Contents

Critical Commentary

The Student Journal of Newman College of Higher Education

GUIDELINES FOR POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Critical Commentary welcomes articles from undergraduate and postgraduate students which discuss topics of importance and interest from all subject areas of the College. Articles may be written from a variety of perspectives including education, philosophy, history, management, professional studies, psychology, sociology or theology.

Articles accepted for publication should not exceed 7,000 words including references. Critical Commentary will hold the copyright of the article if it is subsequently published. Articles should not have been sent to another journal for consideration.
Two copies of the article should be sent to:
Professor Stan Tucker
Editor, Critical Commentary:
The Student Journal of Newman College of Higher Education
Newman College, Genners Lane, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3NT
Phone: 0121 4761181 ext: 2296
Fax: 0121 4761196
Email: s.a.tucker@newman.ac.uk
Manuscripts that do not conform to the requirements listed below will not be considered for publication.

- Articles can only be considered if two complete copies of each manuscript are submitted. After an article has been accepted an electronic copy will be requested.
- The articles should be typed (font size 12 Tahoma) on one side of the paper, double line-spaced, with ample margins, and bear the title of the contribution, name(s) of the author(s), the full postal address of the author who will check proofs and receive correspondence. Offprints should also be included.
- All pages should be numbered.
- Footnotes to the text should be avoided.
- Each article should be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 200 words together with three to five keywords. The abstract should be submitted on a separate sheet to the main text.
- References should be indicated in the typescript by giving the author's surname (without initials), with the year of publication in parenthesis.
- When referencing direct quotations, please use the following format, (Brookes, 1998: 3) this would indicate that the Surname is Brookes, the Year was 1998, and the page number is 3. Single citation marks must also be used around the quotation.
- If several books/papers by the same author and from the same year are cited, a, b, c, etc. should be put after the year of publication.
- The references should be listed in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the following standard form:
  For books: Ball, S (1990) Politics and Policy Making in Education (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul).
  For articles: Johnson, R. (1989) Thatcherism and English education: breaking the mould or confirming the pattern? History of Education, 18 (2), 3-34.
  Titles of journals should not be abbreviated.
  For chapters within books: Ranson, S. (1990) From 1944 to 1988: education, citizenship and democracy. In M. Flude and M. Hammer (eds) The Education Reform Act 1988: Its Origins and Implications (Basingstoke, Falmer).
- Tables and Figures, must be reproduced on separate sheets and not included as part of the text. Tables should be numbered by Roman numerals, and Figures by Arabic numerals. The approximate position of tables and figures should be indicated in the manuscript.
- Proofs will be sent to the author(s) and should be corrected and returned to the Assistant Editor: Claire Smith (ext: 2466 or e-mail: claire.smith@newman.ac.uk) within 14 days. Major alterations to the text cannot be accepted.
- A PDF offprint is supplied free on publication.

AN IMPORTANT STEP

The publication of this journal represents an important step in the development of research and scholarship at Newman College of Higher Education. For a long time it has been recognised that students at Newman College are capable of producing high quality academic work. The challenge for the Editorial Board in assembling this first edition was to bring together a range of articles that

would reflect the diversity and quality of student work from across the institution. A key priority is to produce an interdisciplinary academic journal that captures many of the debates and dilemmas that shape contemporary society. In reflecting such an ambition you will see that we have brought together a fascinating range of articles that tackle important real life themes and issues.

All of the articles in the journal have been rigorously assessed and reviewed. Normal academic conventions have been followed. The intention is to create a publication that will stand up to scrutiny. For most of the authors this will be the first time they have seen their work presented in a journal such as this. Hopefully the experience will enthuse individual contributors to further develop this aspect of their academic work. We also hope that other students will be sufficiently inspired to contribute towards future editions. As an interdisciplinary academic journal we welcome articles that are grounded in research, professional education and training, or work related and community focused practice.

The first two contributions are taken from the Education and Professional Studies subject area. Hickmott and Trotman present a fascinating overview of 'British Educational Reform' via a critical review of 60 years of policy and practice. The 'morality of meritocracy' is critically challenged as the authors make a strong case for comprehensive education. In the next article Beech and McDougall explore the relationship between employability and 'accreditation of literacy and numeracy'. This piece is based on a work placement research project undertaken in a local community centre. The conclusion is simple and disturbing in that low levels of literacy and numeracy are seen to be 'impeding the life chances' of many young people.

The third article contributed by King reflects some of the dilemmas and difficulties in upskilling the Early Years workforce. This article is based on original practitioner research and comes out of a small scale Action research project undertaken by the author. The article by Pinfield et al deals with the issue of physical activity and the body composition of young children. Findings from this research based article point towards disturbingly low levels of physical activity in primary school children.

Students working in the Theology and RE subject area contribute the last two articles. Bevan, in an edited piece of Masters level work, offers a contemporary analysis 'on authority and the Christian life' through an exploration of *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Mary*. In the final offering Ricketts explores the idea of religious fundamentalism. Crucially he argues that modern scholars have significantly 'failed to adequately understand the fundamentalist view of the world'.

Professor Stan Tucker
Editor
Newman College of Higher Education
February 2007

From Butler to Blair: A Critical Review of Sixty Years of British Educational Reform

David Hickmott[*] and Dave Trotman

ABSTRACT

Education is unquestionably a political enterprise - in which the participants are the beneficiaries and victims of often inherent and competing policy tensions. In this paper the authors present a critical review of British educational reform over a period of the last sixty years; ranging from the wholesale adoption of platonic ideas of meritocracy, the egalitarian principles of comprehensivisation to the unabashed embrace of market principles and practices. In this review the authors reveal the contemporary character of this political enterprise, questioning the morality of meritocracy as an educational ideal and challenging the 'taken-as-read' assumptions that underpin the application of the market logic to education. Positioning themselves firmly in favour of the comprehensive ideal, the authors examine the discourses that have now penetrated much of our educational world and consider the imperatives that underpin them.

KEYWORDS

Marketisation, Modernisation, National Curriculum, Discourse

Introduction

Education is a political phenomenon, whether we like it or not. From the day-to-day interactions and experiences of people in organised education (e.g. in schools, colleges, prisons etc) to decisions about the types of qualifications and diet (literally) that young people should have access to, education invariably involves the presence of micro and macro political forces.

In undertaking this review, this paper starts from the premise that Education systems change over time and space according to the political interests of those who manage them (Archer, 1982) and, moreover, that since the mid 1980s the British education system has been subject to more state intervention than any other area of public

policy. In chronicling some of the most significant changes to have affected the British educational system over the past sixty years, our intention is to move beyond a simple narrative of events to a more systematic critical appraisal of the political imperatives and policy levers that have driven educational change. In particular, we will focus upon what Gamble (1994: 35) describes as the conflict between; 'a liberal tendency which argues the case for a freer, more open, and more competitive economy, and a conservative tendency which is more interested in restoring social and political authority throughout society.' We also acknowledge that it has become increasingly difficult to talk about 'British' educational reform in that much of the recent legislation governing such things as league tables and inspection has in fact become an increasingly peculiar English phenomenon.

'And you think you're so clever and classless and free…'
John Lennon, 'Working Class Hero': 1970

The English educational system is no stranger to reform. Indeed, the genesis of much of the contemporary 'modernisation' of the system can be traced back to James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech of 1976, and, as the authors of this paper suggest, to the Education Act of 1944.

In the years following the Second World War, Britain underwent something of an educational revolution. As part of the creation of the welfare state, with the purpose of redistributing social resources and encouraging growth and productivity, there was a deliberate effort on the part of both Conservative and Labour party policy makers to expand the notion of education for all. The 1944 Education Act effectively guaranteed a right to a quality of education that had previously been the preserve of the social elite.

At the centre of the 1944 Act lay 'The Norwood Report' (1943) which had reached the simplistic, yet significant conclusion that: `a curriculum ... suited to some is ... unsuited to others' (Maclure, 1989: 201). Influenced by the ideas of the Greek philosopher Plato (see The Republic), Norwood suggested that `three broad groups of pupils ... [required] three broad types of secondary education' (Norwood, 1943 cited in Maclure, 1989: 201-2). From the age of eleven pupils were to be educated according to their age, aptitude and ability in three types of school: grammar, secondary modern and technical schools. The instrument for selection was to be the newly created eleven-plus examination – An IQ test in all but name.

The jewel in this tripartite crown was to be the grammar school, from which less than 20 percent of the nation's children were to be awarded places (Halsey et al, 1982). Defined along the traditions of public school education, the grammar school aimed to provide an educational pathway to university and entry into the professions (Halsey et al, 1982). The distinguishing feature of the grammar school was to be pupil entrance to

the 'public' examination of the GCE Ordinary, or 'O' level, examination – something from which secondary modern pupils were to be exempt - or, more accurately, barred. The remaining 80 percent of the pupil population would attend secondary modern schools designed 'for children `whose future employment will not demand any measure of technical skills or knowledge' (Ministry of Education 1945: 13). This was, in effect, an attempt to create a British meritocracy.

The intention of secondary modern schools was to offer a curriculum that was relevant to pupils, reflective of their academic potential and provided a good preparation for their future role in both society and the workforce. Further, a denial of access to the GCE 'O' level qualifications consolidated a form of 'vocational' emphasis that focused instead upon practical 'life skills' which in turn led to secondary modern schools being perceived as the poor relation in terms of status, teaching and resources. According to McCulloch, secondary modern schools 'radiated uncomfortable reminders of working class elementary education and even of the Victorian workhouse or prison' (McCulloch, 1998: 90). We would argue that this distinction between academic and vocational education, in terms of perception, purpose and provision, remains evident, within the contemporary education system. Moreover, as Floud (1956) has argued, social class is a major influence on educational achievement. This sense of elitism is perhaps best illustrated by Heim (1954) whose research demonstrated that the coaching and intensive tuition, only accessible to the middle classes, dramatically improved IQ test scores. Here there is a profound resonance with contemporary educational policy preoccupations where we are inclined to agree with Edwards and Tomlinson (2002) who suggest that selection in fact depresses overall standards by polarising high and low performing schools.' It may indeed be true that selective schools obtain better exam results than their comprehensive counterparts, but as Beckett (2002) observes 'if you carefully select your pupils at the age of 11 and force neighbouring schools to teach the pupils you reject, then if you do not get substantially better results…something is seriously wrong.'

In retrospect it is rather easy to dismiss the Norwood Report as an unhelpful reflection of some rather crude social stereotypes. However, before doing so it is perhaps interesting to note, that even within contemporary society, those who occupy roles of political authority, are mostly graduates of the English grammar and public school system. Indeed one could argue that many of the core principles of the 1944 Education Act continue to influence the provision for education in the 21st century.

In 1954 a government paper on 'Early Leaving' suggested that children from lower socio-economic groups were more likely to leave school early (Ministry of Education, 1954). The rigid structure of the education system made it almost impossible for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to enter professional occupations. Subsequently, those without a high level of education were forced to seek employment in more menial

occupations. Consequently, the government was left with a ready made workforce to meet their economic requirements and fill a large gap in the labour market. In effect the 1944 Education Act predominantly benefited the middle classes, working class children were largely ignored and the upper classes were largely unaffected as the vast majority opted out of State run schools. Far from being a means of encouraging greater equality within society, education had become a means by which social inequalities were created, and maintained. The apparent stratification of the education system continued to reflect, reinforce and reproduce the prevalent class divisions of wider society. Public schools continued to ensure that access to positions of power and influence were entirely the preserve of the upper middle classes.

'You say you got a real solution. Well, you know, we'd all love to see the plan.'
The Beatles, 'Revolution': 1968

Throughout the 1950s there was an increasing realisation that the 1944 Education Act had failed to ensure the equality of opportunity and provision it claimed to provide. In the 1960s, Harold Wilson's Labour administration attempted to reorganise secondary education with the purpose of creating a more 'comprehensive' system in terms of both ideology and approach.

In 1963 the report of the Newsom Committee challenged the prevailing notion that intellect and academic ability are innate and unchangeable, the report concluded that 'intellectual talent is not a fixed quantity but a variable that can be modified by social policy and educational approaches' (Ministry of Education 1963a, paragraph 15).

In 1964 the elected Labour government made the introduction of comprehensive schooling a key educational priority, challenging any claim to a `law of intelligence imposing an upper limit on the educational potential of the nation' (Floud, 1963: 57). Comprehensivisation heralded new possibilities and expectations for an egalitarian model of secondary education. Yet the introduction and implementation of comprehensive schooling in fact proved massively problematic. The Labour administration did not insist upon wholesale national change with the consequence that the enormous amount of delay and procrastination surrounding the introduction of comprehensive education merely served to ensure that the use of selection continued unabated. Indeed, according to O'Connor (1990) comprehensive schools had barely had time to become established before grammar school had become synonymous with `good' and comprehensive with `bad': a perception which continues to resonate in contemporary policy discourse.

This sense of inherent inequality is perhaps best illustrated by the introduction of the CSE examination, in 1962. Those pupils deemed most able were entered for O-levels, whilst the less academically gifted were either entered for CSE examinations or no examinations whatsoever. In light of such an overtly selective system, it is perhaps

unsurprising that in 1989 Smith and Tomlinson identified a direct correlation between levels of exam entry and social class divisions. Such 'tinkering at the margins' continued to ensure that the basic structural features that had proved historically to be so divisive remained largely intact. The advent of the 1970s signaled a move away from egalitarian education towards a curriculum that prepared young people for the world of work. Non-selective education became something of a scapegoat, the comprehensive system was much maligned for restricting parental choice, lowering educational standards and failing to provide a skilled and flexible workforce. Epitomised by Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976, the 'educational establishment' was directly criticised for not adequately preparing pupils for the workplace. Callaghan launched the rather grandly entitled, 'Great Debate', a succession of nationwide conferences about education. It is somewhat contestable whether the 'Great Debate' actually achieved anything of value. As Lawton (1994) observes it was 'not a debate and not very great' (Lawton, 1994: 39). Indeed, one could argue that in many ways, it achieved little more than to demoralise teachers by undermining their sense of professionalism and personal autonomy. Callaghan's intervention was perhaps the foundation for state intervention in education and the creation of a culture of accountability that continues to penetrate all areas of the education sector.

Bowles and Gintis (1976: 131) suggest that 'education…helps integrate youth into the economic system through a structural correspondence with the social relations of production' (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Through this lens we would argue that the Ruskin College speech was little more than an instrument for the scapegoating of education in a troubled economy.

'When they've tortured and scared you for twenty odd years, Then they expect you to pick a career….There's room at the top they are telling you still. But first you must learn how to smile as you kill'
John Lennon, Working Class Hero: 1970

Callaghan may have set the wheels in motion but it was Margaret Thatcher who in 1988 took a distinctly authoritarian approach to educational reform. In stark contrast to the egalitarian principles of the early 1960s, Conservative policy was to take a profound ideological shift, accompanied by the emergence of 'Thatcherism' - perhaps best summarised by Carr and Hartnett (1996: 156) who suggest that in a time of increased social and economic uncertainty, education; 'acquired particular significance for the political right. Education was as an allocator of occupations, a defender of traditional academic values.'

Parental choice (of a sort) and private sector participation were central pillars of the Conservative programme, with Thatcher promulgating the view that increasing choice and competition in education would inevitably lead to an increase in 'quality'. For all

intents and purposes educational reform was a fundamental part of the New Right agenda to modernise the economy through a relentless programme of marketisation.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 was in effect a blueprint for educational reform and a triumph of power-coercive strategy (Bennis et al 1969, quoted in McCormick and James, 1983: 29); the most pernicious aspect of this being the introduction of the National Curriculum, which detailed the legal obligations on the part of schools in relation to curriculum and assessment requirements. The National Curriculum was too subject based, age-specific and relentlessly assessment driven. Moreover, it did not escape the attention of some spectators that it offered nothing new from the 1902 Education Codes (Aldrich, 1988: 22). In terms of assessment, the National Curriculum effectively adopted a 'transmission ideology,' a subject-based approach which evaluates performance according to 'how it measures up to standards and criteria' (Meighan and Blatchford, 2003: 178). Here we concur with Rowntree (1987: 1) who suggests that 'to discover the truth about an education system, we must look into its assessment procedures'. Whilst we agree with Meighan and Blatchford (2003: 179) that 'the quality of a learning experience tends to be overlooked in favour of assessing learners' performance' (Meighan and Blatchford 2003: 179), Broadfoot (1996: 19) regards assessment in this context as a 'deliberate and overt measurement of educational performance in order to provide information for purposes beyond the learning situation.' In a power coercive context assessment ultimately becomes a means of social control in which a sense of 'legitimate knowledge' is imposed upon the participants (Bourdieu, 1990). This legacy of this preoccupation with measurement of attainment by successive governments has come to epitomise the culture of performativity; a culture that continues to prevail some twenty years after the inception of the National Curriculum.

According to Archer (1982) education systems are run according to the political interests of those who manage them. In 1987, Walker and Barton identified a definite sense of a new radicalism being injected into educational thinking and practices. Indeed, with regard to the vast majority of policy initiatives directed towards education since 1988, we would agree with their assertion that it is easy to detect a deliberate and determined application of a 'market ideology' which now governs educational spending and curriculum and teaching process for explicitly vocational and instrumental interests (Walker and Barton, 1987).

In 1981 Reeder claimed that 'school teachers neither knew nor understood the industrial and commercial environment in which most of their pupils would need to work' (Reeder, 1981: 192). We would argue that since the early 1980s, there has been a continued and recurring effort to embrace vocational education. Indeed, over the years many of the changes to educational policy have been made in a deliberate attempt to address an employer concern that too many young people leave school without the skills to succeed in a market economy.

In light of this apparent move toward vocationalism, it is perhaps logical to conclude that the conflicting desires for both marketisation and centralisation within the current education system are driven, less by the desire for improved personal educational achievement of all participants, but more by political and economic imperatives for the maintenance of a competitive edge in the UK economy.

'What you don't get in the private sector is goodwill, but no one ever includes this in the equation when working out how much money can be saved by bringing in British American Tobacco, to run the local infant School.'
John O'Farrell, 'The Guardian': 31 August 2001

As many observers of public policy have noted, within the post-war public sector there is a tendency to distrust the judgment of professionals in preference to increasingly higher levels of surveillance. This view would appear to be supported by Campbell and Husbands (2000) who note that one of the ways in which the state has attempted to exercise control over the content and quality of public services has been through more regular and intrusive monitoring and inspection.

In 1992, under the Education (Schools) Act, Ofsted was given responsibility for the regular inspection of all schools in England. Ofsted is in effect a non-ministerial Government department, the purpose of which is to 'improve the standards of achievement and quality of education in schools, through regular inspection and public reporting and informed advice' (http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/about/index.htm).

School inspection is designed with the express purpose of giving parents, governors and the local community a clear understanding of the standards and quality of a school and its strengths and weaknesses, and to provide the school with a useful basis for improvement. However, here we agree with Norris (1998) who suggests that we are increasingly part of an 'evaluation culture'. The relentless pursuit of a market ideology would appear to have resulted in a cloud of suspicion that constantly overshadows the professional activities of teachers, with professional educators increasingly being evaluated according to how effectively they are able to deliver a 'product' that meets the demands of largely external agencies. We should point out here that we are not against accountability per se, far from it, but that this particular form of 'quality control' serves only to undermine teachers' sense of professionalism and to, moreover, distort their capacity for professional judgement in contexts that are increasingly dominated by the 'imperative of profit rather than human need' (Bowles and Gintis, 1976: 53).

The simultaneous existence of both centralisation and marketisation within the British education system would appear to be something of an anomaly. This apparent contradiction is perhaps best summarised by Gamble (1994: 52) who foresees a possible conflict between 'a liberal tendency which argues the case for a freer, more open, and

more competitive economy, and a conservative tendency which is more interested in restoring social and political authority throughout society.' In contrast to the introduction of the National Curriculum and the creation of Ofsted, many of the Conservative's educational reforms were in fact intended to encourage far greater freedom and reflected a wider political agenda to reduce state intervention in education. A particular example of this being the Private Finance Initiative (PFI.)

A PFI is essentially a contract between a public sector body and a commercial organisation. The PFI allows educational institutions to enter into contractual agreements with commercial organisations in return for which they will receive private sector money to invest in improved facilities and resources. The PFI allows schools to take advantage of commercial expertise, whilst in return for their investment commercial organisations assume responsibility for the construction, management and maintenance of new facilities. Subsequently, schools are left to focus upon their key responsibility of educating pupils. Although private companies are taking a risk by investing in the public sector, the commercial rewards are often considerable.

The PFI was intended to widen choice and increase independence by encouraging greater private sector involvement within the education system. Whilst agreeing with O'Farrell (2003a) that the PFI is grounded in an erroneous presumption that the private sector does most things better than the public, we argue further that PFI is a corrosive agent of market ideology in the public sector, exemplified in the parcelling up of curriculum, professional standards and quality control. Moreover, this assumes that moral purpose and 'culture fit' are unproblematic. As O'Farrell (2003b) points out: 'what you don't get in the private sector is goodwill, but no one ever includes this in the equation when working out how much money can be saved by bringing in British American Tobacco, to run the local infant School' (O'Farrell, 'The Guardian': 31 August 2003). Not all schools of course will be able to secure private investment; indeed according to Beckett (2002: 23); 'rather like supermarkets, schools now have to establish a brand to attract customers.'

'Things can only get better…'
D: Ream, Things Can Only Get Better: 1994

When they came to power in 1997 the New Labour government faced something of a dilemma. The previous Conservative administration made a somewhat radical attempt to revolutionise education by increasing parental and private sector involvement, while at the same time reducing state intervention, in a deliberate attempt to lessen the influence of local government (Johnson, 1991). The notion of increased parental choice has proved very popular with the electorate and thus has remained a key component of current educational policy. However, the continued application of a competitive market ideology would appear entirely at odds with traditional Labour values of greater inclusion and equal opportunities.

Griffin (1997) offers a useful explanation for this apparent ideological contradiction by suggesting that although we are now subject to the discourse of New Labour, which gives prominence to matters of exclusion and social justice, many old themes still dominate. The policy agenda being one that continues to be inspired by longstanding concerns about the 'deficiencies' of young people.

A prime example of the way in which educational discourse has shifted over recent years is the ever increasing emphasis currently being placed upon the notions of inclusion and inclusive education. Indeed, since 2001 parents have had the right to choose whether or not their child receives a mainstream education. In the name of equality, the government is aiming to increase participation in mainstream education, yet at the same time continues to shackle curriculum, pedagogy and educational 'value' to the crude instruments of performative measurement, testing regimes and league tables - designed as means of supposedly enabling 'informed' parental decision making.

Prima facie evidence suggest that pupils with special educational needs are not high on the list of beneficiaries in this overtly competitive environment, as their inclusion may have an adverse effect on school performance. As Neil Crowther, head of education policy at the Disability Rights Commission observes 'government initiatives such as school league tables work against inclusive policies by forcing schools to focus more on average results than the individual's attainment' (Crowther, quoted in Curtis, 2002). A view that suggests that this policy of social inclusion is contradicted by the widening social and educational gaps consequent upon selection and hierarchy in schooling.

Throughout this paper we have referred to the idea of discourse and nowhere is this more important than in the 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990) that has afflicted education. Foucault (quoted in Martin et al 1988) suggests that it is discourses that define, describe and delimit what is possible to say and not possible to say about a given area, arguing that there is a direct correlation between the language used in a particular society and the distribution of power within that society – s/he who controls the dominant societal discourse will inevitably hold the balance of power. In Ball's (1990: 18) prescient analysis of contemporary educational discourse the 'discourse of derision' eschews the language of pedagogy, reflection, curriculum development and social interaction, and privileges instead the impoverished labels of 'delivery', 'value added' 'standards', 'special measures', 'trainee', plus countless educational acronyms. It is a discourse of derision that has both publicly and privately profoundly changed the way in which education is perceived and talked about.

A corollary of this discourse shift is 'modernisation'. Modernisation is one of those slippery terms that has become synonymous with New Labour's programme of educational reform. Typically associated with notions of progress and development, indeed, it is such an apparently positive word that is difficult to argue against it. Who could possibly object

to modernisation when the only apparent alternative is to deny progress and remain firmly routed in the past? The current Labour administration portrays modernisation as process of change that is both necessary and desirable. We argue that this is essentially an ideological shift, which seeks to fundamentally alter the way in which we perceive the role of the State. Indeed, we would argue that the notion of modernisation is in fact highly symptomatic of Britain's transformation from a welfare state to a post welfare society.

In a welfare society, citizens are guaranteed the right to provision of housing, education and healthcare. In a post welfare society, government does not accept that same duty of care, preferring instead to protect the right of the individual to be free and self-determining. Gamble (1994) suggests that the simultaneous existence of a strong state and a free economy is something of a contradiction, an ideological position built upon a paradox; the state is simultaneously non-interventionist and decentralised in some areas and highly interventionist and centralised in others. Educational examples of this can be found in the Labour's National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy interventions into curriculum, evidencing a clear desire for the continued standardisation and centralisation of educational management. In contrast, other policy initiatives such as those outlined in the white paper, 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All' (DfES, 2005), seem to encourage greater freedom for private sector participation.

It is difficult to ignore the potential for conflict between those policies intended to increase freedom and competition and those intended to increase centralisation and sustain political authority. It is equally difficult to ignore the ideological conflict faced by a Labour administration overseeing an education system based upon neo-Conservative principles.

For all intents and purposes 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All' is a natural expansion of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) introduced by the Conservatives in 1992 with Trust status schools being afforded greater autonomy to operate with minimal intervention from local government. As with so many areas of educational policy making, there are a number of inherent contradictions contained within the bill. For example, the notion of greater independence for State schools is rather at odds with the need for closer co-operation and collaboration between schools as prompted by other pieces of legislation such as Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003).

Conclusion

'Things can only get better…'[?]

There can be little disputing the fact that following the Second World War, Britain underwent something of an educational revolution. As part of the formation of the welfare state, there was a deliberate effort to expand the egalitarian notion of education for all. It is difficult to deny that since the genesis of the modern education system in the late nineteenth century, there has been increased educational opportunities and participation for previously disenfranchised social groups. Although it was never the egalitarian ideal that some had envisaged, comprehensive schooling did increase social mobility for some individuals from working class backgrounds. In fact, if one were to measure success on a purely statistical basis, then one could argue that in terms of raising standards, comprehensive education has in fact achieved something quite remarkable. The number of pupils passing public examinations has risen steadily from the 1960s and; 'the A-level exam originally designed for less than 10 percent of the population was achieved in two or more subjects by 37 percent of young people in 2001' (Tomlinson, 2005: 217).

While overt selection is now deemed largely unacceptable, we would argue that the notion of differentiated provision remains an enduring feature of the British education system. Indeed as Halsey et al (1997: 5) have argued 'the reproduction of privilege, especially by the upper classes, remained, and the idea that occupation and status would be determined solely by merit remained a myth'. In fact, we believe that over the past twenty years we have witnessed a relentless series of market orientated reforms which have further distorted principles of equality and moral purpose in education. As Porter observed in 1999, 'education has become narrowed to an economic function… governments are effectively neutralising schools, colleges and universities as independent and democratic institutions' (Porter,1999: 11). This preoccupation with marketisation can in fact be linked to a wider concern regarding Britain's continued competitiveness within a global market economy. In order to maintain the competitive nature of the UK economy, the Government appears to be encouraging competition in a deliberate effort to prepare its citizens for the riggers of a global jobs market. Unfortunately, it would appear its primary modus operandi in achieving this goal is to take an ever-tighter grip on direction of the entire education system. Yet again we are faced with an apparent conflict between what Gamble (1994: 42) describes as 'a liberal tendency which argues the case for a freer, more open, and more competitive economy, and a conservative tendency which is more interested in restoring social and political authority throughout society.' In essence, 'New Labour policies have changed the welfare state into a competition state' (Cerny and Evans, 2004: 59) by 'pushing marketisation and privatisation as zealously

as the Conservatives ever did' (Marquand, 2004: 118). In a welfare society, citizens are guaranteed a right to a certain level of education. In a post welfare society, Governments reduce State dependency and encourage private sector involvement in an effort to; 'empower individuals to take responsibility for their own futures' (Clinton, 1994: 3).

The major problem with this seemingly relentless process of marketisation is that markets do not promote equity in terms of educational provision, nor do they take any account of social exclusion or segregation. Indeed, according to Bobbitt (2002: 230) 'market states are largely indifferent to the norms of justice'), and as Jordan (1998: 137) observes 'Governments can announce that opportunities are formally open to all but cannot control jockeying for positional advantage' (Jordan, 1998: 137). The reality is perhaps that commercial markets are always erratic and often dysfunctional. Subsequently, it is wrong to assume that increased levels of competition within education will necessarily lead to the desired increase in standards and quality.

If this relentless process of marketisation is allowed to continue, one could argue that 'the days of mass public education are unlikely to continue' (Bobbitt, 2002: 242) Such a conclusion may seem somewhat extreme but as Crouch observed in 2003: 'once public services are treated in most respects as commodities ... how long will it be possible to defend their being subsidised and not bought or sold in the market like other commodities?' (Crouch, 2003: 25)

In her work, 'Education in a post-welfare society' Tomlinson (2005: 1) paints a bleak portrait of a market dominated education system, within which 'funding, teaching and curriculum are centrally controlled, and the subjection of schools to market forces has increased social and academic divisions.'

We find it difficult to challenge Tomlinson's assertion, indeed, we conclude that far from being a key component of the welfare state it would appear that education has now changed so much that it has become little more than a prop for a global market economy. However, it is important to remember that whilst prosperity may depend upon a strong economy 'an economy that regards its own success as the highest good is a dangerous one…In a social landscape where there is a growing gulf between those who have and those who have not, surely the importance of social cohesion cannot be ignored.' (Kennedy, 1997: 6)

In 1966, John Dewey suggested that the primary purpose of education should be to develop a society 'in which every person shall be occupied in something which makes the lives of others better worth living' (Dewey, 1966: 316). These are principles that we hold close to our own interests, but leads us to question whether such ambitions can ever be reconciled with prevailing versions of competition and consumer choice.

REFERENCES

ALDRICH, R. (1988) 'The National Curriculum: An historical perspective' in LAWTON, D. and CHITTY, C. (eds) The National Curriculum, Institute of Education: University of London.

ARCHER, M.S. (1982) The Social Origins of Educational Systems, London: Sage.

BALL, S. J. (1990). Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in policy sociology. London: Routledge.

BARTLETT, S. BURTON, D. and PEIM, N. (2001) Introduction to Education Studies, London: Paul Chapman.

BECKETT, F. (2002) 'Not so special after all', The Guardian, 15 October, 2002.

BENNIS, W.G., BENNE, K.D. and CHIN, R. (1969) The Planning of Change (2nd edition), New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, quoted in McCORMICK, R. and JAMES, M. (1983) Curriculum Evaluation in Schools (2nd edition), London: Croom Helm.

BOBBITT, P. (2002) The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History, London: Allen Lane.

BOURDIEU, P. (1990) Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture, London: Sage.

BOWLES, S. and GINTIS, H. (1976) Schooling in Capitalist America. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

BROADFOOT, P (1996) Education, Assessment and Society. Buckingham: Open University Press.

CAMPBELL, J. and HUSBANDS, C. (2000) 'On the Reliability of OFSTED Inspection in Initial Teacher Training: a case study', British Educational Research Journal, 26, 1.

CARR, W. and HARTNETT, A. (1996) Education and the Struggle for Democracy: the political ideas of education, Buckingham: Open University Press.

CERNY, P.G. and EVANS, M. (2004) 'Globalisation and Public Policy Under New Labour', Policy Studies, 25, 1, pp. 51-66.

CLINTON, B. (1994) 'Remarks on Reinventing Government Initiative, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 30:1763', quoted in Tomlinson, S. (2005) Education in a Post-Welfare Society (2nd edition), Buckingham: Open University Press.

CROUCH, C. (2003) Commercialisation or Citizenship: Education Policy and the Future of Public Services, Fabian ideas 606.' London: The Fabian Society.

CROWTHER, N. (2002) quoted in CURTIS, P. (2002) 'Disabled pupils face discrimination at school', The Guardian, 9 December 2002.

DEWEY, J. (1966) Democracy and Education, New York: The Free Press.

DfES (2003a) Every Child Matters: Summary, London: Department for Education and Skills.

DfES (2005j) 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All: More Choice for Parents and Pupils. London: Department for Education and Skills.

EDWARDS, T. and TOMLINSON, S. (2002) Selection Isn't Working: Diversity, standards and inequality in secondary education. London: Catalyst Forum, quoted in BECKETT, F. 'Not so special after all', The Guardian, 15 October, 2002.

FLOUD, J. (1956) Social Class and Educational Opportunity, London: Routledge.

FLOUD, J (1963) 'Further Memorandum on Higher Education, Evidence to Robbins Committee on Higher Education', London: HMSO.

MARTIN, L.H., GUTMAN, H. and HUTTON, P.H. (1988) (eds) Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

GAMBLE, A. (1994) The Free Economy and the Strong State: The politics of Thatcherism, London: Macmillan.

GRIFFIN, C. (1997)` Representations of the Young', in ROCHE, J.,

TUCKER, S. THOMPSON, R. and FLYNN, R. (eds) Youth in Society, London: Sage.

HALSEY, A., HEATH, A.F. and RIDGE, J.M. (1982) Origins and Destinations: Family, class and education in modern Britain. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HALSEY, A., LAUDER, H., BROWN, P. and STUART WELLS, A. (1997) Education, Culture, Economy and Society, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HEIM, A. (1954) The Appraisal of Intelligence, London: Tavistock.

JOHNSON, R. (1991) `A Road to Serfdom, a Critical History of the 1988 Act', in 'Education Limited, Schooling and Training and the New Right Since 1979', Education Group 11, Department of Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, London: Unwin Hyman.

JORDAN, B. (1998) The New Politics of Welfare, London: Sage.

KENNEDY, H. (1997) Learning Works: Widening Participation in Further Education, Coventry: FEFC.

LAWTON, D. (1994) The Tory Mind on Education 1979-1994, London: Falmer Press.

MACLURE, S. (1989) Education Reformed: A guide to the Education reform Act (2nd edition) London: Hodder and Stoughton.

McCULLOCH, G. (1998) Education and Economic Performance: History of Education, 27, 3, 203-6.

MARQUAND, D. (2004) The Decline of the Public, Cambridge. Polity Press.

MEIGHAN, R. and SIRAJ-BLATCHFORD, I. (2003) A Sociology of Educating (4th edition), London: Continuum.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1943) Norwood Committee 'Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools', London: Ministry of Education.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1945) 'The Nations Schools', London: HMSO.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1947) 'Schools and Life', First Report of the Cenral Advisory Council for Education (England) London: HMSO.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1954) 'Early Leaving', Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) London: HMSO.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1963a) 'Half Our Future', Cmnd 2165, Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), London: HMSO.

NORRIS, N. (1998) 'Curriculum Evaluation Revisited' in Cambridge Journal of Education, 28, 207-220.

O' CONNOR, M. (1990) Secondary Education, London: Cassell.

O' FARRELL, J. (2003a) I Blame the Scapegoats, London: Transworld Publishers.

O'FARRELL (2003b) 'The Guardian': 31 August 2003.

OFSTED (2006) httpwww.ofsted.gov.uk/about/index.htm

PLATO (1974) The Republic, Harmondsworth: Penguin

PORTER, J. (1999) Reschooling and the Global Economic Future, Wallingford: Symposium.

REEDER (1981) 'A Recurring Debate: Education and Training' in R.

DALE, R., ESLAND, G., FERGUSSON, R. and MacDONALD, M. (eds) Schooling and the National Interest, Basingstoke: Falmer Press quoted in TUCKER, S. and WALKER, S. (2003) 'Education and Training Provision For Young People: A new era?' in J. Roche, S. TUCKER, R. THOMPSON, and R. FLYNN, (eds) Youth in Society, London: Sage.

ROWNTREE, D. (1987) Assessing Students: how shall we know them? London: Kogan Page.

SMITH, D.J. and TOMLINSON, S. (1989) The School Effect: A study of multicultural

comprehensives. London: Policy Studies Institute.

TOMLINSON, S. (2005) Education in a Post-Welfare Society (2nd edition), Buckingham: Open University Press.

TUCKER, S. and WALKER, S. (2003) 'Education and Training Provision For Young People: A new era?' in ROCHE, J., TUCKER, S. THOMPSON, R. and FLYNN, R. (eds) Youth in Society, London: Sage.

WALKER, S. and BARTON, L. (eds) (1987) Changing Policies, Changing Schools; New Directions for Schooling? Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Diagnosing The Disconnect:
The Skills Gap 'Vicious Circle'

Lauren Beech and Julian McDougall

ABSTRACT

This article presents findings from an undergraduate work placement research project undertaken at a Community Centre in the West Midlands. The project explored the relationship between service users' employability and accreditation in literacy and numeracy. The centre is situated in an area of significant economic disadvantage on the outskirts of Birmingham. Quantitative, diagnostic data was gathered from a National Certificate in Adult Numeracy and Literacy examination. Alongside this, qualitative data was acquired from questionnaires and informal interviews with centre users. The research concludes that low levels of numeracy and literacy (basic skills) are impeding the life chances of the young people that access the centre, causing a 'disconnect' between them and the vocational worlds from which they are excluded that is more tangible and potentially 'treatable' than its symptoms in social terms (alienation, antisocial responses, disempowerment). From this diagnosis, we suggest that a programme of study would be of benefit to these users if it were designed to enhance their transferable skills and employability.

KEYWORDS

Basic skills, 'Disconnect', Accreditation, Employability, Disadvantage

Introduction

Data from the DFES indicates that around seven million adults in the UK are not "functionally literate" which means that one in five adults are less literate than the expected level of an 11 year old. The same statistic applies to numeracy.

The current drive for accreditation of learning, linked to the evolving 'external driver' of the economic environment (which is set up discursively as natural and unquestionable) is now also put in dialogue with a growing policy concern with the needs of the individual. Every Child Matters (DFES: 2003) asserts that the most important criteria for children and young people are to:

- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Achieve economic well being
- Stay Safe
- Make a positive contribution

The Government states that their "ambition" through the implementation of programmes such as Key Skills, is concerned with narrowing the gap in 'outcomes'. Here there is a clear recognition of the distinction between outcomes as determined by screening for qualifications and outcomes defined by actual skills. However a finding of this research is that accreditation is pivotal for upskilling which in effect reconnects skills to qualifications.

The Totum Centre, based on a large estate in Birmingham, deal with children and young people up to the age of 25 years old, from the local community offering help and support to those that need it most. The Centre provides specific programmes and activities which are designed to enrich the lives of its users, including Tenancy Advice and Support (TASS) and the Connexions Services. These services come into contact with young people and adults who have left school with every few GCSEs, if any, and are subsequently finding it difficult to find permanent employment. Currently 42 percent of the tenants that TASS support have no GCSEs; 100 percent of these are unemployed.

The research that informs this article looks at service users' levels of numeracy and literacy these centre users have and ways of accrediting these users to help diminish the "outcome" gap and the resulting 'disconnect' between their life chances and those in the vocational 'mainstream'. It also asks whether a suitable programme of study can be implemented to help these young people and adults to not only achieve accreditation but more importantly to improve their basic skills, which will improve their employability and consequently their quality of life.

Literature Review

Improving literacy and numeracy skills is one of the Government's stated priorities and a national Strategy to tackle the literacy and numeracy needs of adults specifically was launched by the Government in the Autumn of 2000. Togerson, Porthouse and Brooks (2005) report the growing problem of adult skills deficit in literacy and numeracy, a diagnosis with which Moser (1999) concurs. The link between this growing issue and the development of a basic/key skills programme by the Government is closely related as the Key Skills programmes in schools and colleges, as they examine candidates on literacy, numeracy and ICT. Through the implementation of the National Strategy the Government has been attempting to instill these skills in children from when they start Primary School.

However, '…many secondary schools are faced with a substantial number of pupils with inadequate skills, many of which are not able to catch up and are at risk of becoming disaffected and disruptive' (DFES, 1997: 37), … which can result in pupils leaving school with very few, if any qualifications.

The lack of basic transferable skills such as literacy and numeracy are a developing concern not only amongst the government but also employers. A survey in 2000 showed that transferable skills were what most appealed to the employers questioned (Owen, 2000) however, Green (1998: 24) found that 'employers still frequently complain about the low standard of core skills'.

'Employers believe that entrants to the workforce lack basic skills in language use, mathematics and problem solving skills' (Rotunda and Sackett, 2004: 128). Rotunda and Sackett highlight a deficiency in supply and demand. The economical impact of such a shortfall in generic skills was highlighted in an international study in skills and qualifications acquisition in which the UK appeared to be doing badly in comparison with other developed countries (Hodgson and Spours, 2002). This comparison has also been made by Rotunda and Sackett (2004), Green (1998), Togerson, Porthouse and Brooks (2005) and Moser (1999) who state that poor levels of numeracy and literacy in the UK is the underlying reason for the nation's poor productivity compared with much of Europe.

Whilst Wolf (2002) is highly sceptical of the hegemonic New Labour discourse of education linked to growth, claiming from an economist's vantage point that educational investment from Government into qualification reform is often a 'red herring' in relation to Gross Domestic Product, she is clear on the fundamental determining nature of basic skills:

'Poor literacy and numeracy – especially the latter – have a devastating effect on people's chances of well-paid and stable employment' (Wolf, 2002: 34). Wolf makes the crucial point that in this case skills must be decoupled from qualifications. Whereas employers value certain qualifications arbitrarily and there is some debate over the vocational relevance or applicability of curriculum, the literacy and numeracy skills deficit effect is more significant than screening for qualifications.

It is a common belief that limited basic skills can cause serious disadvantages at work for many people (Moser, 1999; Hodgson and Spours, 2002; Hayward and Fernandez, 2004). Research which was carried out by the City University (Moser, 1999: para 3.14) indicates that adults with poor basic skills are most likely to arrive in unskilled or semi skilled low grade work and are four times more likely to experience long term unemployment (Moser, 1999). However Moser (1999) also suggests that the quantity of unskilled and semi-skilled positions have reduced with such roles becoming less important. Hayward and Fernandez (2004) also share this view and argue that the

dominant vocational shift since 1980 in the UK economy has been the move from manual to non manual work and that the absence of Key Skills in young people… 'constitutes one of the major weaknesses of our education and training systems and their development would ensure a more highly skilled and competent workforce' (Hayward and Fernandez, 2004: 48).

Moser (1999) continues to state that a lack of key skills undoubtedly affects an individual's earning capacity and that low income is much more likely if a person has limited basic skills which links back to Every Child Matters and the "universal ambition" of achieving "economic well being".

The development of a key/basic skills programme has been being developed for the last twenty-five years and after having looked at the literature and research which has been completed on Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Key Skills and the demands of the work place we cannot help but agree with Hayward and Fernandez (2004): 'Despite an evident demand for generic skills in the English economy, successive waves of education and training policy intended to stimulate the supply of such skills have failed to deliver the desired results' (Hayward and Fernandez, 2004: 117).

Diagnostic research

The first research method used was action research, as a diagnostic intervention was made at the Totum centre with the introduction of a system of accreditation, through consultation with the DFES. An online assessment tool was selected, funded by the DFES and thus was in line with national standards and recognised as such in the National Qualifications framework. A questionnaire was completed by users following the online test. A small sample of 15 people was used to trial the online test. The sample was chosen at random from the Centre users who are involved with the TASS and Connexions services.

The National Certificate in Adult Numeracy and Literacy is a two test certificate which can be obtained at a Level 1, which is the expected level of an 11 year old child and at a Level 2, which is compared with GCSE standards. This certificate can be sat at any DVLA centre in the UK and costs £30. www.move-on.org.uk is a website run by a national project which is funded by the DFES and promotes the accreditation of this national certificate. As the organisation works with the DFES the website, the online numeracy and literacy tests and the results from these tests are all in line with national standards. The 'Move-On' website provides not only a test to determine what level your numeracy and literacy is at but it also gives hints and tips on how to increase your skills in these areas and once registered as a Centre that was interested in promoting these skills the

DFES provided three "toolkits" to help support workers to support the adults wishing to sit the test.

From data gathered from the candidates that sat the online test it took on average 10 – 20 minutes, which when asked the candidates felt that this was a fair amount of time for the completion of such a test. Thirteen out of the 15 candidates who sat these tests were over the age of 18 years old. There was one young person aged 17 years old and one candidate who did not give details of their date of birth.

A higher level of numeracy was achieved than in literacy (see Table i).

Table i

	Level Obtained		
	Candidates Below Level 1	**Candidates at Level 1**	**Candidates at Level 2**
Numeracy	5	7	3
Literacy	6	7	2

Seven out of the 15 Centre users achieved different levels in Numeracy and Literacy (Table i). Forty seven percent of the candidates achieved a level one in numeracy and literacy, which is the expected level of an 11 year old child. Twenty percent attained a level two in Numeracy and 13 percent reached a level two in Literacy.

Ninety three percent found the online instructions and questions easy to follow. Considering the poor levels attained in the test, 73 percent of the candidates found the test to be "OK" rather than "hard", which can only suggest a level of denial or a lack of understanding as to what the questions are asking of them, which of course is linked to poor key skills – a 'vicious circle' in effect.

One positive outcome of these results is that out of all the young people and adults asked, 87 percent stated that they would be interested in sitting an exam for the National Certificate in Adult Numeracy and Literacy and were interesting in gaining accreditation for their skills in this area. This can only indicate that they are aware of the problems with their numeracy and literacy and that they realise that they need to and are willing to try and improve their skills and understanding in these areas. In other words the 'patient' is enthusiastic about the treatment (see table ii).

Table ii

Levels Achieved	Number of Candidates
Numeracy Below level 1 Literacy Level 1	2
Numeracy Below Level 1 Literacy Level 2	0
Literacy Below Level 1 Numeracy Level 1	2
Literacy Below Level 1 Numeracy Level 2	1
Numeracy Level 1 Literacy Level 2	1
Literacy Level 1 Numeracy Level 2	1

Evaluation and Conclusion

The results from the trial tests confirm the initial notion that there is a low level of basic literacy and numeracy skills amongst the centre users. However what the results also showed which was not expected was just how low a level of numeracy and literacy users have - one in three or the candidates have a lower level of numeric comprehension than an 11 year old child.

It seems apparent that the implementation of The National Strategies of Numeracy and Literacy into all schools starting from Primary have come all too late for some and that the key skills qualification which has been embedded (with limited success) into Curriculum 2000 caters for those who choose to continue onto college and who choose to sit the (non mandatory) units and examinations, but there appears to be a lack of success in

reaching those who left school before the year 2000 or those who have left school with no qualifications.

Of course there are limitations to this research, given that it was conducted as a work placement project for an undergraduate degree over one academic term, the sample used was small. The results would have benefited from a much more detailed questionnaire so that patterns and correlations could have been established between the level achieved from the online test and the number of GCSEs the candidate had, if any. An issue that arose throughout the research was that the research subjects may have difficulties in reading and I did not want to over complicate matters by asking them to complete detailed questionnaires that they may not have fully understood, which may have led to a distortion of the results gained, again a result of the 'vicious circle' created by this skills disconnect.

REFERENCES

ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE Adult Basic Skills Resource Centre for Students and Tutors [online] Available from: http://www.skillsworkshop.org [Accessed: 01/02/06]

BARKER, K and LONSDALE, R (1994) Skills for Life (London, Taylor Graham).

BBC, Key Skills [online] Available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/ [Accessed: 31/01/06]

COBEN, D et al (2003) Adult Numeracy Review of Research and related Literature. (London, WRDC)

DFES LITERACY TASK FORCE (1997) Implementation of The National Literary Strategy. (London, DFES)

DFES (1999) Improving literacy and numeracy : a fresh start : the report of the working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser (Sudbury, DFES Publications)

DFES, Move On [online] Available from: http://www.move-on.org.uk [Accessed: 01/02/06]

DFES (2003). Every Child Matters [online] Available from http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk [Accessed: 01.02.06]

GREEN, A (1998) 'Core Skills, Key Skills and General Culture: In search of the Common Foundation in Vocational Education' in Evaluation and Research in Education 12:1

HAYWARD, G and FERNANDEZ, R (2004) 'From 'Core Skills to Key Skills: Fast Forward or Back to the Future?' In Oxford Review of Education 36: 1

HODGSON, A. and SPOURS, K. (2002) 'Key Skills for all? The Key skills qualification and curriculum 2000' in Journal of Educational Policy, 17:1 29-47

LSDA, Key Skills Support Programme enhancing skills for life and work [online] Available from: http://www.keyskillssupport.net/lsda/ [Accessed: 31/01/06]

OWEN, E. (2000) What Key Skills do Employers Need? (Southampton, Arena)

ROTUNDA, M. and SACKETT, P.R (2004) 'Specific versus General Skills and Abilities: A job revel examination of Relationship with Wage.' in Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology, 77, 127-148

ST CLAIR, R. (2005) 'Building Knowledge, Building Community: Reflecting on the Value of a National Research Programme' in Adult Numeracy and Literacy (Oxford, Blackwell).

TORGERSON, C., PORTHOUSE, J. and BROOKS, G. (2005) 'A Systematic Review of Controlled Trails evaluating interventions in Adult Literacy and Numeracy' in Journal of Research in Reading, 2 87-107

WHITTLE, S.R and MURDOCH-EATON, D. (2005) 'Curriculum 2000: Have changes in curricula affected students' Key skills?' in Journal of Further and Higher Education, 29:1 61-71

WOLF, A. (2002). Does Education Matter? Myths about Education and Economic Growth. London, Penguin.

Training all the time? – Professional Development for Early Years practitioners in the Non–LEA sector

Amanda King

ABSTRACT

The importance of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce for the Early Years has been recognised in recent Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. 'Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who are able to implement the curriculum requirements' (DfEE, QCA 2000: 36). This research presents the findings from a small-scale study using questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence to explore practitioners' perceptions of the need for continuing professional development, their ability to access professional development opportunities currently provided by Warwickshire Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Partnership, and the appropriateness of the training provided. Findings suggest that practitioners are aware of the need for continuing professional development and hold positive attitudes towards training. However at an organisational level settings do not have mechanisms for resourcing training and development effectively. Barriers such as cost, time, supply cover and transport all impinge on access to training and in some cases the availability of places on certain courses. Practitioners are satisfied that current training opportunities meet their needs although discussion demonstrated feelings of resignation with regard to access to training at higher levels due to work-role demands. At a wider level the multi-faceted nature of professionalism hinders practitioners ability to identify their long-term needs.

KEYWORDS

Professional Development, Early Years, Skilled Workforce, Quality, Training.

1. Rationale – The Purpose of the Research

The focus for research is supported by a belief that investment in training for practitioners has a direct effect on the quality of experiences they offer to children, and that the opportunity for adults to gain accredited qualifications should be something accessible to all. As an Early Years Advisory Teacher part of the author's remit is concerned with ensuring high quality educational provision for young children. It is hard to define quality and there are multiple understandings of what it may look like. Pugh (2001: 20) describes

three main elements of a quality Early Year's service, 'An appropriate curriculum, well trained staff and good relationships between parents and staff'. One of the main objectives for the research was to see if practitioners in the Eastern area of Warwickshire recognise the need for well-trained staff. A further area of the author's work role involves the planning and delivery of training courses. The research project met a second aim to explore the appropriateness of the courses currently available in Warwickshire.

2. Context

Warwickshire is a large county with both rural and urban areas comprising of varied socio-economic backgrounds. Over two hundred providers working within the Non Local Education Authority (LEA) sector access the Nursery Education Grant. The County is divided into five geographical areas for the delivery of training. This was a small-scale study with research limited to the Eastern area of the county. Initially the brief was to compare the perceptions of practitioners across both the Non LEA and LEA sectors. However it was realised that this would make the scale too wide and consequently a decision was taken to limit research to the Non LEA sector only.

The Warwickshire Sure Start Early Years and Childcare and Partnership ('The Partnership') strategic plan summary (2004: 2) states several aims in the area of workforce development:

• Support the training and development of the childcare sector in the context of the National Standards and their requirements.

• Ensure all Foundation Stage practitioners access an average of four days training and development per year.

• Develop training and development plans as a high priority in all settings.

Given that 'The Partnership' places a high commitment on workforce development the third objective of the research was to consider the issues that impinge on access to training and professional development which in turn may frustrate the aims of 'The Partnership'.

3. Methodology

Initially a research diary noting all reflections on the subject area was compiled. From this activity it became clear that there was a need to draw up an action plan detailing long, medium and short-term actions. A folder was assembled within which articles, documents and information relevant to the focus area were placed. It proved helpful to note key questions and tasks in the research diary, which was kept throughout the action research project. It quickly became apparent that research centred on the work of both 'The Partnership' and Warwickshire LEA's Educational Development Services

(EDS). It proved necessary to correspond with both bodies requesting their support and permission before significant progress could be made. Both parties were interested and requested a copy of the findings. As part of the process meetings were arranged with the Advisory Team leader, Project Co-ordinator for the Eastern area and The Partnership's Training and Equal Opportunities Coordinator to outline plans. Support and advice at this stage proved invaluable, in particular the piloting of questionnaires ensured the data collected was relevant to the research aims.

Consideration was given to the selection of appropriate research tools. Would another researcher using the same tools obtain similar results? Bell (1999: 105) advises 'the instrument is merely the tool to enable you to gather the data, and it is important to select the best tool for the job'. It was decided that a combination of questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis would provide triangulation, thus ensuring research was both reliable and valid. The intention was to collect rich data concerned with practitioners' and professionals' attitudes and perceptions that made the approach essentially qualitative. Numerical data was generated from a quantitative approach used to analyse data arising from questionnaires. Documentary analysis and additional primary source materials were used to further support the study together with the author's personal experiences of delivering training and working alongside practitioners.

3.1 Questionnaires

The design used several different types of question including lists, categories, grids, and the Likert Scale. Questionnaires were sent to Non LEA practitioners incorporating private day nurseries, Playgroups, Pre-Schools and Independent schools. It was necessary to consider the area of ethics and to use an ethical approach. 'Research ethics is about being clear about the nature of the agreement that you have entered into with your research subjects or contacts' (Bell 1999: 39). All practitioners and professionals involved read the abstract of the study. Participation was on a voluntary basis and anonymity was guaranteed. Individuals were able to withdraw from the research at any point.

Thirty-five questionnaires were given out via cluster group meetings. Discussing the project face to face with practitioners was helpful in generating a response rate of 60 percent (21 from 35 questionnaires). A good response, but given the small sample size a danger that one or two responses could skew the results. Questions were grouped against the three key aims of the study.

3.2 Interviews

The questions to be covered within the interviews were made available to interviewees who could withdraw at any time or opt not to answer a question.

When both planning and conducting interviews bias proved to be a recurring and difficult feature to deal with. Firstly practitioners saw the author in her role as 'advisory teacher' rather than 'researcher' and were tempted to respond to that role. This may well have prejudiced responses to questionnaires and interview questions. Secondly the area of the study was closely linked to the author's work remit, which may have subconsciously influenced the interpretation of results and responses. The authors skills as a researcher were not developed enough to avoid errors such as agreeing with the interviewee during the first interview! These kind of difficulties are not unusual and Sellitz et al (1962) recognise that 'interviewers are human beings and not machines'. The important factor is to be aware of and guard against potential bias as much as possible. Interview participants included the Early Years Advisory Team Leader, Advisory Teacher, Project Co-ordinator for Early Years Education, the Warwickshire Early Years and Childcare Development Partnership Training Co-ordinator and the Training Co-ordinator from EDS in the maintained sector. Interviewees from the private sector included an independent school teacher, pre-school leader, day nursery owner, day nursery manager and playgroup supervisor. It was important when developing the interview programme to include a range of key stakeholders.

The interview method was a standardised open-ended interview to make data collection more systematic due to the short timescale for this work. A key word approach to analyse data and organise responses into the three aims of the research was used. The disadvantage of this method is there is little flexibility in relating the interview to the particular individuals (Cohen et al 2003: 270).

3.3 Documentary Analysis

Two sources of documentary evidence were used. An evaluation of the Eastern area training programme and practitioner evaluations of one training course. This supplemented findings from other methods, giving further insights into the key aims of the study.

4. Results

The majority of respondents were drawn from the Pre-School sector (see Fig 1). Participating settings were asked to provide details of practitioner qualifications (see Fig 2). Only five percent of practitioners held no qualification. The qualification held by the highest number of practitioners was NVQ Level Three. Forty five percent of practitioners undertaking training were also working towards NVQ based accreditation.

Fig 1 – Provision in Non LEA Sector
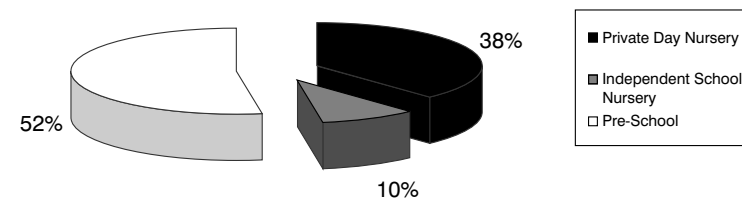
Number = 21

Fig 2 – Practitioners Qualifications
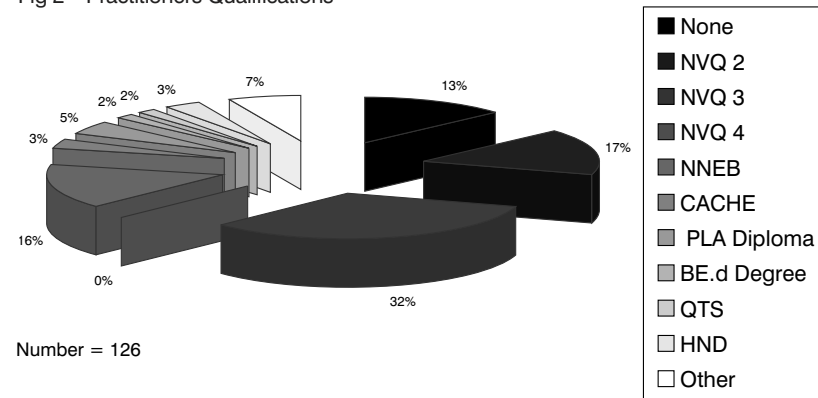
Number = 126

The vast range of qualifications recorded reflects the national picture where years of 'disjointed strategy towards early years education and care has led to a multitude of qualifications' (David 1990: 72). In 1999 the QCA (1999b) attempted to classify occupational roles into a hierarchy to determine what type of qualification and qualification level would be required for practitioners to be registered within a new framework of accredited qualifications. In addition to this The Early Years National Training Organisation, (now Skills Sector Council) carried out a series of surveys between 1999 and 2000 which will go some way to providing better and more comprehensive information on Early Years qualifications (BERA, 1999). Recent policy changes, such as the setting up of Early Years Childcare and Development Partnerships (EYCDP) and the establishment of annual childcare audits have 'attempted to gain an overview of the position in the UK' (BERA 1999: 14).

5. Data related to professional development and training

5.1 Questionnaire data

Over half of the respondents recognised the need for a training policy in their setting with 62 percent reporting the existence of a training policy and of these 76 percent also had a training plan. High levels of awareness may be due to recent training and input by the advisory team in this area. However documentary evidence demonstrated poor attendance levels at courses indicating a disparity between what is planned / desired and what is achieved.

Fig 3: A highly trained Early Years workforce is the key to good provision and benefits the Early Years Sector as a whole
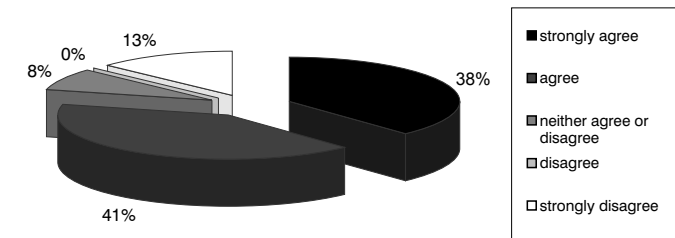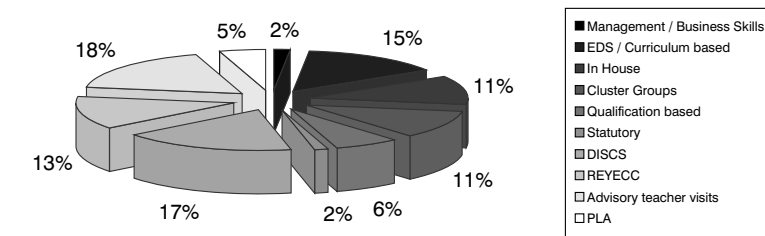

Number = 21

Clearly from reviewing Figure 3 it can be seen that there is considerable enthusiasm for the development of a highly trained workforce. Practitioners identified that continuing professional development helped ensure high quality opportunities for children and benefited the Early Years workforce as a whole. However written comments at the end of the questionnaires were all concerned with experience and a natural skill for the job. Perceptions of this kind reinforce the views of Penn and McQuail (1998: 63) who point out 'that almost all respondents considered that aptitude was more important or at least as important as training'.

It is evident practitioners in the Eastern area are aware of the need to develop knowledge and understanding. However the range of training routes has led to practitioners who have had different depths of training experience, ranging from short courses to degrees. Research by Oberhuemer and Ulich (1997: 24) surveyed staff training across 15 European Union countries and found that many practitioners had to study for far longer and in greater depth to work in Early Years. They concluded that 'examples of high levels of training contrast with workers (in the UK) who have completed an optional course of up to 200 hours'. This throws into sharp relief the depth of professionalism that can be

gained by the current training routes available.

Practitioners have attended the full range of training opportunities available. When considering which training opportunities are most beneficial practitioners cite Advisory Teacher visits, Disability, Inclusion, Sensory & Communication Service (DISCS) and EDS curriculum based training in their top three. It is also interesting to note from Figure 4 below the value that is accorded to gaining management / business skills and the understanding of statutory policy / legislation.

Fig 4: Which training opportunities do you find most beneficial in terms of raising the quality of provision you offer to children?

Number = 126

It must be acknowledged that the high percentage attributed to Advisory Teacher visits may have been influenced by bias in that respondents knew the author through her work role.

5.2 Interview data

Part of the interview process was concerned to explore the value that practitioners placed on continuing professional development. Table 1 illustrates the range of key word responses that emerged during the interview activities relating to the need for continuing professional development. In Table 2 the effectiveness of particular approaches to training is renewed.

Table 1 – Continuing Professional Development

What is your opinion of the need for continuing professional development?	Number of responses to key words
Important	3
Builds upon knowledge skills and understanding	4
Ensures you fulfil your obligations	2
Keeps you up to date with changes and developments	2
Early Years is always moving on	2
Accreditation leads to higher standards	1

Table 2 – Effective Training

What types of course do you find the most effective?	Number of responses to key words
Cluster groups	2
Advisory Teacher visits	3
In – House training	3
Curriculum based / EDS	2
SEN / DISCS	2
Practical / hands on	4

Interviews supported the findings of questionnaires showing awareness that training and development led to gains in knowledge and understanding. Again, Advisory Teacher visits and DISCS were cited as valuable in-house training. These approaches allow for a more strategic input, thus supporting individual needs more effectively than broader based training opportunities. It may be for this reason that they are more highly regarded.

5.3 Documentary Evidence

Documentary analysis arises from in depth consideration of the evaluation of the Early Years training programme, focussing on four courses offered in the Eastern area between September 2003 and January 2004. Data details projected places, actual attendance on the course and the resulting evaluation grade (see table 3). The data has a high degree of reliability as it is concerned only with recorded factual evidence and not with the author's perceptions or interpretations.

Table 3 – Evaluation of Training

| Course	Date	Projected No	Actual no	Evaluation Grade 1 = Excellent				
				1	2	3	4	5
Producing training and development plans Content Delivery	25.9.03	18	10	10 10				
Observing young children Content Delivery	18.6.03 / 16.10.03	20	6	3 3	3 3			
Resourcing the Learning Environment Content Delivery	11.12.03	15	12	10 2	10 2			
Fantasy and Fun through Small World Play Content Delivery	12.1.04	30	15	15 15				

Most significant is that the projected numbers are higher than actual attendance. It could be deduced that practitioners identify a need and book onto a course without planning for the logistics such as supply cover and costs in advance. The author's experiences of working with practitioners add weight to this theory and a discussion with the EDS training co-ordinator seemed to reinforce this fact. Only one setting had a budget for training pointing to a workforce who are willing but not yet at the stage to reflect upon their needs, plan and co-ordinate training effectively to ensure a higher rate of uptake. Yet at the same time it should be noted that a number of organizations were actively developing training policies and plans.

6. Data related to practitioner satisfaction

6.1 Questionnaire data

This section deals with the questionnaire data generated through the research that explores levels of satisfaction concerning the range and quality of training (outlined in Figures 5 & 6). Included in the figures are the individual statements participants were required to respond to.

Fig 5: We are happy with the range of training opportunities currently available to us through EDS
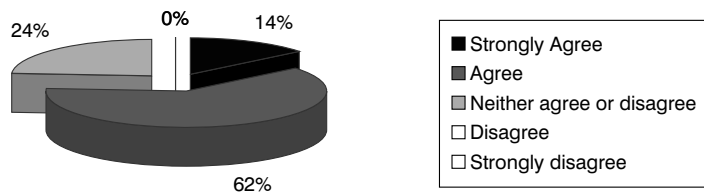
Number = 21

As can be seen there exists a high level of satisfaction concerning the range of training offered. Fourteen percent of practitioners strongly agreed with the statement, 62 percent agreed they were happy with the range of training opportunities currently available to them with three quarters of respondents feeling that training is of a high quality. Similar levels of satisfaction are also apparent when it comes to considering the quality of training on offer (see Fig 6).

Fig 6: We feel the training we attend is of a high quality
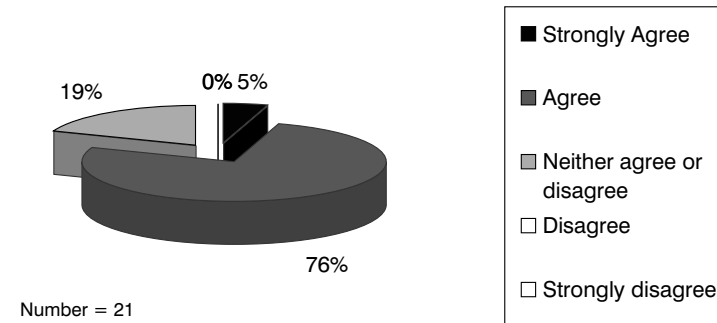
Number = 21

6.2 Interview data

Crucially the interview process was used to explore in more depth how effectively training courses were meeting the needs of practitioners (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Meeting practitioner needs

Are the courses available through EDS and REYECC appropriate for practitioner's needs?	Number of responses to key words
Yes	9
No	1

Do we include practitioners in decisions we make about training?	Number of responses to key words
Yes	10
No	0

There was overwhelming agreement that training is appropriate to practitioners' needs. One interviewee stated that her needs were met "at the moment". A recurring feature of interviews with practitioners concerned itself with a lack of choice with regard to career progression at higher levels. A lack of self-belief was noted that practitioners could

achieve more, in addition to the usual difficulties related to cost and time. Newman College in conjunction with Warwickshire LEA has attempted to address this issue by offering a highly subsidised part time Early Childhood Studies degree, a more practical route for practitioners who need to work full-time. In addition to this the Accreditation of Prior Learning Experience (APEL) route which accredits prior learning demonstrates a growing awareness of the need to support practitioners to a much greater extent, approaching training opportunities with more imagination and flexibility.

It is important to consider Early Years practitioners perceptions of what defines 'professionalism' and 'appropriate training' in order to further understand individual's overwhelming acceptance that they are being provided with what they need. Research by Menmuir and Hughes (1998: 32) with students undertaking a BA in Early Childhood Studies found, 'no one set of professional expectations' applicable to all early years staff. This suggests that at national level there is need for a set of categories defining professionalism leading to clearer articulation of what it means to be an early years professional. This in turn may lead to greater recognition of the 'value and status' of Early Years Practitioners whilst improving quality of provision on a more consistent scale.

6.3 Documentary Evidence

A funded course 'Resourcing the Learning Environment' was offered across the county in the autumn term of 2002. One hundred places were available and practitioners attending received £100 of resources to implement the approach and ideas covered in the training. In return they were asked to gauge the appropriateness of the course in meeting practitioners needs. Forty-four evaluations were returned.

Practitioners' responses show that they found the course appropriate for their needs. In addition to this the response to question two demonstrates that this particular course enabled them to extend children's learning, a clear indication that training and development has a positive impact on the quality of provision for children. The EPPE report (Sylva 2003: 13) found that effective pedagogy was to be seen where 'the most highly qualified staff provide the most direct teaching'.

Table 5 – Responses to training

1 = excellent 2 = good, 3 = average, 4 = fair, 5 = poor	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Question one: **How did the course help you in resourcing the learning environment?**	19	18	4		1
Question two: **Have you found the resources useful? Have they helped you to extend children's learning?**	18	19	1		1
Question three: **Has Your Advisory Teacher supported you in using your resources?**	14	1 5	4	1	1
Question four: **Did you find the starting points sheets useful?**	15	19	8	1	1

7. Issues impinging on training and development

7.1 Questionnaire data

Time and cost were the largest barriers to training at 20 percent and 18 percent respectively. Access to supply cover and transport were seen as further barriers. Over 60 percent of practitioners stated that they found it hard to implement their plans for training in reality.

A further question looked at access to courses at the booking stage. Fifty two percent of respondents were unable to book onto the courses they needed to access. With further investigation it became clear that the courses in question were largely of a statutory nature such as first aid and child protection. These findings served to inform the planning of future training activities with particular emphasis being placed on the provision of statutory activities. It must also be noted that high levels of late cancellations were also reported for these courses and the training administrator comments that 'childcare is an additional difficulty for practitioners'.

7.2 Interview data

The interview process again proved useful in examining in more depth the barriers to

attending training. Participants were all encouraged to reflect on personal difficulties.

Both interviews and questionnaires showed cost, supply cover, time and transport as major barriers to accessing training. Difficulties with cost matches the national picture developed from six major national workforce surveys completed in the last three years. It is noted that 'in the majority of settings surveyed the entire training budget was less than £500 a year' (Abbot and Hevey 2001: 26). To surmount the barriers, nursery owners and managers need to give more thought and status to training. It is not uncommon for staff to attend training in their own time without remuneration or time in lieu. Difficulties obtaining supply cover in the Eastern area add further pressure. These are not easy problems to solve; there is fine balance between offering continuous provision to parents / carers and placing additional demands on the workforce to train in their own time.

Given the current picture there is a need to consider alternative routes such as planned closure for training and development across the year as seen in the LEA sector. Reflective practice cannot exist in a vacuum and all practitioners should be entitled to time to reflect in the company of colleagues and visit other centres of excellence in order to observe high quality practice. As shown a wide range of locally based training is offered by 'The 'Partnership'. Practitioners cite transport and location as barriers, which impinge on access, but given the range of strategies available already perhaps an alternative approach may be for managers of local groups to meet to consider their training plans and arrange transport through a more collective approach.

Conclusions

Given the considerable expansion in provision in recent years there is a realisation that for social and economic reasons there is need for a highly trained and skilled workforce. The QCA (1999b) sets out a training framework and underlying principles with national occupational standards forming the basis of all qualifications. The success of this will be dependent on a coherent national strategy to co-ordinate training.

Practitioners in the Eastern area of Warwickshire are aware of the need for continuing professional development to enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding. They demonstrate both positive attitudes and commitment to the process, although some negative attitudes do prevail. Approaches to planning, budgeting for and accessing training at management level are not yet highly developed. The types of training and numbers attending does not always equate with what is desired and actually needed for settings.

Barriers such as cost, time, transport and supply cover impinge on access to training opportunities. The lack of alternative approaches explored by managers / owners suggest a lack of status given to training and development e.g. training budgets and in-service training days. This area for development will be focussed on in greater depth by 'The Partnership'.

Practitioners felt that the training opportunities they attended were appropriate to their needs. However discussion arising through interviews indicated a feeling that further development at degree level was unattainable, contrary to the positive take up of the Early Childhood Studies degree. The research also raised questions about practitioners' perceptions and understanding of professionalism and the need for a clearer definition at national level.

REFERENCES

Abbot, L and Hevey, D (2001) in Pugh G. (ed) (2001) 'Contemporary Issues in the Early Years' (3rd edn) London: Paul Chapman.

Ball C, (1994) 'Start Right: The Importance of Early Learning' London Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce.

Bell J, (1999) 'Doing Your Research Project' (3rd edn) Suffolk: Open University Press.

British Educational Research Association, Early Years Special Interest Group (2003) 'Early Years Research: Pedagogy, Curriculum and Adult Roles, Training and Professionalism' Nottingham: BERA

Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K, (2003) 'Research Methods in Education' (5th edn) London: Routledge Falmer.

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) DfEE & QCA

David T, (1990) 'Under Five – Under Educated?'. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Drury R, Millar L & Campbell R (2000) 'Looking at Early Years Education and Care' London: David Fulton.

Menmuir, J and Hughes A. (1988) 'Developing Professionalism in Early Years Staff'' Early Years – An International Journal of Research and Development. Vol 19 No 1

Oberhuemer, P and Ulich, M. (1997) ' Staff in Early Childhood Services: Patterns of Training and Provision in the European Union Countries'. European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, Vol 5, No 1

Penn H. and McQuail, S. (1998) 'Childcare as a Gendered Occupation.' Research reports No 23. London. DfEE.

Pugh G. (2001) 'Contemporary Issues in the Early Years' (3rd edn) London: Paul Chapman.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (1999 b) 'Early Years Education, Childcare and Playwork: A framework of nationally accredited qualifications'. Suffolk: Qualifications

and Curriculum Authority Publications.

Sellitz et al (1962) cited in Bell J, (1999) 'Doing Your Research Project' (3rd edn) Suffolk: Open University Press.

Sure Start Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership in Warwickshire, (2004-2006) 'Strategic Plan Summary'. Warwickshire County Council.

Sylva, K. (2003) 'Using systematic Observations to Identify Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years' Warwickshire Early Years Conference. 28.3.03 – Key Note Speaker notes.www.dfes.gov.uk/research
http://www.ioe.ac.uk/cdl/eppe/

Physical Activity and Body Composition in Young Children

Simon Pinfield, Lisa Mangan, Stephen Lodge and Melissa Broderick

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships between body composition and physical activity of a selected sample of British Primary School children. The study also assessed gender differences in physical activity and body composition amongst this group of children. Twenty two children aged 9-11 participated in the study over three days (one weekend day and two weekdays). Body composition was assessed using air-displacement plethysmography and physical activity was determined using heart rate monitoring. The correlation results indicated that there was no significant relationship between body composition and physical activity ($r = -.404$, $p = .070$). The results of the Independent Samples t-test indicated no significant difference between boys and girls in body composition ($t19 = -1.306$, $p = .207$) or physical activity ($t20 = -.579$, $p = .569$). Only 27 percent of children met the recommended guidelines for daily physical activity. However, this was only achieved on one day out of the three days of monitoring. Such low level of physical activity amongst primary school children is a cause for concern.

KEYWORDS

Heart rate, Obesity, Children, Physical activity

Introduction

Research into physical activity and body composition has been given greater importance in recent years with the continuing rise in obesity amongst adults and children populations. Obesity levels and physical activity participation are factors that appear to track from childhood into adulthood, and therefore children have been the focus of recent research on physical activity and obesity.

Obesity is regarded as a condition in which a person has excessive amounts of body fat. This nutritional disease is the fastest growing medical epidemic which has been linked to ailments such as coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes and some cancers (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention 'CDC', 2005). According to Wilson and Reilly (2005), children who suffer from obesity may be at risk for other ailments such as glucose intolerance and asthma, and therefore childhood obesity should not be deemed an aesthetic problem.

One of the main identified reasons for obesity is the decline in physical activity. According to the World Health Organisation 'WHO' (2002) 60 percent of the world's population are inactive and this is specifically the case amongst girls and women. Physical inactivity contributes largely to ill health, and its relationship with diseases such as obesity, heart disease and cancer have been widely documented (WHO, 2002).

Related Literature

The Physical activity levels of children have been a major cause for concern over the past two decades. Davison and Birch (2001) describe how the amount of overweight children has doubled over the last twenty years. The major increase in obesity and other weight related ailments has given grave cause for concern, as overweight children increase their risk of developing obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease and other ailments during adulthood.

Kelly (2000) argued that the risk factors for coronary heart disease begin in childhood. The relationship between levels of physical activity and body weight is a contested area, while some authors support a strong positive correlation between the two areas (Kelly, 2000), others argue that there is not sufficient evidence to support the claims (Armstrong et al, 2000). Physical activity in childhood does have benefits including the adoption of good exercise habits which generally persist into adulthood, and therefore elicit the health benefits that come with them including the regulation of body weight and the prevention of obesity (Goran and Treuth, 2001; Kelly, 2000).

Between the years 1984-1998, the occurrence of overweight children in the U.K. rose from 8 percent to 20 percent (Lobstein and Frelut, 2003). The cause of this rapid increase needs to be uncovered and eliminated in order to improve the health and welfare of the youth population. Davison and Birch (2001) suggest that the increased occurrences of sedentary behaviour such as television viewing and computer game play have led to the massive increase in overweight children. However, other factors need to be taken into account such as energy and calorie intake, regardless of energy expenditure (WHO, 2002). Fox (2004) described how a combination of healthy food and adequate daily physical activity is the best approach to a healthy lifestyle.

Recommended Levels of Physical Activity

The Health Education Authority 'HEA' (1998) guidelines recommend that all young people should engage in at least one hour of moderate intensity exercise per day, and also should engage in activities to enhance bone and muscle strength and flexibility at least twice a week. However, according to the WHO (2002), 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per day should be sufficient which similar to the minimum recommendations

set by the HEA (1998). Armstrong et al (1997) state that moderate intensity exercise in children is a measure of 139 BPM or more, which is the equivalent heart rate attained during a brisk walk.

Numerous research studies have been carried out on the physical activity levels of children. In 1998 Armstrong and Van Mechelen reviewed a number of studies involving heart rate monitoring over three and four day periods. Young people's activity levels are characterised by short bouts of exercise rather than sustained continuous exercise and therefore, heart rate readings above 139 bpm for five minutes or more duration can be classified as a physical activity bout (Armstrong and Welsman, 1997).

Most studies have found that girls are significantly less active than boys (Armstrong et al, 1998). Armstrong et al (2000) found that only 33 percent of boys compared to 86 percent of girls did not register a 10-minute sustained period of moderate intensity (>139 bpm) while 76 percent of boys and 100 percent of girls failed to reach the vigorous heart rate band (> 159 bpm), and therefore, did not reach the recommended guidelines. However, this study had a small sample group (N=35) with a larger number of boys (21) than girls (14), while it was also based in Hong Kong where social and cultural diversities may have contributed to these gender differences.

Assessment of Physical Activity

The assessment of physical activity, especially in children, can be a difficult task. Armstrong and Welsman (1997) describe how various objective measurements such as heart rate monitoring, accelerometers, pedometers, the doubly labelled water method and indirect calorimetry can be used to determine physical activity levels. However, the association between excess body fatness and level of physical activity is imprecise because of the inconsistencies in measurement techniques (Powell et al, 2002). Different measurement techniques possess their own specific advantages and disadvantages, and cost, availability of equipment and of facilities will determine the best measurement techniques to use (Dale et al, 2002; Armstrong, 1998).

In order to assess habitual physical activity in children the minimum number of monitoring days has been defined as three days, which must include a weekend day (Armstrong, 1998). Trost (2001) describes how monitoring across the weekend allows for measurement of potential differences in behaviour and helps to give a better insight into the physical activity levels of children.

Heart rate monitoring is not a direct measure of physical activity, but is an indicator of the stresses placed on the cardiopulmonary system during exercise (Armstrong, 1998). The use of heart rate monitors for assessing physical activity is useful, as there is a linear relationship between heart rate and work rate, especially during moderate intensity activity (Heyward, 2002). Heart rate is a practical indicator of intensity of exercise while

it also displays changes in physiological adaptations during exercise (Laukkanen and Virtanen, 1998). Vuori (1998) describes how heart rate is also a useful indicator of intensity because of its known relationship to exercise intensity and cardiac strain. However, authors suggest that heart rate can vary due to external factors such as environmental temperature, emotion, hydration levels and excitement (Durant and Baranowski, 1993), while heart rate response also lags behind changes in movement, which may cause difficulties when analysing data (Trost, 2001). Armstrong (1998) describes how the use of heart rate monitoring provides patterns of physical activity, and from this frequency, intensity and length of exercise time can be established. Heart rate monitoring therefore provides a relatively clear marker of physical activity levels and energy expenditure.

Assessment of Body Composition

Heyward (2002) stated that body composition refers to the chemical composition of the body. Various component models have been used to determine body composition, but the most commonly applied method is the two-component model, which distinguishes between fat and fat free mass. The complexity of determining body composition has been well documented and various methods such as hydrostatic weighing and Bod Pod, skinfold measurements, bioelectric impedance analysis and near infrared interactance have been successfully used in research (Eston and Reilly, 2001).

Various research studies have aimed to cross-validate methods of body composition assessment. The commonly applied methods include Hydrostatic Weighing, Dual-Energy X-Ray Absorpotiometry 'DEXA, Air displacement plethysmography, Skinfold thickness, Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis and Near Infrared Interactance. The use of Air Displacement Plethysmography is a relatively new method compared to other methods. It allows a quick and easy test, which is comfortable and non-invasive to subjects (Fields et al, 2002). Previous densitometry measurements such as hydrostatic weighing were inconvenient to certain subjects such as the elderly and children. The Bod Pod has helped to improve densitometry measurements in paediatric populations (Fields et al, 2002). Eston and Reilly (2001) describe how the Bod Pod correlates highly with other techniques such as hydrostatic weighing and is highly valid.

In a study by Fields and Goran (2000) air displacement plethysmography was the only technique out of Hydrostatic Weighing, DEXA and Total Body Water that could accurately estimate fat mass in 9 to 14 year-old children. During recent research the Bod Pod has been found to be valid compared to other measurements. Fields et al (2002) describes how the Bod Pod measurements were within one percent of Hydrostatic weighing measurements in children, compared to DEXA scoring two percent in the same study. Therefore, the Bod Pod seems to be a very efficient means of estimating body composition, especially in children.

The rising occurrence of obese and overweight children in the U.K. and around the world has been described as an epidemic. Various factors, such as physical activity levels, energy intake, metabolic rates, genetics and habitual activities among others, have all been attributed to children's growing weight levels. The impact of lack of physical activity on percentage body fat has been documented; however, the evidence shows that physical activity is not the only aspect of lifestyle that contributes to increased body fatness (Harro and Riddoch, 2000). Nevertheless, the health benefits that can be gained from physical activity are essential to young children (Armstrong et al, 1998).

The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between physical activity and body composition of young children. The findings from such a study may prove to be useful in planning intervention strategies to combat obesity.

Methodology

Subjects and procedures

Testing took place in two West Midland's primary schools and involved 22 children, 10 girls and 12 boys. The mean age of the children was 9.9 years ± .83 years. Letters explaining the nature of the study and including the consent forms were sent by the research team to the parents/guardians through the schools' head teachers. Interested parents were invited to attend a meeting in school with the research team to clarify the procedures and respond to any queries or concerns they may have. Prior to any testing, written informed consent was obtained from the parents/guardians of all participating children as well as the assent of the children themselves. This research was approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

The children wore the heart rate monitors for three days, two weekdays and one weekend day. The heart rate monitors were fitted approximately 8:00 am and collected at approximately 8:00 pm. The children were also asked to fill out a daily activity diary sheets for the days that they were wearing heart rate monitors to establish the nature of activities they were involved in at a particular time of the day.

Prior to testing, the heart rate monitors were set to record at 60-second intervals. Each heart rate monitor was labelled with a number, and this number was recorded next to the individual child's name on a tracking sheet. This helped the researchers to be more efficient when fitting the heart rate monitors; it allowed data to remain anonymous while it also helped the researchers to identify the monitors when collected in the evenings.

On the first days of testing, the monitors were fitted and children were informed as to what behaviours were likely to interfere with recordings. They were also advised on procedures, should they need to take them off for water based activities such as swimming or bathing. The daily activity diary sheets were also handed out, and again these were explained to the children.

Measurements

Children's physical activity levels were monitored using heart rate telemetry (Polar Vantage XL and the Polar Accurex, USA). All activities eliciting 139 bpm or above were recorded minute by minute (139 bpm is commonly used to indicate moderate intensity exercise in children that brings about desirable health benefits, Armstrong et al., 1998). The body composition assessment was carried out through the use of air displacement technique (Bod Pod, USA). Each child involved in the study visited Newman College Human Performance Laboratory where their percentage body fat and lean body mass were recorded. Children were accompanied by parents and teachers.

Once the three-day recordings had been collected the heart rate data was downloaded using a Polar Interface and laptop. The researcher then analysed the information for bouts of sustained physical activity of 5, 10 and 15 minutes.

In order to assess body composition children were asked to wear a swimsuit and swimming cap and to take off any jewellery, glasses or clothing. The height of children was measured prior to entering the Bod Pod (using Leicester height measure, SECA, UK). The procedure was explained to each child prior to the test. Three 30-second tests were performed and the door was opened at the end of each test in order to calibrate the air volume of the chamber. The children were advised to remain as still as possible, refrain from sudden movements and to breathe normally.

Statistical analysis

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 13). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation tests were carried out to determine the relationships between percentage body fat and physical activity levels. Independent t-tests were carried out to assess differences between boys and girls. Descriptive statistics were also used to analyse physical activity levels of the children.

Results

The results from the heart rate monitoring revealed that only six (27 percent) of the 22 children that took part in the study managed to complete 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on one of the three days of monitoring (Figure. 1).

Fig 1 - The percentage of child participants meeting the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity on one day of testing.
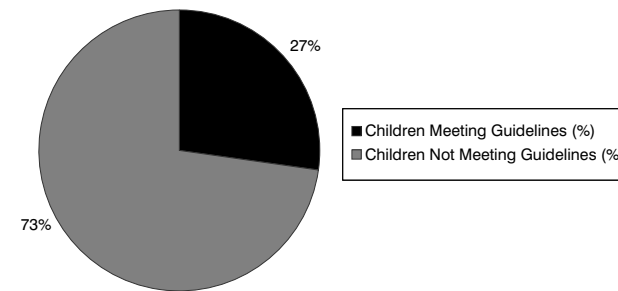
The results of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient suggest that there is no significant relationship between percentage body fat and the average minutes spent at or above 139 bpm (moderate to vigorous physical activity) each day (r = -.404, p = .070). This therefore suggests that percentage body fat is not related to the average amount of time a child spends performing moderate to vigorous activity.

Table 1 - The Mean and Standard Deviations for the group's percentage body fat and average minutes spent in moderate to vigorous activity.

	Mean	**S.D.**
% Body Fat	23.08	9.04
Average Minutes	21.70	20.18

The mean results for the percentage body fat suggest that the children are above the norms set for children's of this age (10 – 20 percent for boys, and 15 – 25 percent for girls, Lohman, 1992). The standard deviation results for the percentage body fat suggest that there is as much as nine percent variance between the participants (S.D. = 9.04 percent).

The mean results for the average minutes spent performing moderate to vigorous activity suggest that a very small amount of the day is spent performing such activity (mean = 21.70 minutes). The standard deviation results for the average time spent performing moderate to vigorous activity suggest that there is much variation in the time spent

performing such activity (S.D. = 20.18 minutes).

The results of the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient suggest that there is no significant relationship between percentage body fat and the percentage of time spent per day at or above 139 bpm (moderate to vigorous physical activity) each day (r = -.401, p = .071). This suggests that percentage body fat is not related to the percentage of time a child spends performing moderate to vigorous activity per day.

Table 2 -The Mean and Standard Deviations for the group's percentage of time spent performing moderate to vigorous activity per day.

	Mean	S.D.
% Per Day	4.21	3.80

The mean results for the percentage of time spent performing moderate to vigorous activity per day suggest that the children are spending very little time performing such activity (mean = 4.21 percent). The standard deviation results for the percentage of time spent performing moderate to vigorous activity suggest that there is very little deviation between the participants and that even those participants who are more active are still spending very little time performing moderate to vigorous activity (S.D. = 3.80 percent).

The results of the Independent Samples t-test suggest that there is no significant difference between males and females in terms of percentage body fat (t19 = -1.306, p = .207).

Table 3 - The Mean and Standard Deviations for males and females percentage body fat.

	Mean	S.D.
Males	20.88	6.27
Females	26.00	11.55

The mean results for the percentage body fat suggest that females have a higher percentage body fat at this age than males (26.00 percent and 20.88 percent for females and males respectively). The standard deviation results for the percentage body fat suggest that females have a much higher variation within the group of percentage body

fat than males (female S.D. = 11.55, male S.D. = 6.27).

The results of the Independent Samples t-test suggest that there is no significant difference between males and females in terms of average minutes spent performing moderate to vigorous activity.

Table 4 - The Mean and Standard Deviations for males and females average time spent performing moderate to vigorous activity per day (minutes).

	Mean	S.D.
Males	19.59	20.42
Females	24.73	20.64

The calculated average time spent performing moderate to vigorous activity suggests that females spend a longer time performing such physical activity at this age than males (24.73 and 19.59 minutes for females and males respectively).

Children's Daily Physical Activity

Figure 2 represents the mean time spent each day performing physical activity.

Figure 2 - The Mean Time Spent Performing Moderate to Vigorous Activity During Each of the 3 Days of Monitoring.
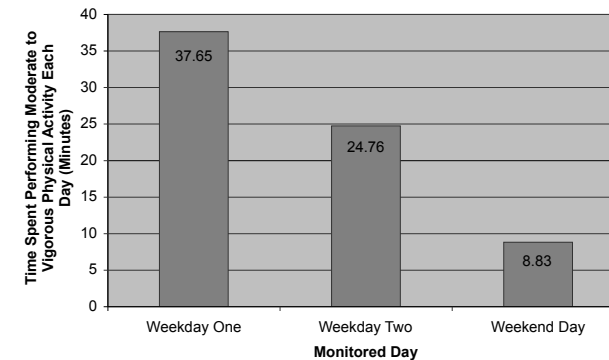
The greatest amount of time spent performing moderate to vigorous physical activity was on the first day of monitoring (mean = 37.65 minutes), the second greatest time spent performing such activity was on the second day of monitoring (mean = 24.76 minutes), and the least amount of time performing such activity was on the weekend day

of monitoring (mean = 8.83 minutes).

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that there is no significant relationship between physical activity and body composition of young children. This result concurs with previous research findings (Armstrong et al, 2000; Armstrong et al, 1990). It was evident that there was a high degree of variance between the children's physical activity levels and also their percent of body fat. The children were demonstrated a low level of physical activity as the appeared to be engaged primarily in sedentary activities which supports previous research (Mota et al, 2006; Fisher et al, 2005).

There may be several reasons as to why physical activity was not correlated to body composition. It is believed that body composition is multifactorial and is directly influenced through a variety of factors favouring an imbalance between energy consumed and expanded. The major influences include genetic predisposition, physical activity levels and dietary regime (Mota et al, 2006).

Some children will have a tendency to gain and store fat despite levels of physical activity equivalent to their peers, and this could be attributed to a genetic predisposition (American Obesity Association, 2006). An imbalance in the hormone leptin, which acts on brain cells to regulate food intake and body weight, is believed to be one genetic disorder that can be credited to increased levels of body fatness (Friedman, 2000). It has also been postulated that genes exist that set levels of metabolic activity and control energy intake (Freedson and Melanson, 1996), and low resting metabolic rate has been shown to be an inherited trait that contributes to higher levels of body fatness in families (Woteki and Filer, 1995). Therefore, those children who have a lower resting metabolic rate than their peers would have higher levels of body fatness despite the same levels of physical activity. However, although genetic factors have an impact on individual body fat levels, the rising prevalence of genetically stable populations indicate that environmental and behavioural factors underlie increased body fatness (Ebbeling et al, 2002).

It has been shown children's physical activity is significantly influenced by the time of year and that children are more active in summer compared to winter (Fisher et al, 2005). This study was conducted in the winter months of February and March; therefore the seasonality may have affected the physical activity levels by decreasing opportunities through darker nights and unpleasant weather. Some of the children may engage more in sedentary activities throughout the winter and be more active throughout the summer, whereas some of children may prefer sedentary activities throughout the year. Therefore, it may be that those children with lower levels of body fat are more active throughout the summer compared to those with higher body fat levels. However, there is increasing evidence that contemporary children are very sedentary and that seasonality may only

be a limited factor in body fatness levels (Fisher et al, 2005).

As incomes rise and communities become more urban, diets high in complex carbohydrates give way to diets high in saturated fats and sugars (WHO, 2006), and it may be that diet is the contributing factor to levels of body fat. British children are subjected to ten food commercials per hour of television viewing, mostly for fast food, soft drinks and sweets (Ebbeling et al, 2002) and as most of the children in this study were engaged largely in watching television they would be susceptible to these commercials. A healthy environment that encourages the consumption of nutritious food and regular physical activity is important in maintaining healthy levels of body fat (American Obesity Association, 2006). However, in today's society the bombardment of food advertising, the provision of large food portions and the availability of fast foods, means that people are often battling against the tendency to eat (James et al, 2001). Due to the fact that physical activity levels were relatively low across all children and have not met the daily recommended physical activity, it is a reasonable to assume that other factors such as diet may have an impact on body composition.

Physical Activity and the Recommended Guidelines

The preferred recommended levels of physical activity for primary school children as set by the HEA (1998), is 60 minutes of moderate physical activity per day with a minimum requirement of 30 minutes. The results of this study show that none of the children meet either of the two guidelines, with boys' average of 20 minutes and girls' average of 26 minutes per day. Some of the children actually exceeded the daily requirements on specific days; however none of them actually managed to record 60 minutes of moderate activity on all three days. These findings lend support to previous research that found that few children experience the equivalent of a daily 20 minute period of moderate physical activity (Armstrong et al, 2000). Only one of the children managed to exceed more than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on all three days, with a further five children exceeding 30 minutes on two of the days monitored.

It is interesting to observe that on the first day of monitoring the total number of minutes in moderate physical activity for the group was 753 minutes, on day two the total was 520 minutes and on day three the total was 159 minutes. The first two days represent the school days and the third day was the weekend, so it is possible to see that there was far more physical activity during the weekdays when the children were at school. The large difference in minutes from day one and day two may be explained through the reactivity of children to the novelty of wearing the heart rate monitors on day one. With more than three quarters of the children not reporting any minutes in moderate physical activity during the weekend day, it could be assumed that the children lead very sedentary lifestyle outside of school. It should also be noted that with so many reporting no minutes, there could have been a problem in the experimental design.

Gender Differences

The results of this study indicated that there are no significant differences between boys and girls with regards to body fatness and physical activity levels. Further analysis of the results indicated that boys are leaner than girls with an average of 20.9 percent and 26 percent respectively. This is not a surprising as girls tend to have a higher percentage of body fat than boys (Lohman, 1992). These percentages do however exceed the norms of this age group for healthy body fat.

The physical activities results also indicated that there was no significant difference between boys and girls. However, boys averaged 19.6 minutes of moderate physical activity per day while girls averaged 25.7 minutes. Although these differences were not statistically significant, they do contradict previous research findings that indicate girls were less active than boys (Ridgers and Stratton, 2005; Loucaides et al, 2004; Welk et al, 2004; Macfarlane and Tung Kwong, 2003).

Parental Influences

On analysing the activity dairies there was an obvious pattern of sedentary activities taking place between all of the children. Some of the diaries also note some interesting information regarding parental influences, for instance some of the diaries noted activities such as 'helped mom', 'sat chatting to mom' and 'went shopping with mom'. Of course these are activities that children of this age will undoubtedly undertake, and that due to their age parents will be wearier of them undertaking activities on their own. However, parents need to provide their children with positive experiences and opportunities for physical activities to take place. It has been shown that children of active parents are more likely to engage in physical activity and to maintain that participation, than those of inactive parents (Welk et al, 2003).

School Influences

The physical activity levels of the children observed in this study are relatively low, although they probably do not misrepresent those of other children (Armstrong et al, 2000). It was observed that the children are engaging in more physical activity during the weekdays compared to the weekend, and this could mean that the children get more opportunities to do so at school. However, during the weekdays the children were still not engaging in the recommended levels of physical activity. The school system, therefore, needs to take responsibility and provide opportunities for physical activity to take place. Research has shown that the school setting can make valuable contributions to the recommended 60 minutes of moderate physical activity per day, through recess and structured fitness breaks (Ridgers and Stratton, 2005). Research has also shown that enjoyment levels of PE classes are low amongst primary school children, and that children spend an average of two to four minutes of PE lessons in moderate intensity

activity (Macfarlane and Tung Kwong, 2003). It would be a common sense assumption that by increasing enjoyment levels and the opportunities to engage in moderate physical activity during PE, the number of children meeting the 60 minutes of physical activity per day would increase.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that there was no significant relationship between physical activity and body composition within this sample of young children. The results also indicate that children are not meeting the required recommendations of 60 minutes moderate physical activity per day. These results echoed the findings of previous research (Armstrong et al, 2000). The results also revealed no significant differences between boys and girls in terms of body composition or physical activity levels. Due to the fact that the children are not engaging in sufficient amounts of physical activity per day, parents, educators and health promoters need to identify strategies that focus on the promotion of physical activity. As there was no relationship found between physical activity and body composition, it is believed that this might have been the results of other confounding variables that were not within the remit of this study such as dietary habits and other aspects of children's lifestyle.

Limitations of present study

The following limitations may have impacted on the findings of this study: Firstly, it should be recognised that heart rate can be affected by many factors including emotional and psychological state and not only by energy expenditure. Secondly, there were a number of incidents when the heart rate monitors stopped recording. This could have been due to the size of the child affecting the effectiveness of the transmitter. Thirdly, it should also be noted that heart rate monitoring is a reactive process, and children may alter their behaviour accordingly. Nevertheless, heart rate monitoring is a widely used, valid and socially acceptable method of measuring physical activity in paediatric populations (Ridgers and Stratton, 2005). One final limitation may have been the relatively small sample of children used in this study.

Recommendations for future research

Future studies should consider looking at other variables that may have a significant impact on children's physical activity and obesity such as diet, environmental factors (particularly built environment) and gender differences in some detail. They may also consider involving a larger sample of children in the study.

REFERENCES

American Obesity Association (2006). Causes of Obesity. http://www.obesity.org/education/causes.shtml (Accessed 11/1/2006).

Armstrong, N. (1998). Young people's physical activity patterns as assessed by heart rate monitoring. Journal of Sport Sciences 16: 9-16.

Armstrong, N. and Van Mechelen, W. (1998) Are Young People Fit and Active? In S. Biddle, J. Sallis and N. Cavill (Eds) Young and Active? Young people and health-enhancing physical activity - evidence and implications. London: Health Education Authority.

Armstrong, N. and Welsman, J. (1997) Young People and Physical Activity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Armstrong, N., Welsman, J. R. and Kirby, B. J. (2000). Longitudinal changes in 11-13 year olds' physical activity. Acta Paediatrica, 89: 775-780.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2005). Overweight and Obesity [online]. Available from: www.cdc/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity.htm. [Accessed 05/01/06].

Dale, D., Welk, G. I. and Matthews, C. E. (2002). Methods for Assessing Physical Activity and Challenges for Research (19-34). In G. J. Welk (Editor). Physical Activity Assessments for Health-Related Research. Leeds: Human Kinetics.

Davison, K.K. and Birch, L.L. (2001) Childhood Overweight: A Contextual Model and Recommendations for Future Research. Obesity Reviews, 2: 159-171.

Durant, R.H. and Baranowski, T. (1993) Reliability and Variability of Heart Rate Monitoring in Children. Medicine and Science in Sport and Exercise, 25: 389-395.

Ebbeling, C. B., Pawlak, D. B. and Ludwig, D,S. (2002) Childhood Obesity: Public Health Crisis, Common Sense Cure. The Lancet, 360: 473-482.

Eston, R. and Reilly, T. (2001) Kinanthropometry and Exercise Physiology Laboratory Manual: Tests, Procedures and Data, Volume 2: Exercise Physiology (2nd Ed.). London: Routledge.

Fields, D. A. and Goran, M. I. (2000) Body composition techniques and the four-compartment model in children. Journal of Applied Physiology, 89: 613-620.

Fields, D. A,, Goran, M. I and Mccrory, M. A. (2002). Body-composition assessment via air-displacement plethysmography in adults and children: a review. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 75: 453-467.

Fisher, A., Reilly, J. J,, Montgomery, C., Kelly, L. A., Williamson, A., Jackson, D. M., Paton, J., Y. Fogelholm, M. and Kukkonen-Harjula, K. (2000) Does Physical Activity Prevent Weight Gain- A Systematic Review. Obesity Reviews, 1: 95-111

Fox, K. R. (2004) Childhood Obesity and the Role of Physical Activity. Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health, 124: 34-39

Freedson, P. S. and Melanson, E.L. (1996). Measuring Physical Activity. In Docherty, D. (1996). Measurement in Pediatric Exercise Science. Champaign, IL, Human Kinetics.

Friedman, J.M (2000). Obesity in the New Millennium. Nature 404: 632-634

Goran, M.I. and Treuth, M.S. (2001) Energy Expenditure, Physical Activity and Obesity in Children. Pediatric Clinics of North America, 48:931-953

Harro, M. and Riddoch, C. (2000) Physical Activity. In N. Armstrong and Van Mechelen (Eds.) Paediatric Exercise Science and Medicine. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Health Education Authority (1998) Young and Active? Policy Framework for young People and Health-Enhancing Physical Activity. London: HEA.

Heyward, V.H. (2002) Advanced Fitness Assessment and Exercise Prescription (4th Ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Kelly, L. E. (2000) Patters of Physical Activity in 9-10 Year Old American Children as Measured By Heart Rate Monitoring. Pediatric Exercise Science, 12: 101-110

Laukkanen, R.M.T. and Virtanen, P.K. (1998) Heart Rate Monitors: State of the Art. Journal of Sports Sciences, 16: S3-S7

Lobstein, T. and Frelut, M.L. (2003) Prevalence of Overweight Among Children in Europe. Obesity Reviews, 4: 195-200

Lohman, T.G. (1992) Advances in Body Composition Assessment. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Loucaides, C.A., Chedzoy, S. M., Bennett, N. and Walshe, K. (2004). Correlates of Physical Activity in a Cypriot Sample of Sixth-Grade Children. Pediatric Exercise Science 16: 25-36.

Mcfarlane. D. and Tung Kwong, W. (2003). Children's Heart Rates and Enjoyment Levels During PE Classes in Hong Kong Primary Schools. Pediatric Exercise Science 15; 179-190.

Mota, J, Ribeiro, J, Santos, M.P. and Gomes, H. (2006). Obesity, Physical Activity, Computer Use, and TV Viewing in Portuguese Adolescents. Pediatric Exercise Science 17: 113-121.

Powell, S. M., Rowlands, A. V. and Eston, R.G. (2002) The Relationship between Habitual

Physical Activity and Body Adiposity in 8- to 11-year old Children. Journal of Sports Sciences, 20: 41.

Ridgers, N.D. and Stratton, G. (2005). Physical Activity During School Recess: The Liverpool Sporting Playground Project. Pediatric Exercise Science 17: 281-290.

Trost, S.G. (2001) Objective Measurement of Physical Activity in Youth: Current Issues, Future Directions. Exercise & Sport Sciences Reviews, 29:32-36.

Welk, G.J., Schaben, J.A. and Shelley, M. (2004). Physical Activity and Physical Fitness in Children Schooled at Home and Children Attending Public Schools. Pediatric Exercise Science 16: 310-323.

Welk; G. Wood, K and Morss, G. (2003). Parental Influences on Physical Activity in Children: An Exploration of Potential Mechanisms. Pediatric Exercise Science 15; 19-33.

Wilson, D.C. and Reilly, J.J. (2005) Obesity in Childhood – Much more than a Cosmetic Problem [online] Available from: http://www.behindthemedicalheadlines.com/articles/childhood_obesity.shtml [Accessed 04/01/06]

Vuori, I. (1998). Experiences of heart rate monitoring in observational and interventional studies. Journal of Sport Sciences 16: 25-30

Woteki, C. E. and Filer, L. J. (1995) Dietary Issues and Nutritional Status of American Children. In Cheung, L.W.Y and Richmond, J.B (1995) Child Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity. Champaign, IL, Human Kinetics.

World Health Organisation. (2006). Obesity and Overweight. http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/facts/obesity.html (Accessed 15/1/06)

World Health Organisation. (2002) Physical Activity [online]. Available From: http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/facts/pa/en/ [Accessed 11/04/06]

Shifting the balance?
Contemporary perspectives on authority and faith in two early non-Canonical gospels

Jeremy Bevan

ABSTRACT

This edited version of my MA dissertation analyses contemporary claims for the value of *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Mary* in the light of growing interest in early Christian texts outside the New Testament, and of contemporary suspicion of so-called 'canonical' norms of Scripture. I offer an analysis of the texts within a shifting framework of orthodoxy/heresy and 'gnosticism', and examine their views on authority and the Christian life, demonstrating that they exhibit considerable continuity with more 'mainstream' texts. The Gospels' contemporary use within a structured, church-community setting is advocated as a counterbalance to the fashion for their more private 'esoteric' use.

KEYWORDS

Gospel, Mary, Thomas, orthodoxy/heresy, 'gnosticism'

1. Introduction

The Gospel of Thomas. *The Gospel of Mary*. Rediscovered gospels such as these are a source of interest, even fascination, in our culture at the moment. But how do we assess the value to contemporary Western Christianity of ancient texts like these, especially when they lie outside the 'boundaries' of the 'Canon' of Scripture we're familiar with ? As we search for evaluative criteria, possible 'boundary markers' include the answers to questions like: are these works 'orthodox' or 'heretical' ? Are they in continuity with 'the apostolic traditions' and received models or ideas of church and early Christianity, or not?

However, as awareness of the findings from Nag Hammadi and elsewhere has pervaded popular consciousness (*The Gospel of Thomas* quoted in the film Stigmata; *The Gospel of Mary* and *The Gospel of Philip* cited and discussed in The Da Vinci Code), some of these (re)discovered writings have begun to raise questions about the accuracy and completeness of our perceptions of the nature of early Christianity. Such questions cross-fertilise with contemporary preoccupations about what it now means, if anything,

for some ancient texts to have 'authority' and others not to; and more broadly, whether in this context there can be clear-cut 'right' and 'wrong', acceptable and unacceptable foundational accounts of Christianity. This nexus produces a discourse in which 'suppressed' viewpoints start to challenge long-established assertions and assumptions about the nature of faith and church. Binary oppositions such as orthodoxy/heresy, Gnostic/Christian, tradition/innovation and male authority/female submissiveness are blurred by this discourse, leading to the possibility of recovering alternative voices and perspectives.

This paper seeks partly to examine what contemporary scholarship thinks those voices and perspectives might be; and to examine whether there is a realistic prospect of shifting further the balance of our perceptions so that a more coherent case for using Gospels such as these in shaping the future character of our faith can be made.

2. Shifting the scenery – the changing framework for discussion of early Christian texts

2.1 Terminology – solid ground?
Ancient authorities on orthodoxy and heresy

It is important to define a little more precisely the meaning behind the terms 'orthodoxy', 'heresy' and 'authority' in the context of the early church. It is Irenaeus who establishes a proto-Canon resting squarely on the 'four-formed gospel' and begins to define the content, and therefore the boundaries, of faith - partly in response to a rash of alternative viewpoints being expressed by Marcion, the 'gnostic' writers and the Montanists in particular. The Scriptures Irenaeus approves are those which acknowledge the uniqueness of Jesus as wholly transcending human thought and experience, as God's Word through whom all things were made. This is in contrast to his opponents, whom he charges with, effectively, bending Jesus into a very human shape borne of nothing more than their over-fertile imaginations, which produces a false 'knowledge' of Jesus: this is the nub of what 'heresy' is for Irenaeus, and later rhetorical use of the dismissive term 'gnostic' can be traced to his major surviving work, 'The Unmasking and Overthrow of the Falsely-named 'Knowledge' (= 'Gnosis') – usually referred to in English as 'Against the Heresies'.

Orthodoxy, then, is about believing in and following the Jesus of the four 'canonical' gospels. For Irenaeus, this is the core of a 'canon of truth' that would later become our creeds. At about the same time, Tertullian gives a clear indication of the need to establish a source of authority for the church with his description of the importance of harking back to the 'genuine writings' of the apostles and of the role of tradition in the church.

The word 'canon' derives from the common meaning of the Greek word kan_n,

meaning a measuring rod or rule, and came to mean, effectively, those sacred writings or scriptures that 'measured up' to particular criteria. This of course implied that the writings had to be circulating in communities before they could be acknowledged as canonical, and a tradition of use over time was one of the criteria for making certain works canonical. Despite Irenaeus' proto-Canon, it was not until 367 CE, with Athanasius' 39th Festal Letter, that a fixed canon of the New Testament was promulgated. Furthermore, findings at Nag Hammadi, Qumran and elsewhere suggest strongly that, in both Jewish and Christian circles, the notion of sacred literature was very wide, with the boundaries between Canon and 'other' literature vastly more fluid than we have been accustomed to thinking, and for much longer than has previously been suspected.

2.2 Terminology – shifting ground: rethinking categories in modern scholarship

The Gospel of Mary, apparently unreferenced in extant ancient Christian texts, was rediscovered in Egypt in 1898; fragments of *The Gospel of Thomas* were found in the late 1890s before a full text (along with further copies of *The Gospel of Mary*) was found at Nag Hammadi in 1945. This was a world characterised (to generalise only slightly) by continued use of the binary oppositions inherited from Irenaeus and Tertullian, such as 'orthodox/heretical' and 'gnostic/Christian'.

The opposition between orthodoxy and heresy was first critically examined by the German scholar Walter Bauer as early as 1934 in his book Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei (original ET 1971 as Orthodoxy and Heresy). Bauer examined the evidence for a plurality of belief and practice region by region in the early church. He took a critical knife to the sources, and in particular Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, arguing that much of the 'historical' evidence has the character of legend. Thus he concluded that there was no neat dividing line between approved and unapproved texts: 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' were 'not yet at all clearly differentiated from each other' as late as the early 3rd century (Bauer, 1972: 59).

Bauer's approach had its limitations, in particular a tendency to construct elaborate theses from what other scholars alleged was near-silence. However, later authors, buoyed by the rediscovered ancient texts that were largely unavailable or unknown to Bauer, have taken up his theme. Karen King reviews his approach, maintaining that 'orthodox' was a matter of interpretation, not a question of clear, simple 'truth' and 'error'. She deconstructs the categories in which ancient authorities like Irenaeus worked, describing how:

- his notions of truth as single and falsehood as multiple or divergent in form allowed him to impose a priori categories of judgment on others' works and practices (ibid., 31);

- the 'heresy' tag permitted an 'insider/outsider' dichotomy, and allowed the 'orthodox' to exploit (real) differences and overlook similarities (the 'heretics', after all, frequently claimed to be Christians) or portray the 'heretics' as superficial imitators (ibid., 24 – 25);

- Irenaeus' characterising of his own preferred texts as 'earlier', in contrast to his opponents' works as 'later', had the effect of privileging the former's 'genealogy' arbitrarily (ibid., 34 & 223).

The search for the 'original' texts that founded the faith has an unfortunate effect, that of portraying the traditors as corruptors, rather than taking their re-workings of origins for what they are: evidence of a praxis of their own. Transmission, King insists, is in itself performative, and tells us of the concerns of the transmitter (ibid., 220 – 229); tradition is therefore not a 'given'. It does not matter, then, if the perspective of *The Gospel of Thomas* and of Mary on Jesus, their understanding of authority, or of what is important to the Christian life diverge from what we are familiar with. What matters is that they give an account of themselves: and on this basis space should be made for consideration of them as texts on their own merits.

2.3 Rethinking 'gnosticism'

King also considers the ways in which the early Christian polemicists' discourse on orthodoxy and heresy has been intertwined with twentieth century categories of scholarship on gnosticism in order to derive a 'master-story' that 'reified a rhetorical category into a historical entity' and so disguise what was in her view a continuum of thought (2003b, 52). The new textual finds have deconstructed this opposition, revealing instead a time of 'grappling and experimentation', rather than unity and clarity, with 'multiple levels of intersection and disjuncture' (ibid., 158 – 9) between supposedly watertight 'Christian' and 'gnostic' categories. Thus, King and Esther de Boer see *The Gospel of Mary* as a Christian work that clearly foregrounds Jesus as an earthly figure with disciples, as in the canonical Gospels, also exhibiting characteristics of both Platonic and Stoic thought-forms. Accordingly, when referring to 'gnosticism' and related terms, I will use quotation marks to indicate that it is a contested category, except when citing writers who use it as an uncontested term.

2.4 Feminist critique and the categories of scholarship

Feminist writers on early Christian texts rely to an extent on historical recontextualisation – that is, re-reading of the text to extract it from its 'known' textual patriarchal context in

order to recover an earlier, supposedly more egalitarian layer, the 'original' context of the early church.

They want to 'expand our historical-critical imagination and religious-communal vision' and in so doing, undo the exclusionary, kyriarchal tendencies of the ruling Canon by 'proliferating and destabilising it' (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1995: 5). This broadening approach is particularly important, in my discussion here, as a corrective to some aspects of scholarly approaches to *The Gospel of Mary*, seen as the only Gospel written in the name of a woman.

By contrast, some more recent feminist approaches to *The Gospel of Mary* lay rather less emphasis on its importance as a marker of egalitarian origins than on its probable use in later contexts as part of an appeal to a different (and contested) source of authority than an orthodox one to validate a certain type of spirituality (see for example Torjesen 1993: 290 – 310). Such approaches provide a surer way of linking feminist concerns with the debate about orthodoxy/heresy and Christianity/'gnosticism', against the backdrop of which some value can perhaps be recovered from a text like *The Gospel of Mary*. Similar arguments apply to *The Gospel of Thomas*, though this is a work that seems in any case more ambiguous towards women per se, and so has not attracted the same degree of attention from feminist theologians. It is squarely within the texts, though, rather than elsewhere, that I find persuasive material to support the overall case I make in the sections that follow.

3. Authority and discipleship in *The Gospel of Mary*

3.1 Introductory remarks

For some scholars, there is little doubt as to the import of the portrayal of Mary in the Gospel that bears her name: it is a straightforward and convincing argument for the legitimacy of women's leadership in the early church (King 2003a, 3). For Esther de Boer, her portrayal in the Gospel and close association with the risen Jesus reinforce the 'apostolic' character of Mary (de Boer, 1997: 6): observe, for example, Mary's first appearance (9: 12 – 17), where she 'greeted them all' and announces that the Saviour's grace will be with them. Are these echoes, felicitous or intended, of apostolic greetings in New Testament letters ?

Marjanen (1996, 224), in a general survey of the portrayal of Mary Magdalene in 'gnostic' texts, states that her role in *The Gospel of Mary* does seem to have 'a clear correspondence in the socio-historical reality of women', though he does not allow that this tallies with any concrete reality giving them similar status in the 'gnostic communities' the work was supposedly 'for'; and even if texts like *The Gospel of Mary* were unambiguous, we do not know how they were 'heard': was it as granting her authority among the hearers, or as

a challenge to the hearers' opponents ? (1996: 29 – 30). There is a downgrading, too, of the New Testament sources themselves as unreliable evidence for 'the truth' about women as leaders. Even de Boer's fairly cautious feminist analysis of her portrayals in the canonical Gospels (1997: 43 – 78) suggests that only John has a favourable view of Mary as a woman, with Luke grudging and ambiguous in admitting that she has some spiritual stature.

The effect of both tendencies combined is to somewhat dehistoricise a debate that arguably depends on persuasive historical evidence if contemporary views about women's role in the church are to stand any hope of being shifted - though King describes feminist historiography as aiming to present a more accurate and complete understanding of the past 'at the forks where historical accuracy meets equality and justice' (1995: 601), suggesting that persuasiveness and historical objectivity are not inextricably linked. In part, of course, the historical uncertainty about 'gnostic' communities and the position of women in them may be an effect of injustice if our lack of information about them is due to deliberate suppression of works that foreground them.

3.2 The authority of spirituality

An alternative approach, now emerging, is a greater focus on the spirituality of the Gospel, to try and read 'out of' it rather than into it; with this approach, one no longer has to posit the Gospel as arising from a historical context where debates about women as leaders were supposedly at their height, whether in a Christian or 'gnostic' setting. It also allows acknowledgement of the diversity of views within second-century texts featuring Mary Magdalene, where appeals to vision experiences she enjoys with Jesus give a range of raisons d'être for faith in Jesus, rather than one single 'model' (on this, see Bovon quoted by King 1995, 620, discussing The Dialogue of the Saviour 134 – 139 and Pistis Sophia 26: 19 - 20). What emerges from this approach is the idea that spirituality, not gender, is the point: 'To join the ranks of 'True Humanity' [as King argues Mary does by virtue of her role in the Gospel] requires critical appraisal and introspection' (King, 1995: 624). Mary Magdalene becomes, once again, the pattern of authoritative, true and faithful discipleship, as Schüssler Fiorenza argues she was intended to be in John's Gospel (1994: 332 – 3). Her role in the 'gnostic' Gospel of Mary and elsewhere is thus in continuity with the widely-acknowledged 'Christian' traditions that John's Gospel appears to represent.

Using this approach, we can discern a number of key features of *The Gospel of Mary* that reveal what makes for authority in the Christian life. One is visionary experience of Jesus (10: 10), which is explicitly commended by the Saviour (10: 14 – 16). Mary is the only one granted this, and it follows on more or less directly from his departure (9: 5), as though to emphasise that Mary is his representative to lead the disciples out of the confusion and doubt into which they immediately fall once he leaves. A 'leader', then, is the one given

special insight into spiritual matters: whether that person is male or not is irrelevant. King asserts that visions were often held to be a particularly powerful means of 'authenticating' the recipient in early Christianity (1995: 602), and it is certainly true that, having received it, Mary speaks without needing the invitation of Peter (18: 1), whereas previously she had only spoken at his invitation (10: 4) (Marjanen, 1996: 111 – 116). Scholars have pointed out how Jesus' death in *The Gospel of Mary* is understood (in full clarity only by her) as the entire basis of a changed relationship to the divine and the way upwards (de Boer, 1997: 123). (This is the import of 'he has prepared us and made us [fully human]' (10: 19 – 20)). Mary's teaching and her leadership role, as they emerge in the second half of the Gospel, are, structurally, authorised by placing her in a position parallel to that of the Saviour in the first part of the work: form, function and content work together, it is argued, to authorise her teaching (King, 2003a: 30 - 36).

The relationship with the Saviour is one where spiritual maturity is judged by what lies within, not externals. Hence, relying on 'rules' (9: 1) – perhaps the type of rules the 'true apostles' were trying to bind the churches with - is evidence of disobedience to the Saviour (de Boer, 2005: 206 and King, 2003a: 84). Perhaps the text can be read as displaying an animus towards 'Peter' and the possibly rule-based view of authority that 'he' represents. If he is like the 'lawgiver' of 9: 3 – 4, Mary is the advocate of grace (9: 16 – 17). She it is who has the power to turn the disciples' hearts to 'the Good' and return them to discussing the Saviour's words (9: 21 – 24). Her role in it underlines the importance of the kingdom as a realm where power is exerted for spiritual freedom, not royal, hierarchical dominion (King, 2003a: 33, 106).

Even knowing nothing of any historical context, we can observe too how the Gospel's ending overtly reprises the theme of Mary as a good and rightful leader. Both the narrator (17: 11 – 15) and Levi (18: 7 – 15) dismiss Peter and Andrew's view that her teaching should be rejected because she is a woman. Levi is the last to speak, so closing the Gospel with an authoritative viewpoint in tune with that of Mary. Furthermore, Levi speaks directly to Peter (18: 6), comparing him to the powers we have just seen Mary vanquish (17: 4 – 7). Levi's reminder that the Saviour 'knows her very well' can be read as a refutation of Andrew's charge that Mary's ideas are borne out of ignorance. It is perhaps not going too far to see his 'loves her more than us' (18: 14 – 15) as a rejoinder to Peter's more hierarchy-minded 'prefer her to us' (17: 22): this is a realm of love, not power.

We have to be careful not to read the references too literally, for we cannot be sure the Peter referred to here is the individual as delineated in the canonical Gospels. But it would seem that the portrayal of Mary offered by the Gospel is not one that argues strongly for her replacing 'Peter' at the apostolic level, since it has little of the form of devices traditionally used to legitimate apostolic authority in the NT. Rather, she is shown as offering an alternative way of leadership and source of authority, one where the inner

presence of the 'seed of true humanity' (King's translation of the Gospel's 'Son of Man'), not some externally conferred authority, is what produces disciples faithful to the Gospel, and where 'peace and rest' (17: 5 – 8), not dominion, lead to overcoming. It might even be the case that Levi's admonition to Peter not to waste time contending with Mary 'as with the powers' sharpens this: perhaps the 'male/female leader' issue has become rather stale, a distraction (as the powers are seen to be earlier in the Gospel) from what's really important.

4. Authority and discipleship in *The Gospel of Thomas*

4.1 Introductory remarks

The Gospel of Thomas is as much, if not more, about a different way of validating authority as it is about a different, competing authority.

There is also, though, a good deal of consonance between Thomas and The Gospel of John, and they may be seen as within one flowing stream, or on a linked trajectory, that joins the canonical and later, more mystical, 'gnostic' approaches (on this, see Robinson, 1997: 31). Richard Valantasis (1997: 18) thus talks about both Thomas and John evidencing a renewal movement in early Christianity in contrast to the rigidifying, 'monoepiscopal' tendencies represented in roughly contemporaneous works such as the letters of Ignatius. As such, both works advocate an open community, with no clear hierarchical leadership structure in contrast to the forms favoured by Ignatius. Both show an awareness of a diversity of forms of the faith (logia 12/13).

4.2 The authority of spirituality

The conception of where authority resides in Thomas is similar in some respects to that of Mary - a concern for the inward spiritual life mediated by the words of Jesus as opposed (perhaps consciously) to an insistence on particular church structures or reliance on forceful argument for particular doctrines claiming to represent the mind of Christ. Stevan Davies has noted that the only 'authority' in the Gospel is the individual her/himself, and holds that logion 1 ('Whoever finds…') gives an open invitation to all to come and 'be amazed' (2005: 31). Antti Marjanen has described the Gospel as having a preoccupation with 'masterless self-identity' (1998c: 181), arguing that it is a gospel where there are in fact no leaders – a posture it adopts consciously (in his view) as a counter to the ascendancy of one very dominant leader in the church: James (though this, of course, is to argue for quite an early date for Thomas). Such themes resonate with contemporary preoccupations about autonomy and self-direction, and go a considerable way to explaining the Gospel's appeal in the Western world today, where once again there is something of a crisis of confidence in spiritual 'authorities' outside the self.

It is precisely here, though, that the notion of where authority lies begins to sit quite awkwardly alongside another contemporary concern, that of feminist theologians for our understanding of the position and role of women in early Christianity. If a work like *The Gospel of Mary* has become something of a rallying point for the cause, there are elements of Thomas (especially logion 114) that threaten at times to put the campaign into reverse. Marjanen maintains that women were an important part of the community's audience, even if the terminology used to describe their role is not a 'happy development' (1998a, 106). Valantasis' fruitful thesis is that authority in the community arises not from a purely negative ascetic practice. This would likely be in any case inaccessible to women, the focus of whose lives in ancient society was perforce predominantly on the material things of 'hearth and home', quite apart from potentially 'reinscribing' the often-observed vertical hierarchy of male as spiritual, perfect and transcendent over against its counterpart women as sensual, incomplete and mundane (Marjanen, 1996: 216). Instead, and in keeping with the idea of Thomas as a sort of 'renewal manifesto', it arises from a positive and deliberately transformative set of life-practices. On logion 114, Valantasis makes an intriguing observation about the positive role Jesus plays as mystagogue in relation to Mary's access to the community, noting that Jesus' reply to Simon Peter, referring to 'you males', sets Jesus himself apart from Simon Peter and the others as a sort of 'third gender'. It is by his efforts alone that Mary will be admitted (1997: 195). Valantasis observes:

'The dominant category, however, seems not to be either the woman or the man, nor even the task of becoming male, but the task of becoming a 'living spirit'; which merely 'resembles you males' (ibid.).

Jesus functions in this way towards both male and female, and both are, Valantasis insists, equally capable of transformation. He further cites the final part of logion 114 as evidencing the way in which it will be the effort of the women to transform themselves that counts, paralleling it with logion 22, where the task of seekers after truth is to make themselves, whether male or female, representatives of a third category, that of 'a single one'. In this, Valantasis seems firstly to insist that spirituality, not gender, is important in determining authority in the world of the Thomasine Christian (paralleling King's arguments in *The Gospel of Mary*); and secondly, to draw attention to the central role of Jesus, not Thomas, as the source of authority informing the seeker's search for truth.

5. The nature of faith in *The Gospel of Thomas*

5.1 Faith and community

Critically (and in my view correctly), Valantasis sees spiritual reflection and action in *The Gospel of Thomas* as taking place within a community, albeit one whose nature is more that of 'loose confederation' than tightly-knit circle of initiates (1997: 7). It is a

community whose members 'have become capable of seeing other people who perform similar activities' (ibid.), though not necessarily an intentional community. Such a community can be inferred from the text: 'become passers-by' (logion 42), for example, is a command clearly addressed to a group, one which would scarcely make sense performed by a solitary individual. Even texts like logion 49, which seemingly refers to a solitary life, take on a different sense when the key command is translated as 'be single' [sc. of purpose], as Davies (2005: 63) has it. The work involves all the actions necessary for building and promoting a 'different identity within the larger confines of [late first-century] Christianity', creating a new person or subjectivity 'as a minority person within a larger religious culture' (ibid., 22). To do this requires a withdrawal from the 'dominant modes of articulating subjectivity' in order to create the space within which something different can emerge (ibid.)

Changed social relationships - perhaps the 'social radicalism' Patterson and Robinson (1998: 46 – 48) argue for, precursor to the 'Wanderradikalismus' characteristic of later East Syrian Christianity, with its itinerancy and voluntary poverty - and a changed symbolic universe are accomplished through a 'rigorous set of intentional performances' (ibid.). This includes striving to become a 'single one' (logion 22), redefined 'familial' relationships, the construction of the community itself and making peace (logion 48). We have already seen that, for Valantasis, this community sought to transcend male/female as categories of significance. Despite the cautionary note about this view taken by Perkins, I am attracted by the parallels Valantasis draws between the developing community of Thomas and possible incipient asceticism among the widows of 1 Tim. 5: 3 – 16. This reminds us that some aspects of the apocryphal Acts tradition celebrated the deeds of women like Thecla. It is not impossible that, in such a climate, women found a home among the Thomasines too.

6. The nature of faith in *The Gospel of Mary*

6.1 Introductory remarks

At first sight, the context for faith in *The Gospel of Mary* seems to be completely different from that of Thomas and yet scholars like King and de Boer can make bold claims for its inclusion within the broad stream of early Christian thought. De Boer asserts that the message of Mary, the story of the Saviour as the Human One (1997, 87: King prefers the phrase 'the Child (or Seed) of True Humanity'), is one of suffering and overcoming it in greatness. She holds that Mary, in the work that bears her name, discloses the disciples' true task of bringing about the peace and rest the Saviour has made possible: this is to be achieved by proclamation of the gospel in which Saviour originally instructed them (8: 21 – 22; 19: 1 – 2; see King, 1997: 117).

6.2 Faith in Hellenistic form?

There is considerable textual evidence that the writer is using Hellenistic thought-paradigms to explain how faith works and what it's 'for', and Platonic thought-forms in particular were to an extent intertwined with 'gnostic' ideas. The Jesus who speaks to Mary Magdalene in Mary speaks, in a vision experience, to human nous (10: 20 – 22), a key category of the mind familiar to Hellenistic thought. In a way similar to the idea that human input (epinoia) was an important component in understanding how hearers were supposed to use and respond to Thomas, so nous is central to discerning who is 'spiritual' in Mary (Mary herself) and who is not (Peter and Andrew). It is a source of treasure (10: 15), possession of which prevents Mary from being shaken, and leads to self-confidence and the ability to assert the truth of the gospel. De Boer has argued that it is an essential concept in presentation of the Christian truth of 'God in us' to Hellenistic ears (1997: 109).

6.3 Faith, sin and salvation

As the work proceeds, attachment to material things is contrasted with what King calls a new economy of the spirit (1995, 605). These concerns are reasons to link the work strongly back to similar NT concerns in Colossians 1, for example, rather than forward to more esoteric ones: sin is vanquished by knowing him, or perhaps more accurately, knowing him as the true self within ('acquiring him for ourselves (18: 17), as King puts it (2003a: 60 – 61). It is conquered, too, by understanding his purpose in relation to the generality of human suffering, rather than by virtue of anything achieved through the sacrifice of his body.

Nonetheless, King maintains, the work shows a strong ethical drive, driven by a contemplation of the fate of matter (2003a: 46), in a manner analogous to the ethical drive imparted by a knowledge of forgiveness in most NT schemes of understanding. However, this aspect of her work on the Gospel (2003a: 78 – 85) seems weak and vague, with no clear ideas about how the 'ethics' of the Gospel would work in practice. Hints of an ethical base are there: love is a rather understated theme, with Mary as Jesus' beloved disciple in parallel to John's role in his Gospel (the Johannine thought-world again ?). And presumably 'putting on the perfect man' is an effect of 'being made worthy', so an element of the outworking of 'grace' (9: 16) can be seen. But the transforming effects of proclamation and preaching (19: 2) are not revealed.

6.4 Mary as a feminist role model for faith ?

Does this new economy of the spirit come at a price that may be unacceptable to women? King, apparently overriding her own earlier (1995: 604) concerns that such idealistic language moves us too far from lived human experience, speaks of the 'truly human' (= 'perfect man' in the Nag Hammadi translation) in the Gospel as an ungendered, ideal

image, emphasising that it is the salvation of the soul, not the resuscitation of a corpse, that counts (2003a: 61 – 66).

The concerns the Gospel seems to have here – for unity and group identity, for knowledge and for stability within the group in order to proclaim the Saviour – are those of the broad church too in Mt. 28, and King sees a parallel with, for example, the appeal made in Eph. 4:13 which draws on these themes. The difference is the implied rejection of Mt. 28's sanctioning of a particular form of order. This further connection with/echo of the 'orthodox' church's Scriptures, as part of the 'shared thought-world of early Christians' (King, 2003a: 97), is perhaps a fitting point at which to end this discussion of themes in *The Gospel of Mary*: a work in various respects perhaps not so far removed from the faith world we are familiar with from the NT and more 'mainstream' early Christian writings.

7. Discussion

7.1 Gospels: old and new 'maps'

The world of early Christianity, as we see it spread out before us at the start of the 21st century, undoubtedly does not have the same topography as it did a century ago. With this image in mind, my question about boundaries at the outset of this paper could perhaps be put another way: can works like *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Mary* function as maps to guide us across this changed terrain ? Or are they like pirates' treasure maps, misleading and full of hopeful-looking but ultimately false clues ?

As James Barr has remarked (1983: 74), the Canon is a map we cannot easily erase from our consciousness. Being in possession of that sort of map does make seeing things from other perspectives much more difficult. We are inoculated against them. To continue the metaphor: generations of surveyors, from the Church Fathers Irenaeus and Tertullian onwards, have examined the terrain from the high road of 'orthodoxy', shaken their heads doubtfully as they peer across to what look like bogs and swamps, and urged us not to go there.

And yet go there we have. For some scholars, Wright (1992) and Philip Jenkins (2001) perhaps the most notable among them, there is no doubt: Gospels such as these are themselves the bogs and swamps: Irenaeus and Tertullian were right to warn against them as exalting the 'subjective' imagination over the 'objective' witnesses of history, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

7.2 The Gospels of Thomas and Mary and contemporary spirituality

This may be so. But there is an undeniable conjunction between some of the themes of the Gospels of Thomas and Mary and contemporary spirituality, as Risto Uro (2002: 485),

among others, has remarked. The somewhat solipsistic nature of discipleship in both Gospels is an obvious example, but there are others: the notion that one's community of affinity is a small subset of the larger whole, in rebellion from its structures where need be (Gos. Mary 18: 10); the related idea, stronger in Thomas, that the truth is hard-won, not immediately accessible on the surface of things; and perhaps even that the truth is culturally relative, to be adapted to the hearer's mindset, as with Mary's 'Platonic/Stoic' form. I suggest that this style of religiosity is a force that behoves us to consider that literature afresh, and to consider where we stand to do that.

But what is it exactly, this contemporary spirituality? Michael Downey has suggested that it is by nature eclectic, holding dear the notion that the sacred is accessible to all, and by a variety of routes. It is characterised by a 'self-help' mentality, believing personal responsibility for one's spiritual life to be paramount (Downey, 1997: 8 – 12). Downey also speaks of 'a turn inward, a greater reliance on the self because of the unreliability of outer worlds of meaning and purpose and value which external authorities are intended to uphold and safeguard' (1997: 17). Peter Berger adds that an inductive, experience-driven approach to faith is now preferred in an age where traditional, deductive structures are hard to maintain (1980: 4).

Increasingly, early Christianity is bursting the bonds of its 'safe' New Testament forms. Therefore to get a sense of the value of works like Thomas and Mary requires an approach that takes us off the road. But, disagreeing with Wright and Jenkins, I think the works themselves are not bogs and swamps. The danger comes rather from trying to read them in a framework that force-fits them into pre-existing categories. So that, for example, we try to use Thomas (or snippets from it) as a quarry from which we mine the likely 'true' sayings of the historical Jesus, thereby fuelling a modernist obsession with origins, fighting 'old battles' that are arguably not a postmodern concern; or make Mary the touchstone for female leadership and apostolicity in the early church, a sort of Holy Grail that will at a stroke revolutionise church origins and sanitise them to allow the participation of legions of alienated women.

7.3 Texts and the context of pluriformity, ancient and modern

Very few Christians read beyond the NT: to hope for great influence for these and similar works seems optimistic at best. And simply asserting that the categories of orthodox and heterodox, Christian and Gnostic, are no longer of significance won't make them vanish from people's mindsets. Nor will it do to simply replace outmoded 'metanarratives' with another one, the narrative that everything is equally valid and worthy of admission to the pantheon. However, one aspect of the value of dwelling on these texts in our present context is that they reveal afresh how early Christianity is a series of multiple intersections and disjunctions (King, 2003a: 160). In them, soteriology can be conceived as a multiplicity of approximations (Davies, 2005: 98). We forget at our peril how diverse and

fluid early Christianity was, and the way in which praxis seems to have preceded doctrine and dogma throughout. Perhaps the very strongly praxis-oriented approach of Thomas, at least, marks it out as a Gospel for our time ?

Is there a danger with approaches like these, though, that we end up being utterly self-referential ? Can texts so dehistoricised and remote from 'canonical' norms be useful to us ? Wright and Jenkins would say no. I believe there are certainly risks in an unanchored approach. In his discussion of contemporary spirituality, Downey recalls the 19th-century work of Friedrich von Hügel as something of a possible corrective here. Von Hügel saw the importance of the institutional, intellectual and mystical dimensions in spirituality. As Downey puts it: '[F]or von Hügel… the quest for the sacred must be related to a religious body in which texts, traditions and communities communicate or mediate the presence of the sacred' (1997: 24). Downey goes on to argue that, when institutions betray the gift of the sacred, it is the intellectual dimension that challenges and reminds it of the task of mediating the sacred. I think that part of what we see with current interest in texts like Thomas and Mary is the combining of an intellectual strand with a mystical one, as part of a revolt to try and get us back to a sense of the sacred.

If *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Mary* are to be of use, I believe it will need to be in the context of Downey and von Hügel's 'structure, tradition and community'. It will mean that our praxis together of the truths of these Gospels will need to take a more prominent place, rather than individualised readings that isolate the reader/hearer. If 'character' is the criterion that *The Gospel of Mary* tells us should count, and not apostolic 'authority' (King, 2003a: 177), then our shared character, too, in some ways should come into play to authorise the text anew as we interpret it for our life together and, simultaneously, it authorises us (on this, see Claudia Camp, 1995: 162). It is perhaps in this sense that we may most clearly see how 'inspiration' functions in relation to these works: the feature that supposedly distinguished the canonical works above all others to the ancient church can be made to work again. Melanie May and Lauree Meyer hold that unless we 'authorise diverse, life-giving words in our day as new expressions of God's word', we risk doing its opposite, establishing 'the [to us] acceptable limits of diversity with reference to an already given deposit of faith'. In so doing, we continue to serve a 'dominator tradition' (1993: 149). All of this means thinking seriously about the question 'what does it mean for a community to listen to a sacred text ?' (Burgess 2004 online).

I do not expect', or hope, that Thomas and Mary will provide a single construction of religious affirmation. I do suspect, and to an extent hope, they will provide plural constructions of affirmation, as we read them anew in a hermeneutical space that seems set to remain fluid for some time. It remains to be seen what ethical spur *The Gospel of Mary* will provide to groups of feminist readers and hearers, or what forms of communal life *The Gospel of Thomas* will give rise to. But ultimately, I believe the only 'proof' that

Thomas and Mary are worth preserving will be that we have used them and found them to yield something of lasting value to the Christian life together, as apparently the ancients did.

My hunch is that such a role will be somewhat harder for *The Gospel of Mary*, simply because it is in some ways more difficult to 'apply' than *The Gospel of Thomas*, its ethics less developed, its thought-paradigms less accessible. One hopeful sign, though, is the way it is being woven into a broader story of wise women in early Christianity. If this can be done without inventing a penumbra around the text that obscures it, Mary may yet prove to be the resource for action King anticipates. There are grounds for optimism, then: we may yet behold the landscape from off the beaten path and discover tracks that lead, not into the swamps and bogs, but along by narrower, less trodden paths to somewhere along the road of faith.

REFERENCES

Unless otherwise stated, quotations from *The Gospel of Mary* and *The Gospel of Thomas* are those established in Robinson, James (ed.) The Nag Hammadi Library in English (1990). San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Bauer, W. (ET 1972) Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity. London: SCM Press.

Berger, P. (1980) The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation. London: Collins.

Bloom, H. (1992) 'Afterword' in Meyer, Marvin (ed.) *The Gospel of Thomas*: the hidden sayings of Jesus. San Francisco: Harper Collins. 111 – 122.

Brown, R. (1963) '*The Gospel of Thomas* and St. John's Gospel'. In New Testament Studies IX, 1962 – 63, 155 – 177.
(1992) 'Canonicity'. In The New Jerome Biblical Commentary. London: Geoffrey Chapman. 1034 – 1054.

Burgess, J. (2004) 'Going Creedless', Christian Century, June 1, 2004, 24 – 28. Available from http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3062 Viewed 31st May 2006.

Camp, C. (1993) 'Feminist Theological Hermeneutics: Canon and Christian Identity'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume One: A Feminist Introduction. London: SCM. 154 – 171.

Chadwick, H. (1993 new edition) The Early Church. London: Penguin.

Davies, S. (2003) *The Gospel of Thomas* Annotated and Explained. London: DLT. (2005)

The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom California: Bardic Press.

De Boer, E. (1997) Mary Magdalene: Beyond the Myth. London: SCM. (2005) *The Gospel of Mary*: Listening to the Beloved Disciple. London: T & T Clark Continuum.

De Conick, A. (1997) 'Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen (Jn. 20: 29): Johannine Dramatization of an Early Christian Discourse'. In Turner, J. and McGuire, A. (eds.), The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration. Leiden: Brill. 381 – 397.

Downey, M. (1997) Understanding Christian Spirituality. Mahwah: Paulist Press.

Dunderberg, I. (1997) 'John and Thomas in Conflict ?' In Turner, J. and McGuire, A. (eds.), The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration. Leiden: Brill. 361 – 380. (1998a) 'Thomas' I-Sayings and the Gospel of John'. In Uro, Risto (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 33 – 64. (1998b) 'Thomas and the Beloved Disciple'. In Uro, Risto (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 65 – 88.

Dunn, J. (1977) Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Enquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity. London: SCM.

Ehrman, B. (2003) Lost Christianities: The Battle for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew. New York: OUP.

Funk, R. (2002) 'The Once and Future New Testament' in MacDonald, L. and Sanders , J. (eds.) The Canon Debate. Peabody: Hendrickson. 541 – 557.

Jenkins, P. (2001) Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way. New York: OUP.

Kee, H. (1990) What Can We Know About Jesus ? Cambridge: CUP.

Kemp, M. (2006) 'Hallelujah, It's a dud' (review of The Da Vinci Code), The Guardian 22 May 2006. Available from http://arts.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1780480,00.html. Viewed 22/05/2006.

King, K. (1990) '*The Gospel of Mary* (BG 8502, 1)'. In Robinson, J. (ed.) The Nag Hammadi Library in English (1990). San Francisco: Harper Collins. 523 – 524. (1995) '*The Gospel of Mary* Magdalene'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary. London: SCM. 601 – 634. (2003a) *The Gospel of Mary* of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle. Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press.

(2003b) What Is Gnosticism? Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press.

Marjanen, A. (1996) The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents. Leiden: Brill.
(1998a) 'Women disciples in *The Gospel of Thomas*'. In Uro, Risto (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 89 - 106.
(1998b) 'Is Thomas a Gnostic gospel ?'. In Uro, Risto (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 107 – 139.
(1998c) 'Thomas and Jewish religious practices'. In Uro, Risto (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 163 – 182.

May, M. and Hersch Meyer, L. (1993) 'Unity of the Bible, Unity of the Church: Confessionalism, Ecumenism and Feminist Hermeneutics'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume One: A Feminist Introduction. London: SCM. 140 – 153.

Markschies, C. (ET 2003) Gnosticism: An Introduction. London: T & T Clark.

McGinn, S. (1995) 'The Acts of Thecla'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary. London: SCM. 800 – 828.

Meyer, M. (1992) *The Gospel of Thomas*: the hidden sayings of Jesus. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Pagels, E. (1973) The Johannine Gospels in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John. Nashville: Abingdon.
(1990) The Gnostic Gospels. London: Penguin.
(2003) Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas. New York: Vintage.

Patterson, S. and Robinson J. (1998) The Fifth Gospel: Thomas Comes of Age. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.

Perkins, P. (1995) '*The Gospel of Thomas*'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary. London: SCM. 535 – 560.

Poirier, P.H. (1997) 'The Writings Ascribed to Thomas and the Thomas Tradition'. In Turner, J. and McGuire, A. (eds.), The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration. Leiden: Brill. 295 – 307.

Robinson, J. (1997) 'Nag Hammadi: The First Fifty Years'. In Turner, J. and McGuire, A. (eds.), The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of

Biblical Literature Commemoration. Leiden: Brill. 3 – 33.

Romney Wegner, J. (1991) 'Philo's Portrayal of Women – Hebraic or Hellenic ?' In Levine, Amy-Jill (ed.) Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Graeco-Roman World. Atlanta: SBL Early Judaism and Its Literature Series. 41 - 66.

Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (1994) In Memory of Her. London: SCM. (1995) 'Transgressing Canonical Boundaries'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary. London: SCM. 1 - 14.

Sellew, P. (1997) '*The Gospel of Thomas*: Prospects for Future Research'. In Turner, J. and McGuire, A. (eds.), The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration. Leiden: Brill. 327 – 346.

Sevrin, J.M. (1997) 'L'Interprétation de l'Evangile selon Thomas: entre tradition et rédaction'. Turner, J. and McGuire, A. (eds.), The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration. Leiden: Brill. 347 – 360.

Stevenson, J. (1957) (ed.) A New Eusebius. London: SPCK.

Synek, E. (1995) 'Die andere Maria: zum Bild der Maria von Magdala in den östlichen Kirchentraditionen', Oriens Christians, vol 79 (1995). 181 – 196.

Torjesen, K.J. (1993) 'Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History'. In Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (ed.), Searching the Scriptures. Volume One: A Feminist Introduction. London: SCM. 290 – 310.

Uro, R. (1998a) 'Introduction: Thomas at the Crossroads'. In Uro, R. (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 1 – 7.(1998b) 'Thomas and oral gospel tradition'. In Uro, R. (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 8 - 32.
(1998c) 'Is Thomas an encratite gospel ?' In Uro, R. (ed.), Thomas at the Crossroads: New perspectives on a debated gospel. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 140 – 162.
(2002) 'Who will be our leader ? Authority and Autonomy in *The Gospel of Thomas*'. In Dunderberg, I. ,Tuckett, C. and Syreeni, K. (eds.), Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity. Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen. Brill: Leiden.
(2003) Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of *The Gospel of Thomas*. London: T & T Clark.

Valantasis, R. (1997) *The Gospel of Thomas*. London: Routledge.

Vermes, G. (3rd edition 1987) The Dead Sea Scrolls in English. London: Penguin.

Wright, T. (1992) The New Testament and the People of God. London: SPCK. (2005) Scripture and the Authority of God. London: SPCK.

Religious Fundamentalism:
A Phenomenon Older Than Its Name?

Desmond Ricketts

ABSTRACT

This study offers a historical consideration of the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. In doing so it asks whether or not it is an exclusively modern form of religious expression which has arisen solely as a reaction against the rise of secularism in the post-Enlightenment period, as many commentators suggest, or whether it has always existed as a reaction to different perceived threats throughout history. The beliefs of three historical groups – the Jewish Sicarii, the Shia Muslim Nizaris, and the Christian Puritans of 17th century England – will be explored and the possibility of attributing to them the term 'fundamentalist' will be assessed, using definitions commonly applied by scholars in this field. It is the contention of this study that these examples demonstrate that modern scholarship has failed to adequately understand the fundamentalist view of the world.

Part One

Fundamentalism: a Phenomenon Older Than its Name?

The term 'fundamentalist' was first coined by a group of Protestant Christians in the United States in the first half of the last century to describe themselves. They were 'interdenominational in character and fellowship' (Beale 1986: 6) and included groups 'from all sections of Christian opinion, both Arminian and Calvinistic, premillenial, postmillennial and amillenial' (Masters 1995: 8. It should be noted that, in this instance, 'Christian opinion' refers exclusively to Protestant Christian opinion). What brought these doctrinally diverse groups together was a firm conviction that there were certain 'fundamental' truths that must be adhered to in order for the believer to be able to claim a true Christian faith and experience. These included: belief in Biblical inerrancy; affirmation of the literal truth of the Trinity, the virgin birth and Christ's resurrection; and the need to be 'born again' (Beale 1986: 348). Furthermore, according to 'The Committee on Definition of Fundamentalism' set up in 1976 by the 'World Congress of Fundamentalists': 'Unless a man holds and defends the Faith of Scripture and is concerned for the salvation of the lost, he is not a true Fundamentalist' (see Beale 1986: 348) – thus the need to spread the word is imperative. This group were undeniably concerned with new approaches to the Christian faith that had arisen in the previous century – liberal interpretations of the Bible being their primary cause of concern, for these apparently called into question the validity of a literal belief in the 'fundamentals' of the faith which they believed were solely based upon Scripture. For them this was a great threat. The concern of this study, however, is whether this threat, and their reaction, was unique in its form, or whether it was just another threat to religious belief that mirrored previous threats and reactions throughout differing religious traditions at different times in history.

Fundamentalism, many scholars would have us believe, is an exclusively modern phenomenon. Armstrong (2002) writes of 'a militant piety, often called "fundamentalism"' as having 'erupted in every major religious tradition' in the 20th century as a 'widespread rebellion against secular modernity' (The gods meet fire with fire. [Internet] Available from: http://www.newstatesman.com/200212160050; accessed 30/3/2006). Almond et al believe that 'the resistance to modern forms of secularization is a defining common feature of religious fundamentalisms' (2003: 20) and Marty and Appleby, in the introduction to their extensive study of the 'modern' fundamentalist phenomenon, The Fundamentalist Project, note how '..."modern" is a code word for the set of forces which fundamentalists perceive as the threat which inspires their reaction' (1991: xii). Ruthven (2004: 127) further observes that in its 'original' American Protestant form: 'Fundamentalism only comes into being when challenged by modernist theologies, when post-Enlightenment scholarship is perceived as threatening to the eternal verities enshrined in the Word'. Thus, without a post-Enlightenment, modern, secular world which to react against, fundamentalism, it is assumed, would be without the oxygen it needs to survive.

The conclusions emerging from the Enlightenment are, therefore, key to appreciating the current understanding of fundamentalist expressions of religion. From it came certain understandings about religion generally, for example, as noted by Almond et al:

'Since the Enlightenment, the principle of separation of church and state has been an essential criterion of modernization and the measure of liberty. It leads scholars, journalists, and statesmen to assume that religion is an unequivocally private matter' (2003: 4).

From this it can be seen that potentially highly influential figures in Western society bought into the myth of the Enlightenment, in which we in the West became 'modern', fled the ancient and medieval mindsets that had beset our forbears, and where 'reason and science [had] triumphed over Scripture, tradition and custom' for the 'West was superior, and western modernity was the culmination of human development' (Roberts 1995: 248) that would 'inevitably banish religion from the world' (Appleyard 2006: 21). Religion was to be relegated to the private sphere, where it would, hopefully, fade and

die. As a result of our new understanding of the world we in the West have come to expect 'that, as modern habits of thinking advance across the world, people everywhere will become more like us – or at least as we imagine ourselves to be' – 'rational…forward-looking…humane and cosmopolitan' (Gray, 2004: 17).

This 'survival of Enlightenment expectations' (Almond et al 2003: 4) is acknowledged by the authors of Strong Religion - a work that seeks to summarise the findings of a ten year study of fundamentalism: the Fundamentalism Project - who believe that, whilst it 'no longer reflects reality' (Ibid: 5), 'it has not been replaced by views more consistent with our understanding of the human situation' (Ibid) and has contributed to a lack of understanding of the persistence of religion generally and, more particularly, religious fundamentalism, which the authors have sought to address. Religious fundamentalism has, they assert, raised 'questions about the boast that science and secular rationalism will fully replace religion and the sense of the sacred as approaches to meaning' (Ibid). However, even as they acknowledge the short-sightedness toward religion as expressed through secular interpretations of the Enlightenment tradition (Ibid: 4), the authors of Strong Religion seem to buy into the definitions of the world supplied by that tradition and which clearly influence their approach to, and conclusions regarding, the phenomenon they seek to examine.

The Enlightenment demarcation of history - an arbitrary and unjustifiable demarcation – has resulted in a distorted view of the history of religious experience and expression. This view uses the words 'modern' and 'secular' to describe the experience of individuals of the post-Enlightenment period as if the two terms were without precedent in their interaction with religious belief. As a result, those who lived before - with their own understanding, of what was 'modern' and encounters with their own equivalents of 'secular' belief – are treated as non-persons whose experience will always be less valid than ours, to the degree that they are unable to express or experience, as we the 'modern' are, religious expressions that are considered 'fundamentalist' by current scholars' definitions, but are in someway unable to be described as such for want of the protagonists not being post-Enlightenment 'modern'.

If you interpret 'modern' as being post-Enlightenment, 'secular' as that which is 'concerned with the world' as opposed to that which is concerned with religion (O'Collins 1974: 13), and 'secularization' as 'movements which entail a change from religious to this-worldly purpose' (Ibid), then two assumptions must be made in order to define fundamentalism as an exclusively modern, specifically anti-secular phenomenon:

1. The Enlightenment division of history which renders us 'modern' is indisputable and marks a significant change in the nature of humanity itself, rather than just an attitude of superiority garnered as new advances in the sciences appeared to elevate the moderns to new heights of knowledge and advancement.

2. The understanding of what entails 'secular' and 'secularization' views them as unique forms of opposition which are seen as such by the fundamentalist groups themselves.

These two assumptions are highly questionable. Firstly, and most simply, the division of history which emerged at the time of the Enlightenment is totally arbitrary and a belief in its 'chief tenet' of advances in the sciences and the resultant 'growth of knowledge' being viewed as 'the key to human emancipation' (Gray 2004: 18) is, as we look at the world around us, increasingly absurd.

Secondly, and more importantly, to define the fundamentalist's perception of what 'secular' represents to them as being unique in its form shows a lack of understanding of the mind of the fundamentalist. Fundamentalists, according to current scholarly interpretations, are more concerned with the threat of the encroachment upon their beliefs of those with 'no god' – as represented by secular thinking - than those with 'another god' – the types of opposition encountered by religious groups in the past. What this does not take into account, however, is that to the fundamentalist, worship of 'another god' is impossible, for, as reflected in the first part of the Muslim shahadah: 'There is no god but Allah'; just as, in orthodox Jewish and Christian traditions: there is only one God. Any statement of faith in another deity is, therefore, a rejection of the one true God and equivalent to a belief in 'no god'. Thus the idea that 'modern secularity' offers a new and unique threat to religious belief that has resulted in a new form of religious expression called fundamentalism is unfounded. Fundamentalism interprets secularism in the same way that some religious groups – prior to the creation of the word 'fundamentalist' - have always interpreted alternative interpretations of the human condition: as a manifestation of evil.

When Ayatollah Khomeini famously referred to America as the 'Great Satan' in 1979 (Black, 2005, 'Great Satan' warned of a burning hell. [Internet] Available from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,1415966,00.html; accessed 1/5/2006) he was not viewing it in terms of a potential secularizing threat in and of itself, but rather as an alternative belief system to his own. For Khomeini, 'mankind [was] divided into two parts: the House of Islam and the House of Unbelief' (Lewis 2004: 385). His beliefs accommodated America's existence and he framed his opinion of it within his own worldview – one that saw the threat that America posed as existing, not because it had 'no god', but rather because it had 'no god' as understood and accepted by Khomeini; a position that would have equally have applied to American 'worship' of Jesus Christ, the dollar, or secular modernity. That alone was his criteria. That alone is the criteria of the fundamentalist – whatever period in history they occupy. For each of the groups examined here in Part Two the same response to supposed threats can be argued for, as noted above, to those who conform to a fundamentalist worldview there cannot be 'no

god', simply, as it were, the wrong god.

In writing of Islam's reaction to secularism Lewis (2004: 408) has observed that it 'was never prepared, either in theory or in practice, to afford full equality to those who held other beliefs and practised other forms of worship'. It had never had the historic context in which a need to separate 'Church' and State arose in order to facilitate a peaceful political environment such as was required for Christian denominations in Europe to live side by side (Ibid). Thus, within Islam generally, never mind fundamentalist Islam, secularist ideas are alien and either directly identified as a form of satanic worship:

> 'Some of the acts of worship have changed. The Arabs no longer worship the idols of the past. However, worship of Satan in itself did not change. The old idols are replaced with new idols: like…partisanship, nationalism, secularism, personal freedom, sex and others' (Wunaiyaan, S. 2006 Secularism and its Dangers. [Internet] Available from: http://www.alminbar.com/khutbaheng/708.htm; accessed 5/5/2006).

seen as a foolish rejection of a God already known:

> 'The acceptance of a legislation formulated by humans means a preference of the humans' limited knowledge and experiences to the divine guidance: "Say! Do you know better than Allah?" (2:140)' (al-Qaradawi, Y. 2004 Secularism. [Internet] Available from: http://www.islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=117; accessed 5/5/2006);

or taken as a literal separation of an existing God from human concerns:

> 'Secularism is belief in God, but His exclusion from our earthly affairs' (Ali, S., 2004, Islam and Secularism. [Internet] Available from: http://www.islam21.info/Lectures/Islam%20and%20Secularism/Islam%20and%20Secularism.htm; accessed 5/5/2006).

As can be seen from each of the above statements, the idea that secularity actually represents a solid, genuine atheistic position is not even countenanced. This is not wilful ignorance – it is just an inability to perceive a world without a reference to Allah. In a video released in September 2002, an American member of al-Qaeda, Azzam al-Amriki, made a clear statement as to the group's Islamic fundamentalist view of secularism. Speaking in English, he addressed the 'People of America' and warned them that they would pay for, amongst other crimes, the 'spreading of the false religions of Christianity, Democracy, Capitalism and Secularism to all corners of the Globe' (http://www.intelcenter.com/OBLMATA-PUB-v1-1.pdf, 15-17; accessed 5/5/2006).

There can be no clearer indication of the group's view on secularism: it is just another false religion.

American fundamentalist Christian views of secularism are startlingly similar to those of Islam. Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye and Pat Robertson are all household names in America and are at the forefront of the increased vocalisation of 'fundamentalist' values in American politics. Each has expressed concerns about the secularization of America but none acknowledge it as a valid stance separate from their own – simply a different form of expression of old enemies of the faith. Falwell infamously blamed the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001 on:

> 'the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians… the ACLU, People For the American Way - all of them who have tried to secularize America - I point the finger in their face and say "you helped this happen."'

Cited at: Robinson, B. (2005) Aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attack: Verbal attacks on pagans, etc. [Internet] Available from: http://www.religioustolerance.org/reac_ter7.htm (Accessed 15/4/2006)

At first glance it appears that 'pagans' have mistakenly been lumped in with other perceived secularizers of America – what relation, after all, do they have to the rest of the groups mentioned? However, in looking at another of Falwell's statements, which predates the above, we can see that he considers there to be a close link between the secularist and the pagan:

> 'Everyone must hear the gospel: I utilize the secular media because I believe Christ died for all men and women, everywhere. Therefore, I believe the "greater public" must also hear the gospel. Most of them do not attend church or watch Sunday morning television. Accordingly, I feel I must go to them through secular, pagan, prime-time media' (Falwell, J., 1999, Why I do the talk shows. [Internet] http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=17744; accessed 5/5/2006).

His use of 'pagan' in this context harks back to the days when those outside of the faith were labelled as such – when 'Christian reference [to a 'pagan'] implied one who was not a 'soldier of Christ'' encouraging 'the risky assumption that religious belief and practice, outside the Christian and Jewish spheres, formed a unity' (Price and Kearns 2003: 399). What they did believe was immaterial, what mattered was that they did not conform to the beliefs of the user of the term.

Echoing al-Amriki, LaHaye goes one step further than Falwell in directly naming 'secular humanism' (Unger, C., 2005 American "Rapture". [Internet] Available from: http://www.vanityfair.com/commentary/content/printables/051128roco02?print=true; accessed 5/5/2006) as 'the most deceptive of all religious philosophies'. Bokaer reports Robertson as defining 'the war on secularism' in a speech to the Christian Coalition in 1991 as '"a Spiritual battle…There will be Satanic forces.... We are not going to be coming up just against human beings... We're going to be coming up against spiritual warfare"'

(Cited at: Bokaer, J. (2003) The Rise of the Religious Right in the Republican Party. [Internet] Available from: http://www.creativeresistance.ca/united-states/2003-feb24-the-rise-of-the-religious-right-in-the-republican-party-joan-bokaer-theocracywatch.htm; accessed 5/5/2006). Billy Graham, who started his ministry lauded by fundamentalist Christians as one of their own, took a similar stance against Communism in the 1950s – a political philosophy that goes beyond simple separation of Church from state and is proudly atheistic in its expression – when he described it as: 'the medium through which he [Satan] operates to dupe, deceive and delude that large segment of society which has chosen to believe a lie...Today, millions are embracing the false religion of Communism' (Cited at: Reynolds, M. (1995) Billy Graham, the Pope, and the Bible. [Internet] Available from: http://www.fundamentalbiblechurch.org/Foundation/fbcbillg.htm; accessed 5/5/2006). Beale (1986: 157) proudly quotes a 'candid admission' from Christian Century, which he describes as a 'liberal' magazine from 1920s, which clearly states that: 'The God of the fundamentalist is one God; the God of the modernist is another'. So it would appear that for fundamentalist Christians, as for Muslims of both extreme and moderate persuasions, secularism poses no new challenge – it is simply the same old enemy dressed in new modern clothing.

Even though they may wish to, secularists, from a fundamentalist point of view, cannot escape from God. He, for the believer, is self evidently extant and active in the lives of men and women. The secularist may wish to separate religion and politics or simply deny the existence of any deity but in so doing they are either doing the will of the 'god' they unwittingly serve – Satan being a popular choice in Islamic and fundamentalist Christian circles – or fulfilling the will of God unknowingly. The latter is exemplified by the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Kook – described as 'one of religious Zionism's seminal thinkers' (Macovsky D. (2005) Gaza Disengagement: Ideological and Political Challenges for the Settlement Movement. [Internet] Available from: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2306; accessed 2/3/2006) – who saw in the return of secular Jews to Palestine at the beginning of the 20th century their use by God 'as unknowing religious instruments in the reestablishment of the Land of Israel' (Ibid). This is at least a positive take on the unbeliever being used as an instrument of God's will – in later Jewish history, some viewed Hitler in the same way (Rubenstein 1966: 160). Similar sentiments can be seen in Jerry Falwell's rant about who was really responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Centre: certain segments of society had brought this upon the American nation and God had used the terrorists in those planes to punish them. Ironically the terrorists probably felt the same way. For the fundamentalist God uses people whether they want him too or not: 'The angry atheist can only shake his fist against God because God empowers him to do so' (Benton 2003: 15).

Part Two

History's Unacknowledged Fundamentalisms?

This section will examine three religious groups from history: the Sicarii, the Nizaris and the English Puritans. Each of the historical groups examined had their own 'modernity' – for modern is a moveable concept: what was 'modern' for the Zealots, the Nizaris, and the English Puritans was the contemporary world that surrounded them. This world also contained threats that would have been perceived in the same way as today's fundamentalists view secularization: the increasing Hellenization of Judea; the increasing dominance of Sunni Islam; and the perceived threat of a return of Catholicism as the dominant faith to England. For each group it will be proposed that the idea that there existed an alternative viewpoint was considered no less an external threat to their core group and its beliefs than modern secularization is perceived by fundamentalists today.

The Sicarii of 1st Century Judea: A Brief Outline

Although there have been debates about to the nature of this group and its relation to the more infamous 'Zealots' of the period and about the limited nature of the source of information about them (basically the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus), it is arguable that there is enough information about the Sicarii to identify them as having a coherent set of distinct characteristics enabling them to be used in this study. Scholarship on 'the Zealots' – when used as a blanket term for all violent political groups opposed to the Roman occupation of Judea in the first century CE – shows them to be a group united in particular by a 'zeal for the Law' (Farmer 1956: 178), stemming from a 'passionate devotion to Torah for which they were willing to fight [and] even lay down their lives (Russell 1963: 54). This manifested itself in vocal and violent opposition 'to the Hellenizing ruling classes' (Farmer 1956: 60) with Hellenization…regarded as contrary to the Law' (Ibid 57).

There was, in the mid 1980s, a challenge to the perceived wisdom as to who the group known as the Zealots were, and how influential their role was in the lead up to the uprising against the Roman occupiers of Judea and their increasingly Hellenized puppet government in 66-70CE which resulted in the backlash that led to the destruction of the Temple and the dispersal of the Jewish people. Traditionally the Zealots – in part, no doubt, due to the Gospel accounts written much later which included Zealots within Jesus' close circle – were seen as a group which slowly, over a sixty year period, stirred up discontent and incited rebellion until they finally gained enough support, rose up and overthrew the occupying forces. Horsley and Hanson (1985) see this interpretation of the Zealots as 'a historical fiction' (xiii) and isolate their influence to the situation after the initial uprising. Instead they identify three distinct groupings within the Jewish opposition

to the Roman occupation and perceived increasing Hellenization of Jewish culture that had previously, by scholars such as Farmer (1956: 178) and Russell (1963: 37), been grouped together: the 'Fourth Philosophy'; the 'Sicarii'; and the 'Zealots'.

The 'Fourth Philosophy', the earliest of the three groups, first mentioned by Josephus as originating in the first decade CE, were led by Judas the Galilean and were of a similar theological position to the Pharisees but were more vocal and, in particular, demonstrative in their opposition the Roman occupation and what they perceived as the increasing Hellenization of Jewish culture (Horsley and Hanson 1985: 191). Seeing themselves, as Jews, as the 'chosen people of God' who had been freed from Egyptian slavery by God, they believed that they were 'called by God into freedom from foreign overlords' and therefore refused to pay taxes to the Roman authorities (193). They also felt that 'Jewish society was to live under the rule of God' (Ibid) - not Roman emperors. Furthermore they were willing, rather than pay taxes to Rome, to submit to torture and even death - not only their own, but also that of their 'relatives and friends' (Ibid). This was the key characteristic noted by Josephus that separated them from the Pharisees (Solomon 2000: 23) who were willing to make compromises with the occupiers and the ruling elite – Josephus himself being a classic example of this.

Horsley and Hanson also see in Josephus's description of the Fourth Philosophy, that their willing acts of self sacrifice were 'informed by a certain eschatological orientation' which led them to believe that, in standing firm, they would 'be helping to bring about the Kingdom of God' (1985: 194) or, short of that ultimate goal, enable them to 'be seen as glorious martyrs to God's cause' (Ibid), harking back to an earlier Jewish tradition of a 'theology of martyrdom' (Ibid). What is not apparently evident to Horsley and Hanson however, is that violent acts of rebellion played any part in the resistance of the Fourth Philosophy movement, although they do note that Josephus writes that they did 'fill the nation with "unrest"' (1985: 197) and credits their leader with infecting 'the nation with every kind of misery' (Ibid), which could indicate a more active, widespread and, above all, violent form of opposition. What is significant in the role of the Fourth Philosophy is that, as noted by Scott: 'Josephus seeks to make evident that Judas' spirit, interpretation, and example influenced all subsequent revolutionaries (Scott, J. (2006) Summary comments on Second Temple Jewish sects and parties. [Internet] Available from: http://www.wheaton.edu/DistanceLearning/Parties.htm; accessed 22/2/2006).

Whether or not Horsley and Hanson's interpretation of these passages is correct and acts of violence were not a part of this group's philosophy, the Sicarii, the leaders of which were directly descended from Judas the Galilean and 'a continuation' of the party he founded (1985: 201), certainly did use violence – in particular political assassinations of their opponents who collaborated with the Roman authorities – to get their message across. They also shared 'a coherent ideology similar to that of the Forth Philosophy'

(Ibid: 202). The nature of their violent protest was to mingle with the crowds in Jerusalem and stab their victims – one of whom was the high priest - before blending back into the crowds (Nickelsberg 1981: 278), a method that was to cause 'intense anxiety' and demonstrate that the collaborating Jewish ruling classes were not invulnerable (Horsley and Hanson 1985: 205).

The Nizaris of 11th – 13th Century Persia: A Brief Outline

The first centuries of Islam, after the death of Mohammad, were marked by doctrinal, ideological, and political splits which resulted in the emergence of two different, and distinct, groupings: the majority Sunni and the minority Shia, the latter later being centred around the 'anti-Caliphate' rulers of Cairo. The initial split between the two groups was over who was the rightful successor to Mohammad but within Shia Islam further splits occurred, initially over the successor to the sixth Shia Imam in the 8th century, Jafar al Sadiq, and in the 11th century by a dispute within the Shia Fatimid rulers of Cairo that saw two brothers, Nizar and al-Mustali, pitted against each other in a political battle to succeed their father as Caliph (Black 2001: 47).

Hasan-i Sabbah was a follower of Nizar but was forced to flee after the murder of his leader, ending up in Persia in the fortress city of Alamut. The group he led, now known as the Assassins but called by themselves the 'Nizaris', set out on a campaign against the surrounding Sunni authorities 'of terror and 'assassination' against the kings and princes of Islam' (Lewis 1995: 93). Sabbah saw himself as only a lieutenant to Imam Nizar and claimed to be leading his group only until Nizar reappeared in person (Black 2001: 47). Black sees their violent terror campaign – he calls it their 'religio-political strategy' – as being intended 'to inspire a spontaneous uprising in favour of the true Fatimid Imam Nizar' (Ibid). Lewis succinctly outlines their stance in the following passage:

'They rejected Sunni Islam, they condemned the political, military and religious leaders that maintained it; they represented…a revolutionary opposition and, as they saw it, an alternative, a true Islam and a true caliphate' (2004: 128).

In their desire to provoke the right environment for the return of Nizar, the Nizaris 'established small principalities of their own' (Ibid: 127) from which their leaders would despatch well trained volunteer 'assassins' (Ibid: 127-128) who would carry out their missions against local Sunni 'princes, officers…ministers…religious leaders and scholars who had condemned their doctrines' (Sardar 2004: 97). It has been suggested that, once their mission had been accomplished, the assassin would make no attempt to escape, for to return from a mission was considered 'disgraceful' (Lewis 2004: 127). This has led to some seeing them as the predecessors to the modern 'suicide bomber' but without '[the] random slaughter of uninvolved bystanders' (Ibid: 127).

To fully understand Sabbah's position we need to briefly examine the theology of the Shia and their understanding of the role of the Imams, whom they saw as the rightful successors of Mohammad, 'the only legitimate leader[s] of the ummah'; with each successive Imam as 'the spiritual leader of his generation [,an] infallible spiritual director and…perfect judge' (Armstrong 2000: 47-48). Reflecting this, Momen (1985: 56) notes that the Sabbah's group were also known as the 'Talimis': 'because of their doctrine that the Imam is the dispenser of divinely-ordained teaching (talim). The Nizaris' belief that Nizar was the true Imam was by no means the mainstream belief of most Shia in the 11th century - nor, indeed, is it today – (Armstrong 2000: 50) but, due to the accepted Shia belief that the 10th century, possibly fictitious, Twelfth Imam, Abu al-Quasim Muhammad, had not died but undergone a process of 'occultation' that had transferred him to the spiritual realm where he awaited the correct time to return 'after a long time has passed and the earth has become filled with tyranny' (Ibid: 48-49), the potential was there for groups to claim the Imam's return to this world in the form of another person by encouraging an environment that was, in the words of Black an attempt 'to achieve the consummation of history by force' (2001: 47). A later leader of the group actually claimed to be the returned Imam and a secret descendant of Nizar (Momen 1985: 56), declaring a new epoch in which Islamic law (Sharia) was to be superseded by his rulings (Black 2001: 47).

The Puritans of 17th Century England: A Brief Outline

The Puritan movement in England in the 17th century, which was to gain political power by means of civil war and regicide after attempting to do so through parliamentary means, were not a single, unified entity but were a reasonably loose affiliation of denominations (although, as has been noted by Hill (1993: 35) talk of denominations at this time is not 'very meaningful') with theological stances that simply defined them as Protestant and not Catholic. 'Above all, Puritans believed in the individual's direct, personal relationship with God' (Hunt 2002: 10). Groups such as the Anabaptists, who had been persecuted ruthlessly on the continent as differing Protestant groups fought over doctrinal issues (Hill 1993: 5), were included within the broad church that came to represent the republican forces. In particular, the New Model Army that Cromwell formed showed him as having little regard for specific orthodoxies – so long as they were Protestant and uncontaminated by Catholicism as the Anglican Church led by Archbishop Laud had come to be seen. Whatever the specific idiosyncrasies of the Protestant grouping the individual belonged to, the New Model Army recruit was put in no doubt as to the religious nature of their campaign. It was made clear to them that they were involved in 'the advancement of Christ's Kingdom and the purity of his Ordinances' (Hill 1993: 155) which included 'the suppression of an Antichristian Prelacy consisting of Archbishops, Bishops etc' (Ibid) – a physical expression of which was the burning of the Book of Common Prayer (Hill 1993:

260) – and, as members of the new fighting force, the principle requirement of them was that they 'be religious and godly' (Ibid).

Hill (1993: 20) notes how '[the] Bible was central to all intellectual as well as moral life in the…seventeenth [century]' and, particularly to the Puritan, how 'Scripture' was understood as relating not only to morality, but also to 'ethics, economics, politics [and] academy' – the latter relating to the way education should be undertaken (Ibid) – as well as being central to science (Ibid: 21), law (Ibid: 28), the arts and literature (Ibid: 31). So all-encompassing, according to the Puritans, was the ability of the Bible to address all of the problems, big and small, that mankind encountered, that the idea that 'Tradition', as embraced by the Catholic faith, could improve on it was, quite literally, unbelievable (Ibid: 30). Indeed this kind of sentiment led one historian to note that the English 'Revolution' was 'anti-Catholic rather than Puritan' (cited in Hill 1993: 186).

This anti-Catholicism lay at the heart of Puritan thinking. The rather weak Reformation in England had, ultimately through the clever politicking of Elizabeth I, resulted in a national church that was able to accommodate a broad range of ideas, but which was not able to address all the tensions that arose. In particular immense problems were caused by the relatively brief reign of Mary Tudor as she sought to return England to its former status as a Catholic nation and harshly persecuted her Protestant subjects. Indeed, after the Bible, the most widely read book in Puritan homes would have been the deeply biased – but sincerely believed – 'Book of Martyrs' by John Foxe, which described in great detail deaths of loyal Protestants who had been killed during Mary's reign (Plowden 2004: 16).

The horrors of Mary's reign and propaganda that had been used by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I as they sought to break away and consolidate England's separation from the See of Rome had led to the identification of the Catholic Popes by Puritan thinkers with the Antichrist of the Biblical book of Revelation. A printed pamphlet in 1642, called The Camp of Christ and the Camp of the Antichrist, positioned Charles I as firmly in the latter camp (Hill 1971: 79). This perception of Charles as a Catholic in sympathies, if not in fact, was based partly upon his 'authoritarian style' – seen as imitating the Catholic monarchs, in particular his father-in-law the King of France - 'and the high-church faith he encouraged' (Hunt 2002: 7) but, above all the influence of his Catholic wife Henrietta-Maria with whom he was 'utterly in love' (Ibid).

Thus historians see that the Puritans and Cromwell in particular, 'entered the war against Charles because he feared that the king was undermining the Protestant faith' (Hunt, T. (2001) Britain's very own Taliban. [Internet] Available from: http://www.newstatesman.com/200112170042; accessed 30/3/2005). This fear of Catholic influence also led to the violent atrocities committed by Cromwell's forces in Catholic Ireland at Drogheda and Wexford.

Equally based upon the Puritan rejection of Catholicism, though infinitely less bloody, this anti-Catholic feeling also led to the banning of all festivals and 'Holy-days'– including Christmas and Easter – with the justification that they were 'sinful contrivance[s] of the Roman Catholic Church' (Ibid). The Archbishop of Canterbury appointed by Charles, the high-church William Laud, was also executed on Cromwell's orders in an attempt to 'curb the more Catholic instincts of some Anglican churchmen' (Hunt 2002: 156). So, as can be seen, the Puritans as represented by Cromwell were tolerant of divergences within the Protestant faith, but rejected absolutely any compromise with Catholicism which they saw as a threat and, indeed, anti- Christian.

Part Three: Conclusion
Fundamentalism: as Old as Religion Itself?

Part One of this paper considered what fundamentalists, rather than those observing them, thought of the modern, 'secular' world that surrounds them. Some may find the results surprising. They were not running scared of the potential unbelief that they and others believed secularism entailed, rather they were keen to identify it as what they believed it to be: an alternative religion inspired by the same forces that had opposed true believers throughout history. It was Satan that deceived Eve; it is Satan who continues to deceive now. The adherents of modern, secularist beliefs are regarded as fools who have been duped in a cosmic game of chess between the forces of good and evil and which they are ultimately destined to lose.

Part Two examined three historical groups and concluded that they were worthy of the name 'fundamentalist'. In order to reach this position it was necessary to dismiss pre-conceived ideas as to what was their relationship to today's fundamentalists who, it had previously been assumed, were reacting to a unique challenge - that of post-Enlightenment, modern secularism - which excluded the possibility of the Sicarii, the Nizaris, and the English Puritans being counted amongst their number. These assumptions imply that, not only was the experience of the modern fundamentalist unique, but that our experience of them was also unique; it was, and is, not.

The cover of New Statesman magazine, released on April 10th 2006, displays, in large letters the word 'Religion' and then, in slightly smaller letters, suggests to the potential reader that it contains 'Everything you need to know about the great issue of our time'. Within, it contains articles by some of the leading commentators in the field – Jonathan Sacks, Karen Armstrong, Tariq Ramadan and others – each of whom writes of the current religious state of the world. Fundamentalism, in particular Islamic fundamentalism, frequently rears its head in their writings and it is religious fundamentalism that actually appears to be the 'great issue of our time'. Why we in the West appear to want this

phenomenon to belong exclusively to those of us living within this period of history is a mystery. Why some academics have assumed that because Enlightenment thinkers had suggested that religion was dead - with science holding the smoking gun – that it was indeed dead, is another mystery that can only be laid at the door of ignorance rather than enlightenment. Why it is still considered correct to believe this statement of faith – easily as great a leap of faith as believing in God - when throughout the rest of the world religion, in its many varied forms, continues to dominate, shows only that arrogance, both that of the West historically and the generation that represents it today, permeates our understanding of the world.

It may be that we seek to interpret the fundamentalist phenomenon that has recently forced itself - through expressions of anger and acts of violence - into the minds of those who thought religion dead, as exclusively modern because we hope that to do so will give us the power to control it. We believe that we have the potential to stop the violence and anger if we are able to address their needs – appeal to the fundamentalists as reasonable people. Unfortunately this will not work. We are not dealing with people of reason – we are dealing with people of faith. Yavetz, in writing of the Jewish anti-Roman groups extant in the first century CE whose opposition lead to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem – and whose name has become synonymous with those who show religious 'zeal' - writes that: 'Zealots are never convinced by rational arguments, and the price they pay is always heavy' (1979: 107). Of even greater resonance, however, is his statement as to the character of the Roman leaders who sought to deal with these religious zealots – or fundamentalists as we should now call them. '[It] should never be forgotten', he writes, 'that the fiercest conflicts between the Jews and the Gentiles in Antiquity erupted against kings who were considered enlightened, liberal and tolerant… [they]…persecuted the Jews with the declared objective of compelling them not to be different from other peoples' (Ibid: 107).

In the desire to remake the world in its own post-Enlightenment, 'modern' secular image, the West has dramatically failed. Religion, especially fundamentalist religion, stands as a clear reminder that, although we live in a technologically advanced world, our core humanity has needs and wants that science cannot address. It may be that, deep down, many people realise this and dread the fact that all that science has given the fundamentalist is the ability to address a larger audience and the power to inflict greater harm on those who they sincerely believe adhere to false religions that seek to destroy them. Enlightenment thinking did not create fundamentalism; it merely equipped it to more effectively and forcibly convey its message.

REFERENCES

Al-Amriki, A. (2004) Address to the people of America. [Internet] Available from: http://www.intelcenter.com/OBLMATA-PUB-v1-1.pdf (Accessed 6/5/2006) 15-17.

Ali, S. (2004) Islam and Secularism. [Internet] Available from: http://www.islam21.info/Lectures/Islam%20and%20Secularism/Islam%20and%20Secularism.htm (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Almond, G., Appleby, R. & Sivan, E. (2003) Strong Religion. The University of Chicago Press, London.
al-Qaradawi, Y. (2004) Secularism. [Internet] Available from: http://www.islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=117 (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Ammerman, N. (1994) The Dynamics of Christian Fundamentalism: An Introduction in Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1994) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 4: Accounting for Fundamentalisms. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 13-17.

Appleby, J., Hunt, L. & Jacob, M. (1994) Telling the Truth about History. W.W. Norton & Company, London.

Appleyard, B. (2006) Religion: Who Needs It? New Statesman. 10 April 2006, 20-22.

Armstrong, K. (1994) A History of God. Mandarin Paperbacks, London.

Armstrong, K. (2001) The Battle for God. Harper Collins Publishers, London.

Armstrong, K. (2002) The gods meet fire with fire. [Internet] Available from: http://www.newstatesman.com/200212160050 (Accessed 30/3/2006)

Armstrong, K. (2006) What's God got to do with it? New Statesman. 10 April 2006, 34-35.

Beale, D. (1986) In Pursuit of Purity. Unusual Publications, Greenville, South Carolina.

Benton, J. (2003) What's going on out there? Evangelical Press, Darlington.

Black, A. (2001) The History of Islamic Thought. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Black, I. (2005) 'Great Satan' warned of a burning hell. [Internet] Available from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,1415966,00.html (Accessed 1/5/2006)

Bokaer, J. (2003) The Rise of the Religious Right in the Republican Party. [Internet] Available from: http://www.creativeresistance.ca/united-states/2003-feb24-the-rise-of-the-religious-right-in-the-republican-party-joan-bokaer-theocracywatch.htm (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Boyer, P. (2001) Religion Explained. William Heinnemann, London.

Falwell, J. (1999) Why I do the talk shows. [Internet] http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=17744 (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Farmer, W. (1956) Maccabees, Zealots, and Josephus. Columbia University Press, New York.

Fukuyama, F. (1992) The End of History and the Last Man. Penguin Books, London.

Gray, J. (2004) Heresies against Progress and Other Illusions. Granta Books, London.

Hill, C. (1970) Cromwell, Oliver (1599-1658) in Gardiner, J. ed. (2000) The History Today Who's Who in British History. Collins & Brown, London.

Hill, C. (1971) Antichrist in the Seventeenth-Century England. Oxford University Press, London.

Hill, C. (1993) The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London.

Horsley, R. & Hanson, J. (1985) Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus. Winston Press, Inc., Minneapolis.

Hunt, T. (2001) Britain's very own Taliban. [Internet] Available from: http://www.newstatesman.com/200112170042 (Accessed 30/3/2005)

Hunt, T. (2002) The English Civil War. Phoenix, London.
Juergensmeyer, M. (2001) Terror in the Mind of God. University of California Press, London.

Lawrence, B (1989) Defenders of God. Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco.

Lewis, B. (1995) The Middle East. Phoenix, London.

Lewis, B. (2004) From Babel to Dragomans. Phoenix, London.

Lyotard, J. (1992) The Postmodern Explained to Children to Children in Jenkins, K. & Munslow, A. eds. (2004) The Nature of History Reader. Routledge, London and New York, 312-319.

Macovsky, D. (2005) Gaza Disengagement: Ideological and Political Challenges for the Settlement Movement. [Internet] Available from: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2306 (Accessed 2/3/2006)

Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1991) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 1: Fundamentalisms Observed. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1993) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 2: Fundamentalisms and Society. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1993) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 3: Fundamentalisms and the State. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1994) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 4: Accounting for Fundamentalisms. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Masters, P. (1995) Are We Fundamentalists? Sword & Trowel Metropolitan Tabernacle, London.

McNeil, W. (1993) Epilogue: Fundamentalism and the World of the 1990s in Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1993) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 2: Fundamentalisms and Society. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 558-573.

Momen, M. (1985) An Introduction to Shi'I Islam. Yale University Press, London.

Nickelsberg, G. (1981) Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah. SCM Press Ltd., London.

O'Collins, G. (1974) The theology of Secularity. The Mercier Press, Dublin & Cork.

Phillips, K. (2006) American Theocracy. Viking, New York.

Plowden, A. (2004) Burned for their beliefs: Life in the troubled religious climate of the 16th century. BBC History Magazine. 5 (9), September 2004, 12-16.

Price, S. & Kearns, E. (2003) The Oxford Dictionary of Classical Myth and Religion. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ramadan, T. (2006) A case for reform. New Statesman. 10 April 2006, 26-27.

Reeves, R. (2006) Should the state 'do God'? New Statesman. 10 April 2006, 23.

Reynolds, M. (1995) Billy Graham, the Pope, and the Bible. [Internet] Available from: http://www.fundamentalbiblechurch.org/Foundation/fbcbillg.htm (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Roberts, D. (1995) Nothing But History in Jenkins, K. & Munslow, A. eds. (2004) The Nature of History Reader. Routledge, London & New York, 243-251.

Robinson, B. (2005) Aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attack: Verbal attacks on pagans, etc. [Internet] Available from: http://www.religioustolerance.org/reac_ter7.htm (Accessed 15/4/2006)

Rubenstein, R. (1966) After Auschwitz. Second Edition. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London.

Russell, D. (1963) Between the Testaments. SCM Press Ltd., London.

Russell, D. (1967) The Jews from Alexander to Herod. Oxford University Press, London.

Ruthven, M. (2004) Fundamentalism. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Sardar, Z. (2004) Desperately Seeking Paradise. Granta Books, London.

Sardar, Z. (2006) Interview: The Chief Rabbi. New Statesman. 10 April 2006, 24-25.

Scott, J. (2006) Summary comments on Second Temple Jewish sects and parties. [Internet] Available from: http://www.wheaton.edu/DistanceLearning/Parties.htm (Accessed 22/2/2006)

Solomon, N. (2000) Judaism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, London.

Unger, C. (2005) American "Rapture". [Internet] Available from: http://www.vanityfair.com/commentary/content/printables/051128roco02?print=true (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Wunaiyaan, S. (2006) Secularism and its Dangers. [Internet] Available from: http://www.alminbar.com/khutbaheng/708.htm (Accessed 5/5/2006)

Wuthnow, R. & Lawson, M. (1994) Sources of Christian Fundamentalism in the US in Marty, M. & Appleby, R. eds. (1994) The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 4: Accounting for Fundamentalisms. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 18-56.

Yavetz, Z. (1979) The Jews and the Great Powers of the Ancient World in Kedourie, E. ed. (1979) The Jewish World. Thames and Hudson, London, 89-107.