syllabuses published in 1994 in Britain by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority do not include a thematic model, yet do not rule out a thematic approach – a case of those wishing to maintain the 'purity' of Christianity having more influence on the Department for Education and SCAA than those defending thematic approaches.
- 4 Incidentally the use of the term 'phenomenology' in sociology needs some explanation. Alfred Schutz initially used Husserl's phenomenology as a philosophical basis for Weber's 'interpretive' (*verstehende*) sociology (in opposition to the Vienna Circle's positivism and behaviourism). Later, under the influence of G H Mead, Schutz reversed Husserl's idea that the individual is prior to society and founded phenomenological sociology. Its method begins by describing common sense assumptions about social existence, and its field methods closely resemble those of ethnography (e.g. the work of Becker and Garfinkel).
- 5 Ninian Smart's work also shares this emphasis, although his 'dimensional' approach is looser and less concerned with the mechanics of classification than the systems of most phenomenologists, and he draws back from essentialism. Rather than looking for essences, Smart's schema points up family resemblances, either among religious traditions or between religious traditions and other types of worldview such as political ideologies (notably Maoism). In his later work, Smart uses the term 'worldview analysis' to characterise this activity (e.g. Smart 1982). Eliade's work is complex and wide-ranging in its reference, but he nevertheless has a basic concern with classification.
- 6 Basil Moore and Norman Habel used ideas from phenomenology to develop a typological approach drawing on, for example, the work of Continental European phenomenologists such as Kristensen and van der Leeuw (Moore and Habel 1982, 49). They acknowledge the work of Smart, but differ from him in limiting their typology to overtly religious systems and in advocating Christianity and its typological categories as the paradigm for the study of religion (1982, 15). Their argument is that pupils are more likely to be familiar with Christian (and Jewish) categories than those of other traditions, an argument that is difficult to sustain in increasingly pluralistic societies. Apart from asserting that 'religion refers to those types of phenomena which bear a family resemblance to the individual phenomena of Christianity and Judaism' (20), Moore and Habel's approach starts from three axioms concerning the study of religion:

- a) the study of religion is concerned with the study of individual types of phenomena and the typical patterns of relations within and between the individual phenomena;
 - b) the study of religion is concerned with the study of the specific character of the types in given traditions and the specific relations between the phenomena in specific religious traditions;
 - c) the study of religion is concerned with the study of the typical patterns of relations at the inter-face between religion (both the types of phenomena and the religious traditions) and other aspects of human existence. (49)
- Unlike some of their British counterparts, they give a good deal of attention to educational theory and to practical skills and pedagogical techniques in relation to what they call 'cross-cultural translation', giving attention both to cognitive and affective factors (Chapter 3).
- 7 *Verstehen* can be translated as 'understanding' or 'interpretation', the thrust of the meaning being to 'understand' (the use of symbols, for example) from the point of view of the 'insider'. The precise meaning of the term varies in different disciplines and approaches, for example in phenomenology – which emphasises empathy with the insider – and interpretive anthropology, which involves reconstructing the wider symbol systems of insiders.
- 8 It is with regard to the dangers of inadvertently transposing classificatory categories that I have some sympathy with critics of the cruder types of thematic approach to RE.

Anthropology and Interpretation

INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, we found a methodology based in traditional views of the phenomenology of religion deficient for understanding religious data. Are there, then, other fields which might provide appropriate methods for interpreting different religious ways of life? Here it is argued that recent work in social or cultural anthropology (often called ethnography) provides techniques which 'classical' phenomenology of religion lacks. The interpretive anthropology of Clifford Geertz, in the discussion which follows, is seen as especially relevant, but not without taking account of criticisms of Geertz from ethnographers of a more 'deconstructive' hue. The debates between Geertz and his critics raise further questions about understanding and interpretation. There is the issue of reflexivity, of being aware of one's own self and personal and social understandings in interpreting the testimony of someone from another way of life – an issue which came up in our discussion of phenomenology. There are also the crucial questions as to the nature of a religion or a culture. These last questions – ones that have received little attention from religious educators – are the subject of the following two chapters.

ANTHROPOLOGY'S HISTORY

If phenomenology does not provide the best methods for interpreting religious ways of life, does anthropology – another discipline concerned, in some of its branches, to enable the scholar to reconstruct the life-worlds of others – provide appropriate techniques? A glance at the history of the discipline would, on the face of it, suggest not. The histories of

anthropology in general and social and cultural anthropology in particular are shot through with methodological, epistemological and moral issues. The subject expanded through colonialism enabling white, Western (and almost exclusively male) anthropologists to study the 'other' – different cultural groups, often in exotic locations. Moreover, it has been argued that anthropology has not simply developed because of colonialism, but has served colonialism's interests (e.g. Asad 1973).

At various times, 'grand theories' have been imposed upon the discipline, from evolutionism in the nineteenth century to cultural relativism, structuralism and Marxism in the twentieth. Some of these anthropological perspectives have had an impact on religious education – for example nineteenth century anthropological accounts of the development of religion. The image of the anthropologist E B Tylor imposing an evolutionary structure (from animism to polytheism to monotheism) on to the history of religion (1871) is mirrored by some approaches to the 'Old Testament' in 1950s and 1960s English and Welsh Agreed Syllabuses for Religious Instruction, and even in school books sometimes still found in use in schools. Wigley and Pitcher's *From Fear to Faith* is an example of the perpetuation of the evolutionary view in a religious education text, with 'primitive' religious ideas and practices represented as being generated by fear and Christianity portrayed as the culmination of religion's development (1969).

Some of anthropology's failures have been attempts to accommodate ethnographic method to the natural sciences. The work of Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, for example, drew heavily on Durkheim, treated social anthropology as a form of comparative sociology and was attacked for imposing a positivist interpretation on its data (1958). Other writers, including various types of conflict theorists (e.g. Marxist), have tended to impress particular ideological interpretations of a more political kind. Related to this point is the view that, from the early history of the discipline, many anthropologists have been anti-religious, a fact that prompted Edward Evans-Pritchard (himself a Catholic convert) to chart anti-religious bias in anthropological writing (1962a, 155–71). Anthropology, it might be concluded, hardly seems likely to be the progenitor of impartial and sensitive methods for representing and interpreting religious ways of life.

If anthropologists are rejected as providers of appropriate methods, should the task of 'translation' be put into the hands of 'insiders'? In the context of religious education, which has a very strong tendency to portray rather loosely knit religious traditions as holistic entities, insider accounts from one segment of the tradition can be read inadvertently (or even may be

intended to be read) as universally applicable. Another problem here is that accounts written entirely by insiders tend to take for granted as 'normal' or ignore as 'common sense' key symbols and institutions which might awaken a sense of understanding in outsiders, and therefore may be of limited value in explicating the symbol systems or institutions of a particular group of people. This is not to say, of course, that 'insider' accounts do not have their place.¹

To return to anthropology, it is in the work of ethnographers who have recognized artistic elements in their work that we begin to find methodologies which are less prescriptive and more self-critical than those of some of their more narrowly scientific or ideological colleagues. For example, Evans-Pritchard (one of Radcliffe-Brown's critics), in his later work, argued vehemently against positivistic assumptions in the history of social anthropology, drawing attention to the artistic and humanistic elements in ethnography and maintaining that the subject required competences similar to those of the historian (1961; 1962b). Strict comparison of social institutions was impossible, argued Evans-Pritchard, and any quest for the laws of human social behaviour was futile (1962b). In different ways, and especially through their interest in literary theory and practice, anthropologists such as Victor Turner, Mary Douglas, Edmund Leach, Clifford Geertz, Barbara Myerhoff and James Clifford have also blurred the boundary between art and science through their views of anthropological interpretation.

INTERPRETIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

The 'interpretive' anthropology of Clifford Geertz is particularly relevant to our purpose. Geertz has conducted significant fieldwork, much of it of direct interest to the student of religion (e.g. 1960; 1968), but much of his writing consists of reflections on his methodology drawing upon a range of disciplines, but especially on literary theory and philosophy, often applying his insights to other fields such as religion or politics (1973), law or art (1983). Following the example of some of his critics who have emphasised the importance of the act of writing in ethnography (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986), his most recent book is a study of the anthropologist as author (Geertz 1988). Geertz's work is especially valuable precisely because of its reflective, critical nature. Geertz's reflections on the processes of fieldwork, data analysis and writing, and his application of his insights to other fields, provide us with a clear point of entry into recent debates within ethnography concerning techniques for interpreting another's way of life.

Whereas the 'classical' phenomenologists attempted to lay aside their presuppositions in reconstructing another's worldview, Geertz urges ethnographers to be conscious of the relationship between the concepts, symbols, institutions etc of 'insiders' and their own vocabulary – whether technical or not – used to reconstruct the insiders' world and to interpret it to others. The ethnographer's own language is a comparative tool for working out the meanings of insiders. Geertz is also concerned to explore the relationship between the particular and the general in a cultural scene. Classical phenomenologists were interested in identifying abstract universal essences, free from any context in time or place. Geertz, however, is concerned with the relationship between 'parts' and 'wholes' within a cultural situation. For Geertz, meaning is tied to context. The two processes are not easily separable in practice, as the Javanese example discussed below indicates. In bridging one's own conceptual frame and that of an insider, reference has to be made to the wider context in which the insider's discourse is set.

Parts and Wholes

Although Geertz is an eclectic and original writer, his approach owes a heavy debt to the European hermeneutical or 'interpretive' tradition, especially to Paul Ricoeur (Geertz 1973, 19) and less directly to Wilhelm Dilthey (Geertz 1983, 70).² For example, Geertz's idea of 'inscription of action' is adapted from Ricoeur's 'textualization' (Ricoeur 1971) and is the process through which parts of a cultural scene – oral tradition, beliefs, rituals etc – are recognized as a 'text', a fairly stable reference point for interpreting other parts of the 'culture'. Geertz puts the idea this way:

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

To make use of ideas from Wittgenstein, an analysis of what Geertz calls an 'ensemble of texts' would reveal the 'grammar' of a 'form of life' (1958), the contextual reference for interpreting particular symbols, whether they be stories, rituals, institutions etc. Just as a grammar is abstracted from a language (both speech and text) and can be analysed separately from the context in which the language is spoken, so 'text' (as inscribed, for example, in the fieldnotes of the ethnographer) is to be distinguished from 'discourse', which is spoken language tied to particular events in life.³ The ethnographer needs to preserve these different 'levels' through the accumulation of detailed fieldnotes which reveal the complexity of the field – what Geertz calls 'thick description'.

Fieldnotes are 'inscribed actions' or 'textualisations' and are not raw

'discourse'. Published ethnographies (texts which are largely edited and recast from fieldnotes) tend to obscure the various 'levels' of data, giving the appearance of code cracking, when the reality is that ethnography is an interpretive activity, more akin to that of the literary critic, says Geertz, than the cipher clerk (1973, 9). The thicker the description in the field notes, the more chance the ethnographer has of applying hermeneutic principles well in interpreting the structures of signification within a cultural scene. But the ethnographer needs to be candid about the interpretive nature of the whole approach:

... what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to ... Right down at the factual base, the hard rock, insofar as there is any, of the whole enterprise, we are already explicating. (1973, 9)

The 'Bridge' between Ethnographer and Subject

Returning to the first concern mentioned above – working out a balanced relationship between the concepts, symbols, institutions etc of 'insiders' and the vocabulary of the ethnographer – the essence of anthropological analysis, says Geertz, lies in creating a balance between what he calls 'experience near' and 'experience distant' concepts.

An experience-near concept is, roughly, one that someone – a patient, a subject, in our case an informant – might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others. An experience-distant concept is one that specialists of one sort or another – an analyst, an experimenter, an ethnographer, even a priest or an ideologist – employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims. (1983, 57)

It is important to emphasise that Geertz is referring to concepts rather than terms. He gives 'caste' as an example of an 'experience near' concept for Hindus. The concept would be familiar to most Hindus, while the term might not be. Moreover, some uses of the term by outsiders expressing particular interpretations of the concept might be 'experience distant' (c.f. Dumont 1972). In any case, Geertz acknowledges that the distinction between 'experience near' and 'experience distant' is sometimes a matter of degree. One might compare the distinction between 'folk' terms and 'analytic' terms sometimes made by writers on ethnographic methodology (e.g. Spradley 1978).

The key question for Geertz is how each set of concepts should be deployed in order '... to produce an interpretation of the way a people live which is neither imprisoned within their mental horizons ... nor

systematically deaf to the distinctive tonalities of their existence ...' (Geertz 1983, 57). The art of anthropological analysis is to grasp concepts that are for another people 'experience near' well enough to place them '... in illuminating connection with experience-distant concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life ...' (58). How can this be done? Not by empathizing with the people being studied, with an ethnographer imagining himself or herself to be someone else and then seeing what he or she thought. As far as Geertz is concerned:

The ethnographer does not, and, in my opinion, largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he perceives, and that uncertainly enough, is what they perceive 'with' – or 'by means of,' or 'through' ... or whatever the word should be. (58)

Geertz's criticism is especially directed at Malinowski, but could equally be applied to those phenomenologists of religion and religious educators who expect students with a limited knowledge or understanding to empathize with insiders from unfamiliar ways of life. The way to proceed, says Geertz, is '... by searching out and analysing the symbolic forms – words, images, institutions, behaviours – in terms of which, in each place, people actually represented themselves to themselves and to one another' (58). Geertz gives examples from his fieldwork with various groups of people in Java, Bali and Morocco showing how he discerned in each case the concept of 'person' or, in less specifically Western terms, 'the human individual'. In Geertz's view, attempting to grasp another's concept of 'person' by means of empathy usually amounts to accommodating that concept to the Western conception of a person as '... a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivated and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background ...' (59).

All of Geertz's examples are illuminating, but a summary of one gives an idea of his mode of analysis. The key to grasping the idea of the human individual, in the particular group of Javanese people he studied, turned out to be two pairs of 'experience-near' concepts. The first pair, *batin*, and *lair* are borrowed from Islamic (Sufi) mysticism and reworked. *Batin* is an 'inside' word referring to the emotional life of human beings generally.

It consists of the fuzzy, shifting flow of subjective feeling perceived directly in all its phenomenological immediacy but considered to be, at its roots at least, identical across all individuals, whose individuality it thus effaces. (60)

Lair, on the other hand, is an 'outside' word referring to external actions,

movements, postures and speech. *Lair*, like *batin*, refers generally to human beings. 'Inward feelings' and 'outward actions' are regarded as independent realms of being that separately need to be controlled or regulated.

The other two concepts connect with the idea of control or putting into proper order. *Alus* is a rich word whose connotations include 'refined', 'civilized' and 'smooth'. By contrast the meanings of *kasar* include 'impolite', 'rough', 'course' and 'insensitive'. The aim is to be *alus* in both *batin* and *lair* realms of the individual. In the 'inner', *batin* realm this is achieved through religious (mainly mystical) discipline. In the 'outer', *lair* realm it is achieved through a very tight system of etiquette. Geertz shows the application of this analysis to anthropological understanding with a vivid example:

Only when you have seen, as I have, a young man whose wife – a woman he had in fact raised from childhood and who had been the centre of his life – has suddenly and inexplicably died, greeting everyone with a set smile and formal apologies for his wife's absence and trying, by mystical techniques, to flatten out, as he himself put it, the hills and valley of his emotion into an even, level plain ('that is what you have to do,' he said to me, 'be smooth inside and out') can you come, in the face of our own notions of the intrinsic honesty of deep feeling and the moral importance of personal sincerity, to take the possibility of such a conception of selfhood seriously and appreciate, however inaccessible it is to you, its own sort of force. (61)

I hope the point is clear, even though in my summary of Geertz's summary, the 'depth' of the exercise can be barely communicated. A few more remarks on Geertz's analytical methods might make his position clearer. Although the example does not discuss directly Geertz's use of 'experience-distant' concepts, the impression is given that part of his 'feeling' the way towards a grasp of 'experience-near' concepts is through running parallels with, and then rejecting as inadequate, concepts from his own 'form of life'. Thus 'body' and 'soul' are mentioned in his account as being entirely inappropriate designations for *lair* and *batin*, for to look for one word expressions in one cultural setting and then match them with 'equivalents' from another would be to make a category mistake. Lists of English words are also used by Geertz to express the subtleties of meaning of 'experience-near' concepts and fairly complex English sentences are required to convey this sense. Look again at Geertz's 'definition' of *batin* (above).

More important is the technique used for getting to the point where he can attempt these English interpretations. Here, as indicated above, Geertz sees his method as a type of hermeneutics. Geertz's data analysis consists

in getting a sense of the 'culture' as a generality through its parts, and getting a sense of each part – each 'symbol', whether it be a word, image, institution or behaviour – by considering it in relation to the whole.

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

As Geertz acknowledges, this is a version of what Dilthey (in applying a technique from Schleiermacher's Biblical work to the social sciences) called the hermeneutic circle. Geertz regards this method as central in ethnographic interpretation, just as it is (he holds) in other forms of interpretation, such as literary, historical, psychoanalytic or Biblical. In this sense, understanding someone else's way of life is akin to interpreting a poem. (70)

There is, in the Javanese example quoted above, an implicit view of common human nature in terms of emotions, in this case the emotion of grief. With regard to the employment of concepts by the insider and outsider to describe the containment of emotion, however, there is overlap, but not identity between concepts used by the insider and the outsider; the way in which the concepts relate to each other in the insider's way of life has to be unpacked by reference to the wider symbol system as inscribed in texts (whether Geertz's cumulative fieldnotes or other referential literature or both) and by comparison and contrast with the outsider's use of concepts and symbols. The danger with 'empathizing' as a methodological technique is the inadvertent projection of one's own concepts and ways of using them on to a different set of concepts with a different grammar.

Geertz sometimes uses the word 'translation' for the interpretive process, a term that could be misconstrued and needs to be understood in a technically specific way.

Translation . . . is not a simple recasting of others' ways of putting things in terms of our own way of putting them (that is the kind in which things get lost), but displaying the logic of their ways of putting them in locutions of ours; a conception which again brings it rather closer to what a critic does to illumine a poem than what an astronomer does to account for a star. (10)

Although there are some differences in detail (importantly, Geertz's ideas are relatively easy to convert into usable practical methods), there are some similarities between Geertz's ethnographic approach and Waardenburg's 'new style' phenomenology. Although Waardenburg's focus is specifically

on religion, and therefore narrower than Geertz's, the oscillation between individual experience and the wider signification system as a means to interpretation is common to both of them, as is the designation of the hermeneutic exercise as an art. Geertz is sceptical of the ethnographer's capacity to empathize with insiders, advocating a mode of interpretation requiring the comparison and contrast of related or overlapping 'insider' and 'outsider' terms. In attempting to say something very similar, Waardenburg uses the metaphor of digestion. The researcher, says Waardenburg, 'must be able, not only to receive different impressions on different levels, but also to digest them adequately in order that he may arrive at an understanding of them' (1978, 111).

To conclude this section, we may say that, on the face of it, Geertz has come up with techniques that can be applied to studies of religions in the field and which could be adapted and developed as methods for use in religious education. Before considering these possibilities, however, we need to review and discuss critics of Geertz who expose some problems with his work and propose alternative approaches.

DECONSTRUCTIVE ETHNOGRAPHY

A movement in anthropology which emerged partly in reaction to Geertz, is the work of a group of ethnographers who are influenced by 'deconstructive' literary theory, and who are sometimes described as postmodernists (e.g. Geuijen 1992; Webb 1992). They include James Clifford (1986; 1988), Vincent Crapanzano (1980; 1986), Michael M J Fischer (1986), George Marcus (1986; 1992), Paul Rabinow (1977; 1986) and Stephen Tyler (1986). Others have developed the position, sometimes from a feminist perspective (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1993). Writers such as Kevin Dwyer (1982), who share some of this group's criticisms of Geertz's work and of anthropology in general, are less influenced by literary theory and see themselves as continuing the work of anthropologists and other writers (e.g. Edward Said) whose criticisms have been tied to a general critique of the role of Western society in defining other cultures.

If Geertz is influenced by hermeneutics and (under his own interpretation) semiotics, his critics are more likely to be applying ideas and using terminology derived from writers such as Derrida, Lyotard or Foucault. They give close attention to the ethnographer's own assumptions and status and especially to devices employed to disguise (consciously or unconsciously) the establishment of the ethnographer's authority and the ways in which cultural material is presented to readers. The emphasis shifts from the ethnographer's techniques for interpreting another

worldview in as undistorted a way as possible to the text produced by the ethnographer, the real bridge between the 'other' – the 'culture' studied – and the readership.⁴ In James Clifford's words, 'ethnography is actively situated *between* powerful systems of meaning' (Clifford 1986, 2). For Geertz, 'texts' (starting with thickly described fieldnotes and moving, through the application of hermeneutical methods, to well crafted 'ensembles of texts' which are the basis of published ethnographies) convey a fairly stable account of a cultural scene. They capture a particular point in time, so soon become dated, but the better ones convey a skilful interpretation of the data collected by the ethnographer. The deconstructive ethnographers would agree that 'text' may include elements which communicate something of the insider's worldview. If analysed, however, ethnographic texts also reveal a good deal about the observer, whose privileged position and literary skill may obscure significant weaknesses in interpretation. At one extreme of this position there is a denial of the existence of individuated cultural schemes; these are 'fictions' or 'fabrications', as the root meaning of these terms suggest, made or constructed by observers. More moderately, as in the case of Clifford, the unstable and internally contested nature of cultures is recognized. Rather than being loosely connected but relatively stable (which is Geertz's view), 'cultures' are conceived as highly variegated internally, with different interest groups competing with each other to represent particular pictures of the 'whole' to other insiders and to outsiders. The more extreme are not quite reduced to silence when it comes to representing others, but concentrate on portrayals of individuals in their immediate context. The moderates strive for broader representations, but write heavily qualified accounts, drawing the reader's attention to emphases and biases associated with the ethnographer (academic, religious, or gender-related, for example). No type of ethnographic method or reportage is regarded as ideal, but there are better rather than worse ones which ethnographers can select.

For James Clifford, issues of interpretation are present at every stage; 'authenticity' is not provided through the apparent immediacy of the ethnographer's experience. The ethnographer interprets through his or her text; the reader interprets that part or version of the text that is published.

Literary process – metaphor, figuration, narrative – affect the ways cultural phenomena are registered, from the first jotted 'observations' to the completed book, to the ways these configurations 'make sense' in determined acts of reading. (1986, 4)

Since textual accounts are the focus of this approach, its proponents make extensive use of contemporary literary theory in their analyses, and they

often range more widely, drawing on other disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology and history. Ethnography is seen as an interdisciplinary field.

Members of this loosely knit 'school' regard the writing of cultural descriptions as experimental and they have spawned new forms of ethnographic writing, especially ones which give 'insiders' more of a direct say and which inform the reader about the ethnographer's own presuppositions. These include accounts of a sequence of encounters with informants, each intended to illuminate the others (Rabinow 1977) and an extended interpretive, psychoanalytic interview with an individual Muslim (Crapanzano 1980). Although different in some respects, Dwyer's interviews in *Moroccan Dialogues* have some close parallels in terms of form (Dwyer 1982). Clifford classifies these approaches as variously 'dialogic' and 'polyphonic' (1988). Critiques of earlier forms of ethnography, including Geertz's interpretive anthropology, have also been generated, and sometimes are combined in the same volume with new-style ethnographic writing (Crapanzano 1986; Dwyer 1982).

The approach is highly aware of the ethnographer's influence – through personal, cultural, political, and academic history, through gender, race and so on – on the 'construction' of the 'other' through text. The work of 'deconstructive' ethnographers, in highlighting the reflexivity issue (the critical awareness of the relationship between observer and observed), has helped, for example, to open up a range of gender issues (e.g. the role of gender in gaining access to certain field situations and interpreting certain events) which have especially been discussed by anthropologists who are women (e.g. Callaway 1992; Lamphere 1987; Moore 1988; Morgen 1989; Okely 1992; Personal Narratives Group 1989).

From the point of view of 'deconstructive' anthropology, there can never be 'ideal' ethnographies; they can only be better or worse. All of them are 'fictions' in the sense of 'being made or fabricated'. They are by nature constructed, artificial accounts. A study of them will reveal as much (or even more) about the writer as about the people whose world is reconstructed. Incidentally, the similarity between ethnographies and other genres – such as journal, diary and travel writing – has stimulated comparative work, sometimes drawing on material written in different historical periods (e.g. Crapanzano 1986).

In introducing the approach, I will give some attention to examples by James Clifford and Vincent Crapanzano, not so much because their work is 'typical' (although Clifford is a leading figure), but because both have applied their methods in criticizing the work of Clifford Geertz. A consideration of their work furnishes an opportunity to compare their approaches with that of interpretive anthropology.

THE DEBATE BETWEEN GEERTZ AND HIS CRITICS

Clifford's chapter 'On Ethnographic Authority' (1988) and Crapanzano's paper 'Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description' (1986) both include critical analyses of a paper by Geertz, 'Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight', reprinted in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973). Geertz's paper was based on his fieldwork in Bali, and his aim was to interpret the role of the cockfight in Balinese social life. The piece was written at the time when the film *Deep Throat* was circulating, and he makes extensive use of sexual puns which, he says, the Balinese would have understood. I do not know the original audience for whom Geertz wrote the paper (it was first published in the journal *Daedalus*, 101, 1972), but his humour (a device he often uses) is rather more pronounced than usual. Both Clifford and Crapanzano are especially concerned with the ways in which Geertz establishes authority in the eyes of readers.

Crapanzano draws attention to Geertz's sub-headings – such as 'The Raid'; 'Of Cocks and Men'; 'The Fight'; 'Odds and Even Money' – pointing out their relationship to 'whodunit' fiction and their distance from the Balinese. For Crapanzano, the headings create a collusive relationship between the ethnographer and his readers as well as a hierarchy of ethnographer, readers and then the Balinese. Crapanzano also notes a pronoun change which supports his case. In his account of how he entered the field ('The Raid'), Geertz pictures himself as the naive ethnographer, separated from his own background, but not yet having grasped the 'new world' he represents through his account. In this part of the paper, Geertz uses the first person singular personal pronoun, 'I' ('my wife and I'). In the main body of the text, however, this is changed to 'you'. Crapanzano observes:

The 'you' serves as more, I suggest, than an appeal to the reader to empathise with him. It decentres the narrator in the space of intersubjective understanding. He engages in dialogue with his reader in a way, at least in his presentation, that he does not engage with the Balinese. *They* remain cardboard figures. (1986, 71)

And just as Geertz colludes with his readers, says Crapanzano, so he misleads them by blurring his own understanding with that of the Balinese, a device partly achieved through piling vivid images one upon another, enabling Geertz to project meanings and motivations on to a generalized 'Balinese'. Crapanzano quotes an example:

In the cockfight man and beast, good and evil, ego and id, the creative

power of aroused masculinity and the destructive power of loosened animality fuse in a bloody drama of hatred, cruelty, violence and death. It is little wonder that when, as is the invariable rule, the owner of the winning cock takes the carcass of the loser – often torn limb from limb by its enraged owner – home to eat, he does so with a mixture of social embarrassment, moral satisfaction, aesthetic disgust, and cannibal joy. (Geertz 1973, 420–1)

Geertz goes even further in calling the cockfight an 'art form' (443), projecting a Western conception on to a Balinese practice, and even compares the cockfight with *King Lear* and *Crime and Punishment*, a tragedy and a novel – different literary genres within a particular cultural tradition and both different in kind from the non-literary cockfight which is, moreover, situated in a non-Western setting. Crapanzano's conclusion is:

... there is in fact in 'Deep Play' no understanding of the native from the native's point of view. There is only the constructed understanding of the constructed native's point of view ... His constructions of constructions appear to be little more than projections, or at least blurrings, of his point of view, his subjectivity, with that of the native, or, more accurately, of the constructed native. (74)

Here we have a reprise of one of the fundamental criticisms of phenomenology – the projection of the scholar's subjectivity on to that of the 'insider'.

Both Crapanzano and Clifford are interested in how Geertz gives his constructions authority. Clifford uses 'Deep Play' to illustrate his contention that from Malinowski onwards anthropological authority has rested on an appeal to first hand experience to establish the ethnographer's authority ('I was there ...'), with the subsequent suppression of the ethnographer from the text establishing scientific authority. Writing of interpretive anthropology generally, but with Geertz's paper in mind among other accounts, Clifford says:

The research process is separated from the texts it generates and from the fictive world they are made to call up. The actuality of discursive situations and individual interlocutors is filtered out ... The dialogical, situational aspects of ethnographic interpretation tend to be banished from the final representative text. (1988, 40)

Crapanzano's point about the shift in Geertz's text from 'I' to 'you' has already been noted, but he also draws attention to a passage from the closing pages of 'Deep Play' in which Geertz refers to culture as 'an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains

to read over the shoulder of those to whom they properly belong' (1973, 452). The ethnographer is back in the text at this point, but not in an equal I-you relationship, but an 'I-they' relationship. The authority of the author is confirmed, says Crapanzano, standing above and behind those whose experience he purports to explicate.

If Crapanzano and Clifford are right in their interpretations, is there much point in even trying to understand the worldviews of others? Dwyer, for one, is pessimistically ambivalent about ethnography as a means to grasp another's way of life (1982). Clifford has more optimism, seeing room for creative experiment within different 'paradigms' of ethnographic writing (1988, 53). These he classifies as the experiential, interpretive, dialogic and polyphonic.⁵ None is 'pure' but all have something to offer in principle. Clifford's preference is on the dialogic/polyphonic wing and the main thesis of his paper is to show that anthropological writing of the experiential and interpretive kinds (which he associates in general terms with colonialism) has tended to suppress the dialogical dimension of fieldwork. By 'dialogic' Clifford seems to mean both literal dialogue (as in Dwyer 1982), but also dialogically related components or discourses. Genuine dialogue, argues Clifford, is suppressed in Geertz's writing, partly through his emphasis on moving from the particular to the general. Even within the dialogic paradigm, however, the anthropologist is the person who organizes the material and represents the dominant culture. Dialogic texts can be no more than 'representations' of dialogues. The polyphonic paradigm, (of which there are some elements in the writings of Victor Turner, for example) is perhaps the answer, '... a utopia of plural authorship that accords to collaborators, not merely the status of independent enunciators, but that of writers' (51).

But joint authorship, says Clifford, still necessitates organisation by the principal editorial hand:

... quotations are always staged by the quoter ... a more radical polyphony would only displace ethnographic authority, still confirming the final, virtuoso orchestration by a single author of all the discourses in his or her text. (50)

Thus there is no ideal way to represent 'the other' through text. How one arrives at the best approach, says Clifford, is 'a matter of strategic choice' (54), although his preference for dialogic and polyphonic modes is clear enough.

TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS

Despite Clifford's ambivalent conclusion, his criticisms of Geertz's interpretive anthropology, together with those of Crapanzano, are plain. But how far are they justified? It is significant that both writers analyse a text which is untypical in the extent to which Geertz uses humour. Analysis of passages from *The Religion of Java* (1960) or *Islam Observed* (1968) or his essay on 'Religion as a Cultural System' reprinted in the same volume as 'Deep Play' (1973) might have yielded different conclusions, as, of course, might the analysis of Geertz's fieldnotes on which he reflected in interpreting the Balinese cockfight through his paper. As we have seen (above) Geertz is only too aware that ethnographic accounts inevitably obscure the various levels of construction to be found in thickly-described field data (Geertz 1973, 9).

Moreover, Clifford and Crapanzano do not offer anything more convincing than Geertz's hermeneutical method for establishing the relationship between 'parts' and a more general picture of a cultural scene. Indeed their use or recommendation of dialogic and polyphonic writing might tempt some ethnographers to generalize from the experience of one informant, without providing an attempt to interpret the symbol system or way of life within which that person functions. Without the hermeneutic method, there is also the danger of projecting one's own preoccupations on to those of the person(s) with whom one is in dialogue. However, their work raises important questions about what constitutes 'wholes' such as a culture or a religion, a crucial point to which we shall return in the next two chapters.

Geertz himself has discussed the work of some of these 'deconstructive' ethnographers (1988, 91–101). He sees Crapanzano, Rabinow and Dwyer as examples of 'I-witnessing' anthropologists. For Geertz they are some of 'Malinowski's Children' (1988, 73), following in the 'empathetic' tradition of encounter with people from other cultures. Geertz is not impressed by the examples of dialogic and polyphonic texts he reviews. He finds them 'highly "author-saturated", supersaturated even, anthropological texts in which the self the text creates and the self that creates the text are represented as being very near to identical...' (97). His criticisms of Crapanzano's book (1980), a study of a Moroccan tilemaker, focus on the lengthy connections made between aspects of his subject's psychological life and theoretical material from modern European cultural studies (Lacan, Freud, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger, Hegel, Gadamer etc). Geertz's withering conclusion is: 'If the face of the sitter gets a bit difficult to locate in this high-wrought "portrait", that of the

portraitist seems clear enough' (95). The 'strong note of disquiet' that characterizes such texts interests Geertz. Their imagery: '... is of estrangement, hypocrisy, helplessness, domination, disillusion. Being there is not just practically difficult. There is something corrupting about it altogether' (97). As Geertz remarks earlier: 'The question that arises, of course, is how anyone who believes all this can write anything at all, much less go so far as to publish it' (96).

To return to my own criticisms of Geertz, it is not so much the use of hermeneutical analysis that is primarily at fault in his 'cockfight' paper (though his application of the hermeneutical method in this particular case permits a tendency to drift into loose generalisations about the Balinese) but his failure to relate 'experience-near' and 'experience-distant' concepts in the meticulous way which he himself advocates (1983, 57). Contrast his over-use of humour and his flamboyant use of literary parallels in 'Deep Play' with the painstaking, and one might say *serious*, explication of a particular Javanese concept of the human individual he constructs in *Local Knowledge* (59–61). What 'Deep Play' lacks in its form and style is the quality of *sensitivity* that Geertz himself insists should be present in ethnographic fieldwork (70). In attempting to defend Geertz in this way I am not denying the validity of some of Crapanzano and Clifford's other criticisms (one might add to them, with regard to 'Deep Play', Geertz's tendency to generalize and a certain penchant for the exotic). No doubt Geertz would do well to reflect on them, just as Crapanzano and Clifford would benefit by applying them to their own work. There is, for example, Clifford's tendency to self-reference as a device for establishing authority (Rabinow 1986, 244) and I have reviewed (above) Geertz's remarks about Crapanzano's approach to ethnography.

ETHNOGRAPHY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To summarize so far, we have argued that techniques from interpretive anthropology have a great deal to commend them when it comes to reconstructing and elucidating the religious or cultural way of life of others. Criticisms of the interpretive approach have exposed some potential weaknesses (the possibility of the interpreter's abuse of his or her authority through the way in which an account is written; the danger of projecting one's subjective experience on to those studied; the tendency to suppress individual voices of insiders; the possibility of constructing artificial 'wholes' from the experience of individuals etc), but they have not offered a convincing alternative methodology. The approach suggests methods for studying religion in the field, for selecting material for the

'content' of religious education and for developing methods to be used in the classroom.

In our work in ethnography and religious education at Warwick, we have attempted to combine an interpretive approach, dealing with parts and wholes (individuals in the context of their membership groups in relation to the wider religious tradition), with 'polyphonic' elements, using plenty of direct quotation from interviewees and involving the 'insiders' represented in curriculum texts directly in the editorial process. Chapter 5 shows how Geertz's ideas, seasoned with some insights from his critics, have been applied in gathering and reshaping ethnographic data as curriculum material for religious education. For the moment, we can draw attention to some general points which are relevant to RE's role in trying to interpret and represent someone else's religious way of life.

There are a number of issues concerning reflexivity – the relationship between the experience of students and the experience of insiders whose way of life they are attempting to interpret. The first is the importance of the student's self awareness (whether in the role of ethnographer or RE pupil). We have already remarked (in Chapter 1) on the difficulties of leaving one's presuppositions to one side. However, one can attempt to be *aware* of some of them, for example the impact of gender, academic background, religious views, nationality, race, ethnicity, class and age on the interpretive process. Reflections on these influences can be included in ethnographic reports or in work done as part of religious education.

A second is to raise the question as to how far it is possible to empathize with another's experience. One of the strongest influences on RE from phenomenology has been the expectation that students might empathize with the experience of others. 'Empathy' (*Einfühlung*) is the identification of the other's experience with one's own, experiencing what another experiences. It is an even stronger word than 'sympathy', which connotes feeling with or for another. The interpretive approach reveals how problematic empathy is, and how easy it might be to convince ourselves that we have empathized with others when in reality we have not done so. Its method – which involves comparing and contrasting elements of one's own language and experience with that of insiders, as well as examining the interplay of the individual insider's experience and behaviour with the wider symbolic context of language, imagery and practice – provides a means to elucidate another's way of life. If the interpretive process is well done (with good technique *and* with sensitivity), then the student should have a clear understanding or interpretation.⁶ Whether or not empathy in its full sense can be achieved, an engagement with the process of interpretation is surely a necessary condition for it.

A third is a point not so far considered, namely the student's personal response to the material that has been interpreted. Anthropologists have sometimes remarked on how their own experience has been enriched and their assumptions challenged through studying 'other cultures' (e.g. Carrithers 1992, 190–2; Leach 1982, 127), and this is analogous to the claim made by some religious educators that pupils can 'learn from' religion as well as 'learn about' it (Grimmitt 1987). We will return to this idea in Chapters 5 and 6 when the concept of 'edification' is discussed.

Apart from issues related specifically to reflexivity, we should say more about the relationship between the lives of individual insiders and the wider religious and cultural worlds within which they operate. As the discussion in this chapter has illustrated, without some attempt (albeit self critical and full of caveats) at 'overviews' of symbol systems and cultural grammars, which the hermeneutical method can provide, the alternative 'deconstructive' ethnographers may (and sometimes do) drift into eccentricity.⁷ However, ethnography, if it is to present the diversity of insiders' voices as accurately, sensitively and engagingly as possible, needs to find forms of writing and presentation that portray individuals well, acknowledge the effects of the ethnographer on the field and do not close and reify 'cultures' or 'religions'. The better ethnographies and accounts of religious life (whether research reports or educational texts) might create interplays between particular examples and more general accounts of symbolic structures. Necessary conditions for a reasonable degree of success would be sensitivity (in fieldwork *and* in writing) and a constant methodological self-criticism. It is those two characteristics that Edward Said identifies as crucial in combating what he calls 'corrupt' scholarship. In praising the work of scholars he admires,⁸ Said declares:

What one finds in their work is always, first of all, a direct sensitivity to the material before them, and then a continual self-examination of their methodology and practice, a constant attempt to keep their work responsible to the material and not to a doctrinal preconception. (1978, 327)

One problem for religious education is that 'religions' and 'cultures' are rarely presented in a vibrant, flexible and organic way. RE tends to treat 'religions' as discrete belief systems, and 'cultures' (when they are discussed at all) as separate, bounded entities. In the next chapter, we will make out a case for religious educators to reconsider the ways in which they represent individual 'religions', and 'religion' as a generic category, before going on, in Chapter 4, to consider assumptions about cultures made in some of the literature on religious education, and the related field of cultural development.

Notes

- 1 See chapters 5 and 6 for discussions of the role of 'insiders' in religious education.
- 2 Hermeneutics (a word derived from Hermes, the messenger of the gods in Greek mythology) is the theory or art of interpretation which, in modern times, was first articulated in the context of Biblical studies by Schleiermacher. As developed by Dilthey, hermeneutics became the imaginative interpretation (*Verstehen*) of the subjective experience of others, and Dilthey's influence on van der Leeuw's phenomenology has already been noted. Most writers following in Dilthey's tradition of hermeneutics emphasize the elucidation of context in attempting to gain a good interpretation or understanding of some particular experience or event from the insider's point of view. (See also Chapter 6, note 10).
- 3 There is a parallel here with Wilfred Cantwell Smith's 'faith' and 'tradition' hermeneutic which will be introduced in Chapter 3. A 'tradition' is a particular 'ensemble of texts' in Geertz's terms. How the texts are composed and combined will vary among different insiders and outsiders.
- 4 This is where they differ from Dwyer whose main preoccupation is with the effects of the ethnographer on the subjects of study during the fieldwork encounter.
- 5 Clifford is drawing on the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin who introduced terms 'polyphony' and 'dialogism'. Whereas the language of traditional epic and lyric poetry is monologic, striving to impose a single particular interpretation, the novel is 'dialogic', incorporating many styles or voices which 'talk' to each other and to other voices outside the text, 'the discourses of culture and society at large' (1981).
- 6 Both words are used to translate Dilthey's *Verstehen*.
- 7 The dangers of reductionism are discussed in Chapter 6.
- 8 Jacques Berque and Maxime Rodinson.

CHAPTER

3

The Representation of Religions

INTRODUCTION

One of the criticisms of phenomenology as an approach to RE discussed in Chapter 1 was its lack of critical attention to how Westerners' ideas of religion in general and separate religions in particular have been formed. A method premised on the suppression of presuppositions did not question these fundamental assumptions. Our discussion of interpretive methods in Chapter 2 pointed to the importance of appreciating the interplay between an individual's religious or cultural life with that of the symbol system within which that person operates, but it also raised the question about the nature of cultures and religions and pointed to the dangers of generalising about cultural or religious 'wholes'.

However, since the developments which took place in British religious education in the early 1970s, there has tended to be an assumption that either the subject matter of RE involves the study of discrete religions (usually referred to as 'world religions') or it involves a general exploration of 'religion', using models such as Ninian Smart's dimensions (Smart 1971; 1989) or, less often, more aesthetic, 'spiritual' and personal accounts like that of Edward Robinson (e.g. Robinson and Lealman 1980). While there has been much debate in Britain about the pros and cons of 'multifaith' religious education, there has been very little critical, historical discussion by religious educators of the concept of 'religion' as a generic term and of how our presuppositions about what constitutes individual religions have been formed. These issues have tremendous importance in terms of the ways in which religions are represented in schoolbooks, agreed syllabuses, examination syllabuses and schemes of work.

The association of the study of discrete religions with the processes of

religious education in England and Wales was codified in law in the 1988 Education Reform Act's stipulation that RE should draw on Christianity and 'the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (UK Government 1988, Section 8 [3]). The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Model Syllabuses, written to provide non-mandatory guidance to local Agreed Syllabus conferences, interpret these principal religions as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism (SCAA 1994a and b). SCAA's attempt to provide syllabuses which are fair to the different religious communities in Britain is laudable (especially through involving members of the different religious communities in some of the activities involved), but the processes which brought the syllabuses to fruition did not address the important issue of the historical representation of the 'religions' in particular and 'religion' in general. In the discussion in this chapter it is acknowledged that, while some usage of established names for religions is unavoidable, our 'inherited' assumptions about the nature of religions and of religion should be reassessed.

Crucial to the discussion is a consideration of the emergence of the modern concepts of religion and of religions in the West, especially the view of religions as schematic systems of belief, the establishment of the names of the religions, the emergence in the nineteenth century of 'religion' as a generic category, and the appearance in the twentieth century of the term 'world religions'. The political dimension of this, in terms of power relations, is also discussed. A model for analyzing religious data which treats religious traditions as organic, internally diverse and more complex than 'belief systems' is suggested, and this is applied to an example of curriculum development in religious education in Chapter 5.

RELIGION AND RELIGIONS

The following brief historical survey is intended to suggest that the concepts of 'religions' and 'religion' that are generally accepted uncritically by recent and contemporary religious educators (including proponents as well as opponents of 'multi-faith' or 'world religions' approaches) are relatively modern and are contestable. Their application to complex phenomena rooted in diverse cultural settings was largely a construction by more powerful outsiders.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, in his book *The Meaning and End of Religion*, traces in considerable detail the emergence and development of the concept of 'religion'. Smith demonstrates that from its pre-Christian roots and throughout the Patristic period, the Latin term *religio* had

connotations of piety and devotion. In Patristic literature, *religio dei* came to mean 'worship of God' while *religio* could also designate an attitude (sometimes of awe) towards God and the universe. There was a more intensive usage of the term at times of persecution, to distinguish between true *religio* and false *religio*, for instance, though the distinctions refer to *practice* and not to 'religion' in the modern sense. Jerome's occasional usages of the term in the *Vulgate* (his Latin translation of the Bible) refer to ritual practice and worship (Smith 1978, 28). So far, then, *religio* has no connotation of distinct social groups with particular beliefs but refers to piety and devotion, a common debating point being about the quality or authenticity of *religio*. St Augustine was the last pre-Renaissance writer to discuss the term in much detail, using *religio* to refer to the relationship between God and humanity. The Platonic 'Form' of that relationship is the eternal, timeless, unobscured divine-human bond made possible by Christ (1978, 30).

Medieval Christian writings give little attention to the word *religio*.¹ From the fifth century CE, the term is used to refer to the monastic life and, following an earlier usage, is used to distinguish 'the religious' from lay Christians. These meanings are confirmed, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, by the usage of the English word 'religion' (by around 1200 CE) to mean 'a state of life bound by monastic vows', and by 1400 CE 'the religions of England' meant the various Christian monastic orders. Serious interest in the concept was revived during the European Renaissance by the Classical scholar Marsilio Ficino who shared Augustine's Platonism, but regarded *religio* (approximately 'religiousness') as a universal, divinely provided and uniquely human instinct by means of which people perceive and worship God. Ficino, writing in the 1470s, argues that it is better to worship God in any way than not at all, but that the ideal (in the Platonic sense) is through Christ. *Christiana*, in the title of his book *De Christiana Religione*, means 'Christ-oriented' or 'pertaining to Christ' (1978, 34).

The principal Reformation contributions came from Zwingli and Calvin. Zwingli's discussion of the true and false *religio* of Christians regards false *religio* as superstition – over-sanctification of papal, conciliar and church authority.² Calvin's influential *Christianae Religionis Institutio* (1536) uses *religio* to mean an inner, transcendently directed devotion, and in it Calvin distinguishes between genuine and false piety.³ The influence of Calvin's text probably accounts for the dramatic increase in the use of the phrase *Christiana religio* during the sixteenth century.⁴

Smith selects Grotius as a 'transitional' figure of the seventeenth century. Grotius writes in the Platonic tradition of Ficino, but emphasizes

Christianity as *the* true religion, arguing that its principles are factual statements.⁵ Lord Herbert of Cherbury marks the full transition to the view of *religio* as a system of ideas and beliefs. Cherbury's book *De Veritate* (1624) advances his position that the truth or falsity of a religion corresponds to the truth or falsity of its doctrines (1978, 40). Cherbury held the view that became general in intellectual circles during the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on abstraction and schematization. 'A religion' is something to be believed or not believed, whose propositions are true or false. 'This interpretation', Smith remarks, 'had by the mid-eighteenth century sunk deep into the European consciousness' (40).

The term 'natural religion' had emerged in the late seventeenth century to refer to putatively universal beliefs attainable through reason. During the eighteenth century this universalist and rationalistic view was taken up by the Deist movement, which included writers such as Voltaire. 'True religion' was derivable through reason alone, while the practices and authority structures of traditional religious institutions (degenerate ritual practice, priestcraft etc) were to be rejected as corrupt. A view of 'religion' as a series of propositional beliefs, and deeply influenced by deism, was that which the eighteenth century British Orientalists carried to India and through which they labelled and interpreted the traditional faith and practice of the Indian people (Jackson 1996b). The distinction between natural and revealed religion, was given wide exposure by Joseph Butler in *The Analogy of Religion* (1736), the concept of 'revealed religion' – the idea that a *religion* could be revealed (as distinct from divine revelation) – being entirely new (Smith 1978, 41).

It is also in the eighteenth century that 'religion' is reified and connected with individuals or groups. The first references to the 'religion of the Church of England', 'the Catholic religion' and 'the Protestant religion' are found at this time (41). So are references to non-Christian religions such as 'the Hindoo religion' (Jackson 1996b). Much of this language was used in apologetic and polemical writings. Polemics played a role in further developments of the concept of religion, and Smith notes that those attacking either a specific 'religion', or 'religion' more generally, schematized the object of their attack, with defenders tending to use the same constructions in making their responses. Consequently the plural 'religions' came into use (from the mid seventeenth century, but commonly in the eighteenth), while the generic term 'religion' emerged for the first time to refer to the totality of all belief systems (Smith 1978, 43).

Another key development, mainly in the nineteenth century, was the reification of religion as a generic category. Schleiermacher, as well as being influential in restoring religion's concern with subjective, emotional

experience, also generalized the term.⁶ Under Hegel's influence, the reification of 'religion' is taken further, with the emergence of the idea that 'religion' itself has an essence. This development is seen clearly in Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Religion* (1851). Feuerbach, a former student of Hegel, had earlier written *The Essence of Christianity* (1841); both 'a religion' and 'religion' in general were held to embody an essence (Smith 1978, 47). This idea, as we saw in Chapter 1, was an axiom of the phenomenology of religion which began to emerge as a discipline in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Other developments in the nineteenth century include an understanding of 'the religions' as encompassing their own historical development and the coinage of the term 'secularism', signifying a perception of 'religion' as a private matter rather than as a symbolic framework or a vital strand in a worldview.⁷

WORLD RELIGIONS

Smith does not discuss more recent developments, so we might add that the term 'world religions' emerged and was in fairly regular use by the time of the rise of Religious Studies in British universities in the mid 1960s. The term seems to have originated as a synonym for 'religions of the world' or 'world's religions', the latter being in the title of a popular book by William Paton (1916).⁸ An early use of the term is in a heading – 'The Rise of the World Religions' – in E O James's book *Comparative Religion* (1938, 18). By the 1950s, 'world religions' was appearing in book titles, with *Readings from World Religions* (Champion and Short 1951) and *The Archaeology of World Religions* (Finegan 1952) being some of the earliest. The intended meaning was generally 'living religions of the world', often distinguished from other religions (such as primal religions) by having a conviction of a universal message and, in the view of some writers, also having a universal mission (Edgar 1952, 4–5). In the context of religious education, an early use of the term 'world religions' is by F H Hilliard in his pamphlet *Teaching Children About World Religions* (1961).⁹ Geoffrey Parrinder's *What World Religions Teach* (1963), although aimed at a broad, general readership, was used as a resource by many teachers of religious education.

The name of Ninian Smart is often mentioned in connection with the establishment of 'world religions' approaches to religious studies and religious education (e.g. Fitzgerald 1990). Smart, however, did not go out of his way to promote the use of the term. His *World Religions: a Dialogue*, published in 1966 by Pelican, is a re-titled version of *A Dialogue of Religions* published by SCM Press in 1960. The text of the book does not

include the term 'world religions', with the author referring to the 'comparative study of religion' and the 'comparative study of religions' (1966, 11), 'the great religions' (12) and 'the major religions of the world' (19). It transpires that it was the publisher who suggested the title *World Religions: a Dialogue* for the Pelican edition (Smart, personal communication). By 1969, in *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, Ninian Smart was using the term 'world religions':

Naturally, most folk will be interested in the great living faiths – the 'world religions' as they are sometimes called: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. Taoism in China, Shintoism in Japan, the Jain and Sikh religions in India, together with modern offshoots from Christianity in the West, such as the Latter Day Saints, are also important. (1971, 14; US edn 1969)

Smart uses the expression 'world religions' simply to mean 'religions of the world'. With Confucianism in the list, numerical size would seem to be Smart's major criterion for being regarded as a 'world religion', rather than cultural transferability.

In 1969 the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education was established after a conference at the Shap Wells Hotel in Cumbria, England, and since that time it has sought to promote the study of world religions at all levels of education (Wood 1989). Ninian Smart was a founder member and is President of the Working Party. In its early days, Shap did not use the term 'world religions' extensively. John Hinnells, another founder member, uses it in his introduction to Shap's first book (the papers from its first conference), *Comparative Religion in Education* (1970), but throughout the text the term 'comparative study of religion' or CSR is used by the contributors. Subsequently 'world religions' appears in the title of many Shap publications (e.g. Brown 1986; Cole 1972b; 1976) and since 1986, *World Religions in Education* has been the title of Shap's annual journal. However, there is no single view of 'world religions' in the Working Party, and Shap's flexibility is signified by the inclusion of personal perspectives from faith traditions written by insiders, as well as material on various modern religious movements in Shap's handbook of the early 1990s (Erricker *et al* 1993).

Timothy Fitzgerald argues that 'world religion' is basically a *theological* concept, a concept derived from liberal Christian theology.

It is possible that the prototype World Religion derives from evangelical Christianity of the capitalist west, which in the 19th century proclaimed a message of salvation equally valid to individuals everywhere, regardless of class, race or colour. But the missionaries

encountered alternative theologies which either had, or which quickly developed, their own universalist claims. As a result, and in 'dialogue' with their foreign equivalents, liberal Christian theology dropped its exclusivity and began studying these alternative systems of salvation in earnest. Hence particular claims of universality became transformed into World Religions, objects that can be studied scientifically. (1990, 104)

Fitzgerald is right to point to liberal Christian influence on the development of the idea of a 'world religion', but he does not trace the history back before the nineteenth century. The structures that shaped the idea are fundamentally those that determined the view of a 'religion' as an individuated belief system in the eighteenth century. Thus, although Fitzgerald is correct in arguing that 'world religions' should not be considered straightforwardly as discrete systems of belief, the reasons for their being so regarded, as has been argued above, were not primarily theological. Liberal Christian theology did not originate the structures underpinning the idea of a 'world religion', but it did enable the perpetuation of eighteenth century European (and in Edward Said's terms 'Orientalist') assumptions through its influence on the development of historical, comparative and phenomenological studies of religion which, in turn, led to the formation of 'secular' religious studies.¹⁰ It is clear that those of us who continue to use the term 'world religions' should do so critically.

KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

Smith's skilful deconstruction exposes the Western and Christian influence on the definition of religions, but he does not deal with the issues of relative power in the processes involved, except to remark that in the twentieth century, the universities have helped to institutionalize some of the post-Enlightenment developments referred to above. Writing from the field of cultural studies, and concentrating on the Arab Middle East, Edward Said provides insight into Western writers' tendency to superimpose ideas on to 'other cultures'. Said does not write specifically about religions (although he has a good deal to say about Islam), but his observations about the representation of 'the Orient' are very relevant to our discussion.

Said's book, *Orientalism*, discusses how European 'knowledge' about Eastern cultures has been shaped by Western countries' superior power. When knowledge becomes institutionalized, taken for granted and received as part of a culture's history, it needs to be reassessed. Historical

sources can be revisited in order to challenge established orthodoxies. Said uses the term 'Orientalism' variously to refer to academic traditions which perpetuate earlier stereotypes; a disposition or 'style of thought', which essentializes some aspect of the Orient in contrast to the Occident; and a cultural mechanism, a mesh of cultural assumptions, which structure and largely determine what is said or written in the West about the Orient (Said 1978, 2-3).

Although he cites examples from the seventeenth century, Said takes the late eighteenth century as a rough starting point for Orientalism, the period, as we have seen, when individual religions were already being identified as schematic systems of belief. Modern Orientalism is mainly a post Enlightenment phenomenon which achieved its 'classical' form in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Said discusses a wide range of sources having, through the influence of one text upon another, a common Orientalist set of assumptions or 'discourse'.¹¹

A key point is that an on-going imbalance of power permits a politically and technologically stronger culture or group to *define* weaker groups. Whereas Michel Foucault takes European culture and shows how distinctions between sane and mad, healthy and sick etc emerge (1971), Said extends this analysis to look at ways in which one culture has defined exotic 'others'. Thus the West defined the Orient, and then exerted authority over it. Western writers spoke on behalf of the Orient, regretted the decline of its 'golden age' or reconstructed its debased knowledge. To take an example not used by Said, Hindu religion, which emerged as 'Hinduism' in the early nineteenth century, was largely a Western construction, representing the superimposition of the Western idea of a 'religion' and Enlightenment values and assumptions (deist universalism and the classical 'golden age') on to Indian history. Although the motives of British Orientalists such as Charles Wilkins, Henry Colebrooke and Sir William Jones were largely commendable and their work scholarly, they failed to grasp the amorphousness, plurality and continuity of the Indian tradition. Their influence reinforced the trend to distinguish between 'high', monotheistic Brahmanical Hindu religion in contrast to its 'low', 'polytheist', 'popular' equivalent, and, like Enlightenment writers in Europe, they saw priests (Brahmins) as the chief corrupters of the religion.¹² It is important to distinguish between these Enlightenment-influenced, deistically-minded scholars and administrators who were benevolently inclined towards Indian culture, and those deeply racist writers, politicians and clerics whose views on Indian life were malicious. These later British writers (whom elsewhere I have called 'Anglicists' to distinguish them from the earlier Orientalists) rejected the work of Jones and others of his persuasion, and developed views and policies which were

strongly against anything Hindu, regardless of its historical period. If the Orientalists structured the concept of Hinduism, the Anglicists provided deeply negative evaluations which became part of the Western articulation of the concept (Jackson 1996b).¹³

The essential 'structure' of Orientalism, according to Said, is its tendency to dichotomize people into 'us' and 'them' and to essentialize the resulting 'other' by writing of 'the Oriental mind' or generalising about Islam or the Arabs. There is a tendency to emphasize the exotic, the strangeness of people from other cultures. Said identifies and attacks Oriental stereotypes such as the eternal and unchanging East, corrupt despotism and mystical religiosity, which function to suppress an authentic human reality. This reality, asserts Said, can only be achieved through first hand experience and interaction, not through writing. Thus, Said criticizes Orientalism for its construction of static images which are transmitted intertextually, rather than historical or personal 'narratives', noting that people tend to prefer the authority of literary sources to the complexities of direct human encounter (1978, 93). Scholarship can avoid corruption, says Said, by being critical of inherited conventions and traditions and building self-criticism into academic methodologies. Those fields of study which attempt to understand human experience directly (as in the more critical forms of ethnography) are likely to yield much better interpretations than most kinds of textual studies (1978, 326).

More recently Said has been less confident of ethnographic techniques, arguing that even those ethnographers who are highly aware of the limitations of their own discipline still produce writing grounded in the logic of an unequal power relationship (Said 1989; 1993). Nevertheless, presumably in preference to denying the *possibility* of understanding ways of life other than one's own, Said makes the cautious suggestion that ethnographers might deal with the power issue by persistently acknowledging that power differences are inherent in anthropology (1989, 225). Said's analysis of Orientalism, especially if taken together with Smith's work on religion, is of considerable value in reconsidering the definition of religious systems in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We will return briefly to the impact of Orientalist ideas on religious education in Chapter 6 but, for the moment, will move on to consider the emergence of the modern names for the major 'world religions'.

THE NAMES OF THE RELIGIONS

Christianity, Judaism and Islam

Most modern *names* for religions first appeared in the nineteenth century

(Smith 1978, 61). Of those that appeared earlier, 'Christianity' (and the other equivalents of the Latin term *Christianitas* and the Greek term *Christianismos* in modern European languages)¹⁴ and 'Judaism' did not convey the sense of discrete, bounded belief systems until the eighteenth century. The Greek word *Judaismos* first occurs in II *Maccabees* (probably first century BCE), but has the principal meaning of 'Jewishness' (Smith 1978, 72).¹⁵

The term 'Christians' (Greek *Christianos*) was first used by outsiders in Antioch (*Acts* 11, 26), a title at first resisted. The first published usage of the Greek term *Christianismos* was in the second century CE in Antioch by Bishop Ignatius, with a meaning indicating how Christians should learn to live, a reference to personal qualities, not institutions. The Greek term was transliterated into Latin as *Christianismus* by Tertullian. From the third century a new Latin term *Christianitas* was introduced, although neither term was widely used. In the Middle Ages the latter term was used mainly to refer to the people constituting the Christian community. No book on 'Christianity', says Smith, was written in the Middle Ages, the usual medieval expression being *fides Christiana* (Christian faith).

The term 'Christianity' only went into current usage after the Reformation and was not used commonly until the period of the Enlightenment when it became used to refer to a system of beliefs whose reasonableness and truth were matters for debate. Through an analysis of the titles of printed books from fifteenth to the twentieth century, Smith shows first a decline in the use of the term 'Christian faith' (beginning in the sixteenth century), then decline of the expression 'Christian religion' (from the seventeenth century) and an increase in use of 'Christianity' steadily from sixteenth century to 1950, with a huge increase in the eighteenth century (1978, 77). There was also a move from usage of the term 'Christian religion' to 'the Christian religion', showing a gradual shift from a personal idea to an impersonal one to an institutionalized concept. By the end of the eighteenth century, the term 'Christianity' was primarily used as the name of a systematized 'religion' (76). During the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century there was a further shift from Christianity as an intellectual system to Christianity as an observable, historical, geographically located social phenomenon.

'Islam' is a special case in not being a name devised by outsiders and in exhibiting more internal unity than the other traditions. The term is Qur'anic, but in Smith's view, 'the almost universal Muslim use of the term *Islam* in a reified sense is a direct consequence of apologetics', of Islam's need at various times to defend itself (115). Through an analysis of Arabic literature, Smith charts the decline of use of *iman* ('faith') and the

expansion of the use of term *islam* from the time of the Qur'an to the nineteenth century, arguing that the dominant modern usages, to denote the empirical actuality of Islam or the Platonic ideal of the total Islamic system, rest on the chronologically and logically prior meaning of the self-commitment of the individual Muslim.

Modern names for Eastern religions

Smith notes the earliest uses of versions of the modern names for religions cited by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, including 'Boudhism' (1801), 'Hindooism' (1829), 'Taouism' (1839), 'Zoroasterianism' (1854) and 'Confucianism' (1862). In Hinduism's case, there are earlier references in English, but they still belong to the first two decades of the nineteenth century, probably the earliest being 1808. This was in a pamphlet written by Colonel Stewart, an English officer in the Indian Army. Stewart was very much on the liberal wing of the Orientalist tradition, and was responding vigorously to vehement anti-Hindu feeling that was being drummed up by some Evangelical Christians in London. Stewart, an artist as well as an Orientalist and soldier (some of his work is in the Victoria and Albert Museum), infuriated his opponents through his support of Hindu civilization in a pamphlet entitled *Vindication of the Hindoos, by a Bengal Officer* (1808). His use of the term 'Hinduism' occurs in a passage arguing that any attempt to convert Hindus to Christianity 'must be abortive'. This is so, says Stewart, because '... Hinduism little needs the meliorating hand of Christianity to render its votaries a sufficiently correct and moral people for all the useful purposes of a civilized society' (9). Nine years after Stewart published his pamphlet, Rammohun Roy, writing in English, and influenced by British Orientalists, was probably the first Hindu to use the term in a publication. 'The doctrines of the unity of God', wrote Rammohun, 'are real Hinduism, as that religion was practised by our ancestors' (Jackson 1996b).

As Smith points out, the naming process was not haphazard. The West developed names for 'religions' only in those societies where religious life ceased to be fully integrated with their social existence, either by expanding into other societies and gaining converts or by declining to some degree, so that the population and the 'religion' were no longer coterminous. In this latter case, a name arose to distinguish the religion from the social group, usually through adding the Greek suffix '-ism' to a word used to refer to members of a religious community or followers of a religious tradition.¹⁶

SUMMARY

To summarize so far, influenced by Patristic and earlier Latin sources, some Renaissance humanists (such as Ficino) and some Protestant Reformers (especially Zwingli and Calvin) used *religio* to correspond to inner piety. It was only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the personal piety idea was largely displaced by a concept of religion as schematic, intellectualist and 'exterior', and which individuated religions as systems of belief. This concept reflected and stimulated religious conflict and was used both to delineate groups within Christianity and to classify and encompass what was perceived to be equivalent material in non-Christian cultures encountered by the West. Colonial power enabled the projection of Western assumptions on to the religious and cultural life of the 'Orient', and accounts of non-Christian religions by Western writers were accepted as authoritative by a European readership. Some of these assumptions and attitudes were replicated in literature (academic and fictional, for example) and were perpetuated through inter-textual influence.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Schleiermacher revived the inward and non-intellectual meaning of religion and, through the work of Feuerbach, the reified concept of 'religion' as embodying certain universal essences appeared. During the nineteenth century the term 'religion' also changed to include the history of the 'religions', and most of the modern names for religions were coined. The emergence of the term 'secularism' marked a perception of religion as a private matter, as one aspect of life rather than as an essential part of a total worldview.

The history of the terms 'religion' and 'religions' is thus fundamentally Western and Christian, and the ideas of individuated religions (or from about the mid-twentieth century 'world religions') as 'belief systems' and of religion as a generic category with an essence are modern. Much recent religious education in Britain is deeply influenced by these ideas.

FAITH AND TRADITION

Are there alternative ways of representing religious data that convey their organic, personal and changing, nature? Smith thinks so and goes so far as to argue that, apart from the 'personal piety' sense, the words 'religion' and 'religions' should be dropped as 'confusing, unnecessary and distorting' (1978, 50). His preference is for the terms 'faith' and 'tradition'.

By 'faith' I mean personal faith . . . For the moment let it stand for an inner religious experience or involvement of a particular person; the impingement on him of the transcendent, putative or real. By 'cumulative tradition' I mean the entire mass of overt objective data that constitute the historical deposit, as it were, of the past religious life of the community in question: temples, scriptures, theological systems, dance patterns, legal and other social institutions, conventions, moral codes, myths, and so on; anything that can be and is transmitted from one person, one generation, to another, and that an historian can observe.

It is my suggestion that by the use of these two notions it is possible to conceptualize and to describe anything that has ever happened in the religious life of mankind, whether within one's own religious community (which is an important point) or in others' (which is also an important point). Also, so far as I can see, it is possible for these concepts to be used equally by sceptic or believer, by Muslim or Buddhist, Episcopalian or Quaker, Freudian or Marxist or Sufi. (156-7)

The link between faith and tradition is the living person. While avoiding tight definitions, Smith goes on to explore the concepts in detail. He regrets that in modern Western languages there is no verb derivable from 'faith', leading (in English) to the misleading usage of the verb 'to believe'. 'Belief' is an expression of faith and is not identical to it. Faith is a personal quality and it is persons who experience the transcendent. The faith experience, which always points beyond ordinary experience, can be expressed in a multitude of ways; through the arts; through ritual and morality; through ideas and words; through institutions (marriage, for example) and through various other forms of community experience. The expressions of the faith of individuals themselves become part of the organically changing cumulative traditions.

Each person is presented with a cumulative tradition, and grows up among other persons to whom that tradition is meaningful. From it, and them, and out of the capacities of his own inner life and the circumstances of his outer life, he comes to a faith of his own. The tradition, in its tangible actualities, and his fellows, in their comparable participation, nourish his faith and give it shape. His faith, in turn, endows the concrete tradition with more than intrinsic significance, and encourages his fellows to persist in their similar involvement. (187)

Smith's book provides a penetrating deconstruction of the concepts and terms 'religion' and 'religions' and offers an alternative and liberating way of conceptualising material from the spiritual traditions. Although Smith

shows no overt signs of familiarity with the Continental European tradition of interpretation, his dialectical method represents an application of the hermeneutic circle in which 'cumulative tradition' is a 'whole' and the 'faith' of individuals is a part. It is in the interplay of the two – the 'hopping back and forth between the whole as conceived through the parts that actualize it, and the parts conceived through the whole ...' as Geertz would say (1983, 69) – that understanding is generated. Smith's insights have potential for developing a theoretical framework and practical methods for developing understanding across religious and secular worldviews, and can be applied particularly in religious education.

CRITICISMS OF SMITH

Before elaborating on that potential, it is important to consider some criticisms of Smith's analysis and terminology. Smith adopts several roles in his writing. He is a Western scholar using standard academic analytical methods, but he is also a Christian theologian. Smith's theological assumptions and leanings sometimes show through his analysis. The 'transcendent' is nearly always conceived in personal terms, as exemplified in his neat summary of his whole approach: 'The traditions evolve. Men's faith varies. God endures' (192).

His usage of the term 'faith' is also problematic. Although Smith uses it in a novel and technical sense, it still carries associations from its history in Christian thought, and inherently implies a personal relationship. Despite Smith's comments on the multifarious ways in which faith can be expressed, the term does not quite fit the range of activities that might be said to constitute a person's spiritual experience. It might be adequate to denote a Hindu woman's devotions at the domestic shrine, but fits less well as the name for the same person's obligations as a family member. In the discussions which follow, we will refer to 'the individual' rather than to 'personal faith', concentrating on the individual's language, experiences, feelings and attitudes in a religious context, but taking account of the influence of other types of group.

Similarly, his concept of tradition needs some modification. Smith's view of 'tradition' as 'the entire mass of overt objective data that constitute the historical deposit ... of the past religious life of the community in question' avoids the issue of disagreement over the limits any religious tradition. Not only might there be scholarly disagreement over the classification of religious material, the tradition also will be perceived differently by individuals according to the way of life in which they are operating and their background knowledge and experience, and one's view

of the tradition is likely to be modified as one encounters new material. Moreover, 'insiders' may have different views from one another of the scope of the tradition and of the relative importance of its different aspects. The precise nature of a religious tradition will be a matter of negotiation or even contest (see Chapter 6). Nevertheless, despite its fuzzy edges, the general idea of 'a tradition' is useful for interpretive purposes.

Smith's own liberal/radical Christian theology shows through here and there, but is especially evident in some of his other writings. His position on the relationship between the religious traditions tends (using Hick's classification) towards the pluralistic, and would not be amenable to many people within the traditions (see, for example, Smith in Oxtoby 1976; Smith 1981). My point is that Smith's deconstruction of 'religion' and his faith/tradition hermeneutic should be evaluated in terms of the quality of his analysis and not in relation to his theology. That analysis (with suitable terminological modifications) should be acceptable to theological inclusivists and to some exclusivists as well as to secular scholars.

Another significant, though not insuperable, problem with Smith's analysis is its lack of any overt social and political awareness. The straight dichotomy between individual faith and cumulative tradition fails to perceive the enormous influence of what one might term 'membership groups' within traditions, which have their own dialectical relationships with individuals and the wider tradition. Such groups may play a key part in shaping an individual's spiritual perceptions and political consciousness, especially in terms of influencing the nature of relationships with outsiders. Smith does discuss 'faith's expression in community' (174), but his concept of community is very general – he gives the Christian Church, the Muslim *ummah*, the Hindu caste and the Buddhist *Sangha* as examples – and lacks a clear political dimension (174–7). The idea of the 'membership group' as a third 'level' in the interpretation of religious life will be developed below.

A further weakness of Smith's account, in terms of politics, is his lack of awareness that the process of defining and encompassing a religious tradition is related to power relations between the parties concerned. Smith notes that it is outsiders who name and define 'religions' (129), but he does not pursue the issue of power. As Said demonstrates, it is an on-going imbalance of power that permits a politically and technologically stronger culture or group to *define* weaker groups, a point relevant to understanding the radical right's portrayal of ethnic minority cultures in Britain as both uniform and alien (see Chapters 4 and 6).

A final important critical point is that Smith's appeal that we should drop the terms 'religions' and 'religion' altogether (except in the sense of

personal piety) is naive in its assumptions about language use. While agreeing with much of Smith's analysis, the shift needs to be one of emphasis, rather than a reduction of 'wholes' to 'parts'. Thus terms such as 'Hinduism' or 'Christianity' as examples of 'religions' should not be taken as referring to bounded and uncontested systems, but to the various constructions of each religious tradition made by different insiders and outsiders.¹⁷ Even Smith, in his own writings, cannot rid himself of the habit of using the terms, talking of 'religious systems' in *Towards a World Theology*, for example (1981, 141).¹⁸

MEMBERSHIP GROUPS

In concentrating on the relationship between individual faith and cumulative tradition, Smith ignores the powerful influence of groups of various kinds in shaping an individual's sense of religious identity. The term 'membership groups' is a loose one, but is used here to refer to more specific groupings than Smith does through his concept of 'community'. 'Membership groups' include denominational, 'sectarian', ethnic and other social categories or combinations of them. The basic point is that when one meets a person from within a religion one does not meet someone who relates straightforwardly to a whole cumulative tradition. One might meet someone whose 'faith' is strongly influenced by the priorities and perceptions of one or more 'groups', and whose personal transcendental interests might be inextricably intertwined with agendas set by those groups. For the moment we might advance the view that in bringing a 'religion' to life by generating an interplay between 'the individual' and 'the tradition', we could select examples of personal experience which illustrate the importance and influence of 'membership groups'.

At first glance such groups might appear to be entirely sub-divisions of the tradition. To take Christianity as an example, there are what we might call the great sub-traditions of Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant. Then there are 'streams' which sometimes flow across the borders of sub-traditions, such as Evangelical, Liberal and Charismatic. Next there are 'denominations', such as the Methodists and the Salvation Army, and 'regional units' like diocese. Finally we have 'local congregations', composed of individual persons. This taxonomy was developed as a research tool by Eleanor Nesbitt in analyzing ethnographic material on Christian children from diverse backgrounds in an English city (discussed in Chapter 5).¹⁹ Such groups themselves are not homogeneous, however, and they overlap with other types of group – various types of ethnic group, for example – and are also subject to change over time.

Literature from the social sciences on different types of membership group and their impact on individuals is helpful in teasing out some of the complexities of the relationships between individuals and groups. To take an example from social psychology, Henri Tajfel's theory of social identity illuminates the interplay between psychological and social factors in the relationship between individuals and membership groups (1974; 1981). Tajfel points to the human tendency to generate meaning by categorization, arguing that people have an inherent tendency to emphasize difference when classifying human groups. In analyzing a particular social structure, a first step would be to reveal the social categories which are used to distinguish groups and to construct hierarchies within a society. These might be based on class, caste, gender, age, nationality, religion, geographical origins etc, providing a basis for constructing a sense of group identity in terms of which individuals might exclude or include themselves from particular categories. Tajfel emphasizes that individuals are members of many categories; no-one's social identity can adequately be described in terms of one social category such as religion or ethnicity. Thus, we should not only think in terms of purely religious sub-groups as a bridge between 'faith' and 'tradition'. Groupings based on factors such as ethnicity, gender and age group are also relevant.

Tajfel draws on research from social psychology to show that individuals frequently compare their own groups with other membership groups. The group provides a social network in which comparison with other groups suggests mechanisms for adopting (or maintaining) positively valued features of other groups. By social comparison, groups can also choose to retain or even exaggerate characteristics which distinguish the group from other groups. The relative power of different groups is an obvious factor in the process. The adoption of new symbols and structures, an adaptation of certain traditional symbols, or a renewed emphasis on them, are possibilities. Consider, for example, the emphasis on vegetarianism as a symbol of Hindu identity for some British Hindu groups (in this case the generalization of a traditional symbol) or the adoption of structures similar to Sunday schools or Western youth organisations by those running classes in language and culture in Hindu supplementary schools (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993), or the changing symbolic significance of 'the priest' or of Mary in certain Roman Catholic Christian communities in Britain (Ashenden 1995).

A THREE LEVEL MODEL

Smith's 'faith and tradition' matrix can be modified in order to take account of significant membership groups. The interpretation of a

religious way of life would thus involve examining the relationship between individuals, relevant groups to which the individual belongs, and the wider religious tradition. The matrix has been applied in various ethnographic studies of children from different religious backgrounds in Britain – in research design, as a means of selecting a range of children from different backgrounds within a single religious tradition, and in data analysis, and as an aid to contextualizing the experience of individual children. It is also used and in a curriculum development project in religious education.²⁰ However, just as care needs to be taken not to identify individuals with the key concepts and practices of a 'constructed' religion, so, in applying the matrix, one needs to be wary of giving a prescriptive account of a tradition or of locking individual persons into stereotypical group identities. This last issue will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

The following example, from a report of research on Hindu children in the city of Coventry (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993), illustrates the use of the model in an ethnographic study. The research began with participant observation in a variety of Hindu events, followed by semi structured interviews with children in the eight to thirteen age range, and then detailed case studies of twelve children over an eighteen month period. We made the decision to report the research thematically, using quotations from children and bringing together material on topics such as the children's self-perception, food and fasts, prayer and worship and formal religious teaching. However, each individual was considered in the context of various membership groups, while the wider Hindu tradition was kept as a general reference point. By way of illustration, we can refer to 'Anita' (the children were given pseudonyms). Anita's parents are of Gujarati Hindu ancestry (with a South African-born mother) and migrated to Britain early in the 1960s. They became devotees of the living spiritual teacher Sathya Sai Baba in 1972. Anita was born in 1974, and was nearly twelve years old and a first year student at a Coventry comprehensive school during our fieldwork. The following extract illustrates the range of membership groups to which Anita belonged (including school and peer groups, 'ethnic' and caste groups and the Sathya Sai Baba movement), and something of the influence they had on her. It also shows how Anita's spiritual life relates to the Hindu tradition more generally.

At school Anita wore the same style of school uniform as any other girl in her class. Her spoken English showed no signs of being her second language. Her favourite school subjects were the sciences and she participated enthusiastically in school sports. She was at ease with her peer group and she had high academic aspirations.

At home among her family, Anita mainly spoke Gujarati. Like the rest of her family Anita was a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba and talked with considerable knowledge, understanding and feeling about his teaching, his miracles and his values. She described in detail a visit to Sathya Sai Baba's headquarters at Puttaparthi in South India in order to have his *darshan* ('sight') and to receive his blessing. Like most of our interviewees, Anita regarded herself as a 'foreigner' and distinguished herself from 'the India people' while in India, but described herself as 'Indian' when in Britain. She felt no inner conflict in making these situationally different identifications.

In the evenings, Anita and her family sang *bhajans* (devotional songs) before the shrine to Sathya Sai Baba, situated at one end of the living room. On at least one evening per week they were joined by other families, with Anita – dressed in the white clothes worn by Sathya Sai Baba's devotees – often leading the worship, playing *tabla* and harmonium, and performing the *arti* ceremony. She attended *Bal Vikas* ('child development') classes run by Sai devotees, and once a year attended a youth camp. In the classes she learned 'silent sitting', a meditation technique, and explored the movement's central values of truth (*satya*), righteous conduct (*dharmā*), peace (*shanti*), love (*prem*) and non-violence (*ahimsa*). She also received instruction on food, health and hygiene, especially the importance of a vegetarian diet and the principle of *jutha*,²¹ her *guru* emphasising that when serving food the spoon must never touch people's plates.

Although Anita perceived the Sathya Sai Baba movement as transcending 'Hinduism', she was conscious of her Hindu heritage and of being Gujarati. She preferred Gujarati style vegetarian food and Gujarati is her mother tongue. She had attended the supplementary school (run by members of the predominantly Gujarati Shree Krishna Temple) where she learned to read and write the Gujarati language and heard about aspects of Hindu religion and culture. She had, for example, performed a dance – a stylized version of the *arati* ritual – at an open evening of the school, held mainly for parents. She was one of 250 (mainly Gujarati) Hindus who took part in a pilgrimage to five *mandirs* (temples) in England one day in 1987 and she attended events associated with the Shree Krishna temple in Coventry such as the *Bhumi Pujan*, a ceremony of 'worship of the earth', at the site on which the new temple was to be built. She was also aware of the *Matiya Patel* (or *Matiya Patidar*) caste to which she and her family belonged.

At an individual level, Anita interpreted aspects of the Hindu tradition in a very personal way and her developed personal spirituality is

evident, although the influence of the Sathya Sai Baba movement can be detected in some of her judgements.

When I perform *arati* I think of it as giving my mind peace and rest, instead of always asking 'God give me this' or 'God give me that'. If I do it at the end of the day I say 'Thank you God for such a good day'. I don't perform *vrats* (making vows, often accompanied by keeping a fast) because I think that means you're always asking God for something. I think he's given you enough – food, clothing and so on.

She had strong personal views on the *samaj* (caste association) to which her family belonged:

Samaj is really nothing. It's just a few people getting together to try and rule over all the people who are the same sort of caste. I personally don't like the *samaj* thing.

Anita held views about equal opportunities for girls and women that show the generational difference between her and her grandfather (with whom she could discuss such issues freely) and the influence of current thinking in the wider society. She did not, however, find such views a threat to her Hindu identity.

Anita moved skilfully from one cultural situation to another, exhibiting no obvious tensions and participating energetically in the life of the different groups in which she was involved. She had internalized language, knowledge, skills and values from the world of school as well as from various membership groups through being part of a particular family and religious movement. In a sense the 'conversation' between different world views took place in her own personal and social life. (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, 176–8)

The methodology for the research on which this account was based was influenced by Clifford Geertz, although it takes account of some of the criticisms of his work discussed above in Chapter 2. The influence of Smith's work is also evident, albeit in modified form. In the passage above, the use of the term 'Hinduism' is not avoided, but the emphasis is on a personal account set in the context of groups and the wider Hindu tradition. Indeed, the experience of Anita and her family is seen as a living part of that tradition. This experience is not 'typical' (what is a typical Hindu or Christian or Jew?), but it does give the flavour of Hindu life, and includes examples of some widely understood concepts (e.g. *jutha*), and widespread practices (e.g. pilgrimage and *puja*) and institutions (e.g. caste and religious movements), as well as group-specific points and Anita's personal interpretations. The account would need to be balanced with others, but it is as authentic as any other account of Hindu life, and

could provide a way into the Hindu tradition for someone unfamiliar with it.

It will be shown later that this same threefold model can be used flexibly in religious education as a teaching and learning tool. For the moment, I hope the potential for using the model as a tool for organizing ethnographic data on 'living religions' is evident. The approach does not deny the importance of grasping concepts and practices, but it avoids imposing a general schema which raises the expectation that all 'members' of a religious tradition share the same concepts, beliefs and ways of doing things.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has presented a case for reviewing the ways in which religions or 'world religions' have traditionally been represented. The argument does not go so far as Smith in wanting to delete conventional terms, such as 'religion' or 'religions', from the language, but it does appeal for a general loosening of established approaches, advocating more personal accounts which link individual experience to social experience, and avoiding approaches which posit universal 'essences' or entrap insiders within schematic formulations of key beliefs and concepts. There is an appeal for more attention to the internal diversity of religious traditions, and, incidentally, for attention to religious phenomena that do not fit neatly into taxonomies based on six world religions. Moreover, integrity and sound methodology in representing and interpreting religious data are regarded as essentials. To recall points from the previous chapter, there needs to be sensitivity to the subject matter (which includes, of course, the people whose ways of life are being reported), a continual review of methods and practices and an attempt to represent and interpret material authentically.

The emphasis on personal and social experience highlights the tight relationship between 'religious' and 'cultural' life which exists on the ground. This has already come up briefly in relation to the adaptation of religions to new cultural settings and in the representation of religious minorities by the hard right so that they are 'contained' and appear culturally alien. In the next chapter, we will consider some of the issues pertaining to the representation of 'cultures', applying the discussion to religious education.²²

Notes

1. Aquinas used the term rarely and in different ways, and as far as Smith could discover, no-one in the Middle Ages

wrote a book on 'religion' (Smith 1978, 32). By concentrating on the etymology of one word, however, Smith underplays the perception by Christians of different worldviews as 'other' at various points in history. For example, although the usages of *religio* in the medieval world are as Smith describes, it is clear that Jews and Muslims were seen by Christians as belonging to groups many of whose teachings were to be rejected. The *milites Christi*, 'soldiers of Christ', interpreted by Pope Urban II as involving physical warfare against the enemies of Christendom, had the side effect of increasing attacks on Jews in Europe. Much more moderately (though their aims were to refute the opposition's arguments), there were missionary theologians of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (Gilbert Crispin, who understood Jewish exegesis, and Peter the Venerable, who studied Islam, among others) who understood the need to have some knowledge of others' worlds before entering into debate with them. (Evans 1980; Kritzeck 1964). Nevertheless, the history of the terms 'religion' and 'religions' is fundamentally Christian and Western and the ideas of individuated religions as 'belief systems' with rational bases, but with superstitious and popular accretions, and of religion as a generic category with an essence, are modern.

2 *De Vera et Falsa Religione Commentarius* (1525).

3 As with some other texts referred to above, the title of the English translation (in this case first used in the nineteenth century) is misleading. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, suggest Smith, would better be rendered as *An Essay on Genuine and Spurious Piety* (Smith 1978, 37).

4 Incidentally, although Roman Catholicism has not taken much part in the evolution of the term, Catholic writings may well have been the first to use *religio* in the plural to refer to 'religions of the world'. A text using *religio* in this sense appeared as early as 1508 (slightly pre-Reformation) (Smith 1978, 236).

5 *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* (1622).

6 *On Religion* (1799).

7 G J Holyoake coined the term 'secularism' in 1851 (Jones 1920, 348).

8 Paton's book, *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions*, is the basis for some of the material in the Sunderland Agreed Syllabus first published in 1944, for example (Sunderland 1960, 84).

9 Hilliard does not use the term 'world religions' in his earlier educational articles on religions (1943, 1945).

10 Although he does not discuss the term 'world religions' specifically, see Bates (1994, 1996) for an account of the origins and development of the study of world religions in English education.

11 The term 'discourse' is derived from Michel Foucault whose thinking, especially on power, is influential on Said's argument (e.g. Said 1978, 3, 23, 94, 130).

12 There is a double paradox here, since Brahmins were responsible for shaping 'high' Hindu tradition; Brahmins were also invaluable to Orientalist scholars in their translations and studies of Hindu texts.

13 Orientalist and Anglicist attitudes are to be found in early (and some not so early) Agreed Syllabuses for religious instruction (see Chapter 6), and some of these attitudes appear in more recent textbooks and syllabuses (Jackson 1996b).

14 Both terms are preserved in modern French, le Christianisme; la Chrétienté.

15 Interestingly, as with modern names for religions, the word *Judaismus* appeared in a situation of culture contact, in this case during extreme persecution of Jews by the inheritors of Alexander the Great's Hellenism. The word 'Judaism' applied 'institutionally', however, is modern.

16 On representations of 'Sikhism', see Oberoi (1994). The English word 'Sikhism' approximates to two Panjabi words, *panth*, for 'Sikh Community' and *gurmat*, meaning 'teaching of the Gurus'.

17 The issue of reductionism is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

18 There are other issues raised by Smith's analysis which could be addressed, though I do not think that they threaten his basic case. These include the question of 'faith' of people who are not obviously part of 'cumulative traditions'. This is an issue as much, say, for so-called 'primal religions' as it is for individuals with a spiritual outlook operating within a secular framework. There is also the issue of Smith's strong tendency to engage with the intellectual history of concepts rather than exploring their usage among ordinary people. One suspects that among many ordinary Western Christians the terms 'religion' and 'faith' might be used in fairly similar ways, at least in certain contexts. Smith's approach also does not allow for the adaptation of concepts and terms to particular local usage. This kind of material is discovered by ethnographers rather than historians of ideas.

19 In this taxonomy, Nobbitt avoids using 'Church' as a category, since its familiarity and wealth of applications would be likely to lead to imprecision.

20 An outline of ethnographic studies and a discussion of the curriculum project which use this model can be found in Chapter 5.

21 A Hindi word meaning food to be avoided because contact (even indirect) with another's saliva has made it impure.

Cultural Issues

INTRODUCTION

So far we have dealt with ways of representing religious data which challenge conventional assumptions and aim to make portrayals of religions more personal and flexible, through linking individual experience with membership groups and with religious traditions in their generality. In considering the importance of membership groups when giving accounts of religious activity, we have already seen that some of these do not impinge solely on religious life, but also have a wider cultural reference. The relationship between religion and culture is difficult to unpack, and there are awkward definitional issues relating to both terms. However, cultural factors clearly affect the public form and expression of religions. The differences between Ukrainian and Roman Catholics; the Elim Church and the New Testament Church of God; the Thai Forest Tradition of Buddhism and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order; or between Hindus with a Gujarati and a Tamil ancestry – and all of these groups are present in Britain – are not cashable purely in terms of theological or ritual difference. Just as the issue of representing religions is vital for religious education, so is that of representing cultures.

Although it is arguable that no cultures are 'pristine', and that even the most isolated cultures show the effects of contact with others (Carrithers 1992), the question of representation is made more complex in societies containing groups with varied and distinctive cultural backgrounds – what are often called multicultural societies. Moreover, the ways in which the cultural groups within such societies are conceived and described by politicians and educational policy makers can have far-reaching social effects.

Yet religious educators in Britain, like some supporters of multicultural education, have given little attention to the analysis of 'a culture' as a

category. Critics of multifaith RE, however, have often appealed explicitly to cultural factors in arguing for a predominant place for Christianity in the subject's content. In both cases, assumptions about the nature of cultures need to be made explicit and re-assessed. This chapter attempts to tease out these views and discusses them in relation to the debates about the nature of cultures which have been central to social anthropology. Culture is then discussed in relation to the concepts of ethnicity and national identity, and there is some speculation about the kind of multicultural society that would enable communication across cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries, while preserving a sense of belonging and a shared national identity. Finally, some conclusions are drawn in relation to religious education specifically.

MULTICULTURALISM, ANTIRACISM AND MULTIFAITH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education writing from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s began to take account of the increasing secularization and plurality of British society, notably the work of Edwin Cox (1966), Ninian Smart (1968) and J W D Smith (1969). Although there are important differences in the argument of these writers, there was a general move (consistent with work which was then current in the philosophy of education and of religion) towards an epistemological justification of the place of RE in the curriculum based, not on religion's self-evident or publicly agreed truth, but on its role as a 'form of knowledge' or, more precisely, as a distinctive area of human experience. Cox's work, in particular, shows that the shift towards a critical and secular study of religion was prompted by secularization (of classrooms as well as theological literature) rather than by religious plurality. The publication of Cox's book predates the arousal of interest in the study of religion globally (inspired by Ninian Smart's work) and the study of religions in Britain, stimulated especially by the migration of whole families of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim background from East African countries, following their independence and 'Africanization'.¹ It was the arrival in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s of knowledgeable elders from the South Asian populations which fostered religious practice in temples, gurdwaras and mosques, creating a more 'visible' religious plurality. The increase in overt religious activity also began to have a direct influence on a religious education that had already begun a re-assessment of its aims (e.g. Cole 1972a).

Multifaith approaches to religious education, which became established in the 1970s, had the primary aim of increasing understanding of different

religions among pupils, but there was often a secondary and closely related aim of increasing tolerance and sensitivity towards people of different faiths. Thus, the aims of multifaith religious education were consistent with what became known as 'multicultural education'. Many religious educators saw their contribution to multicultural education in terms of aiming to change negative attitudes towards the religions and cultures of Britain's new citizens through knowledge and understanding, sometimes enhanced by personal acquaintance. Many recent local authority religious education syllabuses and the national model syllabuses of 1994 (despite some ambiguous messages) maintain this 'multiculturalist' goal. As we saw in Chapter 1, the 'Bible' of multiculturalism in Britain, the Swann Report, perceived religious education in this way, and explicitly advocated the phenomenological approach of Ninian Smart's Schools Council Project as a means to impartiality in the treatment of another's religion or faith (Swann 1985, 3.19). The assumptions about the nature of cultures in multifaith RE and in multicultural education were closely similar, and while both were attacked by the radical right, it was the general approach of multiculturalism that attracted criticism from antiracists.

In the 1980s, the multicultural approach, associated with a 'liberal education' philosophy, came under strong attack from some of those who identified themselves as 'antiracists' (e.g. Mullard 1984). The following is a summary of some of the key criticisms of multiculturalism from the standpoint of this type of antiracism.

- In multicultural education, a culture was often perceived as a closed system, with a fixed understanding of ethnicity.
- The treatment of 'cultures' in the language and practices of multicultural education was usually superficial, partly because of a well meaning attempt to celebrate diversity. The charge is expressed neatly in Barry Troyna's parody of multicultural education in practice in schools as 'saris, samosas and steelbands' (1983). Such superficiality reinforced platitudes and stereotypes, and hence helped to maintain racism intact.
- An emphasis on discrete cultures allowed them to be perceived as rivals to the national culture which, through its tolerance, allowed them to express themselves.
- Multicultural education emphasized the exotic, the other, the different – perpetuating the approaches of early social and cultural anthropologists.
- The superficiality of multicultural approaches resulted in a lack of attention to hierarchies of power *within* different cultural groups. Cultural and religious groups were perceived in simplistic terms as holistic and unified communities.

- Racism was perceived psychologically in terms of personal attitudes that could be changed through knowledge and learning the value of tolerance. The power structures and established social practices within institutions, which were principally responsible for the perpetuation of inequality, were ignored.

Although not directed specifically at religious education, there is no doubt, especially with the benefit of hindsight, that many of these criticisms hold true of RE, especially with regard to assumptions about the nature of 'cultures' in some of its teaching materials and sometimes to its delivery in classrooms. The parallels between some of the antiracists' criticisms of the representation of cultures and the criticisms of Western representations of religions offered above (Chapter 3) are clear.

For antiracists, individual beliefs about 'race' and the content of cultural traditions were not perceived as the central issue. According to antiracism, it is 'structures of power' – institutional and social practices – that produce racial oppression. Racist ideas reinforce and legitimate unequal distribution of power between different groups (e.g. Troyna and Carrington 1990, 56). Racism, it is argued, needs to be tackled by challenging and changing these structures, not by presenting information about cultures or religions in the classroom. Because of its primary concern with changing structures, antiracism (especially during the 1980s) was limited in its suggestions with regard to the school curriculum. Some writers offered ideas to promote a more critical stance with regard to awareness of 'institutional racism' and strategies to promote racial justice in the school. However, having criticized multicultural education's approaches to cultures in the curriculum, antiracists have been short of ideas for dealing with the complex issues of culture, ethnicity and religion which undoubtedly exist in schools and in British society generally. Some have been naive in their suggestions, showing an inability to make conceptual distinctions which are familiar to professional religious educators in Britain – for example, the distinction between religious education and religious nurture (e.g. Cole 1992, 247). Moreover, with its preoccupation with structures of power and its use of categories intended to eliminate the distinctions between groups, this form of antiracism has itself tended to 'homogenize' different communities. In attacking superficial and closed accounts of culture and ethnicity, some antiracists themselves have underestimated the importance of questions of cultural and religious representation, transmission and change. This point is recognized by writers who, in various ways, attempt to synthesize antiracist and multicultural education (e.g. Leicester 1992) or to address issues of culture and 'race' together (Donald and Rattansi 1992).

Thus an important issue for religious educators is not so much to question whether they *should* deal with the representation of cultures, but rather to look for more flexible ways of representing and interpreting cultural material which take on board key elements of the antiracist critique. This is a necessary, though clearly not a sufficient condition for achieving one of the primary goals of religious education, which is to develop an understanding of the grammar – the language and wider symbolic patterns – of religions (Jackson 1984, 142). The hermeneutical approach to the study of religious material outlined in Chapter 2 and the three-fold model of individual, membership groups and tradition described in Chapter 3, go some way to answering the criticisms of the antiracists as far as religions are concerned. Later in this chapter, we will consider ways of representing cultures which need to be taken into account in religious education. First, however, we will examine the views of cultures from critics of multifaith RE.

CHRISTIANITY, MULTICULTURE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

British RE literature contains little discussion specifically about the concepts of 'culture' and 'cultures', much of it simply regarding religion as a subset of culture. Individual cultures are generally assumed to be organic and discrete, rather close to Tylor's nineteenth century definition of culture as '... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor 1871). Thus a multicultural society is often perceived as a society in which different, clearly distinct cultures exist side by side.

With this view of cultures, it is relatively easy to construct an argument which identifies an organic, but relatively stable, national culture which is threatened by imported foreign cultures, or which allows alien cultures to exist by its good grace. This position is assumed by writers from the radical right in attacking multifaith RE (Burn and Hart 1988, discussed in Jackson 1992) and in arguing for the separation of children from 'different cultures' in certain educational settings (Naylor 1989, discussed in Banks 1996, 171–88). The language of writers holding similar views, especially their use of metaphors which imply the 'pollution' of the national culture by alien cultures, is discussed in Hull (1991).

A more sophisticated version of the argument has been advanced by the theologian John McIntyre (1978). McIntyre recognizes the organic nature of cultures, seeing a culture as both 'the expression of the fundamental

concepts and values of the community ...' and the 'expressing' of them, for '... culture is an activity, an ongoing concern, and not a collection of artefacts, the externals, the observables of the culture' (1.1). Although he acknowledges a dynamic element in the culture of 'western society', the degree to which it can precipitate change is severely limited, for the authenticity of cultural expression is measured against concepts and values which are immutable. The source of these basic elements, argues McIntyre, is primarily Christian:

There is at least an historical case for saying that in western society, it is religion, and in particular, the Christian religion, which has been the source of the values and concepts from which culture has sprung. Even where there has been a coincidence of Christian and Humanist values, the weight of priority seems to lie with the former, as the inspiration of our culture (1.6).

Cultural change in Western society is thus governed by reference to a fixed core of Christian concepts and values. In McIntyre's view, 'If you change what might be called the nucleus of the culture, you change the cultural expressions derivable from it. In fact you change the culture' (1.7).

Even with this 'closed' idea of a culture, McIntyre does not countenance any possible overlap between the values of one culture and another; cultures, according to this view, might be pictured as separate, rather than overlapping, circles. Hence McIntyre argues that Britain could only be 'multicultural' in a weak sense in which the Christian-derived values of British culture allowed and enabled subordinate cultures to exist.

The members of society of the dominant culture have the responsibility to ensure the assimilation of the newcomers, with a delicacy which does not eliminate the cultural differences from themselves, and to see that no social inequalities are imposed. (3.5.2)

This responsibility is only sustainable, says McIntyre, if the values of the dominant culture are maintained (7.2.4). Thus he justifies teaching Christianity from a committed standpoint and with the intention of producing in pupils 'commitment to the faith' (8.1) in order to preserve those values.

There are various problems with McIntyre's arguments, for example, the paradox of his view that a culture can be both dynamic and yet based on an unchanging bedrock of concepts and values, and the oddness of advocating teaching Christianity as true apparently for instrumental reasons.² What is of particular interest in the present context, however, is McIntyre's view of cultures as discrete wholes. The only relationship between them he envisages is one of acquiescence on the part of

'subordinate' cultures to the (supposedly) religiously-based value system of the dominant culture.

Christianity and Cultural Development

McIntyre's account has some assumptions in common with the view of culture advanced by Nicholas Tate, Chief Executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (Tate 1995). Tate advanced his ideas in an attempt to initiate a debate about cultural development, in view of the 1988 Education Reform Act's requirement that the whole curriculum should contribute to pupils' 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' (UK Government 1988, Section 1 [2]). In his concern that schools should combat cultural relativism, Tate advocates the teaching of a common culture consisting of English language, literature and history, the study of Christianity and the classical world, ensuring that pupils have '... a sense of common culture and making sure an induction to that common culture is a central thread in the school curriculum'. Like McIntyre, Tate sees cultures as internally homogeneous and clearly distinct from one another, and his view of cultural identity is inflexible. Children from ethnic minority backgrounds are pictured as having two cultural identities, an English one and a subordinate home-based one, Bengali, for example: 'People of course can have more than one identity.' Pupils with both 'British (or indeed English)' and Bengali identities live 'within the two identities side by side' (para 29).

His construction of a national culture (he sometimes virtually equates 'cultural identity' and 'national identity' as in paragraph 23) ignores 'regional' and 'local' culture, concentrates on 'high' culture, and omits whole areas (music and art for example). I am not suggesting that any pupils in Britain should be deprived of an initiation into the examples he lists. My objection is that in asserting the separateness of cultures and cultural identities, and by privileging his construction, other cultural material is implicitly devalued. There is no acknowledgement of the contested nature of a culture, and the complexity of each person's cultural identity, which is likely to draw on many sources, is denied. A simple choice of either pick and mix relativism or the deliberate transmission of a constructed national culture is seen as the only option. As we will see below, this kind of ideological account of cultural development is very different from empirical examples of how culture actually 'develops' in day to day life.³

With regard to Christianity, it is right at one level to agree with McIntyre and Tate that its study should have an essential place in religious education in Britain. As the tradition which has interacted with the personal and social lives of people in the British Isles for well over a

millennium, it would be unthinkable not to give Christian studies an important place in religious education. At another level, one must be cautious. The relationships between personal faith and religious traditions and between religious traditions and the wider cultural milieu in which they are set are dynamic and not static. Christianity, indeed, has helped to shape cultural life in Britain, but a Christianity already deeply influenced by Hellenic thought, and open to the influences of social and cultural movements within Britain and within the many countries in which it flourishes. Christianity should have an important place in religious education, but not on the grounds that there exists a fixed and unchanging culture or 'British way of life' that requires a study of an equally static Christianity for its preservation (Coombs 1988). Christianity and the other faiths need to be seen as living and internally varied traditions, relating, responding and reacting to one another and to the secularism they all encounter. The Christian tradition also needs to be presented as theologically and ethnically pluralistic (Jackson and Nesbitt 1992; Nesbitt 1993; see also Chapter 5 below). There may not only be profound theological and cultural differences between Christian groups, but also shifting and contested interpretations of key symbols *within* each one (Ashenden 1995). Christianity will generally warrant more space on the timetable than the other traditions because of its historical and contemporary presence in British society, together with its significance as a global religion. It stands open to academic scrutiny, however, on the same terms as any other religious tradition.

DEBATES ABOUT 'CULTURES' IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In recent social anthropology, we find some very different approaches to the representation of cultures from that envisaged by McIntyre and Tate. Rather than finding a view of cultures which is taken as read, we find a *debate* which is linked to the experience of fieldwork and which reflects on the history of anthropological interpretation. In contemporary approaches to anthropological theory, just as the Tylorean view of a culture has been superseded, so has the cultural relativism of Franz Boas and his followers such as Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. Once again, their emphasis was on closure, but unlike Tylor, who saw different cultures as related but on different steps of an evolutionary ladder, the cultural relativists emphasized difference from other cultures and a high degree of internal uniformity. For Ruth Benedict, for example, a Digger Indian living in the modern world was perceived as the relic of a dead culture, rather than an expression of cultural continuity in a new context. Benedict recounts a

conversation with a 'Digger' informant about what both he and she perceived to be the decay of Digger Indian culture and remarks that '... he straddled two cultures whose values and ways of thought were incommensurable. It is a hard fate' (Benedict 1935, 16). In Benedict's view, each culture is thought of discretely, by analogy with types of living organism. One either has a culture or one does not; it either survives or it is lost; there is no possibility of the formation of new cultural expressions as a result of culture contact.

Clifford Geertz's view is more open. Cultures are seen to be distinct (Geertz's fieldwork was in locations such as Bali, Java and Morocco where it was perhaps relatively easy to perceive them so) but internally highly variegated, though all the diverse parts would in some ways be connected. Cultural continuity is maintained via inherited conceptions, expressed through symbols, through which knowledge about and attitudes towards life are expressed (1973, 89). The specific function of sacred symbols is 'to synthesize a people's ethos – the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood – and their world view' (90).

Geertz uses the octopus as a metaphor for cultural organisation, an animal:

... whose tentacles are in large part separately integrated, neurally quite poorly connected with one another and with what in the octopus passes for a brain, and yet who nonetheless manages to get around and to preserve himself, for a while anyway, as a viable, if somewhat ungainly entity (1973, 407–8).

This is a much looser view than that of McIntyre or Tate, allowing for a considerable amount of diversity within cultures, while still making sense of 'a culture' as a whole. Nevertheless, there are still some difficulties with it. One is the easy way in which Geertz tends to represent people in generic terms, playing down diversity and changes in the use and meaning of symbols. Through his studies of individuals, he makes generalizations too readily, about 'the Balinese' for example (Geertz 1973, 412–53). He also tends occasionally to over-emphasize the alienness of the other's view.⁴

From the field of cultural criticism, Edward Said, while recognizing the value of Geertz's approach (1978, 326), offers a different perspective, paying more attention to conflict *within* cultures as well as between them. Said's view is that we should attempt to think of cultures, not so much as organically unified or traditionally continuous, but rather as negotiated, present processes. As we saw in the previous chapter, he is especially concerned with the politics of representation, with how powerful outsiders construct and represent cultures (1978; 1981; 1993). To add an insight from Anthony Cohen, the symbols of a culture do not dictate that its members share exactly the same world view. Rather, cultural symbols offer

a language with which to construct a world view. Symbols are malleable, making coherence and dissent possible within 'communities' simultaneously. Despite conflict, the use of shared symbols by dissenters expresses a sense of belonging to the group (Cohen 1985).

The issue of how cultures are portrayed by both insiders and outsiders has been debated by anthropologists such as James Clifford, who are especially interested in how ethnographers represent others through their texts. These writers use techniques from contemporary literary theory, both in giving a critique of anthropological writing and in articulating their own views (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986). For Clifford, there can be no 'whole picture' of a culture. A culture is neither a scientific object nor is it a discrete and stable symbol system which can be interpreted definitively. A culture is internally diverse and is actively contested. Clifford's next key point is that it is inevitable that the representation of a culture will be deeply influenced by those attempting to interpret it, whether through their intellectual presuppositions or gender or whatever. There can be no single definitive account; there can only be better and worse accounts (Clifford 1986, 18–19).

Other voices in social anthropology have gone even further, attacking the very idea of a culture on the grounds of its tendency to make difference 'solid and timeless' (Abu-Lughod 1991; 1993, 11), or wishing to change the emphasis from a generic idea of the 'culture' of a people to 'sociality', shifting anthropology's main focus to the study of individuals in relationships and the interactive nature of social life (Carrithers 1992). The shift in this latter case is from the idea of stable cultures, partly because no known society is untouched by outside influence, and partly because people have a hand in their own futures; they are not simply animals who are moulded passively by societies and cultures. Here there is a change of emphasis from the centres of cultures to their peripheries and the relations between them (Hylland Eriksen 1992; 1993). The appropriate metaphor for a culture shifts from the 'coral reef' to the 'electrical field' (Hylland Eriksen 1994, 22–3). There is a move from static descriptions of people's cultural characteristics to dynamic accounts of the processes in which they are involved. Human beings *actively* make and remake ways of life.

The recent work of the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth is consistent with this view. His fieldwork convinced him that so many variables operate, even within a superficially homogeneous society, that it makes little sense to speak in terms of discrete cultures or to characterize groups by what he regards as their most unstable feature. Rather, we should think of people *engaging with* culture, drawing on different

'cultural funds' (1994; 1996). Instead of describing someone as belonging to a specific culture, we should think in terms of describing that person's social identity, which might be shaped by a variety of cultural influences. To conclude this section, we might note that this brief review of the debates about cultures within social anthropology, at the least, exposes the partiality of accounts by writers such as McIntyre and Tate.

A SYNTHESIS

Research data from studies of children from religious backgrounds in Britain suggest that the views of Geertz and some of the other writers referred to above are not mutually exclusive, and that no single metaphor (whether Geertz's octopus or Hylland Erikson's electrical field) is likely to capture the complexity of cultural life on the ground.⁵ The notion of cultural continuity is not inconsistent with the complex and contested nature of cultural change, nor with disagreements over the ways in which cultural pasts are constructed and used in the present. The debate should be less over whether or not there *is* cultural continuity, but over the ways in which it is conceived and represented. As well as seeing a person as part of a continuing cultural tradition, it is also possible to observe that person's engagement with material from a variety of cultural sources. We need to give attention to *both* of these processes if we are to give an account which coheres with the complexities of what actually happens 'in the field', as opposed to ideological statements of what people would like to happen.

The model of separate or overlapping circles, implied by McIntyre and Tate, is quite inadequate to show change over time and especially to indicate the mobility and flexibility of *individuals* in different cultural situations. This point is especially important for the portrayal of British young people whose ancestry is non-British. Roger Ballard's overview of a series of studies of South Asian communities in Britain stresses the adaptability of the young, describing them as 'skilled cultural navigators', rather than the victims of culture conflict (Ballard 1994, 29–34). Such changes do not simply come about through direct acculturation, for all developments take place in the context of what has been called 'modern plurality'; 'religious plurality' is set in the context of the plurality of views, values and opinions made available through global communications (Skeie 1995). The media, for example, can influence processes of cultural formation in complex and structured rather than random ways (Cohen 1982b; Gillespie 1989; 1995). Empirical evidence shows that the result of this interplay of influences need not be the relativism and moral decline that so worries Nicholas Tate.

With regard to individuals, the example of Anita given in the previous chapter illustrates what might be termed her 'multiple cultural competence'⁶ (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, 174). The term does not imply having 'multiple identities'. The *same* Anita, when she was eleven years old, could move unselfconsciously from one milieu to another, with different aspects of her identity coming to the fore according to context. Her experience, however, showed a clear continuity with Hindu tradition, albeit a part of the tradition in which traditional and institutional symbols are being reworked in particular ways. In the context of Hindu life, she could affirm or be critical of some traditional institutions and practices, sometimes speaking for her gender or her generation. At the same time, she was British, participating fully in educational life and having aspirations to move into higher education and a career. Her 'cultural development' was confined neither to a complex of Hindu influences nor to the British education system. Anita was neither participating in a pick and mix, 'postmodern' way of life, in which she combined bits and pieces of culture randomly, nor was she locked into some traditional construction of 'Hinduism'. Different aspects of her social identity would come to the fore according to the context of the various groups to which she belonged. Her religious life reflected her own views as well as some of the changing institutions and practices of 'British Hinduism', but there was also a clear continuity between aspects of her cultural identity and the Gujarati Indian cultural fund of her forebears. She was not 'caught between' two cultures. In a sense, she and others with whom she interacted were reshaping and even creating culture.⁷

CULTURE, ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY

Those who see cultures as bounded and discrete, also tend to portray ethnic groups in the same way. Ethnicity, on this view, is not only closely associated with a particular set of cultural norms, but is also entirely a matter of biological ancestry. It is but a short step to associate nationality – or nationality in its pure sense – with a particular set of cultural norms and a particular ethnicity. This is an axiom of the radical right position on education (e.g. Naylor 1989).

Ethnicity

However, the concept of ethnicity is a tricky one, and the debate about it in the social sciences is complex and on-going.⁸ Ethnic groups are popularly thought of as having a common ancestry and descent, marked by some form of cultural continuity which distinguishes them from other groups around them. Ethnic differences can be highlighted by legal

definition, as in the 'old' South African apartheid system with its three 'races', each divided into particular ethnic groups. There is also supposedly overt 'racial' or phenotypical difference, and where ethnic differences are also 'racial', divisions are sometimes especially pronounced. Then there is the sense most familiar in 'multicultural' societies, namely the accentuation of ethnic difference through migration.

The theoretical debate about ethnicity centres on the idea of 'closure'. If a person is labelled as being from a certain ethnic group, then that person can be stereotyped by certain 'outsiders' or members of the majority culture, 'locked' into a particular identity – expected to behave, dress, eat, speak etc in certain preconceived ways. This view has been criticized especially by those who have recognized through their field research the situational character of ethnicity. Fredrik Barth, and other writers from this 'situational' tradition, are conscious of changes that take place across socially constructed ethnic boundaries, where one group influences another, either positively or negatively (Barth 1969; 1981). Think of groups who have rediscovered religious or ethnic symbols as a result of being marginalized by more powerful groups around them (French Muslim schoolgirls wearing 'scarves' for example), or groups that have attempted to redefine themselves in response to influences or pressures from other social groups or institutions.⁹ Barth's analysis of ethnicity starts from the insiders' definition of the social situation, focusing attention on the maintenance of ethnic boundaries. Ethnic identity depends on ascription by both insiders and outsiders, and ethnicity is not fixed, but situationally defined. Factors such as competition for economic resources play an important role in the generation of ethnicity.

The most radical positions in the debate are held by those who attack the very idea of ethnicity. There is a Marxist critique, arguing that the only significant category is social class (e.g. Castles and Kosack 1973, 5); there are also some types of nationalist who want to assimilate ethnic distinctions (the pre-World War II American 'melting pot' approach is one example), and there are postmodernist views, some of which emphasize globalization, seeing the concept of ethnicity as an anachronistic social construction. Some writers feel that even the situationist view of ethnicity, with its use of terms such as 'group', 'boundary' and 'maintenance', still potentially 'locks' individuals into particular identities and fails to reflect the varied political and ideological agendas on the ground. Donald and Rattansi, for example, draw attention to the limitations in some multicultural accounts of ethnicity which concentrate on shared descent, preferring to emphasize 'individual agency' in relation to 'cultural authority' in their consideration of the concept of culture (1992, 4).

My view, which is influenced by field research with children from religious communities in Britain (Jackson and Nesbitt 1992; 1993; 1996; Nesbitt 1990; 1991; 1993a, b, c; 1994; 1995a, b, c, d; 1997a, b; Nesbitt and Jackson 1993; 1995), is to regard the term 'ethnicity' as still connoting some degree of identification with an ancestral tradition or a sense of 'shared peoplehood' (Dashefsky 1972), while acknowledging that ethnicity changes situationally and can never be fixed or static. Portrayals of ethnicity also need to give attention to the fact that individuals sometimes operate differently, but often equally well, in varied social and cultural settings. Thus a sense of shared descent is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition of common ethnicity, and ethnicity is only one component of social identity.

At the same time, the internal variety of ethnic groups has to be acknowledged, and also that processes of ethnic re-formation go on constantly as a result of the interactions of individuals with others. Moreover, the 'level' at which someone expresses a sense of shared peoplehood, or is perceived to express it, may vary situationally. In some contexts, ethnicity may be perceived narrowly, as in the case of Gujarati Hindus born in East Africa in distinction from Indian born Gujaratis, or with Kutchis as distinct from Kathiawaris, or more broadly, as when 'Hinduism' as reshaped by Hindus with families with different Indian linguistic and regional roots is still perceived as an ethnically Indian phenomenon.¹⁰

Jessica Jacobson brings out the contextual and shifting nature of ethnic identity in her observations on Pakistani Muslim young people in Britain (1997). With younger people, a sense of ethnic identity may vary situationally – it could be more related to a Pakistani ancestry or be 'British Pakistani' in certain contexts (e.g. in the family), and be 'Asian' or 'British Asian' in another (e.g. with members of the peer group). In the case of young Pakistani Muslims, there is evidence that ethnicity is in a state of flux and rapid change, while religion is perceived as stable and having universal applicability (Jacobson 1997; see also Gilliat, forthcoming).

Some writers speak of 'hyphenated' ethnic identities, such as Norwegian-Pakistani (Østberg 1997) or Chinese-American (Fischer 1986). When Michael Fischer writes of 'Chinese-American' ethnic identity, for example, he is thinking of a group with an ancestry that goes ultimately to China, but he is also asserting that ethnicity is dynamic, and not taught and learned, not simply passed on from generation to generation. To be Chinese American '... is a matter of finding a voice or style that does not violate one's several components of identity' (1986, 196).

Shared ancestry is still a feature of ethnicity, but the internal variety within an ethnic group is acknowledged, as well as the possibility of ethnic reconstruction.

National Identity¹¹

If we regard a 'state' as a type of society with a government, supported by a civil service, ruling over a particular territory, and whose authority is supported by law and the ability to use force, then a 'nation' (or 'nation state') is a type of modern state, in which 'the mass of the population are citizens who know themselves to be part of that nation' (Giddens 1993, 743).¹² 'National identity' has been analysed in various ways as combining ethnic, political and civic elements (Smith 1991), or as a component of social identity (Tajfel 1978). Moreover, there are those – and these are the theorists whom Tate fears most – who reject the notion of unified national identities, arguing that, as a result of globalization, the postmodern identity is fluid, shifting, capable of drawing freely on many sources without recourse to the authority and grammar of separate cultural traditions (e.g. Hall 1992).

When we come to look specifically at debates about British national identity, there are some complicating factors. For example, there are the parameters of the nation. Are we talking about the British or the English? How far do the Scots and Welsh identify politically with Britain, whilst retaining distinct senses of ethnic or national identity? Then there are the questions of Britishness in relation to being European. How far does a European identity challenge or undermine separate national identities? And, of course, there is the issue of migration of people to the UK from former British colonies whose people, like the indigenous people of the British Isles, were equal 'subjects' of the Crown. The descendents of this mainly 'non-white' group are British-born and are British citizens, and yet many popular assumptions about the nature of Britishness and Englishness readily exclude them. Another factor is Britain's loss of the economic supremacy it once had, and its increasing economic dependence on the USA as well as its gradual incorporation into the European Union. Finally, there is the effect on all nation states of the transnational economic, political and cultural forces of 'globalization', which, on the one hand, promotes cultural syntheses, yet, on the other, causes some people to romanticize the past through constructing a stable traditional national culture (Parekh 1995a and b; Tate 1995).

The 'postmodern' perspective on national identity is not the only alternative to a closed and exclusive view. Objectively, all the children and young people we have studied in our research projects at Warwick University are British, in that nearly all of them were born in Britain, and

every one is a British citizen (see Chapter 5). How far they *feel* British, however, depends on context. Among our interviewees of South Asian origin, for example, someone on the receiving end of racism from classmates may not feel accepted as being British when reflecting on the experience. Conversely, a Hindu child visiting India for the first time might feel particularly British (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, Chapter 3).

In her research on young British Pakistanis' perceptions of Britishness, Jessica Jacobson found a wide range of views on what it means to be British, revealing three different, interrelated and shifting 'boundaries of Britishness', constructed mainly by whites and, less so, by members of ethnic minorities (1996). Jacobson classifies these as civic, 'racial' and cultural. It is in the civic sense that all of Jacobson's respondents were British – that is, they were British citizens. Many referred to this sense of Britishness, but most of them felt it to be an incomplete way of belonging to a nation, lacking emotional content.

The 'racial' boundary defines Britishness in terms of biological ancestry, and is associated with white skin colour. However, this view, in the experience of many of Jacobson's respondents, was also closely associated with perceptions of cultural difference. Many told of not being accepted as fully British by white Britons because of their 'race', feeling both the deep unfairness of the response and that such views are deeply ingrained in British society.

The cultural boundary is delineated according to behaviour, lifestyle and values perceived to be 'typically British'. This is a less clear boundary than the others, always featuring a closed and exclusive view of culture, but experienced differently by various respondents, and encompassing as 'typically British' anything from language, the Church of England and 'cultural heritage', to characteristics such as moderation, tolerance and reserve, to inflexible expectations with regard to dress, speech and food etc. The power of the position, in the experience of many of Jacobson's respondents, is enhanced by its close association with a racism based on skin colour.¹³

The British Pakistani young people's feelings as to the degree and variety of their *own* Britishness varied, with many including being British as an important part of their social identity, but nearly always coupled with a view that ethnic, cultural and religious distinctions should be a healthy and significant part of British life, rather than a threat to national identity. Similarly, Fischer's 'Chinese-Americans', Østberg's Norwegian-Pakistanis and my Gujarati Hindu friends in Calgary, Alberta have no difficulty in principle in combining their own distinctive but shifting and situationally expressed ethnic identities with a religious identity (itself changing in

character in some respects) and, respectively, American, Norwegian and Canadian national identities.¹⁴

Moreover, I do not think that their situation is so different from mine in claiming a local Derbyshire identity as well as a British identity. The various studies by the anthropologist Anthony Cohen and his co-writers (1982a; 1986), celebrate the *diversity* of British cultures. These studies show no single homogeneous British or national culture but dozens of diverse cultures often founded on a sense of locality or 'belonging'. Cohen focuses on how members of local communities manipulate symbols in sustaining boundaries, with individuals sharing some common features with the rest of the nation (from aspects of everyday speech to watching TV soap operas), but investing them with 'local meaning'. For Cohen, 'local experience mediates national identity, and, therefore, an anthropological understanding of the latter cannot proceed without a knowledge of the former' (1982b, 13).

These points should be of great concern to religious educators. We cannot get away with assuming that an aim for RE which is to do with fostering an understanding of religious traditions or religious language has nothing to do with these debates. Religious education policy, and therefore views of the subject's aims, can be influenced by narrow and contestable views of cultural development, just as can other areas of the curriculum. Policy influenced by questionable assumptions about the relationship of nationality, ethnicity, religion and culture, however innocently intended, at best would result in deep feelings of rejection among many children. Furthermore, the perspectives on religions held by children in our classes who come from varied religious backgrounds is influenced by ethnic and cultural factors. RE teachers need to have an eye to religions as they are experienced and practised in children's homes and communities if they are to foster an authentic understanding.

THE NATURE OF A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

If cultures are to be perceived flexibly and critically, and if cultural interaction and change is an inevitable and natural part of modern life, what are the implications for societies which are 'multicultural'?¹⁵ Writers from fields as varied as theology, politics and sociology have addressed the issue of the nature and workability of multicultural societies. John McIntyre's ideas, which involve seeing cultures as discrete entities, with subordinate cultures functioning in their own private space, and depending on the values of the dominant culture for their continued existence and well-being, have already been criticized. Oddly enough, the

type of postmodernist view which emphasizes cultural fragmentation and non-communication has some elements in common with this picture. David Harvey, for example, argues that postmodernism mirrors social, economic and political practices in the societies in which it appears, comparing uncommunicating worlds in postmodernist novels with 'the increasing ghettoization, disempowerment and isolation of poverty and minority populations in the inner cities of both Britain and the United States' (1989, 113). Models are needed which address questions of social justice and communication across cultural, ethnic and religious boundaries.

In trying to find workable models of a multicultural society which permit social coherence and justice as well as cultural diversity, some writers emphasize a distinction between public and private domains, regarding certain aspects of cultural life, such as religious belief, primary socialization and the inculcation of religious belief as being the province of private life, while legal, political and economic matters are part of public life. In his discussion of the concept of a multicultural society, John Rex argues a case for a particular relationship between the public and private domains in society (Rex 1985). The public domain includes the world of law, politics and economics, while the private includes matters relating to the family, morality and religion. There are, says Rex, two kinds of boundaries between public and private which are breached in society: state intervention in the economic sphere, and also state intervention in family and community matters, especially through education and social work. In education, for example, the public domain is concerned with the transmission of skills and the perpetuation of the civic culture, while moral education, primary socialization and the transmission of religious belief belong to the private domain.

The structure of the private domain amongst 'immigrant' minority communities includes extended kinship going back to a homeland, a network of associations and a system of religious organisation and belief. 'This structure', says Rex, 'provides a valuable means in an impersonal society of providing a home and a source of identity for individuals' (15-16). However, minority communities may conflict with and challenge the existing order, as have communities based on social class in the past. 'The new social order of the multi-cultural society', according to Rex, 'is an emergent one which will result from the dialogue and the conflict between cultures' (16).

This analysis improves on McIntyre's idea of subordinate and aquiescent cultures, and it gives some indication of how cultural and social change might come about. However, it stays with a 'circles' model of cultures. In

this case, in contrast to McIntyre's idea, the circles overlap in the sphere of public life, but the idea of homogeneity *within* the circles is not challenged. The diversity and contest within cultures is glossed over. Nevertheless, the notion of fuzzy boundaries between the public and private domains is of interest (one sees the possibility of a sensitive interplay between religious nurture in the home and religious education in the school, for example), although the possibility of shared or overlapping values is not explored.

The way we picture a multicultural society needs to be more plastic and multi-imaged. More needs to be made of the fact that some degree of cultural plurality in a society is not dependent on the presence of ethnic minorities who are descended from migrants. As we have already seen in relation to Anthony Cohen's work, what McIntyre calls the 'dominant culture' is anything but homogeneous. Also, ethnic minority cultures are themselves internally pluralistic, and the symbols and values of their various constituent groups are open to negotiation, contest and change. Hylland Eriksen's suggestion of an electrical field as a better metaphor for a culture than a coral reef seems attractive superficially (1994). Rather than being cumulative repositories, with new expressions bonded to old, cultures are seen as less defined towards the periphery, and thereby open to change. The electrical field metaphor fails, however, because it implies a pristine and unchanging core.

A single image is insufficient to grasp cultural relations. We need to hold on to *both* the idea of fuzzy edged and internally contested 'cultures' and the picture of the individual having the potentiality to draw on a range of cultural resources – the person who might become a 'skilled cultural navigator' (Ballard 1994) or who might develop a degree of multiple cultural competence (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993). The notion of private and public domains is still relevant to this, but not in the sense of *confining* particular aspects of life to either. On this more flexible model, 'private' encompasses a much wider range of cultural interactions than envisaged by closed models of cultures; private life is not confined to one cultural sphere. In the public domain, there need to be mechanisms which maximize communication across boundaries, whether it be mutual interpretation or 'conversation', or a harder edged negotiation over questions of value, and there is a need for institutions which enable and foster these interactions. Groups could explain and discuss their community-based values in a search for enough commonality or overlap to cohere with and contribute to the civic and legal expressions of the state.¹⁶ What all participants need, however, is a sense of *belonging* to society, regardless of religious, ethnic or cultural background.¹⁷

RELEVANCE TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The relevance of all this to RE should be clear enough. The portrayal of cultures as bounded and homogeneous, of ethnicity as fixed and related entirely to ancestry, and of national identity and cultural identity as coterminous, are all challenged by theoretical and empirical evidence. Religious educators need to be critical of their assumptions regarding the nature of 'cultures' and to develop new modes of representation. There is a need to question the limited range of views about the nature of culture and cultures present in the literature of our subject. Representations of cultures as closed need to be rejected in favour of portrayals which reveal their dynamism, the contestability of cultural processes, and the potential capacity for individuals to draw on a variety of cultural resources and to be able to operate in different cultural situations. In these respects, recent debates in the literature of cultural anthropology, and the social sciences more generally, are especially relevant to religious educators. Moreover, more flexible models of the multicultural society need to be developed, emphasizing communication and the exploration of 'overlapping' values which cohere with, and feed into, the civic and legal apparatus of the state. Such models should find no structural or ethical barrier to reconciling cultural, religious and ethnic diversity with national identity. The school as an institution would need to mirror these values, and religious education would provide one important forum for communication across religious and cultural divides. The ethical 'grounding' for this form of religious education should not be the values of a particular dominant group (whether the values of liberal education or religious, religio-cultural or political values of a particular type), but rather values that overlap sufficiently for some common and pragmatic agreement to be reached by the range of participants in our society – whether secular or religious – at points where worldviews overlap, or that can be agreed in a 'civic' sense. Here there is room for 'conversation' and 'negotiation'.

As RE teachers, we need to be sensitive to the fast moving changes taking place among 'religio-ethnic' groups in Britain. We must be careful not to identify individuals simplistically with outsider constructions of religious traditions and cultures, nor with insider institutional views. Both ethnic and religious re-formation is going on around us, and the personal and social interactions of the school, whether in classroom or playground, are a significant part of the process, as are out of school peer group relations, the influence of the media and, of course, family and 'community' activities.

Incidentally, the plea for separate schooling from some members of

religious minorities, especially some Muslims and Evangelical Christians, might be less strong if structures and procedures of schooling and religious education were more even-handed.¹⁸ There is always the option of withdrawal for those who could not engage in this form of religious education (and, for some, the possibility of voluntary aided schooling), but an RE fostering communication across different religious and cultural positions should be the norm for the publicly funded school.¹⁹

The next chapter deals with an interpretive approach in practice. It starts with some brief summaries of research on religion in the home and community experience of children in parts of Britain, based on ethnographic studies of children and young people carried out at the University of Warwick. There follows a description of a curriculum development project which uses an interpretive approach, both drawing on that research as source material, and taking account of the discussions of the representation and interpretation of religions and cultures discussed in Chapters 2–4.

Notes

1 Modern Britain's character as a multicultural and religiously plural society results mainly, though by no means exclusively, from immigration, especially of peoples from former United Kingdom colonies in South Asian countries, African countries and the Caribbean. The first significant movement was in response to the labour shortage in Britain's industrial cities in the 1950s with the objective of gaining employment in order to supplement the family income in the home country. In the case of migrants from South Asian countries, for example, by a process of 'chain migration', early migrants were joined by male relatives or fellow villagers, the established residents providing accommodation and helping to find work for the new arrivals (Desai 1963). By the mid to late 1960s, following increasingly restrictive immigration legislation, an increasing number of wives, many with children, migrated to join their husbands, establishing a more permanent form of settlement while continuing to preserve economic and other ties with families in the homeland. The second wave of South Asian migration began in the late 1960s, not directly from India but from eastern and central African states to which Indians had moved in the nineteenth century, although large numbers of Gujaratis also migrated to African countries after World War II. Africanization policies in countries such as Kenya and Tanzania accounted for the desire to move. Tens of thousands of Ugandan Asians were expelled from the country in 1972, the largest group being Hindus, mainly Gujarati by ethnic background. One of the key differences between this and the earlier wave of migration was that, where passports permitted it, whole families entered the United Kingdom together. It was the establishment of whole families, with elders who were knowledgeable in the religions and with women who played a significant role in the transmission of religious culture, that helped to establish the religions and make them more 'visible' to the general population.

2 See Starkings (1982) for a detailed reply to McIntyre.

3 See Bolton (1997) for a theological critique of Tate on cultural development.

4 How he represents the idea of 'a culture' varies in his writing. When discussing the issue directly he takes care to emphasize a culture's internal diversity (1973, 407–8); when he discusses individual Balinese, however, he moves easily from the individual case to a generic Balinese way of life. Apart from problems with Geertz's concept of a culture, there are also difficulties with his idea of a religion. Given the discussion of religions in Chapter 3, and given the overt differences between religious traditions, it is clear that the relationship needs to be expressed in different ways according to the case in question. Hindu tradition, for example, is more diverse and loosely knit than Islam. The changing and contested nature of symbols within religious traditions also needs to be considered.

5 See, for example, Jackson and Nesbitt (1993, Chapter 11) which discusses the interplay of factors affecting religious-cultural change, using a taxonomy derived from Knott (1991).

6 I am grateful to Dr Steven Vertovec for suggesting this term.

7 Personal agency and insider views of culture can spark together to weld new cultural forms. In his field research in Southall in West London, Gerd Baumann found insiders using both what he calls the 'dominant discourse' of culture derived from outside perceptions, and 'demotic discourses' derived from insider use. The dominant discourse reifies 'cultures', with fixed boundaries; McIntyre's analysis of cultures operates in this way. In certain contexts, especially in relation to contests over group rights, Baumann found both forms of discourse being used by insiders (1996, 13). Culture was seen as a possession of an ethnic or religious 'community' but also, as with Anita's personal culture, a dynamic process relying on personal agency. It is the contest between the two, observes Baumann, that brings about the formation of new culture or new senses of community. What starts as questioning among young people or progressive political or religious groups produces wider reverberations. New elements of Southall culture are debated and created, revolving around the terms 'culture' and 'community' (Baumann 1996).

At the level of the individual, it needs to be recognized that although some people, like Anita, move between cultural traditions, others may feel rooted in none but draw, nevertheless, on several cultural funds, while others may continue to feel – with greater or lesser degrees of self-consciousness – firmly attached to one culture, even while that culture changes and evolves over time.

8 As well as the debate within academic circles, there is also the question of the relationship between popular uses of the term 'ethnicity' and academic usages (Banks 1996; Baumann 1996). There is also the question of legal definitions. In the case referred to in note 9, the definition argued for by Lord Fraser is largely derived from dictionary definitions based on popular usage.

9 Just one example is a case in England in 1983 in which a Sikh parent's application for his son's admission to an independent school was refused, since wearing a turban would have contravened school rules. Both the County Court and the Court of Appeal found against the parent. This decision was overturned in the House of Lords after Lord Fraser successfully argued that the Sikhs constituted an ethnic group. His argument hinged on a tight connection (but not identification) between the ethnic and 'racial' character of a group, a connection which meant that indirect discrimination had occurred according to the Race Relations Act of 1976 (Bailey, Harris and Jones 1991).

10 This raises the question of the relationship between ethnicity and religion, on which there are several different scholarly positions. Some writers use the term ethnicity as if they are referring to a state, along the lines of 'a shared sense of peoplehood' (Dashefsky 1972). Ethnicity is regarded as parallel to religion, both being aspects of individual, group or social identity, although authors express different views on the relationship between the two. For Dashefsky, for example, they are barely distinguishable and he refers to religio-ethnic groups (1972, 239). Others regard the two concepts as separate but related, so that religious differences may divide ethnic groups while the co-extensiveness of religion and ethnicity might act as a binding force where each reinforces the other (Francis 1976). Think of the relationship between Sikhism and 'Punjabiness' or of Ukrainian Catholicism and Ukrainian ethnic identity, for example. For Hans Mol, the two concepts of religion and ethnicity are interrelated, but are different qualitatively, with religion acting as a conservative force, a 'harnesser of social change', and as 'sacralizer of identity', whether ethnic or some other feature of identity (1979, 34–5). See note 9 for a court case in which the Sikhs as a religious group were also identified as an ethnic group.

11 I am indebted to Dr Jessica Jacobson, joint Chair of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, for her observations on this discussion of national identity and for making available to me her paper on 'Perceptions of Britishness' (1996).

12 Weber's definition of a nation as 'a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own' is looser, and would accommodate the Scots, for example (Gerth and Mills 1991).

13 See Modood (1992) for his remarks on 'cultural racism' which are consistent with Jacobson's findings.

14 Of the Christian children from Coventry studied by Eleanor Nesbitt – a group encompassing 12 denominations and several ethnic groups – all, except one Ukrainian girl, saw themselves as British, and most as English. However, many saw themselves *not only* as English but Jamaican, Greek Cypriot, Punjabi, Spanish, Greek, Irish and Pakistani (Nesbitt 1993). This study is outlined in Chapter 5.

15 One first has to acknowledge that there are different types of multicultural society. There are modern societies with aboriginal minority groups, and there are societies with substantial numbers of migrants and settlers from other countries. Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden, for example, are 'multicultural' in both senses. Educationalists in the new South Africa have a particularly challenging task in negotiating appropriate approaches to religious education in a society described both as 'non-racial' and 'multi tradition' (Chidester, Mitchell *et al* 1992; Chidester 1996; Mitchell, Mnende *et al* 1993).

16 In Britain, the Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom is one institution that facilitates such communication in

the field of religion. In religious education specifically, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales serves a similar function, as do many Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (see Chapter 6, notes 20 and 21).

17 The view expressed here coheres with that of Will Kymlicka (1995) who rejects the arguments that multiculturalism poses a threat to national unity by pointing out that 'the desire for such polyethnic rights [e.g. accommodation of cultural differences within national institutions] is a desire for inclusion which is consistent with participation in, and commitment to, the mainstream institutions that underlie social unity' (178).

18 The withdrawal of some Muslim pupils from RE relates to a hardening of Government policy, with the publication of revised guidance for schools in the interpretation of the 1988 Education Reform Act (DFE 1994), suggesting a covert Christianisation of the subject, together with a rejection of the often unarticulated negative assumptions of some liberal educators about conservative religious positions.

19 Although my preference is for an open and multi-faith religious education in publicly-funded schools, opposition in principle to the formation of voluntary aided schools for some Muslim children and some children from other religious minorities is unsustainable while this facility is available to Christians and Jews. See Connolly (1992), Halstead (1986) and McLaughlin (1992) for some different positions in the debate about publicly-funded separate religious schooling.

CHAPTER

5

From Ethnographic Research
to Curriculum Development

I have argued for the use of interpretive methods in religious education (Chapter 2), and that conventional portrayals of religions as reified belief systems should be challenged by more personal and flexible representations, linking individual experience with membership groups and with religious traditions in their generality (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I considered various cultural factors and argued, for example, that the debates in the social anthropology, together with empirical evidence, challenged assumptions about the boundedness of cultures made in many RE books and by critics of multi-faith RE. Culture was also discussed in relation to the concepts of ethnicity and national identity, and a narrow view of cultural development was criticized. In speculating about the multicultural society, I emphasized the desirability of social practices and institutions enabling communication across cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries, while preserving a shared sense of national identity and belonging. Religious education was seen as one forum for such communication.

This chapter gives examples showing how some of these points have been addressed in practice. First, there is a brief summary of ethnographic work with children from various religious backgrounds in Britain which gives an outline sketch of religious life, showing children in the context of their families and other membership groups and communities, linking the examples to the wider religious traditions.¹ Next, there is a description of the workings and output of a curriculum development project which uses data from such ethnographic studies as its primary source material. The curriculum project also employs the methods outlined in Chapter 2 and the model described in Chapter 3 in helping children to interpret unfamiliar religious ways of life. The account also shows how the subjects

of the ethnographic studies and other 'insiders' were involved in the consultative and editorial processes of producing the curriculum material.

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES

The ideas discussed in the earlier chapters were developed in the context of an on-going series of ethnographic studies of children from different religious communities in Britain, brought together under the general heading of the Religious Education and Community Project. The studies mentioned below are of children in the 8–13 age range, although attention was sometimes given to younger or older siblings. All of these studies employed qualitative research methods such as participant observation, informal and semi-structured interviewing, documentary analysis and photography.²

Our studies have concentrated on individual children in the context of their families and religious membership groups, although some attention was also given to children's religious education in day schools. We have emphasized processes of religious socialization, using formal, informal and semi-formal nurture as analytic terms to connote the transmission of religious culture to children. The term 'nurture' is adapted from John Hull's usage (e.g. 1984) which, in turn, was derived from Horace Bushnell's musings on Christian nurture in the 1840s (1967). Formal nurture refers to organized classes provided by adults sometimes promoting one or another view of orthodoxy, or a particular 'sectarian' view, or teaching a language and thereby linking 'religion' and 'ethnicity'. Informal nurture refers to participation in the family's way of life, including operating as a family member and therefore part of one or more wider religious or religio-cultural membership groups. Members of the project team sometimes use the term semi-formal nurture to refer to more structured elements in family life, including participation in ritual activity of various kinds.

With regard to 'nurture', a distinction needs to be made between parental analyses and wishes and the children's actual experience in the home and family. We also need to distinguish between formal nurture and the overall picture, which includes influences from peers from outside the tradition, the media, teachers and the school curriculum. There are also differences between the goals of formal nurture and its experience in practice (e.g. in the Jewish case the main influence was sometimes the youth and commitment of the teachers rather than the quality or content of the curriculum).

Hindu Children

Eleanor Nesbitt and I started working together on studies of Hindu children in 1984, and three studies were completed, the first being a study of formal religious nurture in different parts of England (Jackson and Nesbitt 1986), the second a much larger scale study of Hindu children in Coventry (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993; 1996) and the third a study of children from two Punjabi caste-based movements with an ambiguous identity as either Hindu or Sikh (Nesbitt 1990; 1991; 1994).³ The second of these studies, the results of which are outlined below, was the principal source for *Hindu Children in Britain* (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993).⁴

We found a range of influences shaping young British Hindus. Among these were the performance of rituals in the home, videos and the provision of formal classes. Also the small input of Hindu material in school curricula played a part. Hindu tradition turned out to be alive and well, but changing under a variety of influences. We found traditions associated with India, including the maintenance of mother tongue and dialect, as well as practices associated with a particular locality in Gujarat or Punjab, or with a particular religious movement or caste. The influence of the home was especially important, with mothers and grandmothers playing a key part in the transmission of religious practice. Also there were the effects of children's contact with India, experienced indirectly through visits by influential spiritual teachers and Hindi videos, and directly through visits from and to relatives. Influences associated with life in Britain and with technology included elements of popular culture, such as pop music or soap operas (*Neighbours* was watched regularly by most of the children), the English educational system, rituals and practices associated with special occasions such as Christmas and, perhaps most of all, the underlying values associated with individualism and personal autonomy together with Western perceptions of what counts as a 'religion'.

The migration process experienced by parents and grandparents and the character of the migrant group were factors which drew attention to the origins and varied experiences of British Hindu families. To some extent, these determined patterns of settlement and networks of relationships. Children were not only aware of aspects of their family's migration history, but they interacted with relatives in Britain or in other countries, such as Canada, Kenya and the USA, as well as India. These networks were channels of cultural influence through video, fashion in clothes and music, as well as through personal interaction.

The nature of the response to the young people from the white majority was also found to be a factor influencing the organic development of

Hindu tradition in Britain. Fortunately, experiences of overt racism were mentioned by only a few. On the positive side, religious education in schools connected home and wider experience, although there were some ambiguities. We found clear evidence that sympathetic discussion of Hindu tradition in schools raised self esteem among Hindu pupils, but some treatments were tokenistic and the picture of Hinduism found in many textbooks was often very different from children's first hand experience.

There was a significant change from the pattern of cultural transmission in India for those children who attended supplementary classes. Children's experiences differed according to the representations of the tradition offered by the groups organizing the classes, and there was sometimes an orientation towards the teachings of a particular movement, as for children attending 'Bal Vikas' ('child development') classes run by the Sathya Sai Baba organization, or instruction provided by members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Other classes offered in supplementary schools (often organized by temples and primarily teaching Gujarati or Hindi language) sometimes gave a view of Hindu tradition reflecting the tendency in some institutional groups to evolve a unitary view of 'Hinduism', with a specific content of religious and moral teaching and accepting the authority of particular scriptural texts. Finally, we found that, rather than being individuals with a fixed sense of belonging to this group or that, or feeling comfortable in only one type of cultural situation, many children we were studying could move unselfconsciously from one milieu to another.⁵

In 1990, funding was obtained from the Economic and Social Research Council for a three year study called 'Ethnography and Religious Education',⁶ involving research on groups of 8-13 year old Christian and Sikh children in Coventry, and Jewish and Muslim children in parts of Birmingham.

Christian Children⁷

For the purposes of the study, 'Christian' included children who regularly attended worship or youth activities related to a church. Twelve denominations, most listed by the local Council of Churches, were selected.⁸ There were commonalities and differences in the content, processes and style of the children's religious nurture (Jackson and Nesbitt 1992). In all cases, the Bible and life of Jesus were of central importance. Most churches ran classes for children (the Roman and Ukrainian Catholics were exceptions), and all expected children to take part in congregational worship. Diversity of content and style corresponded especially to ethnic and denominational distinctions between

congregations. Some denominational groups – such as the First United Church of Jesus Christ Apostolic and the Coventry Christian Fellowship – were characterized by charismatic experience and evangelical conviction, features which also differentiated individuals within a Baptist congregation and some Church of England congregations, for example.

The children's understanding and expression of their Christian tradition was very similar to that of their parents and church leaders. However, particularly in the case of families from ethnic minorities, children experienced a less homogeneous body of belief and practice than their parents, for instance, because of differences in ethos between home and church (in the Punjabi case) or in Catholic practice in the home and the voluntary aided church school (in the Ukrainian case). For Irish Roman Catholics, attending Roman Catholic schools, the homogeneity of tradition was greater than for many other communities. Minorities, such as the Ukrainians and Greek Cypriots, whose scriptures and liturgical material were in an archaic form of their mother-tongue, promoted formal language teaching, whereas for the Punjabis, whose families had been converted by British missionaries, mother-tongue maintenance was a less important issue (Nesbitt 1993a and c; 1995c, 226-8).

Glimpses into the informal nurture of children in their homes highlighted the central role played by parents. Daily prayer and daily (or less frequent) Bible reading were mentioned most often as Christian activities in the home, processes of nurture common to all groups. In terms of formal nurture, most congregations' provision of Sunday schools was modelled structurally on the state education system, but on a much smaller scale (the largest number mentioned was 'a hundred children under thirteen' at the Coventry Christian Fellowship, a 'Restorationist' or 'New' Church), and there were relatively few professionally qualified teachers. Across the denominations, children experienced a planned programme of integrated activities, usually following a published scheme of work such as *Partners in Learning*.⁹ The Bible and prayer featured prominently and teachers focused on ethical principles. In every case but the Friends' Meeting, which emphasized discussion of moral issues, this formal nurture was overtly Bible-based.

There were some deep differences, as well as strong similarities, between all aspects of children's Sunday worship. The pattern of worship was in some cases (the Orthodox and Roman Catholic for example) unmistakably hierarchical and in others (most obviously the Religious Society of Friends) more egalitarian. Architecture, seating, dress, and gender differentiation all contributed to this. Children were positive about the responsibilities which they had, whether as servers, singers or

instrumentalists, for example. The clergy, with the exception of the Ukrainian Catholic priest, had allocated some tasks to young people and from time to time addressed themselves to the children. In the Orthodox and Roman Catholic congregations, however, girls were excluded from the opportunities of serving which existed for boys.

Baptism and Holy Communion were factors in the children's experience and understanding of their congregations' priorities. This was true even for the Salvation Army and the Religious Society of Friends, groups in which children learned to define themselves partly by reference to their denominations' omission of these rites (Collins 1996). There were differences in the sequence of initiation rites and the preconditions for each. With regard to Holy Communion, there were differences in nomenclature, emphasis, atmosphere and detail across the groups studied. In talking about the Christian tradition, children tended to use the idiom and vocabulary of their membership groups, using in-group terminology, such as 'junior soldier', the 'dedication' of infants and 'meeting for worship'. Group language was also used to describe religious experiences such as 'asking Jesus into their life' or 'having a vision'.

All the case-study children said that they believed in the existence of God, some picturing God in a human form, with others understanding God to be 'spirit', regarded as powerful, incorporeal and formless. While belief in God, Jesus and the authority of the Bible was common to all groups, belief in the Holy Spirit was more varied. Most children did not refer to the Holy Spirit unprompted, and the most explicit references came from three Jamaican Pentecostals who mentioned speaking and singing in tongues as evidence of 'being filled'. One girl belonging to a 'New church' spoke of 'gifts of the Spirit', especially speaking with tongues, done more at home than at church. One Greek Orthodox parent affirmed that it is the Holy Spirit who is active in the church now (e.g. in mystically changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ).

Belief in saints and angels more or less conformed to sub-traditional demarcation, with the Roman and Ukrainian Catholics mentioning their existence and the Orthodox reporting their present activity. Belief in the devil, while not general, united children from the Orthodox and Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical congregations. With regard to the after-life, some children held different ideas concurrently, rejecting or adopting beliefs as their own in the light of personal experience (such as the death of a grandparent) or the teaching of their parents and churches. On life after death, perhaps more than any other subject, children revealed the way in which they sifted different beliefs and arrived at individual conclusions (Nesbitt 1993b).

Sikh Children¹⁰

The research revealed a high level of participation in gurdwara life with the same children attending usually two or more local gurdwaras, despite their differences of ethos and organizational structure.¹¹ Punjabi language and *kirtan* (devotional music) are aspects of the Sikh tradition most actively promoted through supplementary classes (Nesbitt and Jackson 1993).

Sikh children were involved in worship, both at home and in the *gurdwara*, and were used to their houses becoming temporary gurdwaras for a *path* (reading of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred book) or *satsang* (a gathering for devotional singing). They knew the behaviour appropriate in the presence of the scriptures. When they used the word 'prayer', it usually denoted a *path*, recitation of scriptural formulae rather than improvised petition.¹² Through participation, children were aware of gender-related roles in marriages and they knew of the discipline associated with *amrit chhakna* (initiation with holy water). Birthday parties (Nesbitt 1995d) and festivals – especially Vaisakhi – showed cultural adaptation under way in the dynamic interaction between Sikh religious, Punjabi cultural and non-Asian British elements, which could be understood on the analogy of linguistic code switching (Nesbitt 1995b).

The impact of *sants* (living spiritual masters) was evident in the experience of some young Sikhs. The *sant* is called 'Babaji', a term which the children translate as 'God' and apply also to the *Guru Granth Sahib* and historic Gurus (Nesbitt and Jackson 1995). Reference to aspects of a wider Hindu tradition (caste and diet, for example) differentiate the experience of children and their families within the Sikh community. Being 'a proper Sikh' was equated by the subjects with *amrit chhakna* (initiation with holy water), the five Ks (outward signs of *Khalsa* allegiance), Punjabi dress (for women), vegetarianism, avoidance of alcohol and sometimes with reference to positions in the caste hierarchy (Nesbitt 1997b).

The importance of *amrit* in the experience of Sikh children in Coventry both confirms and challenges its role and significance in orthodox Sikh literature (Nesbitt 1997a). The children's references to *amrit* were not only to the discipline and appearance of Sikhs who have been initiated, but also to *amrit* as holy water which has been empowered by proximity to the *Guru Granth Sahib* (both scripture and Guru) or a *sant*. This *amrit* is drunk or sprinkled by children (in some cases daily) for purification, protection, healing and success in their studies. The cultural interaction evident in some celebrations, in the terminology used by the children (e.g. Baba and *path*), in their understandings of 'God' and 'proper Sikh', and in the prominence and diversity of belief and practice surrounding *amrit*, all

raise issues with regard to the representation of the Sikh tradition in both religious studies and R.E.

Jewish Children¹³

Formal nurture was examined using three headings: synagogue, religion school (*cheder*) and day school. The last grouping was especially relevant when it related to Jewish pupils in a Jewish voluntary aided primary school, but data were also collected with reference to Jewish children in county and independent schools (one independent school offered Biblical Hebrew which was studied by one girl who also studied modern Hebrew for GCSE in the *cheder*). Comprehensive school religious education could also have a positive influence, with some children seeing the subject as helping to promote positive attitudes towards other communities.¹⁴

One feature of informal nurture, in the case of children from two mixed Ashkenazic/Sephardic families, was the influence of both traditions and, to a lesser extent, the role of Yiddish terminology in the home. Some aspects of nurture – for example, exposure to events and practices such as festivals, *shabbat*, *kashrut* (the laws relating to *kosher* food) and rites of passage – came up informally in the home, but were also covered formally in *cheder* and day school. Several *Bar Mitzvahs* and a group *Bar Chayil*¹⁵ took place within the case study families during the research period.

The children interviewed emphasized particularly the support their families received from the synagogues they attended, the *cheders* where they studied, and the day schools they had chosen. It appeared to be the relationship of the individual family, whether from Orthodox or Progressive communities, to each of these other elements that was the distinctive factor in interpreting the process of nurture in the Jewish tradition, and not the quality of the particular *shul* (synagogue), *cheder*, school or family. In one case, a boy's experience of the Jewish youth movement *Bnei Akiva* affected the whole family which became increasingly observant.

The influence exerted by the synagogue (especially in the case of Orthodox families) was more impersonal in its nature than that which was evident in *cheder* or day school. This was due partly to the fact that, although the proportion of adults to children there was much higher than in either *cheder* or day school, adults present did not take direct responsibility for the children and their nurture as a group (except in those cases where a children's service was organized in a separate room or building for this purpose).

In the *cheders*, teaching was provided by caring, but frequently untrained, adults and young people in their teens. The contribution to nurture made

by these teachers was generally related less to their scholarship or skills than to the commitment they showed to their tradition and to the values held to be important in their community. In contrast, the staff of the Voluntary Aided Jewish primary school were all professionally trained. They were not, however, all Jewish, and much of the curriculum was secular, although many activities were religiously inspired.

The use and influence of colloquial Yiddish and Hebrew terms in the nurture of Jewish children were judged to be important, especially in the Orthodox communities where they were most frequently employed (Woodward 1993). The influence of history and tradition on the development of a sense of personal identification with the Jewish tradition and the local community was evident among many young people (Woodward 1991). There was near unanimity among children in their commitment to Israel, with family, synagogue and *cheder* all exerting a positive influence. There were some significant differences between children's experience of festivals and other practices and their portrayals in many schoolbooks (Woodward 1993; see also Glinert 1985 and Woodward 1991).

Muslim Children¹⁶

Formal instruction at the mosques where many of the boys prayed, the daily schooling provided by adults for both boys and girls in the *madrasahs*,¹⁷ the cumulative effect of many hours spent in the day schools, and the more informal but powerful support of the family in the home, were all important influences. Where the family's observance of Islamic duties was nominal, however, neither attendance at *madrasah* nor the support of the day school provided sufficient compensation to ensure the child remained loyal to Muslim practice.

For most of the children, prayer was a natural part of their daily lives, although the place of prayer and other matters (such as whether prayer was solitary or with others) varied, and there were extra prayers during the *Eid* festivals and the fast of *Ramadan*. The recitation of the *Qur'an* was an important part of daily life for most of the children, and an essential part of teaching in the *madrasah*. All were able to recite at least some part of the *Qur'an* in Arabic. Children spoke of the celebrations for those who had finished reading the *Qur'an* for the first time. Beliefs about hell, paradise and judgement day figured vividly in the children's life-world, and they attributed their motivations to behave well to these beliefs.

Muslim children showed competence in coping with the different languages they encountered at home, school, mosque and *madrasah*. The increasing use of English in a number of formal contexts, including certain subjects taught at the *madrasahs* and at the private Muslim day schools,

was welcomed by parents who were also concerned that their children should retain or develop competence in the parental South Asian languages (e.g. Punjabi and Urdu).

Most children felt the *madrasah* to be the most important factor in their Islamic education, and attendance took a significant part of out of school and holiday time. As well as learning to recite the *Qur'an*, they followed general Islamic studies, including issues of Islamic culture and politics and ethical studies (dealing with conduct and dress, for example). Loyalty to their families and the mosque/*madrasah* appeared to be a major aspect in motivating children to accept the discipline involved in the process of nurture. The pattern of attendance varied by gender among those who visited mosques regularly. Boys would visit the local mosque (or on Fridays and festivals often the Central Mosque) with their father or brothers. When they were at the *madrasah*, boys attended congregational prayers in the mosque, whereas girls would sometimes participate in congregational prayer at the *madrasah*. On Fridays and festivals, girls' experience varied.

INTRODUCING THE WARWICK RE PROJECT

The above brief summaries are intended to give just a flavour of religious activity in the lives of children whose various home and community backgrounds are overtly religious. The rest of this chapter is an account of how ideas discussed in Chapters 2–4 have been applied to the kind of ethnographic field data outlined above, in order to develop curriculum material for use in religious education in schools. There is also a description of the ways in which curriculum developers and ethnographers have worked together in consultation with members of the families who feature both in ethnographic studies and curriculum texts.

In considering how to apply the research data arising from our ethnographic studies to religious education, in combination with the theoretical ideas discussed in earlier chapters, there were a number of possibilities. My colleagues and I could have settled for designing material or courses which focused on the process of teaching, or we could have written a critique of current textbook material or designed in-service training courses for teachers in order to apply the ideas to RE. In the end, we decided to initiate a curriculum development project with the aim of producing texts for pupils, together with explanatory material for teachers.¹⁸

In part, we wanted to build on earlier experiments with using

ethnographic research material as a basis for developing school texts. During the period of data analysis and writing of our material on Hindu children in Coventry, some of the research material was adapted for use with children in schools and resulted in the publication of two illustrated children's texts (Jackson 1989a; Jackson and Nesbitt 1990). These early attempts to convert ethnographic field data into curriculum material are discussed in Jackson (1989c). Issues such as representation, balance, consultation with families and the relationship between the ethnographic material and the wider religious tradition are discussed in that chapter, and were our main preoccupations when writing the children's books. Activities had been devised for pupils using the materials, but we had not developed a method for helping readers systematically to relate to a way of life that was likely to be different from their own. Nevertheless, the texts do address the issue of representation and reproduce faithfully (with extracts from interviews, diaries and field notes) the interpretations of British Hindu children and parents from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

The decision to develop school texts was also influenced by our view that the discipline of producing curriculum books would ensure that we faced up to a range of methodological and practical issues – for example, seeing how well interpretive methods from social anthropology would convert into practical activities for children taught, in the case of the primary children, mainly by non-specialist teachers. It was also felt that the production of concrete material would furnish further opportunities for experimentation into ways of involving members of the religious traditions featured in our ethnographic studies in the curriculum development process. With the co-operation of a publisher (Heinemann), the Warwick RE Project was set up and eventually based in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit.¹⁹ Two series of books were planned for the Warwick RE Project, *Bridges to Religions* (covering key stages 1 and 2) and *Interpreting Religions* (key stage 3).²⁰

ROLES OF PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

The work involved co-operation between members of a team whose roles were as project director, ethnographers, curriculum co-ordinator, curriculum developers and photographers. There was also an important role for children and adults who had been studied in the field, as well as community leaders and other advisers from the traditions featured in the texts.

Some individuals had several roles, as ethnographer and curriculum

developer, for example. Also, a theoretical input was an on-going feature of the ethnographic research, with reflections on theoretical literature (whether on ethnographic interpretation, field roles, ethics or data analysis) being a regular part of the agenda of meetings between the project director and the ethnographers. Theoretical ideas also influenced the work of the curriculum developers, while practical experience, whether of curriculum development or ethnographic research, informed discussions on theory.

Part of the director's role was to introduce ideas from reading in anthropology, religious studies, philosophy, cultural studies, social psychology, and race and ethnic relations into the team's discussions of issues relating to the conversion of ethnographic data into curriculum material. This was done mainly through presentations, memoranda and working papers. Some of these ideas were also fed into the methodological thinking of the ethnographers, and influenced their deliberations about the nature of ethnography, the role of the ethnographer, the analysis of data and the process of ethnographic writing. The experience of the ethnographic process also reinforced some of the project's theoretical assumptions (e.g. on the internal diversity of 'religions').

The role of the curriculum co-ordinator was crucial in mediating theoretical ideas and ethnographic material to curriculum developers, in ensuring full liaison with members of the traditions featured in each text (Everington 1996a), in commenting on and contributing to draft curriculum material, in feeding draft curriculum material back to the director and the ethnographers for comment, and in organizing field trials in schools when possible (Everington 1996b).²¹ The curriculum co-ordinator's input ensured that curriculum developers understood and followed the project's approach. At the same time, her deliberations on issues raised by the curriculum development process raised questions of theory and presentation which had to be taken on board by the rest of the project team (Everington 1993a and b).

Part of the ethnographers' role (additional to the wider tasks of fieldwork, data analysis, reporting ethnographic research and writing about methodology) was to report their work, through papers and presentations, to other members of the project team.²² In preparing to design curriculum materials, the curriculum co-ordinator and the curriculum developers had meetings with ethnographers in order to explain their preliminary ideas for work at particular key stages. Curriculum developers knew the key stage for which they were preparing material and the religious tradition which they wanted to consider, and they had some previous knowledge of the ethnographers' work through papers and presentations.²³ The

ethnographers contributed their comments and suggestions and introduced the curriculum developers to selected field data in the form of audio-taped interviews, interview transcripts, colour slides taken during fieldwork and documents collected in the field (e.g. teaching material used in particular religious membership groups). The curriculum developers used this material in order to devise ideas for teaching material at particular key stages and as a context for their own ethnographic work. Preliminary ideas were tried out on various members of the project team, including the ethnographers, and were modified as a result of the comments and suggestions received. In addition, the publisher had a role in advising on formats most likely to be usable by teachers and in offering commercially realistic ways of achieving the project team's goals.

THE ROLES OF 'INSIDERS'

As ideas developed, it became necessary to re-establish contact with families from particular groups whose children had been suggested as case studies for the curriculum materials. The ethnographers made contact with the families to explain the potential educational uses of the field data, to ask them if they were willing to participate further in the development of curriculum materials and to introduce the curriculum co-ordinator and one or more curriculum developers. A few declined, but most were willing to take part in the next stage of the work. Members of families who participated in the curriculum work commented on draft materials prepared by the curriculum developers, contributed further interview material and provided additional background and contextual material, occasionally written especially for the project. Photographs taken during fieldwork were used in the draft curriculum material and further pictures were taken as required. It was a principle of the project that, as far as possible, photographs should reflect events as they happened.²⁴

Families were involved in checking, approving, criticizing, commenting on or contributing to draft material produced by curriculum developers. Their ideas were often incorporated directly into the text. Consultations with specialists from inside each religious tradition (in each case an authority from within the local community studied and a nationally recognized authority, usually directly concerned with education) also took place as the materials took their final shape.

Occasionally there were tensions between members of the project team, who wished to present accounts of what had happened through the lens of ethnography, and insiders (whether parents, local community leaders or national advisers), who sometimes wished to paint a more idealized picture

or one which was seen from the perspective of a particular view of orthodoxy. Strategies for dealing with these tensions involved negotiation between project team members and insiders or, when this was not possible, a process of 'deliberation' by members of the project team in which the consequences of alternative courses of action were considered through team discussion and a final decision made. Examples of these negotiations and deliberations are discussed in Everington (1996a).

ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION

The conversion of data from religious traditions into curriculum materials led the project team to engage with theoretical and practical issues concerned with representation and interpretation. These closely inter-related issues were relevant to the project's ethnographic work as well as to the processes of curriculum development. In particular, some of the methods of interpretation used by the ethnographers were adapted for use by pupils in schools.²⁵

In compiling the pupils' texts and material for teachers, the key issues of representation were:

- i. *Reconsidering the character of 'religions', in the light of work from religious studies, anthropology and social psychology, and taking account of the experience of fieldwork.*

The picture of 'religions' gained through fieldwork was much closer to Smith's view (1978) than to that presented through much literature on world religions or comparative religion. Field studies also showed the importance of various types of 'membership group' with which individuals identified and which connected the individual to the wider religious tradition.

In order to avoid the tendency in many RE texts to perceive and present religions primarily as unified belief systems, the team agreed a policy of playing down, but not excluding, the usage of the modern names for religions (such as Hinduism or Christianity) thinking, rather, in terms of more loosely knit religious traditions. Our ethnographic source material was especially useful in enabling us to employ personal narratives which reflected the vigour and internal diversity of the traditions rather than abstracted, static accounts. The titles of children's books deliberately avoid the standard names for the religions. Book titles for the youngest children emphasize individual children's participation in events. For example, *Something to Share* shows a young Muslim girl's birthday celebration (Barratt 1994c),

while *The Seventh Day is Shabbat* deals with a Jewish boy's experience of Shabbat with his family (Barratt 1994e). Books for older children emphasize people rather than systems, using the titles *Meeting Christians* at key stage two (Barratt and Price 1996a; Everington 1996c), and *Christians, Muslims and Hindus* for 11-14 year olds (Robson 1995; Mercier 1996; Wayne *et al* 1996).

- ii. *Recognizing 'religions' and 'cultures' as dynamic and changing, with a content and scope which is negotiated and sometimes contested, and which may be delineated differently by different insiders and outsiders.*

The project team attempted to use ethnographic field data in such a way that the pupils' books and teachers' material did not present children and adults as if they were part of a tradition which had changed in the past, but was now fixed. For purposes of ethnographic interpretation and for pedagogical purposes, we used the threefold model of 'tradition', 'membership group' and 'individual', described above in Chapter 3, as a means to give a looser, more personal and organic picture of religious traditions than that presented in some versions of phenomenology. The project team also took account of issues concerning culture discussed in Chapter 4.

The interpretation of a religious way of life includes an examination of the relationship between individuals in the context of their membership groups and the wider religious tradition. Moving back and forth from one to the other (by setting up activities for teachers or pupils that demand this) increases understanding. The tradition, the 'whole' in this hermeneutical relationship, is used as a reference point for the particular material introduced, but the data on individuals and groups, their language, symbols and experiences, are also intended to help the pupil to form a provisional sense of the tradition which can be revised through later learning.

Clearly there are different views of the scope of any religious tradition, both from insiders and outsiders. Team members were aware of different representations of each tradition from particular members of the groups studied and also from different parts of the tradition – different definitions, different theological or doctrinal emphases, different cultural assumptions etc. For the purposes of producing curriculum material it was the project team's view of each 'religion' as a cumulative tradition which took precedence. However, with the particular examples of field data which formed the basis of the books, there were no objections from insiders from one part of a tradition to the inclusion of material from membership groups which were significantly different from their own.

In curriculum terms, our 'hermeneutic circle' could involve setting up an interplay between an individual and one or more membership groups or through introducing comparative material from another part of the tradition. Sometimes, when material from elsewhere in the tradition is used in pupil texts, the authors' intention was to draw on selected features which are generally looked on as universal, even though the ways in which those categories are interpreted in different parts of the tradition might vary to some degree. Examples are the summary of some of the things that Christians have in common in *Meeting Christians Book Two* (Everington 1996c, 30) and the treatment of sacred writings in the key stage three texts featuring Christians and Muslims. On other occasions, more particular examples of material from other locations within the tradition are used in order to make points of comparison or contrast.

- iii. *Avoiding or exercising great caution in projecting assumptions from one religious tradition on to other religious traditions.*

Project team members agreed to exercise caution in using concepts like the 'numinous' or the 'spiritual' and in using Western ways of dividing a religion up into themes (festivals; worship; rites of passage; pilgrimage; sacred buildings etc), which has been characteristic of phenomenological approaches. Rather, we resolved to make use of categories or divisions within the traditions which were suggested by our source material. The writers also attempted to use broad categories prompted by the data in order to identify general areas of overlap between the language and experience of pupils and of children and young people portrayed in curriculum texts. Comparison and contrast could then be used as part of the process of developing an understanding of the insiders' use of language in describing particular experiences and events. We also tried to avoid making generalizations about 'religion' based on examples from membership groups within particular religious traditions.

INTERPRETIVE METHODS

Having given attention to issues of representation in writing material for teachers and students, the methods through which pupils might engage in the interpretive process were addressed. There were two principal concerns.

The first was to use and to encourage teachers and pupils to operate with the three level model described above. Instead of concentrating on the key

concepts of a religion or on themes across religions, the project team encouraged the consideration of individual children, mainly in the context of their religious membership groups and with reference to the wider religious traditions. Engaging with activities requiring movement between individuals within their various groups and other parts of the tradition is intended to develop pupils' understanding of the wider cumulative religious tradition. Curriculum developers selected topics from the ethnographic data involving individual children and young people of around the same age as pupils using the materials.

The second was to compare and contrast the language and experience of children portrayed in the texts and children in class. The concepts and experiences of insiders and outsiders are not *identified* with each other. Rather, the method looks for areas of overlap to be used as a basis for discussing similarity and difference. In promoting what we called 'conversation', use was made of Geertz's distinction between 'experience-near' concepts (used within a particular tradition or membership group within a tradition) and 'experience-distant' concepts (vocabulary familiar to pupils through their experience or, occasionally, 'technical' vocabulary from scholarly disciplines).²⁶ Finding an appropriate 'experience-distant' concept is not word for word translation, but a form of provisional 'interpretation', in which the two are compared and contrasted with each other. Ways of relating 'experience-near' concepts to those employed by teachers and pupils needed to be found. The curriculum developers made use of the idea of 'analogous experience', ideas and experiences likely to be familiar to pupils which would help them to interpret related ideas presented in the pupils' materials. For example, categories such as respect, peace and giving are used in the key stage one material for teachers as possible areas of overlap or 'bridges' between the language and experience of pupils in the class and the Buddhist boy featured in the pupil text *The Buddha's Birthday* (Jackson, Barratt and Everington 1994, 64-74). The approach goes beyond Geertz's methodology, however, in the degree of direct attention it gives to individuals (including verbatim quotation at key stages two and three), in the involvement of people represented in the texts in the editing process, and in the attention given to the impact of the text upon readers.

EDIFICATION

So far, I have outlined the method of the Warwick RE Project materials, especially in relation to the representation and interpretation of religious material. These processes are seen as central to a religious education which

seeks as a basic aim to develop an understanding of the religious worldviews of others, their religious language and symbols, and their feelings and attitudes. Through this it is hoped, *additionally*, that good relationships between those from different religious and cultural backgrounds will be promoted.

A second basic aim is concerned with helping pupils to reflect on their studies of ways of life that are different in some respects from their own. With regard to this, we were struck by the number of remarks in the anthropological literature in which ethnographers write about how their studies of others have prompted some form of re-assessment of their understanding of their *own* ways of life, or some insight into the human condition in general. Following the terminology of Richard Rorty, who also discusses how one's self-understanding might be deepened by studying other worldviews, we called this form of learning 'edification' (Rorty 1980). This concept, which shows some similarities and differences from Michael Grimmitt's idea of 'learning from' religion (1987, 225), is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. As far as our curriculum texts were concerned, we included activities intended to enable pupils to engage in this kind of reflective activity.

THE BOOKS

The two series, which provide material for pupils at key stages 1-3, were never intended to be comprehensive in their coverage of religious traditions. All are based on ethnographic studies conducted in our Research Unit and reflect the work that we were funded to undertake or which our research associates opted to do. The ages of children studied in our ethnographic work also influenced the selection of traditions for particular key stages. Some curriculum developers had been closely involved in the Warwick RE Project from its inception, while others joined later, and had to take on the task of familiarizing themselves with theory, methodology and field data in the form of audio-taped interviews and transcripts, photographs and other materials collected in the field. The curriculum developers also needed to meet the families involved in the books and, in conjunction with the curriculum co-ordinator, had to take close account of comments on the provisional texts from family members and from other members of the project team.²⁷

Essentially the books are *experiments* in putting an interpretive approach into operation, using contemporary ethnographic field data as source material and involving those portrayed in the texts in the editorial process. The experimental nature of the process meant that it was impossible to

predict all the issues and dilemmas which were generated along the way or how they would be resolved. Some of these are dealt with in articles reflecting on the project's work (e.g. Everington 1996a; 1996b). At the very least, the curriculum books for pupils and teachers provide a starting point for others wishing to develop the approach further.

Key Stage One

At key stage one, the focus of each children's book is on a single child from one religious membership group (although siblings are also sometimes introduced), and the emphasis in the text is on learning within the family both informally and semi-formally. The portrayals of two Christian girls (an Anglican and a Ukrainian Catholic), a Jewish boy, a Muslim girl and a Buddhist boy are all based on ethnographic studies conducted in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit. Each text is a story which illustrates how, in the context of family life, children learn through participation in religious activities (Barratt 1994a, b, c, d, e). There are two versions of each pupil text, one printed in the *Teacher's Resource Book* to be read by the teacher and used as a basis for discussion (Jackson, Barratt and Everington 1994), and a simpler text for pupils printed in the children's books. The interpretive process is also introduced in the materials in the *Teacher's Resource Book* which help children to relate concepts, feelings and attitudes encountered in the stories to their own language and experience. Actions, objects, technical terms etc identified from the pages of the story books are grouped together under general headings as 'key ideas'. These show how a series of words and ideas in the story relate to a wider concept within a religious tradition or to a general concept that overlaps with the pupil's experience. These general concepts reflect areas where bridges can be made from pupils' experience of life to the experience of the children portrayed in the story.

The *Teacher's Resource Book* also relates information about the specific membership groups presented in the children's books to the wider religious tradition to which the group belongs, and attempts to be 'teacher-friendly', avoiding jargon and discussions of theory. Teachers are offered potential 'routes' through the material that connect with familiar infant school topics, as well as being given ideas for linking their RE work to other parts of the curriculum.

The process of edification at key stages one and two is linked, in the books for teachers, to the 1988 Education Reform Act's requirement that the curriculum should contribute to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils (UK Government 1988, Section 1 [2]). Thus, at the primary levels:

Bridging to and from pupils' concepts, feelings and attitudes and those

of the characters in the stories not only helps children to interpret an unfamiliar way of life. It also raises questions in relation to the pupils' own experience. The exploration of these is just as important a part of RE as learning about different faiths.

These explorations and discussions are not meant to question the child's home traditions, but are intended to broaden their horizons and to stimulate thought and reflection. The bridging discussions include some ideas for encouraging children to be more reflective and to make their own contributions spontaneously.

This reflective activity can contribute to children's spiritual, moral and cultural development as they explore their own ideas, emotions and attitudes, and recognise similarities and differences between their own experience and that of people in the stories. (Jackson, Barratt and Everington 1994, 6-7; Barratt and Price 1996b, 5)

Key Stage Two

At key stages two and three the focus is on several young people associated with a range of membership groups, and the emphasis changes to a portrayal of learning and reflection in various groups associated with the family's religious practice – such as churches, Sunday schools, youth movements and voluntary aided schools. The subject matter at key stage two relates mainly to 'formal nurture' (children being instructed in their tradition within the community and religious school). Since key stage two covers four years of schooling, two blocks of material were developed, directed respectively at 7-9 and 9-11 year old children.

Meeting Christians: Book One, aimed primarily at the 7-9 age range, introduces a girl with a United Reformed background, and a boy whose family belongs to the Salvation Army. The reader follows the girl through her experiences and activities in the Junior Church, the youth club and Brownies, while the boy is seen as a Junior Soldier, a member of the choir and a youth club member. Quotations from children and adults are interspersed with a descriptive narrative and photographs taken in the field (Barratt and Price 1996a). The *Teacher's Resource Book* provides background material, advice on planning and teaching, charts showing ideas, feelings and attitudes related to the subjects covered in the children's book, and areas in which the experience of pupils can be used as a starting point for interpreting the symbols and actions of the children portrayed in the texts. Photocopiable activity sheets offer children supplementary information as well as setting interpretive tasks. Teachers are provided with ideas for 'bridging discussion', linking ideas, feelings and attitudes of the two young people introduced in the children's book with those of pupils in class. The discussions focus on topics which were prominent in

the ethnographic source material and include 'joining', 'learning', 'believing and worshipping', 'prayer and praise', 'the Bible', 'living as a Christian', 'sharing' and 'caring for others' (Barratt and Price 1996b).

In the book for older juniors, three young British Christians are introduced, respectively from Roman Catholic, Baptist and Pentecostal family backgrounds (Everington 1996c). The Catholic boy's parents were born in Ireland, the Baptist girl's parents are English-born, while the Pentecostal boy's mother came to England from Jamaica. Readers encounter each of the young people taking part in activities within the family and in different parts of their church communities (including the aided school in the case of the Catholic boy). The material is arranged under the headings 'learning', 'preparing', 'responsibilities' and 'traditions'. Again, extracts from interviews are combined with an author-narrated text, illustrated with photographs taken during fieldwork or supplied by the families. Links are made to other parts of the Christian tradition and the *Teacher's Resource Book* gives advice on method. It also provides photocopiable information for pupils, together with activities which employ the project's interpretive methodology, moving between the language and experience of the children portrayed in the text and of the pupils using the materials in class (Everington 1996d).

Key Stage Three

At key stage three, the emphasis is on engaging with the comments and reflections of young people linked to various groups within the traditions. Each book features four British young people, two girls and two boys. *Christians* introduces young people from Coventry, with backgrounds in the Church of England, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Religious Society of Friends and a 'New' or Restorationist Church (Robson 1995), while *Muslims* focuses on four young Muslims from Birmingham, whose background includes a Pakistani ancestry (Mercier 1996). *Hindus* features four young people from Leicester whose lives relate to various aspects of the Hindu tradition and whose family history can be traced back to Gujarat state in India (Wayne *et al* 1996). Each book gives some general information about the young people and their interests, but concentrates on aspects of their religious life and includes extracts from interviews with them and original photographs taken during fieldwork. The books cover wide-ranging topics related to religious practice in Britain today, all suggested by the data collected during field research.

Students are provided with a variety of activities related to each unit of work. 'Making it clear' tasks are designed to ensure that students have familiarized themselves with some of the basic facts and ideas featured in the unit before proceeding to interpretive tasks. 'Working it out' activities

are designed to encourage students to begin the process of interpretation by relating material drawn from one of the three 'levels' – individual, membership group, tradition – to material drawn from another 'level'. The aim here is to bring two pieces of material together so that each sheds light upon the other. 'Building bridges' is the title given to activities which require students to draw on their own experiences or on familiar ideas in order to interpret material featured in the unit. The aim here is to encourage the student to focus upon personal knowledge and experience which can be related analogically to material from the religious tradition. The familiar is used to make sense of or to gain insights into the unfamiliar.

'Edification' activities are headed 'Thinking it through', and encourage students to use material from a religious tradition as a stimulus to reflecting upon matters of personal significance or concern. As the notes for teachers in each book explain, the aim is 'to encourage students to examine or re-examine aspects of their own understanding in the light of questions, issues or experiences which are encountered in particular religious traditions, but which also have universal significance'. Of course, whether a person feels edified through reflecting on issues and questions raised through interpreting another's way of life is a personal matter, and it is impossible to guarantee it through activities provided in curriculum materials.

These summaries obscure the lengthy processes of deliberation and consultation that took place in developing the material at all three key stages. Some further fieldwork and photography had to be undertaken, and the families became involved in the editorial process. The curriculum co-ordinator and director were also involved in developing methods by means of which teachers and pupils could use the materials, as well as negotiating with the publisher about formats, language levels and pictures and consulting with other members of the project team. Funding was obtained for trialling an early draft of the key stage one materials in schools, and this trial involved the curriculum co-ordinator, the curriculum developer and teachers (Everington 1996b). Selected material from the books produced for other key stages was trialled informally.

CONCLUSION

The interpretive approach used in the Warwick RE Project materials attempts to address issues about the nature of religions and cultures which are discussed in the social sciences, but have received little attention in the religious education literature. It also aims to overcome some of the

criticisms made of phenomenological approaches to RE. By drawing on ethnographic source material, the materials try to capture the changing nature of religious communities in Britain and to present something of the religious lives of their young people to their counterparts in schools. As such, the books (like any curriculum material) will have a limited lifespan and will need to be replaced as they become dated.

The project team was aware that the reflexivity promoted in our materials might seem threatening to parents from some religious and cultural groups, especially if they themselves feel marginalized. However, since children from *any* religious background have to come to terms with the proximity of their 'home' way of life and the values and practices encountered in the mainly secular society around them, the view was taken that religious education could be a forum for carefully structured discussions of the kinds of issues raised in the Warwick RE Project's books. Although the materials were written for use primarily in maintained schools, we have been pleased to find out that some members of faith communities are using materials on their own traditions in supplementary education classes.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the Warwick RE Project is not intended as a complete programme, but as part of an open and 'conversational' religious education which includes critical as well as interpretive elements. Something of the character of this form of RE, including possible criticisms of it and policies associated with it, are discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

- 1 Much of the material for these summaries was provided by unpublished reports and published accounts by Eleanor Nesbitt, Peter Woodward and Jochem Bauer.
- 2 Accounts of our research methods and the ethics of ethnographic research can be found in Jackson and Nesbitt (1993, 18–20 and 185–91), Nesbitt (1992) and Woodward (1992).
- 3 The study of formal religious nurture was partly funded by the Research and Innovations fund at the University of Warwick. The second and third studies, Hindu Nurture in Coventry and Punjabi Hindu Nurture in Coventry, were both funded by the Leverhulme Trust.
- 4 Stage one of the study was participant observation at Hindu events over a six month period. The second stage comprised semi-structured interviews with thirty four Hindu children in their schools. The list had been drawn up – on the basis of participant observation – to include Punjabi and Gujarati boys and girls between eight and thirteen years of age from families of as many castes and sectarian orientations as possible. On the basis of these interviews and the previous participant observation, and with parental approval, twelve children were selected for follow up. The third stage, in which twelve children from a total of nine families (seven Gujarati and two Punjabi) were studied, extended approximately from November 1986 to October 1987.
- 5 Accounts of other trends and developments can be read in Jackson and Nesbitt (1993; 1996). In 1995 we began a new study of the same Hindu young people who were our case studies in 1985–6, with Eleanor Nesbitt acting as fieldworker. The results of this longitudinal study will be published in due course. We are grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for funding this study.

6 The study was conducted between 1990 and 1993 under the title 'Ethnography and Religious Education'. The ethnographic dimensions were funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK), an independent agency set up to allocate government funds to research projects in the social sciences (Project Reference number R000232489).

7 The ethnographer (Eleanor Nesbitt) used participant observation as a method, carried out during church services, Sunday School classes, youth groups and church school collective worship. This was supplemented by semi-structured interviews with at least one church leader or adult concerned with transmitting Christian teaching. Subsequently, fifty children aged 8–13 were interviewed in school, and thirteen were selected for case study, being interviewed on several occasions in the home. Literature used in worship and formal nurture was collected, plus an archive of colour slides.

8 The decision was taken to include children associated with congregations from those Christian denominations and sub-traditions which are numerically strongest in Coventry. In descending order of places of worship, the greatest number of church-going Christians in Coventry was likely to be Anglican (Church of England), Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist or members of the United Reformed Church. The number of children interviewed reflected this. It was also decided to reflect the diversity of Christian families and congregations in Coventry. In terms of church history, interviewed were selected from the long-established (pre-Reformation) Christian sub-traditions and newer (post-Reformation) denominations including a congregation, the Coventry Christian Fellowship, associated with the less tightly defined movement sometimes known as Restorationism (or 'New' Churches) which emerged during the latter half of the twentieth century.

The congregations, denominations and sub-traditions which are represented on the Coventry Council of Churches do not represent Coventry's ethnic diversity. Consequently, in addition to congregations currently active on the Coventry Council of Churches, a Greek Orthodox congregation (mainly of Cypriot background) and a Ukrainian Catholic (Eastern Rite or Uniat) congregation were included. It was also decided to include black-led Pentecostal congregations. With regard to denominations and sub-traditions which were represented on the Council of Churches, it was decided to ensure that some children who were interviewed were of Irish and South Asian background. This was because some ten per cent of Coventry's population is of Irish origin and because South Asian Christians are often overlooked both in studies of South Asians in Britain and in literature on Christianity in Britain. The fifty children who were interviewed by Eleanor Nesbitt came from a wider spectrum of ethnic and cultural backgrounds than had been initially envisaged, although twenty-five (by far the largest group) were simply 'English' (by ethnic background and their own definition).

9 *Partners in Learning*, subtitled *A Church Community Education Programme*, consists of lessons circulated at regular intervals. The joint publishers are the Methodist Church Division of Education and Youth and the National Christian Education Council.

10 Eleanor Nesbitt conducted semi-structured interviews with adults concerned with formal transmission of the tradition and with forty-five Sikh pupils in local primary and secondary schools, mostly selected from those encountered during fieldwork. Interviewees were selected for a balance of age and gender and to include children of different castes (though, reflecting the Coventry population, the majority were Jat) and participants in all five gurdwaras. Following analysis of the interviews, thirteen children were chosen, with the same variables in mind, for a series of three or four interviews at home. These interviewees kept diaries which, together with some of Nesbitt's collection of slides of young Sikhs' involvement in the community's religious life, were used as cues for eliciting the children's experience of religious nurture.

11 Nesbitt (1995b) reports the research in considerable detail.

12 In addition to venerating the *Guru Granth Sahib*, a few families paid respect, at least periodically, to the goddess, Sherawali Ma.

13 Forty children were interviewed by Peter Woodward in the twelve day schools they attended and fourteen of these were selected, using a matrix designed to ensure an appropriate spread of age, gender, schooling, synagogue affiliation and religious background and commitment. Different national and traditional (Ashkenazic or Sephardic) origins were also reflected in the selection. The parents of these fourteen were then approached with a view to holding further interviews with the children in their homes. Ten of these were interviewed at home on three or four occasions each, sometimes in the company of siblings and/or parents and sometimes on their own. The interviewing of parents, children and their local religious teachers/leaders was conducted to obtain a broad overview of the local communities as well as for triangulation purposes.

14 See Chapter 6 for an example.

15 *Bar Chayil* is sometimes translated 'daughter of worth'. As Adrian, one of the case study boys, put it: 'Girls, when they get to twelve, have their *Bar Chayil*, just like a boy's *Bar Mitzvah*, and after that they are not allowed into the synagogue

[main body of the synagogue] because they are counted as a woman, and when the boys have their *Bar Mitzvah* they are not allowed into the women's because they are counted as a man' (Woodward 1993).

16 Fieldwork was conducted by Peter Woodward. In the light of the numerical dominance of the Pakistani community among Muslims in Birmingham, the majority of the mosques selected for visits (and interviews with children) represented Urdu speaking Sunni Muslims whose families originated in various areas of Pakistan. Children selected for interview, including those who attended Muslim day schools and a centre for secular educational studies, came forward as volunteers during visits to *madrasahs*. Additional names were suggested by the adults interviewed or by teaching staff of Muslim private schools. Forty, mainly British-born, children were given semi-structured interviews in their day schools. Ten of these became the focus for more detailed case studies, selected according to a matrix designed to ensure an appropriate spread of age, gender, types of school attended, mosque/*madrasah* affiliation and level of religious commitment/observance. These children were interviewed at home on three or four occasions each, sometimes in the company of siblings and/or parents. A photographic record was made, and many of the children kept diaries for a period of two weeks, recording their daily religious and secular activities.

17 A *madrasah* is a school for religious study, usually attached to a mosque.

18 This became one of the aims of our ESRC project 'Ethnography and Religious Education': 'to develop and publish material for use by pupils studying religious education and by teachers of religious education, drawing on the project's theoretical work in religious education' (Jackson 1994, 1996a).

19 The Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) was established in Autumn 1994 in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick, absorbing the various ethnographic and theoretical studies which comprised the Religious Education and Community Project, in addition to the Warwick RE Project.

20 For the benefit of readers outside England and Wales, key stages were introduced when the National Curriculum was established in 1988. KS 1 is 5–7 years; KS 2 is 7–11; KS 3 is 11–14; KS 4 is 14–16.

21 Clive Erricker and Margaret Barratt began work on the key stage one draft material in 1991. In 1992, on Clive Erricker's appointment to another post (and subsequent co-directorship of 'The Children and Worldviews Project' (Erricker *et al* 1997)), Judith Everington joined the project team as curriculum co-ordinator with responsibility for overseeing curriculum development at all key stages.

22 Eleanor Nesbitt was Senior Research Fellow and Peter Woodward Research Fellow, both funded by the Economic and Social Research Council between 1990 and 1993. In addition, Jochen Bauer, a visiting Research Fellow from the University of Hamburg, worked on some of the Islamic data following Peter Woodward's appointment to a new post. Some ethnographic material was provided by research associates in the Unit, usually in connection with research for higher degrees in Religious Education at the University of Warwick (Joyce Miller's work on a Warwickshire Buddhist Community, Margaret Barratt's work on Muslim families in a Warwickshire town, Sarah Davies' material on Sikh young people in two cities in the Midlands and the North and Elizabeth Wayne's work on Hindu young people in Leicester).

23 Curriculum developers were Margaret Barratt (at key stages one and two), Jo Price, Sarah Davies and Deirdre Burke (key stage two) and Geoff Robson, Carrie Mercier, Elizabeth Wayne and Dilip Kadodwala (key stage three). As well as co-ordinating curriculum development, Judith Everington contributed material for pupils and teachers at key stages two and three. Sarah Davies' material on Sikh children and Deirdre Burke's work on Jewish young people are unpublished at the time of writing. The Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit is grateful to the St Gabriel's Trust, the Dulverton Trust, Warwickshire Education Authority and the University of Warwick Research and Teaching Innovations Fund for their support of various aspects of the curriculum development work reported in this chapter.

24 In addition to those contributed by ethnographers and curriculum developers, photographs were taken during fieldwork by Noel Barratt, Rosemary Jackson, Hilary Roberts and Peter Roberts. In some cases members of families featured in the curriculum books provided photographs from family albums, and, occasionally, took their own photographs for us. The collection of original photographs was regarded as an important feature of the project, and members of the project team wrote about their experiences of using photography as an ethnographic tool (Nesbitt 1992; Woodward 1992).

25 These were essentially data analysis methods, adapted from Geertz. On children using ethnographic field methods such as observation and interviewing, see Jackson (1990).

26 In discussing points of contact and potential communication between different ways of life or modes of discourse, the philosopher Richard Rorty advocates the search for any possible areas in different discourses where some form or degree of communication might take place. These Rorty calls 'strands in a possible conversation' (1980, 318). We found Rorty's

metaphor of 'conversation' highly appropriate and used it to refer to the process of to-ing and fro-ing between the pupils' world and that of children operating as individuals belonging to various groups within religious traditions.

27 Had we realized how arduous and time consuming the task would be, we probably would have approached it in a different way. It is to the great credit of the curriculum developers – especially those who joined us well into the project's development – that they persevered with the task in all its elements and completed their books on time.

CHAPTER

6

Implications of an Interpretive Approach

This chapter sets out initially to anticipate criticisms of the type of interpretive approach proposed in this book and in our curriculum materials. Some criticisms, such as the charge of relativism, have been directed at multifaith religious education generally, and therefore apply to our work as an example of the genre. Next there is a discussion of aims, and the argument is advanced that the nature of an interpretive approach implies a group of inter-related aims for the subject. I then go on to discuss some more general implications for religious education practice and policy related to an interpretive and 'conversational' approach.

My synthesis of interpretive and more dialogical approaches to ethnography drew attention to the reflexivity of the relationship between the ethnographer and the insider, and this idea influenced the curriculum development project described in the previous chapter. In religious education in Britain, however, the relationship between religious educator and insider goes beyond that of joint producers of texts, and the discussions of the roles of ethnographers or curriculum developers and of insiders in representing religious ways of life, raise broader questions about the participation of members of faith communities in a range of institutional and political processes. The machinery of religious education extends the relationship between 'professional' and 'faith community' into the realms of policy making and practice, and there are implications for the role of the teacher, the development of school policy in relating to parents and children from different religious backgrounds, and the formulation of national policy. Since principles related to an interpretive approach are relevant to all of these relationships, some general points about them are included. The analyses of 'religions' in Chapter 3 and of 'cultures' in Chapter 4 revealed the narrowness and partiality of some of

those who seek to foster closed and exclusive views through their influence on religious education policy. Thus, some comments about the political context of RE, which connect with the discussions of the representation of religions and cultures in earlier chapters, form the conclusion of the book.

CRITICISMS OF AN INTERPRETIVE, MULTIFAITH APPROACH

Relativism

One of the standard criticisms of multifaith RE is the charge of relativism. Are our curriculum materials and our general approach inherently relativistic? The answer has to be 'it depends what you mean by relativism'. Some critics regard merely the *inclusion* of several religions in RE as threatening to children's capacity to think of any religion as having claims to truth (Burn and Hart 1988; Scruton *et al* 1985).¹ This view is nostalgic for earlier times, associated with romanticized ideas of cultural stability, a common religion and moral certainty. We do not, however, live in such a world or society, and it is doubtful that we ever have done so. We live in a highly pluralistic world in which mass communication rapidly becomes easier and in a society with many different ways of life and claims to truth. To ignore this plurality would be dishonest, and would hardly prepare young people for life in the future. Our approach to RE refutes the idea that young people should be insulated from values, beliefs and practices that constitute the discourse of religious and cultural groups in our society and in the wider world. It does, however, leave questions of truth and value open, to be pursued as part of religious education.

Then there are those who see relativism more subtly, as a consequence of the pursuit of tolerance in religious education. Thus the sociologist Kieran Flanagan writes:

The desire for racial pluralism and tolerance has the effect of forcing Christianity to muffle its exclusive claims in the interests of securing cultural and political harmony. More importantly, religious affiliation has become attached to ethnicity and minority rights so that validation of belief forms part of claims for cultural recognition ...

As religious education becomes more concerned with comparison, the issue of what it is to believe becomes marginalised. If all religions are the same, sharing common features, then believing without belonging is affirmed. Affiliation to one belief becomes eccentric and is deemed antisocial. (Flanagan 1996, 83-4)

Flanagan's first remark is odd, reifying Christianity, rather than speaking of Christians or even institutional groups of Christians, and drawing attention to 'racial', rather than religious or even religio-ethnic pluralism. Different Christians (including Christians with varied ethnic roots) are struck in different ways by religio-ethnic plurality. All sorts of positions are possible in theory and practice, and can be encountered in classrooms, including those which combine exclusive Christian claims with tolerance (love even) of others holding different beliefs from their own (Cooling 1990; Wilkins 1991).

Flanagan only mentions 'the desire for racial pluralism and tolerance' as a goal for religious education, so it seems safe to assume that he thinks that religious educators regard this as the subject's fundamental aim. This is not so with our interpretive approach, nor, I suspect, with most multifaith approaches. With our approach, a basic aim of RE is to develop a knowledge and understanding of the grammar – the language and wider symbolic patterns – used by people within religious traditions, so one might understand better their beliefs, feelings and attitudes (Jackson 1984, 142; Jackson, Barratt and Everington 1994). It is hoped that *through this*, inter-religious and inter-cultural understanding will be fostered,² but this does not imply a methodological assumption that 'religions' are equally true. Students are likely to end up with a range of views about the relationship between the truth claims of religions, and the formation of these views will be influenced by a variety of factors, many of them beyond the RE classroom.

Flanagan's point about the association of religion with ethnicity and the 'validation' of belief through cultural recognition is too simplistic. In a democratic society, people have a right to practise their religion, so long as its beliefs and practices do not contravene the law. If, by 'validation', Flanagan means an acknowledgement of a group's right to practise a religion, then it is hard to see the force of his point. The acknowledgement of someone's right to practise a religion, whether or not this forms part of the recognition of some cultural group, does not imply any agreement that its claims are true.

Moreover, 'cultural recognition' does not depend on whether some members of society consider a group's religious beliefs to be true or false or on whether a religious group is identified with or associated with an 'ethnic' group. Any religious group has practices, values and norms that might be related to beliefs, but whose social or spiritual worth, in the eyes of some others in society, need not be judged solely in terms of their convictions as to the truth or falsity of any underlying religious claims. One could have, for example, a high regard for certain Christian or Hindu

or Sikh values, or the values of some other group, whilst believing some or even all of that group's metaphysical claims to be false.

Flanagan's points also ignore the spectrum of beliefs and range of theologies and philosophies *within* religions. Christians, for example, have some different views on exactly what the claims of their religion are, as well as the relationship between the claims of different religions, just as do Hindus or others. His view about comparison of religions (not something promoted as a first order activity in our curriculum project, incidentally) is a reprise of the old 'comparative religion makes them comparatively religious' argument, and betrays a nostalgic wish to replace an open religious education with some type of formal religious nurture or secondary religious socialization. Flanagan does not discuss the fact that religious education is but one influence on the formation of young people's ideas about religion. RE classes can contain children from many religious and non-religious backgrounds. The RE teacher's art is to be inclusive, but not to ignore difference. This involves taking seriously the different positions of participants, including their claims to truth. Religious education does not regard 'affiliation to one belief' as either 'eccentric' or 'antisocial'.

Perhaps the view that the process of religious education is erosive of belief is more related to adult concerns than classroom realities. Laura was a twelve year old pupil at a large, multiracial, urban comprehensive school when she took part in one of our research studies. Laura is also Jewish, from a strictly observant (*frum*) family with whom she attended an Orthodox synagogue. She also went to the *cheder* (religion school) associated with the synagogue. Here is one of her remarks about multifaith RE³ taught at her comprehensive school.

We are going to look at other faiths. I don't mind that, because I think if people can learn about our religion in an RS lesson, I don't see why I can't learn about theirs. Because it is not going to influence me in wanting to convert or anything. In a way it is not going to influence them, but it is just nice to know of other people's religion. (Woodward 1993)

Laura could be committed to the truth of her own community's beliefs and the importance of its practices (*kashrut* – the laws relating to *kosher* food – in the example below) and yet participate in RE and hold friendships across religious divides.

There is a Hindu girl in my class, a Sikh girl in my class, and I know lots of Muslim people from my other school and some Hindu boys from my other school. I have a Hindu girl in my class who is my

friend. I have been to her house. When I am away on Jewish holidays, she writes up my notes for me, and I do it for her when she has her Hindu holidays. And, yeah, I have got a friend from my old school who is a Muslim, I have got lots of friends from my old school who are Muslim, and I have been to their house, but I don't eat in their house. (Woodward 1993)

Laura is just one example and one cannot generalize from her observations. In the absence of any quantitative research, we consider that she questions Kieran Flanagan's pessimistic assumptions about the effects of multifaith RE.

There is a further point (not made by Flanagan) which ought to give religious educators pause for thought. In trying to be scrupulously fair in representing religious groups and traditions, and in involving adherents of the faiths directly in syllabus design and the production of resources, there is a danger of a certain 'domestication', of filtering out controversial issues and conflict within the traditions. We were conscious of this when producing the Warwick RE Project materials. Since the materials, both in text and photographs, portray real families who had co-operated in their production, we decided that it was inappropriate to deal with conflicts within the communities represented. Moreover, our curriculum materials deliberately do not explore truth claims. That is not their job. The point here is that we never envisaged the materials as being the totality of RE. They are one type of resource for teachers and pupils. Truth claims are perhaps better discussed spontaneously on the basis of pupils' questions. Clearly, it would be inappropriate to encourage the very young to engage in debate about claims to truth, and teachers' sensitivities to religious minorities (including Christian ones) might make them cautious about how and when truth claims should be discussed. These points should not stifle or prevent such discussions, however. With regard to controversial issues, if ethnographic material were used as a basis for discussing tensions and conflicts within communities, the various ethical issues raised – of confidentiality and trust towards those represented – would have to be resolved, and indirect ways of presenting the material would need to be found. For example, provided that the correct checks and balances were observed, fictitious accounts could be written based on real cases. Real and apparent tensions within and between groups and traditions could also be dealt with in other ways, such as through the analysis of media reports. Here the issue of representation can become part of the critical apparatus of religious education (Said 1981). The issue of 'critical distance' will be discussed further below.

There is another insidious form of relativism. Does our approach, with its

underlying critique of the ways 'religions' have been represented in much Western literature, imply a view that knowledge is socially constructed, with 'truth' being relative to each constructed way of life? It is certainly the case that our project assumes that at least *some* aspects of knowledge are 'socially constructed'. In the light of the work of scholars such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Edward Said, discussed in Chapter 3, this claim would be very difficult to refute. This is different from asserting that *all* knowledge is socially constructed and that the notion of 'ultimate truth' has no meaning. Our approach has a degree of epistemological openness, and people taking part in our project have embraced some different realist and non-realist views of knowledge. The collective intention has been to find a *pragmatic* way of dealing with epistemological difference that is inclusive of conservative as well as liberal religious views.⁴ The project's ethnographic approach encourages insiders from different types of religious, philosophical and cultural background to express their beliefs in their own terms and categories. It also demands great care and sensitivity in the way writers represent the positions which different groups adopt. Some of these groups make highly specific claims to truth. Such stances may well be held by some children in RE classes or their parents. Parents and others from communities such as these might be less fearful of relativism if they knew that their own religious positions were likely to be taken seriously.

Our view is that young people should have the right to study and reflect on *different* views of truth represented within and across religious traditions as well as considering the functions of religious activity in people's lives. In this respect religious education in school will be one influence on the formation of a young person's views, along with 'nurture' or socialization within the home, the influence of other 'membership' groups and the impact of the media.

Reductionism

Another point of criticism is the charge of reductionism. Does our view of the internal diversity of religious traditions challenge the existence of religions as coherent wholes?⁵ We do not deny the existence or importance of religious 'wholes'. We do, however, take the view that such wholes are constructions and that one insider's view of the nature and scope of the religion will be different from another's and that the outsider's view may be different again. This does not mean that it makes no sense to talk about a religion in general terms. It does mean, however, that one has to speak with various caveats and qualifications. One might also use the idea of a general framework of concepts and practices as a teaching tool, to help a student to 'get into' a tradition. Having done this, the student then needs to look at examples in a more critical and sophisticated way.

Dermot Killingley and I used this kind of approach in a primer on 'Hinduism' (Jackson and Killingley 1988). We quite deliberately provided our own thumbnail sketch of key concepts and practices so that students could dip their toes in the water, but we also warned readers of the danger of seeing this framework as providing a picture of what all Hindus believe or do. We then provided examples of individual practice and belief from different parts of the Hindu tradition that both illustrated the points made in our overview and showed its inadequacy. 'Wholes' are provisional, capable of revision, seen differently from different perspectives, but they are necessary for a hermeneutical understanding. Thus, it is not a case of either positing religions as coherent wholes or arguing for fragmentation, so that attention is only given to individuals and groups. *Both* perceptions are needed in relation to each other, but the wholes should be recognized as abstractions or reifications. They are neither 'entities' nor providers of checklists against which a person's practice and belief should be evaluated.

It is also important to recall some points from Chapter 3, reminding ourselves not only of the various pictures of 'wholes' provided by different insiders and outsiders, but also the shifting way in which they have been represented over time. Agreed syllabuses written shortly after the 1944 Education Act were influenced by the relatively new discipline of 'comparative religion'. 'Religions', as they had been constructed by Westerners, were to be compared in order to show the superiority of Christianity. Thus, the West Riding syllabus of 1947 asserted that:

The teacher should not only aim at describing the outstanding features of the great religions of the world but should also bear in mind that the study is to be a comparative one, i.e. resemblances and contrasts and the relations between the different religious systems should be emphasised. The pupil should be led to appreciate that while each great religion has made its contribution at some period of the world's history, either to man's knowledge of God, or to man's relation with God or to his fellow men, all these contributions are unified and on a higher plane in the Christian religion. (West Riding 1947, 73)

The key point here is that other 'religions' are considered as separate systems, with similar structures and in competition with each other. The representation of religions other than Christianity is Orientalist in character; they are essentialized and evaluated negatively in comparison with the Christian religion.

The 'world religions' movement in English and Welsh RE, especially work associated with Ninian Smart, has taken a very different attitude towards the 'religions' from that of the early agreed syllabuses. As we saw in Chapter 1, Smart's approach drew on ideas from the phenomenology of

religion and great sensitivity was shown to the adherents of the religions and their practices and beliefs. Nevertheless, the religions were still represented in a manner governed by a powerful Western intellectual tradition which had defined them during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The negativity towards the 'other religions' is gone, but the structural parallels are maintained. Some representations, such as Smart's, tend to be through 'dimensions' which presuppose a generic relationship between religious phenomena of similar types; others employ various frameworks of concepts, beliefs and practices that do not accommodate diversity, cultural interaction and organic change over time. This is not simply an academic point, as some of the examples from our ethnographic material show when they point to emphases in practice and belief which reveal some serious discontinuities between children's experience in the home and community and representations in some widely used schoolbooks and examination syllabuses (Chapter 5).

Lewis Glinert, a Jewish social scientist, makes a similar point with regard to representations of Judaism, drawing attention to the gap between RE teaching based on sources claiming to describe 'Judaism' and the actual experience of Jewish children in class.⁵ In the case of Passover, for example, he notes that textbooks usually portray *Pesach* as beginning with the search for *chametz* (leaven) on the eve of the festival, a practice mostly found among the ten per cent or so who are fully observant.

Aside from overdoing this, books on Judaism rarely do justice to the '*Pesach*-cleaning' and the purchase of '*kosher* for *Pesach*', provisions that dominate Jewish life in the weeks leading up to *Pesach*. For every child, the sight of scores of wondrous products, all mysteriously labelled '*kosher* for Passover', and the sudden appearance of a whole range of pots and pans, plates and cutlery only for Passover use, makes as indelible an impression as the Seder night on which Judaism textbooks say so much. (1985, 4)

His conclusion is 'that the teacher ... must seek to supplement (his/her reference books) with as much as can be gleaned from children and adults as to the "authentic" profile of World Religions in the British setting' (1985, 3). Writers of text books, Agreed Syllabus Conferences and drafters of examination syllabuses need to give attention to ethnographic studies of religious groups, and all of us should pay careful heed to what children in class tell us.

THE AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PUBLICLY FUNDED SCHOOLS

Interpretation and Critical Distance

So far I have only touched on the question of the aims of religious education in publicly funded schools in Britain (in Chapters 4 and 5). Among the hypothetical questions which I raised at the beginning of the book was this central one: 'If RE involves understanding a range of religious worldviews, what methods should be used in order to do the job well?' My answer has been to advocate interpretive or hermeneutical methods (rather than phenomenological ones as understood in the literature of the phenomenology of religion), and I have referred to debates in recent social anthropology in order to find such methods. In the discussion of relativism above, I suggested one basic aim for RE, namely to develop an understanding of the grammar – the language and wider symbolic patterns – of religions and the interpretive skills necessary to gain that understanding (Jackson 1984, 142). However, in looking at how that aim might be achieved, it became clear that the task was not straightforward. The discussion of the representation of religious traditions (Chapter 3) shows that religious education needs to be self-critical of its assumptions about the nature of religions, while the analysis of cultures (Chapter 4) illustrates how particular received views of cultures, or views constructed by those with power and influence, can have a major impact on the ways in which religious traditions are perceived and evaluated. In this context, questions of 'fact' (whether raised through the preparation of curriculum material or through teaching in the classroom) require that the evaluative and critical issues of representation should also be addressed. Religious education, therefore, needs to develop critical skills in order to achieve the goal of developing a knowledge of the the language and wider symbolic patterns of religions.

Paul Ricoeur draws on both hermeneutics and critical theory⁷ in making a similar point, regarding the processes of 'participation' (engaging in hermeneutics) and 'distanciation' (a sense of critical distance and a willingness to subject ideologies to criticism) as complementary in attempting to reconstruct traditions (Ricoeur 1973; see also Gooderham 1994). Thus, the debates about the nature of religions and cultures become *part* of religious education; preconceived definitions are no longer taken as received wisdom. The critical element can also open up questions of truth and meaning for anyone participating in religious education.⁸ Moreover, the task of grasping the grammars of religious discourse, like that of reading novels or watching a TV soap opera (Gillespie 1995), does not take place in a vacuum. The young people taking part in RE are

themselves from a range of religious and non-religious backgrounds, and bring their knowledge and experience, their questions, observations and their own critical edge to the classroom. This is quite different from the parody of religious education as offering fully autonomous pupils choices of religions, as if from the supermarket shelf.

Edification

Being able to interpret another's worldview is not the only basic aim of religious education, however. The interpretive process starts from the insider's language and experience, moves to that of the student, and then oscillates between the two. Thus the activity of grasping another's way of life is inseparable in practice from that of pondering on the issues and questions raised by it. Such reflective activity is personal to the student. Teachers cannot delay the process of reflection to a later date, just as they cannot guarantee that it will happen. They can, however, enable it by providing structured opportunities for reflection, and this is what the Warwick RE Project's curriculum developers tried to do through the design of appropriate methods for teachers or activities for pupils (Chapter 5).

Whatever differences there might appear to be, culturally or religiously, between the student's way of life and the way of life being studied, there may also be points of contact, cross-over points and points of commonality. What might appear to be entirely different and 'other' at first glance, can end up linking with one's own experience in such a way that new perspectives are created or unquestioned presuppositions are challenged. This seems to me to be an inevitable product of the interpretive process, and exemplifies what many contemporary anthropologists refer to as 'reflexivity'.⁹ In writing of his work as a social anthropologist, Edmund Leach put it this way:

I still hold that all the anthropologist's most important insights stem from introspection. The scholarly justification for studying 'others' rather than 'ourselves' is that, although we first perceive the others as exotic, we end up by recognizing in their 'peculiarities' a mirror of our own. (Leach 1982, 127).

Writers from different disciplines have made this point, though with different emphases and shades of meaning. For the philosopher Richard Rorty, a person can be *educated* by studying his or her own culture. Engaging in 'conversation', that is in hermeneutics – which for Rorty means trying to make connections between different worldviews (whether 'cultural', 'disciplinary', 'historical' or whatever)¹⁰ – can lead to *edification*. This is a transformative concept. To be edified, in this sense, is to be taken out of one's own self. Through the challenge of 'unpacking' another

worldview one can, in a sense, become a new person (Rorty 1980). This is analogous to what Michael Grimmitt means by 'learning from' religion (e.g. 1987, 225) and to some writers' views of 'spiritual' development.

Edification and Learning From Religion

The two ideas of 'edification' and 'learning from religion' are closely related, but there are some significant differences. Grimmitt describes his concept of 'learning from' religion as follows:

When I speak of pupils *learning from* religion I am referring to what pupils learn from their studies in religion about themselves – about discerning ultimate questions and 'signals of transcendence' in their own experience and considering how they might respond to them, about discerning *Core Values* and learning to interpret them, about recognising the shaping influence of their own beliefs and values on their development as persons, about the unavoidability of their holding beliefs and values and making faith responses, about the possibility of their being able to discern a spiritual dimension in their own experience, about the need for them to take responsibility for their own decision-making, especially in matters of personal belief and conduct, and so on. (Grimmitt 1987, 225)

For Grimmitt, this involves 'impersonal evaluation' (critical evaluation of truth claims etc) and 'personal evaluation' (comparing and contrasting one's own beliefs; having one's own assumptions challenged; learning from the material about oneself) (226). Moreover, the individual child or young person has choice in the process of his or her development as an autonomous person (79; 207).

More recently Grimmitt has gone further, seeing RE as a source of ideological criticism (1994). Rejecting the poles of cultural absolutism and cultural pluralism, he argues that RE should equip students with skills of ideological criticism to promote an 'increased critical consciousness of their own cultural/religious perspective and that of others'; an 'awareness of the processes by which ideologies influence attitudes, values and beliefs, and in so doing, shape the human person'; and 'an openness to and encouragement of, dialogue between those who are ideologically divided so that mutuality, commonality and co-operation based on the acceptance of certain core values challenges, and ultimately replaces, cultural tribalism' (138). This is 'learning from religion' broadened to accommodate cultures, and stated with a concern for social justice.

Grimmitt argues that there are core values which transcend cultural boundaries; human beings are 'humanised' or 'shaped', in the same way, whether through encountering rigid belief systems, more flexible systems

allowing a variety of interpretations, or through haphazard movement between competing systems (1987, 122). The 'model of the human' they adopt 'corresponds to the beliefs about the human they encounter' (123).

Although our view is close to this in a number of respects, there are some differences between 'learning from' in the above sense and 'edification'. Firstly, in this book I have not been considering 'religion' as an abstraction or 'religions' as straightforwardly definable belief systems. Secondly, Grimmit tends to represent different cultures in Britain as more cohesive and uniform than I would, giving little attention to their internal diversity. Thirdly, his approach assumes that all learners will be moving towards the same 'educational' goal – that is, they should become fully autonomous individuals, making their own choices and decisions. Our approach sees schooling as but one key influence on socialization and acknowledges that, depending on their backgrounds, pupils may consider the relationship between material they have studied and their own way of life in different ways. For example, some learners may not perceive themselves to be autonomous individual liberals; they may not share the same views of the nature of knowledge or views on the role of authority in their lives.¹¹ Finally, our approach is less structured when it comes to formulating the effects of 'learning from' the material studied. Although activities to promote reflection can be designed, we would maintain that the student's (like the anthropologist's) response may be spontaneous.¹²

Edification and One's Own Religio-Cultural Background

Edification need not only result from studying religions or cultures other than one's own. The study of another religion or culture can give new insights in re-examining one's own situation. To take an example from anthropology, Barbara Myerhoff, an American anthropologist of Jewish background, had completed fieldwork on the Huichol Indians of Mexico. Later, when she received a grant to explore the process of aging, she decided to do a study of some elderly Jewish people in a Senior Citizens' Center in Venice, California, based on their experiences of life in Eastern Europe and the United States of America. This resulted in the publication of *Number Our Days* (1978), a fascinating and beautifully constructed ethnography rich in verbatim quotation. In effect, Myerhoff's mode of research and reporting is the same as that proposed in this book, since there is an interplay between the individuals portrayed, the groups to which they belong and the wider Jewish tradition, this last drawn on partly through Myerhoff's own personal knowledge and experience. There are also personal reflections on the research, including remarks about the effects the study had on Myerhoff's own relationship with her inherited tradition.

In his foreword to *Number Our Days*, Victor Turner comments on Myerhoff's Jewishness in relation to her studies, citing a lecture by M N Srinivas, a Hindu Brahmin as well as an anthropologist. Srinivas had talked of being twice-born (the act of birth and the *samskara* of the sacred thread). Applying this as a metaphor to his field of study, Srinivas had urged anthropologists to go one stage further, to have three 'births'. The first is one's natal origin in a particular culture. The second is the experience of fieldwork in unfamiliar cultural territory. The third, reports Turner:

... occurs when we have become comfortable within the other culture – and found the clue to grasping many like it – and turn our gaze back to our native land. We find that the familiar has become exoticized; we see it with new eyes. The commonplace has become marvelous. What we took for granted now has power to stir our scientific imaginations. ... [O]ur discipline's long-term program has always included the movement of return, the purified look at ourselves. 'Thriceborn' anthropologists are perhaps in the best position to become the 'reflexivity' of a culture. (Turner 1978, xiii-xiv)

These insights can be applied to religious education, and the 1988 Education Reform Act offers the possibility for young people in England and Wales to study a number of religions, including the one of their own ancestry, examined at some stage through a new lens. Ethnographic source material, plus data from locally conducted studies, could provide a basis for this. Christianity, for example, might be seen from different personal and community perspectives and understood in new ways (e.g. Ashenden 1995; Jackson and Nesbitt 1992; Nesbitt 1993).

Pupils may be changed through taking part in the interpretive process – whether or not it involves a deepening of their understanding of their own tradition. If this seems threatening to some parents, perhaps it is worth considering that children from *any* religious background (especially those from ethnic minorities) have to face the juxtaposition of their 'home' way of life and those which constitute the predominantly secular society around them. Putting it slightly differently, quite apart from religious plurality, all individuals are exposed in varying degrees to the plurality of modernity (Skeie 1995). Religious education can, at least, be a forum for a structured exploration of some of the issues.

To sum up on the issue of aims, I have maintained that a fundamental aim for RE is to develop an understanding of the grammar – the language and wider symbolic patterns – of religions and the interpretive skills necessary to gain that understanding. I went on to argue that the achievement of this aim necessitated the development of critical skills which would open up issues of representation and interpretation as well as

questions of truth and meaning. I then drew attention to the inseparability of understanding and reflection in the interpretive process, suggesting that 'edification' should be a further goal for the subject. However, I also pointed to the personal nature of edification, suggesting that the teacher's role was to ensure that opportunities for reflection on issues and questions raised by the material studied were provided. A point not raised so far which is pertinent to a discussion of aims, is the question of pupils' feelings about the relevance of religious education to themselves. As Harold Loukes discovered over three and a half decades ago, and as many others have pointed out since, a religious education disconnected from pupils' own questions and concerns will simply fail to engage them (Loukes 1961).¹³

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND INSIDERS

A key element in a 'conversational' view of religious education is a clear acknowledgement that voices from inside the traditions (which might be commenting, for example, on school policy, aspects of education or social values as well as explaining what it is like to be an insider) need to be taken very seriously. This is a point about power and about the relationship between theologies or philosophies and ideas of education within the traditions in the political setting of a pluralistic democracy. Members of religious groups and traditions are not simply 'objects of study', but are writers of resource material, pupils, colleagues, parents and others whose voices are relevant to the processes of education.

This increased role in religious education for members of different religious groups raises the question of how far insiders should have control over the ways in which religions are represented. Clearly we do need to go to accounts of religious faith and tradition from insiders. But even here the sources need to be set in a wider context, since what individual can speak on behalf of a whole religious tradition? Insiders may represent a unique perspective, but their accounts may also reflect the views of particular institutions, denominations, sects or movements. Insider accounts may also have particular ethnic characteristics and cultural emphases. Moreover, there may be significant generational differences in the way in which religious faith and tradition is presented by insiders and there may also be different gender perspectives.

What I am suggesting is that we should aim to be balanced in our accounts of religious traditions. The way in which members of the Warwick RE Project team worked co-operatively with members of faith

groups is one attempt at balance. There is also a need to balance material written by insiders from a committed standpoint with good academic material (whether by insiders or outsiders) and with well-constructed but provisional overviews of traditions. We should also try to balance different perspectives from inside religious traditions. There are plenty of sources on which specialist teachers can draw in order to build such multi-faceted accounts with which pupils can interact. Using this approach it is impossible to please all of the people all of the time, but one can be sure of reducing the risk of portraying any religious tradition as monolithic, or of claiming generalizability for accounts of the essentials of religions written by small groups of insiders, such as the *Faith Communities' Working Groups Reports* which formed the basis of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Model Syllabuses (Everington 1996a; SCAA 1994a, b and c).

Religious educators, regardless of their own religious or non-religious backgrounds, and with their professional commitment to achieving the aims of RE to the fore, need to work co-operatively with insiders. This is a more reflexive and 'conversational' version of Geertz's hermeneutics, in which the involvement of insiders is an essential element in the process. In discussing dialogical approaches to cultural anthropology, James Clifford concluded that ethnographers ultimately and inevitably have the principal editorial hand in producing texts, but also argued that they should be open about the processes which brought these cultural representations into being (1988, 50–51). The same is true with an interpretive approach to religious education. The professionals, whether they be writers of curriculum material or teachers, need to have the final editorial role, but making the involvement of insiders clear, and revealing the character of negotiated representations.

Teachers of Religious Education

Contemporary anthropologists come from many cultural and religious backgrounds, and yet share common professional standards, while participating in the debates which are the reflexivity of the subject. Similarly, it should be possible to find among teachers of religious education those of any religious background or none. An essential *professional* requirement (in addition to knowledge and pedagogical skill) is a commitment to an open and dialogical or 'conversational' religious education. This raises the issue of the relationship between the religious or secular commitment of the teacher to the process of teaching the subject, an issue which has been a focus for discussion in the religious education literature (e.g. Cooling 1990; Grimmitt 1981; Hull 1982; Hulmes 1979; Jackson 1982b; Wilkins 1991).¹⁴ From a consideration of the published discussions and from personal experience of 'training' RE teachers for

many years (including students of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh backgrounds as well as numerous Christians of various types and others, including Humanists, not committed to any religious position), it is my observation that teachers with a wide range of religious and non-religious commitments are capable, in principle, of teaching RE effectively and with a high degree of impartiality. By 'impartial' I do not mean 'neutral'.¹⁵ Impartial teachers of religious education are prepared to countenance rival conclusions as well as those to which they are personally attached and know how and when to contain their commitments and how to present material from a religious tradition from the point of view of an adherent. This professional skill does not require the teacher to disguise his or her own position. Experience shows that children appreciate openness in response to questions and that teachers should answer questions about personal faith honestly and at a level appropriate to the age and aptitude of the pupils concerned. It is also part of the professional approach of religious education teachers, however, to set their own comments about faith or doubt in a wider context, perhaps by informing pupils that other teachers have different commitments from theirs and by asking pupils what their parents' views might be and what the pupils themselves think or believe. By operating in a professional way, teachers can draw upon their own religious or secular commitments as resource material alongside other resources in the classroom. In the same way teachers may draw sensitively on the testimony of pupils and of parents and other members of religious communities who might be invited as guests into the school.

POLICY FOR RE IN A PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY

At the local level, teachers and governors need to think carefully about the ways in which pupils and parents perceive the school's attitudes to individuals from religious backgrounds. We all like to think of our schools as open and welcoming places where parents can feel free to air their concerns in a relaxed manner. However, if we look at the literature which discusses why some Christian parents have placed their children in independent Christian schools, one of the reasons given is a feeling on the part of both pupils and parents of a deep, underlying secularism resulting in their religious views not being taken seriously within the school (Hughes 1992, 132). Muslim parents have sometimes made similar claims. If we take seriously rights to religious freedom, then we should be prepared to listen carefully to pupils and parents about their worldviews and about their needs within the school community. Schools need to make it crystal clear that all pupils within the school should be affirmed,

regardless of their religious or secular backgrounds. However, there will always be some parents who will be dissatisfied with even the most sensitive school policy. For them there may be the option of the voluntary aided school or independent schooling.¹⁶

Local arrangements, however, whether at school or Local Education Authority level, are influenced by national policy. At national level, policies need to maximize communication and trust among the various faith groups and between them and professional religious educators. At the time of writing, there needs to be a move away from the hardening and narrowing of policy contained in *Religious Education and Collective Worship*, non-statutory guidance by the Department for Education (DFE 1994). Circulars, sent to all schools, are a standard means of communicating current Government interpretations of law but, as the Circulars themselves declare, 'these documents do not constitute an authoritative legal interpretation of the Education Acts; that is a matter for the courts' (DFE 1994, 1). The first guidance (Circular 3/89), distributed soon after the publication of the 1988 Act, gave a liberal interpretation (DES 1989). The draft of the next Circular, sent out for comment in Autumn 1993, caused great concern among professionals and faith groups, and critical comments were sent in to the DFE from many bodies. Circular 1/94 was published on January 31 1994, and there was widespread dismay at the Department's lack of attention to submissions from professional bodies, teacher unions and faith groups.

The narrow interpretation of Section 8 [3]¹⁷ of the 1988 Act given in Circular 1/94 is very different indeed from that given by the barrister who was consulted by the Department of Education and Science in 1991 when Kenneth Clarke was Secretary of State.¹⁸ A number of expressions are included which reflect the language of the Parliamentary supporters of the Christian Institute. For example, the terms 'predominant' and 'predominate' are applied to Christianity's place in syllabuses. The barrister's opinion, quoted by the Department of Education and Science in a letter to Chief Education Officers sent out in March 1991, specifically warned against the misleading use of shorthand phrases such as 'predominantly Christian' in giving interpretations of Section 8 [3] of the Act. The Circular, however, includes the following passages:

Religious education in schools should seek: to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity as the *predominant* religion in Great Britain, and the other principal religions represented in the country; to encourage respect for those holding different beliefs; and to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and mental development. (DFE 1994, 12, my italics)

As a whole *and at each key stage*, the relative content devoted to Christianity in the syllabus *should predominate*. The syllabus *as a whole* must also include all of the principal religions represented in this country. (16, my italics)

In this second passage, a very restrictive interpretation of Section 8 [3] of the Act is given which is again very different from that of the Department of Education and Science's barrister in 1990, and is so directive and specific that it appears to be at variance with the plain meaning of the law. Religions other than Christianity are put firmly in their place, both here and in the Circular's guidance on collective worship.¹⁹

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This book has argued for communication, whether between pupils and their texts or between classroom participants, rather than fragmentation and isolation and, despite the inherent tensions, a view of religious education and religious nurture as having some complementary features. This is seen as preferable to having no religious education in state funded schools (as in France or the USA) or providing separate RE for different faith groups. It is all too evident, however, that there are those who are deeply opposed to such openness in county school religious education and who seek to influence the political machinery which produces educational legislation and guidance for schools. Their goal would seem to be to privilege a particular understanding of Christianity and its relation to culture and nationality, and to marginalize other faiths.

The underlying issue seems to be one of defining national identity in relation to religions and cultures. The stance of the radical right sees a monolithic culture threatened by the influence of foreign cultures and religions. In its more extreme forms, this position exemplifies what some writers refer to as 'cultural racism' (Modood 1992) or 'new racism' (Barker 1981), based on supposed incompatibility of cultural traditions rather than 'biological' superiority. There have been a number of overt cases of this in the debate about religious education, and a good example is the following statement from a member of the House of Lords during a debate in 1988 on the Education Reform Bill. Here there is a close association of religion and 'race' through the use of a powerful metaphor, an explicitly 'closed' view of culture and religion, and an assumption of a tight relationship between citizenship of the state and a particular form of religious faith:

If we consider religious faith and precept as the spiritual life-blood of the nation and all its citizens, then effective religious instruction can no

more be administered by and to persons of different faiths than can a blood transfusion be safely given without first ensuring blood-group compatibility ... Indiscriminate mixing of blood can prove dangerous and so can the mixing of faiths in education (House of Lords, 3rd May 1988, col 419 quoted in Hull 1991, 17)

The way to challenge the cultural separatism of the radical right is by falsification. In this book I have attempted to show that not only is there abundant empirical evidence that majority and minority cultures are internally diverse, negotiated and contested, it is also becoming clear that the descendents of migrants are not 'caught between' two cultures, but often become 'skilled cultural navigators' (Ballard 1994), competent in a range of different cultural spheres. Components of their social identity might include a range of elements, including religious, philosophical and ethnic ones, together with other potential ingredients and influences which need not threaten a sense of national identity (Baumann 1990, 1996; Gillespie 1995). Varied elements will come to the fore in different situations.

If justice and fairness (as values of a liberal, pluralistic democracy) are to be promoted through publicly-funded education, then the ideal form of religious education in state funded schools should be 'secular' but not 'secularist'. RE should be secular in the same way that India regards itself as a secular country, rather than a country promoting secularism; there should be no implication of an axiomatic secular humanist interpretation of religions. India's secularity is intended as a guarantee of religious freedom and state impartiality towards religious and non-religious diversity. Taking this stance with regard to religious education is fundamentally a pragmatic rather than an ideological one. It is perhaps the only way that one can be confident that different religions and philosophies are dealt with fairly in schools.

As we have already seen, the paradox is that some participants in religious education will have religious views which challenge the notion of openness and impartiality. There are tensions between an epistemology based on the authority of revelation and a view of knowledge based on reason and experience. There is unlikely to be any way of overcoming this paradox, while maintaining a fair and just multifaith approach. However, there are better and worse ways of coping with it. In this book I argue for a pragmatic solution, requiring that those claiming the universal truth and application of a particular way of life would have to acknowledge that there are others who hold different beliefs equally sincerely or live according to different ways of life. Several conditions would have to be satisfied in order to establish such a 'conversational' approach.

First, there would need to be some body of shared or 'overlapping' values for it to work. For example, a basic principle of the open society – freedom to follow a particular religious or secular way of life under the constraints of the law – would have to be accepted as a pragmatic if not a theological or epistemological basis for religious education.

Second, the sensitive application of academic methods and standards would also have to be agreed, although those methods would themselves be open to the critical scrutiny of commentators within religious and secular traditions. For example, the debate about the relationship between personal autonomy and varieties of religious upbringing could be informed and enriched by different religious and secular perspectives on individualism, responsibility and authority.

Third, resources reflecting the understandings of different academic disciplines would need to be balanced by those presenting the perceptions of different kinds of insiders from the religious traditions. Moreover, there would need to be scope for professionals and members of faith communities to work together in producing materials, as in the Warwick RE Project, for example (Everington 1996a). For pupils, the development of skills necessary to gain an understanding of different ways of life would be vital, as would the capacity to form judgements consistently from each person's perspective.

Fourth, specialist teachers would be needed at all levels to teach, to co-ordinate contributions from members of religious communities and to arrange in-service training, and they would need to be recruited for their professional knowledge and skill, as well as for their commitment to a 'conversational' approach, without regard to their religious affiliation or secular stance.

Finally, the school would need to have an agreed policy on recognizing the centrality of religious faith and practice in the lives of some of its pupils, and of affirming the worth of all children, regardless of their religious or secular roots.

There would be some who could never take part in such a 'conversational' approach, though I suspect that educators and parents from a wide range of religious positions – particularly some of the conservative ones who currently feel marginalized or excluded from policy making in religious education – might decide to contribute to it. We have not yet achieved this in Britain, although there are examples of something approaching this ideal in a few schools. As we saw in Chapter 4, the debates about heritage and culture continue, and there is currently the paradox of a legal requirement for collective worship which is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly

Christian character' in combination with a law that says that RE should be non-indoctrinatory (Hull 1995). Nevertheless, I would argue that section 8 [3] of the 1988 Education Reform Act, in spite of some infelicities of drafting, goes a long way in principle towards allowing this kind of religious education. Moreover, although the structural arrangements need some reform, the legal requirement for the establishment of Local Authority Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education, representing different religious, educational and community perspectives, provides an opportunity to influence and develop forms of religious education which are genuinely conversational. At national level, voluntary bodies such as the Religious Education Council of England and Wales,²⁰ and the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom,²¹ aim to keep channels of communication open between people of different faiths and philosophies in relation to religious education in schools.

Multifaith RE is a continuing and emergent field – an ongoing debate and a discipline, rather than a body of factual information – and each debate is sure to reflect the historical and political situation of the society in which it takes place. There will be some common issues, but lines of argument will vary from society to society, as is illustrated by the recent debates in South Africa (Chidester *et al* 1992; Weisse 1996), Canada (Johns 1985; Milot and Ouellet 1997; Watson 1990) and Norway (Haakedal 1996; Østberg 1996). Despite the on-going tensions, the experience and institutional machinery of the English and Welsh system is of considerable interest to religious educators in other countries who wish to accommodate religious plurality in their subject, including those working in confessional systems.

However, whether multifaith RE is taught within a tolerant and open 'confessional' system (as in Norway) or a secular system, the view that religions and cultures are monolithic and unchanging, and the belief that such monoliths can be taken as an indicator of national identity, need to be challenged. If they are not, religious education will continue to be distorted and religious minorities from varied cultural backgrounds will at best be treated paternalistically, while at the same time being kept on the margins of society.

Notes

1 There is an interesting difference between Burn and Hart and Scruton and his co-writers concerning the effects of exposing young people to more than one view. For Scruton *et al*, exposure to more than one view engenders 'idle curiosity where there should be certainty and truth'. No evidence is offered to support this assertion. For Burn and Hart, however, exposure to different views (namely views they do not hold) is dangerous for the reason that young people might adopt them (1988, 31). Again, no evidence is offered in support of this claim. What they both agree on is the exposure of children only to one view of one religion with the intention that children should adopt it.

2 It would be a mistake, however, to claim that understanding and knowledge necessarily foster tolerance; propagandists

are aware that lies and misinformation can increase tolerance, sympathy and respect. Yet is it not the case, that knowledge and understanding are *necessary* conditions for removing prejudice genuinely?

3 The subject was called religious studies at her school.

4 Our view resonates with some of Edward Hulmes' remarks about taking the epistemological views embedded in other religions seriously (1989) and with some of the points on epistemology made by Trevor Cooling (1994).

5 I am grateful to Dr Andrew Wright for raising this question (Wright 1996).

6 Glinert's work is discussed by Peter Woodward (1991).

7 The influence of critical theory (associated with the 'Frankfurt School' of philosophers, and including Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas) on religious education has not been dealt with in this book. Jürgen Habermas has influenced the Catholic religious educator Thomas Groomer, for whom the main contemporary issue for the Church is the quest for human freedom. For Habermas it is the three basic types of human interest – technical control, the inner workings of any discipline and the quest for emancipation – that lead respectively to the technical, interpretive and critical ways of knowing. The technical way of knowing is related to empirical knowledge, the interpretive type is concerned with understanding, and the critical type leads to 'emancipation', operating against the control of knowledge by those with vested interests or with the power to project particular interpretations or stereotypes. Whereas most education leads to acceptance, critical education, argues Habermas, leads to liberation and change. Habermas uses the concept of *praxis* – a combination of theory and practice with a view to change – as the key educational process (1972). Groomer draws on Habermas, advocating critical self-reflection in religious education, and encouraging young people to be critical participants in the life of the Church. From the outset, young people are encouraged to get involved in *praxis* (reflecting on their own feelings and actions) rather than *theoria* (received knowledge) (Groomer 1980, 208–11). Critical theory is also an ingredient of John Hull's eclectic and original work in religious education – e.g. Hull (1996a) shows the influence of Adorno and Horkheimer – and is an influence on David Gooderham's work (1983; 1994).

8 Writing from the educational system in the USA, where RE is confined to religious schools, M Warren argues that an important element of RE is to criticize culture. Warren argues that the dominant culture of the USA is one of appearance rather than substance, with the American media communicating a utopian way of life marked by endless wealth. Warren's concern is to give children the skills to criticize the culture of which they are the passive recipients from the point of view of Christian views of life (1993, 68). This approach could be extended so that aspects of culture could be examined from the perspectives of different religious groups or traditions.

9 In discussing the relationship between the subject and the object in fieldwork, B Sholte refuted the idea of value free social science and introduced the term 'reflexivity' into anthropology. In the narrower sense, 'reflexivity' refers to the anthropologist reflecting about his or her own assumptions, background, etc in relation to interpersonal relations during fieldwork. In the wider sense, reflexivity implies a running critique of ethnography itself, examining how ethnographers produce knowledge about other cultures (1972, 435). Both meanings are highly relevant to religious education.

10 Rorty's view of hermeneutics is different from that adopted in this book in relation to the interpretation of ways of life other than one's own. Rorty sees the hermeneutic circle as a feature of *all* knowledge and activity, a view influenced by Hans Georg Gadamer (Rorty, 357–64). My position is derived from Paul Ricoeur (via Clifford Geertz). Ricoeur regards hermeneutics as a method especially suited to history and the social sciences, and thus for religious education as conceived in this book. In relation to the study of religions and cultures, Rorty's point about edification coheres with Ricoeur's (and Geertz's) mode of interpretation. Although their approaches are different, both Gadamer and Ricoeur use Heidegger's work as a starting point, an interpretive tradition that goes back to Dilthey and ultimately to Schleiermacher.

11 Although there are tensions between liberals and others over the issue of personal autonomy, the fears that some religious groups have about education and autonomy are often overstated. The perception of members of certain religious groups is that the school encourages children to be a 'law unto themselves' in matters of religion and values. Children, it is alleged, are encouraged to choose beliefs and values rather in the manner of selecting cans of beans or fruit from the shelves of a supermarket. This is a distortion of what educators mean by autonomy. In the educational context, autonomy usually means the capacity to make decisions on the basis of a reasonable scrutiny of available evidence. In this sense, there is no contradiction in deciding autonomously to adopt a position that one has hitherto accepted on authority. Moreover, autonomy does not imply complete individualism, for a consideration of others in relation to oneself is an important factor in autonomous decision making. In this sense all autonomy is 'relative'. Many clashes between autonomy and religious nurture are, then, apparent rather than real, and might be resolved by good conversation between parents, pupils and staff at the school. There will be, from time to time, disputes where no reconciliation is possible and in these cases parents can use their right under the law to withdraw their children from religion education.

12 Some writers' views on 'learning from' religion go further than Grimmer, shifting the goals of religious education in

directions that relate closely to particular religious or philosophical positions, giving little leeway to alternative voices. See Ellis (1997), for example, where a revelation-based approach to religion is rejected in favour of a wisdom-based one.

13 For an earlier discussion of aims see Jackson (1987).

14 Andrew Wright makes the following remark: 'the old liberal model demanded on the part of the teacher not commitment but openness, indeed not just any form of openness, but a rigorous and carefully guarded neutrality' (1993, 101). Wright does not name any liberals in particular, but a quick glance at the literature is enough to falsify his claim. See, for example, Grimmer 1981, Hull 1982 and Jackson 1982b all of which, in their different ways, suggest that teachers should use their personal commitments as a resource. In Jackson (1982b), several issues concerned with commitment are tackled. A reply is made to those who argue that in order to understand a religion a person must be committed to that faith. Next the view is advanced that many teachers, having a wide range of commitments – religious and otherwise – are capable of the sympathetic treatment of different religions in schools. Finally it is maintained that there are appropriate occasions in the classroom when the commitment of both teachers and pupils can be used as a valuable teaching resource. Hull's key point is that religious commitment can illuminate good educational practice, but only if there is a consistency between the teacher's religious commitment and his or her educational commitment, that is commitment to the values which underpin the notion of divergence (1982). If we have to go in for classification, then Wright's own educational position seems to me to reflect a type of liberalism.

15 See Bailey (1975) for a discussion of the distinction and its bearing on teaching. See also Cooling (1990) for his view of 'committed impartiality'.

16 See Chapter 4, note 16 for my view on the establishment of voluntary aided schools for Muslims and other religious groups.

17 Section 8 [3] requires that new local agreed syllabuses for religious education 'shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.

18 See Robson (1996) for a discussion of changes of Government policy in religious education in recent years.

19 The large scale withdrawal of pupils by Muslim parents in Bailey, in Kirklees Local Education Authority, was mainly due to the strong emphasis on teaching about Christianity in the the new local Agreed Syllabus which appeared in the wake of DFE Circular 1/94 (Anon 1995, 1996; Hull 1996c).

20 The Religious Education Council of England and Wales provides a forum for sharing information about religious education and for taking appropriate action on behalf of member bodies to promote the interests of RE nationally. Membership (which is not open to individuals) brings together a wide range of faith communities and organizations (including the British Humanist Association) with representatives of national religious education professional associations.

21 The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom was established to improve relations between people of different faiths. It acts as a central information and contact point, organizing seminars and linking national representative organizations from within the UK's faith communities with national interfaith bodies, educational bodies and local interfaith groups. Religious education is just one of the Network's many concerns.

References

- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1991) 'Writing Against Culture' in Richard G Fox (ed) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe (N.M.), School of American Research Press, 137-62.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1993) *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Anon (1995) 'Concero Over RE in Kirkloes', *British Muslims Monthly Survey*, III (12), 13.
- Anon (1996) 'RE Withdrawal Continues', *British Muslims Monthly Survey*, IV (5), 11.
- Asad, T (ed) (1973) *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, London, Ithaca Press.
- Ashenden, C (1995) *Christianity and the Primary School: The Contribution of Anthropology to Teaching about Christianity*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Brighton.
- Bailey, C (1975) 'Neutrality and Rationality in Teaching' in D Bridges and P Scrimshaw (eds) *Values and Authority in Teaching*, London, Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bailey, S H, Harris, D J and Jones, S L (1991) *Civil Liberties: Cases and Materials*, (3rd edn), London, Butterworth.
- Bakhtin, M (1981) 'Discourse in the Novel' in M Holquist (ed) *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 259-442.
- Ballard, R (ed) (1994) *Dezh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, London, Hurst and Co.
- Banks, M (1996) *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*, London, Routledge.
- Barker, M (1981) *The New Racism*, London, Junction Books.
- Barratt, M (1994a) *An Egg for Babcho*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barratt, M (1994b), *Lucy's Sunday*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barratt, M (1994c), *Something to Share*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barratt, M (1994d), *The Buddha's Birthday*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barratt, M (1994e), *The Seventh Day is Shabbat*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barratt, M and Price, J (1996a), *Meeting Christians: Book One*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barratt, M and Price, J (1996b), *Teacher's Resource Book: Meeting Christians: Book One*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Barth, F (ed) (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, London, Allen and Unwin.
- Barth, F (1981) 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries' in Fredrik Barth, *Process and Form in Social Life: Selected Essays*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Barth, F (1994) 'A Personal View of Present Tasks and Priorities in Cultural and Social Anthropology' in R Borofsky (ed) *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, New York, McGraw Hill, 349-61.
- Barth, F (1996) 'How Features of the Encompassing Society Set Parameters for Local Multiculturalism', Unpublished Paper, Conference on 'Multicultural Competence: a Resource for Tomorrow', Høgskolen i Bergen, August.
- Bates, D (1994) 'Christianity, Culture and Other Religions (Part One): The Origins of the Study of World Religions in English Education', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 17 (1), 5-18.
- Bates, D (1996) 'Christianity, Culture and Other Religions (Part Two): F H Hilliard, Ninian Smart and the 1988 Education Reform Act', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 18 (2), 85-102.
- Baumann, G. (1990) 'The Re-Invention of Bhangra: Social Change and Aesthetic Shifts in a Punjabi Music in Britain', *The World of Music: Journal of the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies and Documentation* (Berlin), 32 (2), 81-97.
- Baumann, G (1996) *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Benedict, R (1935) *Patterns of Culture*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bennett, O (1984) *Exploring Religion* series, London, Bell and Hyman.
- Berger, G (1957) 'Religion' in *Encyclopédie Française*, Vol XIX.
- Bolton, A (1997) 'Should Religious Education Foster National Consciousness?', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 19 (3).
- Brenemann, W L et al (1982) *The Seeing Eye: Hermeneutical Phenomenology in the Study of Religion*, University Park, Pennsylvania State Press.
- Brown, A (ed) (1986) *Festivals in World Religions*, London, Longman.
- Burn, J and Hart, C (1988) *The Crisis in Religious Education*, London, Educational Research Trust.
- Bushnell, H (1967) *Christian Nurture*, New Haven, Yale University Press (first published 1847).
- Callaway, Helen (1992) 'Ethnography and Experience: Gender Implications in Fieldwork and Texts' in Okely, J and Callaway, H (eds) *Anthropology and Autobiography*, London, Routledge, 28-49.
- Carrithers, M (1992) *Why Humans Have Cultures*, Oxford University Press.
- Castles, S and Kosack, G (1973) *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, London, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations.
- Champion, S G and Short, D (1951) *Reading from World Religions*, London, Watts.
- Chatepéc de la Saussaye, P (1891) *Manual of the Science of Religion* (ET of *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, Freiburg, 1887).
- Chidester, D (1996) 'Man, God, Beast, Heaven, Light, Burning Fire', Unpublished Paper, Utrecht International Research Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Education, September.
- Chidester, D, Mitchell, G et al (1992) *Religion in Public Education: Policy Options for a New South Africa*, Cape Town, Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa.
- Clifford, James (1986) 'Introduction: Partial Truths' in J Clifford and G Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1-26.
- Clifford, James (1988) *The Predicament of Culture*, Cambridge (Mass), Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, James and Marcus, George (eds) (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Cohen, Anthony (ed) (1982a) *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Cohen, Anthony (1982b) 'Belonging: the Experience of Culture' in Anthony Cohen (ed) *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Cohen, Anthony (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Cohen, Anthony (ed) (1986) *Symbolizing Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Cole, M (1992) 'British Values, Liberal Values or Values of Justice and Equality: Three Approaches to Education in Multicultural Britain' in J Lynch, C Modgil and S Modgil (eds) *Cultural Diversity and the Schools: Equity or Excellence? Education and Cultural Reproduction*, London, Falmer Press.
- Cole, W O (1972a) *Religion in the Multifaith School* (1st edn), Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations.
- Cole, W O (ed) (1972b) *World Religions: Aids for Teachers*, London, Community Relations Commission.
- Cole, W O (ed) (1976) *World Religions: A Handbook for Teachers*, London, Community Relations Commission.
- Cole, W O (1985) *Six Religions in the Twentieth Century*, Amersham, Hulton.
- Collins, P (1996) 'Plaining': The Social and Cognitive Practice of Symbolisation in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 11 (3), 277-88.
- Connolly, C (1992) 'Religious Schools: Refuge or Redoubt?' in M Leicester and M Taylor (eds), *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education*, London, Kogan Page, 137-45.
- Cooling, T (1990) 'Evangelicals and Modern Religious Education' in L Francis and A Thatcher (eds) *Christian Perspectives for Education*, Leominster, Gracewing, 243-52.
- Cooling, T (1994) *A Christian Vision for State Education*, London, SPCK.
- Coombs, A (1988) 'Diluting the Faith', *Education*, 26 August.
- Cox, Edwin (1966) *Changing Aims in Religious Education*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Cox, Edwin (1983) *Problems and Possibilities for Religious Education*, London, Hodder and Stoughton.
- Crapanzano, Victor (1980) *Tuhani, Portrait of a Moroccan*, University of Chicago Press.
- Crapanzano, Victor (1986) 'Hermes' Dilemma: the Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description' in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 51-76.
- Dashefsky, A (1972) 'And the Search Goes On: Religio-Ethnic Identity and Identification', *Sociological Analysis*, 33 (4), 239-45.
- DFE (1994) *Religious Education and Collective Worship*, Circular 1/94, London, Department for Education.
- Desai, R (1963) *Indian Immigrants in Britain*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Donald, J and Rattansi, A (eds) (1992) *Race, Culture and Difference*, London, Sage.

- Dumont, L. (1970) *Homo Hierarchicus*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Dwyer, Kevin (1982) *Moroccan Dialogues: Anthropology in Question*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.
- Edgar, L I (1952) *Co-operation Between World Religions*, London, Lindsey.
- Eliade, Mircea (1958) *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, New York, Sheed and Ward.
- Ellis, R (1997) 'Revelation, Wisdom and Learning from Religion: a Response to D G Atfield', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 19 (2), 95-103.
- Erricker, C, Brown, A, Hayward, M, Kadodwala, D and Williams, P (eds) (1993) *Teaching World Religions*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Erricker, C, Erricker, J, Ota, C, Sullivan, D, with Fletcher, M (1997) *The Education of the Whole Child*, London, Cassell.
- Evans, G R (1980) *Anselm and a New Generation*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward E (1961) *Anthropology and History*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward E (1962a) 'Religion and the Anthropologists' in Edward Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology and Other Essays*, Glencoe (Illinois), The Free Press, 155-71.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward E (1962b) *Social Anthropology and Other Essays*, Glencoe (Illinois), The Free Press.
- Everington, J (1993a) 'Bridging Fieldwork and Classwork: The Development of Curriculum Materials within the Religious Education and Community Project', *Resource*, 16 (1), 7-10.
- Everington, J (1993b) 'The Relationship Between Research and Teaching within Teacher Education: An Account of Recent Work within the Religious Education and Community Project', *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 14 (2), 6-8.
- Everington, J (1996a) 'A Question of Authenticity: The Relationship Between Educators and Practitioners in the Representation of Religious Traditions', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 18 (2), 69-77.
- Everington, J (1996b) 'Trial by Teachers: The Warwick RE Project's Experiences of Trialling Key Stage One Curriculum Materials', *Resource*, 18 (3), 13-17.
- Everington, J (1996c) *Meeting Christians: Book Two*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Everington, J (1996d) *Teacher's Resource Book: Meeting Christians: Book Two*, 'Bridges to Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Finegan, J (1952) *The Archaeology of World Religions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Fischer, Michael M J (1986) 'Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory' in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds) (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 194-233.
- Fitzgerald, T (1990) 'Hinduism and the "World Religion" Fallacy', *Religion*, 20, 101-18.
- Flanagan, K (1996) *The Enchantment of Sociology: A Study of Theology and Culture*, London, Macmillan.
- Foucault, M (1971) *Madness and Civilization*, London, Tavistock (French edn 1961).
- Francis, E K (1976) *Inverethnic Relations*, New York, Elsevier.
- Geertz, Clifford (1960) *The Religion of Java*, Glencoe (Illinois), The Free Press.
- Geertz, Clifford (1963) *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, Glencoe (Illinois), The Free Press.
- Geertz, Clifford (1968) *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, Chicago, The University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford (1983) *Local Knowledge*, New York, Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford (1988) *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Gerth, H H and Mills, C W (eds) (1991) 'The Nation' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London, Routledge.
- Geuijen, Karin (1992) 'Postmodernisme in de Antropologie', *Antropologische Verkenningen* 11 (1), 17-36.
- Giddens, A (1993) *Sociology*, (2nd edn) Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Gillespie, M (1989) 'Technology and Tradition: Audio-Visual Culture among South Asian Families in West London', *Cultural Studies*, 3 (2), 226-39.
- Gillespie, M (1995) *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*, London, Routledge.
- Gilliat, S (forthcoming) 'Back to Basics: The Place of Islam in the Self-Identity of Young British Muslims' in P Clarke (ed), *New Trends and Movements in the World of Islam*, London, Luzak Oriental.
- Glinert, L (1985) *Aspects of British Judaism*, London, Extramural Division, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Gooderham, D W (1983) 'Dialogue and Emancipation: New Horizons in the Development of Religious Education?', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 5 (2), 59-66.
- Gooderham, D W (1994) 'Participation and Distanciation: Contemporary Children's and Adolescent Literature in Religious Education' *British Journal of Religious Education*, 16 (3), 164-73.

- Grimmitt, M (1981) 'When is "Commitment" a Problem in RE?' *British Journal of Educational Studies* 29 (1), 42-53.
- Grimmitt, M (1982) 'World Religions and Personal Development' in R Jackson (ed) *Approaching World Religions*, London, John Murray.
- Grimmitt, M (1987) *Religious Education and Human Development: The Relationship Between Studying Religions and Personal, Social and Moral Education*, Great Wakering, McCrimmons.
- Grimmitt, M (1994) 'Religious Education and the Ideology of Pluralism', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 16 (3), 133-47.
- Groome, T (1980) *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*, San Francisco, Harper and Row.
- Haakedal, E (1996) 'Narrative, Aesthetics and Ritual in Religious Education', Unpublished Paper, International Seminar on Religious Education and Values, Los Angeles, University of Judaism, August.
- Habermas, J (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London, Heinemann.
- Hall, Stuart (1992) 'The Question of Cultural Identity' in S Hall, D Held and T McGrew (eds) *Modernity and Its Futures*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Halsstead, J M (1986) *The Case for Muslim Voluntary Aided Schools: Some Philosophical Reflections*, Cambridge, Islamic Academy.
- Harvey, David (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Hastings, J (ed) (1998) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (13 vols), Edinburgh, T and T Clark.
- Heiler, J (1961) *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion (The Manifestations and Essence of Religion)*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer.
- Hilliard, F H (1943) 'A History of Religions in the Divinity Syllabus', *Religion in Education*, 10 (3), 77-80.
- Hilliard, F H (1945) 'The Non-Christian Religions and the Religion of the Future', *The Modern Churchman*, 34, 10-12.
- Hilliard, F H (1961) *Teaching Children About World Religions*, London, Harrap.
- Hinnells, J R (ed) (1970) *Comparative Religion in Education*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Oriel Press.
- Hocking, W E (1940) *Living Religions and a World Faith*, London, Allen and Unwin.
- Hull, J M (1982) 'Open Minds and Empty Hearts?' in R Jackson (ed) *Approaching World Religions*, London, John Murray, 101-10.
- Hull, J M (1984) *Studies in Religion and Education*, Lewes, Falmer.
- Hull, J M (1991) *Mish Mash: Religious Education in Multi-Cultural Britain: A Study in Metaphor*, Birmingham Papers in Religious Education, Christian Education Movement, Derby.
- Hull, J M (1996a) 'Freedom and Authority in Religious Education' in B E Gates (ed) *Freedom and Authority in Religions and Religious Education*, London, Cassell, 97-111.
- Hull, J M (1996b) 'A Gift to the Child: A New Pedagogy for Teaching Religion to Young Children', *Religious Education*, 91 (2), 172-88.
- Hull, J M (1996c) 'Muslims in RE: What's Going On?' *Resource*, 18 (3), 10-11.
- Hulmes, E (1988) 'Christian Education in a Multi-cultural Society' in V McClelland (ed), *Christian Education in a Pluralist Society*, London, Routledge.
- Hulmes, E (1989) *Education and Cultural Diversity*, London, Longman.
- Husserl, E (1931) *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, New York, Macmillan (German edn 1913).
- Husserl, E (1970) *Logical Investigations* (2 vols), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul (German edn *Logische Untersuchungen* 1900-1).
- Hylland Eriksen, T (1992) *Us and Them in Modern Societies: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Mauritius, Trinidad and Beyond*, London, Scandinavian University Press.
- Hylland Eriksen, T (1993) 'In Which Sense Do Cultural Islands Exist?' *Social Anthropology* 1, 133-47.
- Hylland Eriksen, T (1994) *Kulturelle Veikryss: Essays om Kveolisering*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget.
- Jackson, R (ed) (1982a) *Approaching World Religions*, London, John Murray.
- Jackson, R (1982b) 'Commitment and the Teaching of World Religions' in R Jackson (ed), *Approaching World Religions*, London, John Murray, 89-100.
- Jackson, R (1984) 'The Concerns of Religious Education and the Characterization of Hinduism', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 6 (3), 141-6.
- Jackson, R (1987) 'Religious Education - A Middle Way?' in A Brown (ed), *The Shap Handbook on World Religions in Education*, London, Commission for Racial Equality, 17-19.
- Jackson, R (1989a) *Religious Through Festivals: Hinduism*, London, Longman.
- Jackson, R (1989b) 'Hinduism: from Ethnographic Research to Curriculum Development in Religious Education', *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values*, 1 (2), 59-77.

- Jackson, R (1989c) 'Religious Education: From Ethnographic Research to Curriculum Development' in J Campbell and V Little (eds), *Humanities in the Primary School*, Leves, Falmer, 171-91.
- Jackson, R (1990) 'Children as Ethnographers' in R Jackson and D Starkings (eds) *The Junior RE Handbook*, Cheltenham, Stanley Thornes, 202-7.
- Jackson, R (1992) 'The Misrepresentation of Religious Education', in M Leicester and M Taylor (eds), *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education*, London, Kogan Page, 100-13.
- Jackson, R (1993) 'Religious Education and the Arts of Interpretation' in D Starkings (ed) *Religion and the Arts in Education: Dimensions of Spirituality*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 157-66.
- Jackson, R (1994) 'Ethnography and Religious Education: A Research Report', *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values*, 6 (1), 115-30.
- Jackson, R (1996a) 'Ethnographic Research and Curriculum Development' in L J Francis, W K Kay and W S Campbell (eds) *Research in Religious Education*, Leominster, Gracewing, 145-62.
- Jackson, R (1996b) 'The Construction of "Hinduism" and its Impact on Religious Education in England and Wales', *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values*, 8 (1).
- Jackson, R, Barratt, M and Everington, J (1994) *Bridges to Religions: Teacher's Resource Book, The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Jackson, R and Killingley, D (1988) *Approaches to Hinduism*, London, John Murray.
- Jackson, R and Nesbitt, E M (1990) *Listening to Hindus*, London, Unwin Hyman.
- Jackson, R and Nesbitt, E M (1992) 'The Diversity of Experience in the Religious Upbringing of Children from Christian Families in Britain', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 15 (1), 19-28.
- Jackson, R and Nesbitt, E M (1993) *Hindu Children in Britain*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham.
- Jackson, R and Nesbitt, E M (1996), 'Orthodoxy and Openness: The Experience of Hindu Children' in B E Gates (ed) *Freedom and Authority in Religions and Religious Education*, London, Cassell, 138-48.
- Jacobson, J (1996) 'Perceptions of Britishness', Unpublished Paper, Conference on 'Multicultural Competence: A Resource for Tomorrow', Høgskolen i Bergen, August.
- Jacobson, J (1997) 'Religion and Ethnicity: Dual and Alternative Sources of Identity Among Young British Pakistanis', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20 (2), 238-256.
- James, E O (1938) *Comparative Religion: An Introductory and Historical Study*, London, Methuen.
- Johns, E L (ed) (1985) *Religious Education Belongs in the Public Schools: Theory for a Multi-cultural, Inter-faith approach*, Toronto, Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education.
- Jones, R M (1920) 'Secularism' in J Hastings (ed) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, T and T Clark, Vol 11, 347-51.
- Knott, K (1986) *Hinduism in Leeds*, Monograph Series, Community Religions Project, University of Leeds.
- Knott, K (1991) 'Bound to Change? The Religions of South Asians in Britain' in S Vertovec (ed) *Oxford University Papers on India*, Vol 2 (2): *The Modern Western Diaspora*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 86-111.
- Kristensen W B (1960) *The Meaning of Religion*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff (ET of *Religionshistorisk Studium*, Oslo, 1954).
- Kritzeck, J (1964) *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, Princeton University Press.
- Lamphere, L (1987) 'Feminism and Anthropology: The Struggle to Reshape Our Thinking about Gender' in C Farnham (ed), *The Impact of Feminist Research in the Academy*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Leach, E (1982) *Social Anthropology*, Glasgow, Collins (Fontana).
- Leeuw, G van der (1926) 'Ueber einige neuere Ergebnisse der psychologischen Forschung und ihre Anwendung auf die Geschichte, insonderheit die Religionsgeschichte' *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, 2 (1) 1-43.
- Leeuw, G van der (1938) *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, London, Allen and Unwin.
- Leicester, M (1992) 'Antiracism versus the New Multiculturalism: Moving beyond the Interminable Debate' in J Lynch, C Modgil and S Modgil (eds), *Cultural Diversity and the Schools: Equity or Excellence? Education and Cultural Reproduction*, London, Falmer.
- Lewis, J (1958) *The Religions of the World Made Simple*, New York, Garden City Books.
- Loukes, H (1961) *Teenage Religion*, London, SCM Press.
- McIntyre, J (1978) *Multi-Culture and Multi-faith Societies: Some Examinable Assumptions*, Occasional Papers, Oxford, Farmington Institute for Christian Studies.
- McKenzie, Peter (1988) *The Christians*, London, SPCK.
- McLaughlin, T H (1992) 'The Ethics of Separate Schools' in M Leicester and M Taylor (eds) *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education*, London, Kogan Page, 114-36.
- Marcus, G (ed) (1992) *Re-Reading Cultural Anthropology*, Durham and London, Duke University Press.

- Marcus, G (1986) 'Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System' in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 165-93.
- Marvell, John (1973) *The Religious Beliefs and Moral Values of Immigrant Children*, Unpublished MEd thesis, University of Leicester.
- Marvell, John (1975) 'The Formation of Religious Belief in a Multi-Racial Community', *Learning for Living*, 15 (1), 17-23.
- Marvell, John (1976) 'Phenomenology and the Future of Religious Education', *Learning for Living*, 16 (1), 4-8.
- Mayled, John (1986a) *Family Life*, 'Religious Topics' series, London, Wayland.
- Mayled, John (1986b) *Religious Buildings*, 'Religious Topics' series, London, Wayland.
- Mercier, Carrie (1996) *Muslims*, 'Interpreting Religions' series, *The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Milot, Micheline and Ouellet, Fernand (eds) (1997) *Religion, Education et Démocratie: Un Enseignement Culturel de la Religion est-il Possible?* Montreal, L'Harmattan.
- Mitchell, G, Mnende, N, Phiri, J A and Sconies, J (1993) *The End of the Tunnel: Religion Education for a Non-Racial South Africa*, Cape Town, Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa.
- Modood, T (1992) 'On Not Being White in Britain: Discrimination, Diversity and Commonality' in M Leicester and M Taylor (eds), *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education*, London, Kogan Page, 72-87.
- Mol, Hans (1979) 'Theory and Data on the Religious Behaviour of Migrants', *Social Compass*, 26 (1), 31-9.
- Moore, Basil and Habel, Norman (1982) *When Religion Goes to School: Typology of Religion for the Classroom*, Adelaide, South Australian College of Advanced Education.
- Moore, H L (1988) *Feminism and Anthropology*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Morgen, S (ed) (1989) *Gender and Anthropology: Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching*, Washington DC, American Anthropological Association.
- Mullard, C (1984) *Anti-Racist Education: The Three O's*, Cardiff, National Association for Multiracial Education.
- Myerhoff B (1978) *Number Our Days*, New York, Simon and Shuster.
- Naylor, F (1989) *Deusbury: The School Above the Pub: A Case Study in Multicultural Education*, London, The Claridge Press in association with the Educational Research Trust.
- Nesbitt, E M (1990) 'Religion and Identity: The Valmiki Community in Coventry', *New Community*, 16 (2), 261-74.
- Nesbitt, E M (1991) *My Dad's Hindu, My Mum's Side are Sikh: Issues in Religious Identity, Arts, Culture, Education* Research Papers, Coventry, National Foundation for Arts Education.
- Nesbitt, E M (1992) 'Photographing Worship: Issues Raised by Ethnographic Study of Children's Participation in Acts of Worship', *Visual Anthropology*, 5 (3), 285-306.
- Nesbitt, E. (1993a) 'Drawing on the Ethnic Diversity of Christian Tradition in Britain', *Multicultural Teaching*, 11 (2), 9-12.
- Nesbitt, E M (1993b) 'Children and the World to Come: The Views of Children Aged Eight to Fourteen on Life After Death', *Religion Today*, 8 (3), 10-13.
- Nesbitt, E M (1993c) 'The Transmission of Christian Tradition in an Ethnically Diverse Society', in Rohit Barot (ed), *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis*, Kampen (The Netherlands), Kok Pharos, 156-69.
- Nesbitt, E M (1994) 'Valmiki in Coventry: The Revival and Reconstruction of a Community' in R Ballard (ed), *Deob Parades: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, London, Hurst and Co, 117-41.
- Nesbitt, E M (1995a) 'Celebrating and Learning: The Perpetuation of Values and Practices among Hindu Punjabi Children in Coventry, UK', *Indo-British Review*, 20 (2), 119-31.
- Nesbitt, E M (1995b) *The Religious Lives of Sikh Children in Coventry*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick.
- Nesbitt, E M (1995c) 'Punjabis in Britain: Cultural History and Cultural Choices', *South Asia Research*, 15 (2), 221-40.
- Nesbitt, E M (1995d) 'Many Happy Returns: Some British South Asian Children's Birthday Parties', *Multicultural Teaching*, 4 (1), 34-5, 40.
- Nesbitt, E M (1997a) "'Splashed with Goodness": The Many Meanings of Amrit for Young British Sikhs', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 12 (1), 17-33.
- Nesbitt, E M (1997b) "'Sikhs and Proper Sikhs": Young British Sikhs' Perceptions of Their Identity', in P Singh and N G Barrier (eds), *Sikh Identity: Continuity and Change*, Delhi, Manohar.
- Nesbitt E M and Jackson R (1992) 'Christian and Hindu Children: Their Perceptions of Each Other's Religious Traditions', *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 5 (2), 39-62.
- Nesbitt, E M and Jackson, R (1993) 'Aspects of Cultural Transmission in a Diaspora Sikh Community', *Journal of Sikh Studies*, 18 (1), 52-66.

- Nesbitt, E M and Jackson, R (1995) 'Sikh Children's Use of "God": Ethnographic Fieldwork and Religious Education', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 17 (2), 108-20.
- Oberoi, H (1994) *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Østberg, S (1996) 'Religious Education in a Multicultural Society: The Quest for Identity and Dialogue', Unpublished Paper, International Research Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Education, University of Utrecht, Netherlands, September.
- Østberg, S (1997) 'The Religious Nurture of Muslim Children in Oslo', Unpublished Paper, Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit Seminar, January.
- Otto, R (1959) *The Idea of the Holy*, Harmondsworth, Pelican.
- Oxtoby, W G (ed) (1976) *Religious Diversity: Essays by Wilfred Cantwell Smith*, New York, Harper and Row.
- Palmer, G (1993) 'Politics and Religious Education', *Resource*, 16 (1), 2-6.
- Palmer, G (1994) 'Religious Education: Over to You!', *Resource*, 17 (1), 2-5.
- Parekh, B (1995a) 'Introduction' *New Community*, 21 (2), 147-51.
- Parekh, B (1995b) 'The Concept of National Identity' *New Community*, 21 (2), 255-68.
- Parrinder, E G (1963) *What World Religions Teach*, London, Harrap.
- Faton, William (1916) *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions*, London, United Council For Missionary Education.
- Personal Narratives Group (eds) (1989) *Interpreting Women's Lives*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Rabinow, Paul (1977) *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Rabinow, Paul (1986) 'Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology' in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 234-61.
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred (1958) *Method in Social Anthropology*, University of Chicago Press.
- Rex, J (1985) *The Concept of a Multi-Cultural Society*, Occasional Papers No 3, University of Warwick, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations.
- Ricoeur, Paul (1971) 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text', *Social Research*, 38, 529-62.
- Ricoeur, Paul (1973) 'Ethics and Culture', *Philosophy Today*, 17, 153-65.
- Robinson, E and Lealman, B (1980) *The Image of Life*, London, CEM.
- Robson, G (1995) *Christians, 'Interpreting Religions' series, The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Robson, G (1996) 'Religious Education, Government Policy and Professional Practice, 1988-95', *British Journal of Religious Education* 19 (1), 13-23.
- Said, E (1978) *Orientalism*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Said, E (1981) *Covering Islam*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Said, E (1989) 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors', *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (2), 205-25.
- Said, E (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*, London, Chatto and Windus.
- SCAA (1994a) *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education: Model 1: Living Faiths Today*, London, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- SCAA (1994b) *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education: Model 2: Questions and Teaching*, London, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- SCAA (1994c) *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education: Faith Communities' Working Group Report*, London, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- Schools Council (1971) *Religious Education in Secondary Schools, Schools Council Working Paper 36*, London, Evans/Methuen.
- Scruton, R, Ellis-Jones, A and O'Keefe, D (1985) *Education and Indoctrination*, London, Education Research Centre.
- Sharpe, E (1975a) 'The Phenomenology of Religion', *Learning for Living*, 15 (1), 4-9.
- Sharpe, E (1975b) *Comparative Religion: A History*, London, Duckworth.
- Sholte, B (1972) 'Toward a Critical and Reflexive Anthropology', in D Hymes (ed) *Reinventing Anthropology*, New York, Pantheon Books.
- Skeie, G (1995) 'Plurality and Pluralism: A Challenge for Religious Education', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 17 (2), 84-91.
- Smart, N (1960) *A Dialogue of Religions*, London, SCM Press.
- Smart, N (1964) *The Teacher and Christian Belief*, Edinburgh, James Clarke.
- Smart, N (1966) *World Religions: A Dialogue*, Harmondsworth, Pelican.
- Smart, N (1967) 'A New Look at Religious Studies: The Lancaster Idea', *Learning for Living*, 7 (1), 27-29.
- Smart, N (1968) *Secular Education and the Logic of Religion*, London, Faber and Faber.

- Smart, N (1971) *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, London, Fontana (US edn 1969).
- Smart, N (1989) *The World's Religions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, A D (1991) *National Identity*, London, Penguin.
- Smith, W C (1978) *The Meaning and End of Religion*, London, SPCK.
- Smith, W C (1981) *Towards a World Theology*, London, Macmillan.
- Spiegelberg, F (1957) *Living Religions of the World*, London, Thames and Hudson (also Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall).
- Spradley, J (1980) *Participant Observation*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Starkings, D (1982) 'Pluralism and Truth in Religious Education' in R Jackson (ed) *Approaching World Religions*, London, John Murray.
- Sunderland (1960) *Syllabus of Religious Instruction*, County Borough of Sunderland Education Committee, London, University of London Press.
- Swann, M (1985) *Report of the Committee of Inquiry Into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*, London, HMSO.
- Tajfel, H (1978) 'Interindividual Behaviour and Intergroup Behaviour' in H Tajfel (ed), *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, London, Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H (1981) *Human Groups and Social Categories*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Tate, N (1995) 'Cultural Identity and Education', Address to Shropshire Secondary Heads Conference, 13 July, London, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- Troyna, B (1983) 'Multiracial Education: Just Another Brick in the Wall?', *New Community* 10, 424-8.
- Troyna, B and Carrington B (1990) *Education, Racism and Reform*, London, Routledge.
- Turner, Victor (1967) *The Forest of Symbols*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Turner, Victor (1969) *The Ritual Process*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Turner, Victor (1978) 'Foreword' in B Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, New York, Simon and Shuster, xiii-xvii.
- Tyler, Stephen A (1986) 'Post-modern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document' in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 122-40.
- Tyler, E B (1871) *Primitive Culture* (2 vols), London, John Murray.
- UK Government (1988) *Education Reform Act*, London, HMSO.
- Waardenburg, J (1970) *L'Islam dans le Miroir de l'Occident*, The Hague, Mouton.
- Waardenburg, J (1972) 'Un Débat Coranique contre les Polythéistes' in *Ex Orbe Religionum: Studia Geo Widengren*, Vol 2, Leiden, Brill.
- Waardenburg, J (ed) (1973) *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Vol 1, The Hague, Mouton.
- Waardenburg, J (1978) *Reflections on the Study of Religion*, The Hague, Mouton.
- Warren, M (1993) 'Religious Education and the Task of Cultural Critique', *Religious Education*, 88 (1), 68-79.
- Watson, C W (1992) 'Autobiography, Anthropology and the Experience of Indonesia' in J Okely and H Callaway (eds) *Anthropology and Autobiography* London, Routledge, 134-46.
- Watson, G (1990) *The Report of the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Public Elementary Schools*, Toronto, Government of Ontario.
- Wayne, E, Everington, J, Kadodwala, D and Nesbitt, E (1996) *Hindus, 'Interpreting Religions' series, The Warwick RE Project*, Oxford, Heinemann.
- Webb, Jennifer (1992) 'Debating Muslims and the Legacy of Writing Culture', *Social Analysis*, 32, 71-86.
- Weisse, Wolfram (ed) (1996) *Interreligious and Intercultural Education: Methodologies, Conceptions and Pilot Projects in South Africa, Namibia, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany*, Münster, Comenius Institut.
- West Riding (1947) *Syllabus of Religious Instruction*, County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire Education Department.
- Widengren, G (1945) *Religionens Varld*, Stockholm.
- Wigley, B and Pitcher, R (1969) *From Fear to Faith*, London, Longman.
- Wilkins, R (1991) 'How Can an Evangelical Christian Teach Multi-Faith RE?', *Resource*, 13 (3), 1-3.
- Wittgenstein, L (1958) *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Wood, A (ed), *Religions and Education: The Sharp Working Party 1969-1989*, London, British and Foreign Schools Society.
- Woodward, P (1991) 'The Jewishness of Jews - What the Textbooks Don't Tell You', *Resource*, 14 (1), 5-7.
- Woodward, P (1992) 'Jewish Children Under the Camera: An Ethnographic Study of Jewish Children in Britain', *Visual Anthropology*, 5 (3), 307-30.

- Woodward, P (1993) *Jewish Children in an English City*, Unpublished Report, Religious Education and Community Project, University of Warwick.
- Wright, A (1993) *Religious Education in the Secondary School: Prospects for Religious Literacy*, London, David Fulton.
- Wright, A (1996) 'Postmodernism and Religious Education: A Reply to Liam Gearon', *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 17 (1), 19-25.

Index

- Anglicists 56-7
- anthropology 24, 28, 30-48, 130
and culture 79-82
history of 30-2
interpretive 27, 30, 32-8, 40, 46-7
critics of 41-3
and religious education 31-2, 46-7
see also ethnography
- antiracists, criticisms of multiculturalism 74-5
- Augustine, Saint 51
- Ballard, Roger 82
- Barth, Fredrik 81-2, 84
- beliefs
Christian children 100
Muslim children 103
- Benedict, Ruth 79-80
- Berger, Gaston 13-14
- Boas, Franz 79
- Brentano, Franz 14
- British national identity 86-7, 88
- Burn, John 11-12, 76, 122
- Butler, Joseph 52
- Calvin, John 51, 60
- Chantepie de la Saussaye, Pierre 16
- Cherbury, Lord Herbert of 52
- Christian children 98-100
- Christian theology
and the concept of world religion 54-5
and phenomenology 18-19, 21, 26
- Christianity 50
and the concept of religion 51-3
and cultural development 78-9
membership groups 64
and multiculturalism 76-8
naming 58
and religious education 72, 78-9, 137-8
- 'Christians', use of term 58
- classification, and phenomenology 15-19
- Clifford, James 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 81, 135
- Cohen, Anthony 80-1, 88, 90
- colonialism, and anthropology 31
- community, Smith's concept of 63, 64
- comparative religion 127
- confessional approach to religious education 2, 4, 9, 141
- conversational approach to religious education 139-40
- cosmic hierophanies 17-18
- Cox, Edwin, 9, 10-11, 13, 73
- Crapanzano, Vincent 38, 40, 41-3, 44, 45
- critical distance 125, 127-30
- cultural identity 78, 83
- cultural racism 138-9
- cultural recognition, and multi-faith religious education 123-4
- cultural relativism 77, 79-80, 82
- cultural symbols 80-1
- cultures 72-94
'circles' model of 89-90
debates about in social anthropology 79-82
and ethnicity 83-6
national culture 76
and national identity 78, 86-8, 91, 95
and religion 72
and religious education 47, 49, 88, 91-2, 138-9
see also multiculturalism
- cumulative tradition 61, 62, 63, 64
- deconstructive ethnography 38-40, 47
- Deist movement 52
- Dilthey, William 19, 20, 24, 33
- Donald, J 84
- Durkheim, E 31
- Dwyer, Kevin 38, 40, 43, 44
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 5
- edification 6, 47, 130-1
and learning from religion 131-2
and religio-cultural background 132-4
in the Warwick RE project 111-12, 116
- Education Reform Act (1988) 1, 50, 78, 113, 133, 141
- eideta*, in phenomenology 15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 26
- eidetic reduction, in phenomenology 15, 20
- Eliade, Mircea 16, 17-18
- empathy
in phenomenology 20-1, 22, 24
and religious education 46
- epoché*, in phenomenology 19, 21-2, 25
- Erikson, Thomas Hylland 82, 90

- essences
in phenomenology 15, 17, 23–4
of religion 53, 69
- ethnic minorities
and British national identity 86–7
Christian children 99
and the private domain 89
and the radical right 63, 69, 74, 76, 83, 138–9
South Asians in Britain 2–3, 72, 82, 87
- ethnicity
attacks on idea of 84
and culture 83–6
'hyphenated' ethnic identities 85, 87
and memberships groups 65
and multi-faith religious education 122, 123
and shared ancestry 85–6
situational character of 84, 85
- ethnographic studies 96–104
Christian children 98–100
Hindu children 97–8
Jewish children 102–3
Muslim children 103–4
Sikh children 101–2
- ethnography 4, 5, 32–48
deconstructive 38–40, 47
'dialogic' and 'polyphonic' in 40, 43, 44–5
'experience-near' and 'experience-distant' concepts 34–6, 111
inscription of action in 33–4
and Orientalism 57
and religious education 45–7
- Evangelical Christians, move for separate schooling 91–2
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward 31, 32
- evolutionary structure, in religious education 31
- 'experience-near' and 'experience-distant' concepts 34–6, 111
- faith, and tradition 60–5, 79
- faith communities 3–4, 5
- Feuerbach, Ludwig, *The Essences of Religion* 53
- Ficino, Marsilio, 51, 60
- Fitzgerald, Timothy 54–5
- Flanagan, Kieran 122–4, 125
- Foucault, Michel 56
- Frick, Heinrich 16, 17, 21
- Geertz, Clifford 28, 30, 32–8, 39, 40, 46, 62, 68
on culture 80, 82
'Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight' 41–3, 45
- gender
and deconstructive ethnography 40
and memberships groups 65
and Muslim children 104
- Glinert, Lewis 128
- globalization, and national identity 86
- grandparents, and Hindu children 97
- Grimmit, Michael 112, 131–2
- Grotius, Hugo 51–2
- Hart, Colin 11–12, 76, 122
- Harvey, David 89
- Hegel, G W F 53
- Heiler, Friedrich 16, 18, 21
- hermeneutic circle 24, 37, 62, 110
- hermeneutical phenomenology 19–21, 24
- hermeneutics
in interpretive anthropology 36–7, 38–9
and religious education 129, 135
- Hilliard, F H 53
- Hindu communities in Britain 3–4
- Hinduism
and cultural identity 83
and ethnicity 85
membership groups and identity 65, 66–9
naming 59
Orientalist and Anglicist views of 56–7
and religious education 98, 125
research on Hindu children 66–9, 97–8, 105
Sathya Sai Baba movement 66, 67, 68, 98
- Hull, J M 4, 13, 96
- Husserl, Edmund 7, 8, 14–15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26
- ideal types, in phenomenology 17, 23, 26
- ideological criticism, and religious education 131
- immigrants *see* ethnic minorities
- India, and British Orientalists 52
- 'individual agency' 84
- individuals
and cultures 79, 81–2
multiple cultural competence 83, 90, 139
tradition and membership groups (three-fold model) 65, 66–9, 76, 109, 110–11
- insiders, partnerships between professionals and 107–8, 132–4
- intentional theory of the mind 14–15
- Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom 141
- interpretive anthropology 27, 30, 32–8, 40
critics of 41–3
and religious education 46–7
- interpretive approach 6, 24, 121–3
and critical distance 129–30
criticisms of 122–8
and the Warwick RE Project 110–11, 113

- Islam 28
naming 58–9
and 'new style' phenomenology 26–7
- Jacobson, Jessica 85, 87
- James, E O 53
- Jerome, St 51
- Jewish children 102–3, 128
- Jones, Sir William 56
- Killingley, Dermot 127
- Kristensen, William Brede 16, 17, 19, 25
- Lancaster Schools Council Project 7–9, 10
- Leach, Edmund 30
- learning from religion 131–2
- Leeuw, Gerardus van der 8, 10, 17, 19–21, 22–3, 24, 25, 26
- Leicester University 9–10
- literary theory
and deconstructive ethnography 39–40
and the portrayal of cultures 81
- Local Authority Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education 41
- Loukes, Harold 134
- McIntyre, John 76–8, 79, 80, 82, 88, 89–90
- McKenzie, Peter 12, 15, 18
- Mead, Margaret 78
- media, and the formation of culture 81
- membership groups 63, 64–5, 72
individuals and tradition (threefold model) 65–9, 76, 109, 110–11
- morphological phenomenology 15, 18
- multiculturalism 72, 91
and anti-racism 73–5
and Christianity 76–8
criticisms of 74–5
and ethnicity 84
and 'multiple cultural competence' 83, 90
nature of multicultural society 88–90
- multi-faith religious education 49, 73–6, 141
criticisms of 122–8
critics of 73, 76, 95
and reductionism 126–8
- music, empathy with religious experience compared with 20–1, 22
- Muslim children 102–4
- Muslims 9, 85, 91–2
- Myerhoff, Barbara 132–4
- names of religions 57–9
- national culture 76
- national identity
British 86–7, 88
and culture 78, 86–8, 91, 95
- natural religion 52
- Nesbitt, Eleanor 3, 64, 97
- 'new style' phenomenology 8, 25–7, 27–8
and interpretive anthropology 37–8
- nurture *see* religious nurture
- Orientalism, 52, 55–7, 59, 60
- Otto, Rudolph 24
- Pakistani Muslims in Britain, ethnic identity 85
- parents
Christian children 99
Hindu children 97
and religious education 136–7, 140
- Parrinder, Geoffrey 53
- Paton, William 53
- phenomenological reductionism 15
- phenomenology 7–29, 53
classificatory (empirical) approach to 15–19
and context 22–3, 27
critics of 10–14
and empathy 20–1, 22, 24, 46
essences in 15, 17, 23–4
hermeneutical 19–21, 24
'new style' 8, 25–7, 27–8, 37–8
philosophical 14–15, 21
and religious education 8–10, 49, 117
strengths 24–5
weaknesses 21–4
and world religions 127–8
- philosophical phenomenology 14–15, 21
- political context of religious education 138–41
- postmodernism
and deconstructive ethnography 38
and multicultural society 88–9
and national identity 86
- prayer
and Christian children 99
and Muslim children 103
- professionals, partnerships between insiders and 107–8, 134–6
- public/private domains, and multicultural society 89–90
- Rabinow, Paul 38, 44, 45
- racism, and multiculturalism 74–5
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred 31, 32
- radical right, and ethnic minority cultures 63, 69, 74, 76, 83, 138–9
- Rattansi, A 84

- reductionism 6
 multifaith religious education as 126–8
- reflexivity, ethnography and religious education 46–7
- reified concept of religion 52–3, 60
- relativism 6
 cultural 78, 79–80, 82
 multifaith religious education as 122–6
- religion
 concept of 50–3
 reified 52–3, 60
 and culture 72
 essence of 53, 69
 and membership groups 63, 64–5
 names of religions 57–9
 and natural religion 52
 world religions 49–50, 53–5, 69, 127–8
- Religious Education and Collective Worship* (Department for Education) 137
- Religious Education and Community Project 96–104
- Religious Education Council of England and Wales 40
- religious nurture
 and religious education 4, 75, 136
 studies of 96, 97
- 'revealed religion' 52
- Rex, John 89
- Ricoeur, Paul 33, 129
- Robinson, Edward 49
- Roman Catholics 65, 99, 100
- Rorty, Richard, 112, 130–1
- sacred symbols, and culture 80
- Said, Edward, 28, 38, 47, 63, 126
 and cultural criticism 80
Orientalism 55–7
- SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority)
 Model Syllabuses 50, 135
- Schleiermacher, F E D 52–3, 60
- schools, move for separate schooling 91–2
- Schools Council 8
- Schools Council Working Paper* 36, 9, 12
- secularism 53, 60, 139
- Shap Working Party on World Religions 54
- Sharpe, Eric 9
- signification systems, religious 27
- Sikh children, 101–2
- 'single faith' RE 9
- Smart, Ninian 2, 4, 8, 9, 18, 48, 73
 and the concept of world religions 53–4, 127
- Smith, William Cantwell 57, 68, 126
 on the concept of religion 50–2, 53
 criticisms of 62–4
 on faith and tradition 60–3, 64, 65
 on Islam 58–9
- social identity
 and culture 81–2, 83, 137
 and ethnicity 85
 and national identity 86
 Tajfel's theory of 65
- South Asians in Britain 2–3, 72, 82, 87
- Srinivas, M N 133
- Stewart, Colonel 59
- structural relations, in phenomenology 20
- Sunday schools 65, 99
- Swann Report, *Education for All* 9, 11–12, 74
- Tajfel, Henri 65
- Tate, Nicholas, 78, 79, 80, 82, 86
- teachers of religious education 135–6, 140
- thematic approach to religious education 12–13
- theology *see* Christian theology
- tradition
 and faith 60–5, 79
 individuals and membership groups (three-fold model) 66–9, 76, 109, 110–11
 and Jewish children 103
- Troyna, Barry 74
- truth, and phenomenology 13, 14
- Turner, Victor 43, 133
- Tylor, E B 31, 76, 79
- 'values education' 11
- Waardenburg, Jacques 8, 19, 28
 'new style' phenomenology 8, 25–7, 27–8, 37–8
- Warwick RE Project 92, 104–7, 125, 130, 140
 books 105, 108–9, 112–16
 key stage one 113–14
 key stage three 115–16
 key stage two 114–15
Teacher's Resource Book 113, 114, 115
- curriculum co-ordinator 106
- edification 111–12, 116
- ethnographers 106–7
- interpretive methods 110–11, 113
- representation issues 108–10
- role of 'insiders' 107–8, 134–5
- Weber, Max 19, 20
- Widengren, Geo 16, 17
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig 23
- world religions 49–50, 53–5, 69, 127–8
- worship
 Christian children, 99–100
 Sikh children 101
- Zwingli, H 51, 60

This book deals with fundamental issues for religious education:

- ◆ How far is it possible to understand someone else's religious position?
- ◆ By what techniques can religious data be understood or interpreted by outsiders?
- ◆ How should 'religions' be represented?
- ◆ What is the relationship between the religious traditions and the cultural life of modern Britain?
- ◆ Should RE deal primarily or even exclusively with developing an understanding of the symbols and practices of different religious traditions? Or should it go further in helping students to formulate their own religious positions?

It gives a constructive critique of phenomenological approaches, which have been common in religious education since the 1970s, arguing for an interpretive approach, drawing on ideas from anthropology and hermeneutics.

The discussions are related to curriculum development and the practice of religious education. They will be of interest to teachers and university students of RE and Religious Studies, as well as to teachers and scholars concerned with multicultural, intercultural and antiracist education.

Professor Robert Jackson is Director of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, Director of Graduate Studies in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick and Editor in Chief of the *British Journal of Religious Education*.

ISBN 0-340-68870-X



9 780340 688700

Hodder & Stoughton