The Interrelationship Between Religious Education and Religious Studies

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Autobiographical Background

I came into the field of religious education during a time of change and development in the subject. My first appointment as a teacher coincided with the setting up of the first Religious Studies Department in Britain at the University of Lancaster under the leadership of Professor Ninian Smart. Smart's vision was not only to establish religious studies on the model of continental European and North American Departments of History and Phenomenology of Religion, but also to probe into the relevance of his work for those concerned with religious education in schools. To this end he gained funding from the Schools Council to establish a project to investigate the nature of religious education and to develop appropriate curriculum materials. Essentially the Project criticised confessional models of RE as being inappropriate for state funded schools in a predominantly secular and increasingly religiously pluralistic democracy and advocated a non-dogmatic, phenomenological approach in which teacher and learner alike were encouraged to ' bracket out' their presuppositions in order to attempt empathetically to grasp religion from the insider's perspective. Smart's work came as a breath of fresh air to me and to many other RE teachers, and his work inspired a revolution in approaches to religious education in teacher education and in schools. It also raised a series of issues which were not addressed by the Lancaster Project's inspiring groundwork and which became of particular interest to me. My own work has been concerned with the
exploration of these issues and is, in effect, both a development and a running, sympathetic critique of Smart's early work in religious education.

The late 1960s and the early 1970s brought another significant development which profoundly influenced the direction of my own work. This was the wave of migrations to Britain of people of South Asian origin partly consequent on Africanization policies in recently independent states such as Kenya and Uganda. My move to Coventry in 1972 coincided with Idi Amin's expulsion of 'Asians' from Uganda who were given ninety days to leave. The expansion and change in composition of Coventry's 'South Asian' population which resulted from migrations from East African countries had a deep effect on me. Unlike earlier migrations, women, children and family elders settled in Britain. My first encounter was with children who were attending Coventry's schools. The educational issues were many. There was the ever present issue of racism and there were immediate practical issues connected with language teaching. For me, however, there were crucial matters pertaining to religion and 'culture'. Through Gujarati and Punjabi children in Coventry schools I met their parents. Through parents I was invited to temples and to religious and cultural events. I became particularly interested in the complex and variegated life of the Hindu communities in Coventry, and for the first time in my life I was immersed in the religious culture of a community very different from that of either my upbringing or my academic education. It soon became apparent that Hindu tradition as expressed by my new friends and acquaintances was different in many ways from that portrayed in academic texts used in universities, colleges of education and schools. My mentors were now male elders in the Gujarati community (key figures in the establishment of public Hindu practice, just as women were in establishing domestic religious ritual). The issue of the gap between academic accounts of 'Hinduism' and the varieties of religious life among Hindus in Britain has continued to intrigue me and I have
considered it from various perspectives (eg Jackson 1976; 1987b; 1993; Jackson and Nesbitt 1993 chapters 1 and 2).

During 1972-74 I also studied for an MA degree in philosophy at the University of Warwick, which gave me the opportunity to focus on philosophical aspects of my interests in religion and education which were and continue to be relevant to my work in religious studies and religious education.

My early experience of Hindu tradition in Coventry reinforced my view that whatever religious education might be concerned with in its entirety, it should include a study of several religions. In trying to reassess what the character and aims of the subject should be I wrote a number of chapters and articles, making use of my background in philosophy as well as religious studies. Indeed the critical reappraisal of the aims and nature of religious education has been a recurring theme throughout my work and is returned to in my next book (Jackson forthcoming).

Another significant event was the award of a Fellowship in World Religions and Education in 1974 at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. I was seconded for a term and was given access to the remarkable range of expertise in world religions at SOAS. Out of a wide range of experiences, the profound knowledge of aspects of the Hindu tradition conveyed by Wendy O'Flaherty, Simon Weightman and David Shulman (then a graduate student but now Professor of South Asian Religions at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem) was inspirational as was the introduction to anthropological methods given by Adrian Mayer, who was Professor of South Asian Anthropology. Ralph Russell and Helen Kanitkar encouraged me to develop fieldwork in Coventry and to contribute to the then tiny literature on Hindus in Britain (Jackson 1976; 1981; Kanitkar and Jackson 1982; Jackson and Killingley 1988 chapter
4). Ted O'Connor was the person who saw the relevance of all this to teacher education and schools, and who encouraged me to edit my first book, which brought together contributions from educationalists and from academics at SOAS with an expertise in religious traditions in particular cultural settings (Jackson 1978a). My own contribution to this volume was a discussion of arguments for and against multi-faith approaches to religious education and an elaboration of my views about the aims of religious education (Jackson 1978b; 1978c [abbreviated version]). My links with SOAS remained close and I was offered a second Fellowship in 1979 to write and to develop a series of BBC radio programmes on rites of passage (birth and initiation; marriage and death) based on the work of the French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep.

My early work had attracted the attention of Ralph Rolls who was Senior Producer of educational broadcasts in religion for BBC Radio 4. Rolls was seeking to change the style of RE broadcasts and contacted me in 1975 with a view to discussing ideas for programmes which took account of the increasing religious pluralism in British cities. I suggested documentary style programmes with plenty of 'actuality' and contributions from insiders based on interviews. Rolls sent me on a BBC training course in interviewing and editing and commissioned me to write, record and edit a radio programme and a radiovision programme of my own design. Radiovision programmes consisted of a radio broadcast linked to colour slides which schools purchased from BBC Publications. Rolls’ commission gave me the opportunity to link what I then regarded as phenomenological field studies in religion with religious education. The programmes emerged as two different versions of Coventry's Square Mile, brief portraits of the religious lives of groups of Gujarati Hindus, Pakistani Muslims, Sikhs and Ukrainian Catholic Christians in Coventry. The documentary style became standard for the sixth form series Religion and Life and subsequently for several series of programmes for children of lower secondary and upper junior age ranges (see list of broadcasts). Altogether I wrote,
compiled and presented seventeen programmes, working successively with Ralph Rolls, Jack Singleton and Geoffrey Marshall-Taylor. Their relevance here is their linkage of religious studies and religious education and their use of ethnographic techniques in collecting and analysing data.

By 1980 my work was known in religious education circles and by scholars working on South Asian religions in Britain. I was invited to join the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education and the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values. The former body is a 'think tank' composed of academics in religious studies and religious education together with teachers, advisers and inspectors and having the aim of promoting innovative work in world religions and education. Ninian Smart was its first Chairman and remains as President. I was Chairman in Shap's twentieth year (1989) and presided over its celebratory conference.

In the early 1980s I edited a second symposium on religious education under the title Approaching World Religions (Jackson 1982a). This broke new ground with new writing on pluralism, commitment and the contribution of religious education to moral education, political education and world studies.

During my time as Chairman of the Shap Working Party (in 1990) I helped to set up the European Association for World Religions in Education which extends Shap's activities to Europe and includes members mainly from Western and Northern European countries and I gave the inaugural address at its first meeting in Germany. Over the years I have contributed to many of Shap's publications, a few of which are included in the collection that accompanies this paper (Jackson 1986; 1987a; Jackson and Nesbitt 1986). I also wrote a chapter for a volume celebrating the eightieth birthday of Professor Geoffrey
Parrinder, for many years co-president of Shap and Professor of Comparative Religion at King's College, University of London (Jackson 1990a).

The International Seminar on Religious Education and Values was set up in 1978 and has met biennially since, alternately in a North American or European country. It is the first international research forum concerned exclusively with religious education and values and includes philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, ethnographers, theologians, curriculum theorists and curriculum developers. I have presented papers at nearly all ISREV conferences since 1980 and these have subsequently been published in refereed journals or scholarly collections. Since 1985 I have served on the European Committee of ISREV. My work with ISREV led to my being invited to present papers at universities in Canada in 1985 (Toronto, Magill, Sherbrooke) and to an invitation to work in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Calgary in the summer of 1991.

Since this time I have become Chair of the Conference of University Lecturers in Religious Education and a member of the Professional Religious Education Group which includes the Chairs of the five professional religious education committees in England and Wales. In this capacity I have met the Minister of State for Education to discuss religious education matters in relation to the 1992 Education Bill, have acted as a consultant on religious education to the National Curriculum Council and the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority and have served on the Religious Studies Committee of the Schools Examinations and Assessment Council. Much of my work on the politics of religious education has been published as articles in the educational press and in professional journals (see full publications list).
My interest in the religious lives of ethnic minorities, coupled with my interest in education led, in 1984, to the development of a new field of research, namely the transmission of religious culture from parents and faith communities to children. From the perspective of, for example, Hindu parents whose children were born in Britain in the early 1970s, the issue of the perpetuation of the tradition had become a major concern. Very little research was being done, however, to ascertain what steps parents and communities were taking to address the issue. As a first step, I planned to conduct research into the transmission of religious culture in Hindu supplementary schools. Questionnaires were sent to a wide variety of Hindu organisations in Britain and follow-up visits were made to a range of schools. Some details of the research are outlined in the second part of this paper.

From the perspective of religious education theory the research challenged the sharp distinction generally made between religious education and religious nurture. The current orthodoxy, derived from Smart's work and elaborated by John Hull (eg Hull 1984), was to draw a distinction between religious education (non-dogmatic and with the aim of increasing understanding) and religious nurture, a term adopted by Hull from the nineteenth century American theologian Horace Bushnell (1967) to connote the transmission of religious culture from one generation to the next within faith traditions. In the literature the distinction was made both conceptually and institutionally, with county schools regarded as the forum for religious education and religious (eg voluntary aided) or community-based independent or supplementary schools being the purveyors of religious nurture. To use the terminology of Smart's project, religious nurture was perceived as 'confessional' while religious education was presented as 'educational'. The research findings blurred the distinction somewhat, since in Smart and Hull's terms, some of the activities of supplementary schools were 'educational' and some of the RE
The curriculum of County schools was perceived by some Hindu community leaders and parents as contributing to the religious development of their children.

It was also clear from the research findings that, in concentrating on what we called 'formal religious nurture', we had barely scratched the surface of the question of the transmission of religious culture from one generation to the next. I decided to design a piece of research examining the ways in which tradition was transmitted informally in the home and community. Initially, I conceived this piece of research as a phenomenological study. It was only when approaching the practical task of selecting appropriate methods that I began to realise some of the inadequacies of phenomenology as a tool for investigating religion in the field. Few field studies described by their authors as phenomenological had much to say about methods, and those that did (eg Knott 1986) used methods derived from ethnography. The issue of research design took me back to my introduction to anthropological work at SOAS and to my practical training in interviewing techniques at the BBC. I also consulted Robert Burgess who advised me and guided my reading in ethnography. This was the beginning of an interest in ethnographic methodology which has stayed with me since. I read manuals of ethnographic methods (eg Burgess 1984, 1985; Spradley 1980), and also became interested in the ways in which Western academics portray or represent religions and in issues of ethnographic interpretation, especially as treated by the American ethnographer Clifford Geertz (1973; 1983). My on-going reading in ethnography influenced the research design and its development in later projects. The work of Wilfred Cantwell Smith on the emergence of Western ideas of religions and religion (1978) complemented my ethnographic studies.

The field research, which began in January 1986, was a two year project on the 'nurture' of a group of 8-13 year old children from Hindu communities in Coventry. I was
fortunate enough to be awarded a grant of £29,000 from the Leverhulme Trust which enabled me to appoint Eleanor Nesbitt as Research Fellow. The various stages in the study are described in Jackson (1989b). The amount of data collected was huge, and it has taken some years to complete a fairly full analysis and to write an ethnography. The study is the main source of data for Hindu Children in Britain (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993), a book which also incorporates some of my theoretical work on ethnographic methodology (especially the application of the work of Clifford Geertz to studies of Hindu children) as well as reflections on relevant work from social psychological literature on identity theory and sociological and anthropological writing on ethnicity. Further details of this book are provided below.

More immediately, the data were used in the writing of books for use by children in schools (Jackson 1989a; Jackson and Nesbitt 1990), in five radio broadcasts, in articles disseminating the work of the project to teachers and to a wider audience of parents and governors. The conversion of ethnographic data into curriculum material is discussed below.

The Hindu Nurture in Coventry study was an excellent opportunity to dig deeper into the Coventry Hindu scene and to note changes in the communities that had taken place since my first contact with them in the early 1970s. The assistance of Eleanor Nesbitt was invaluable, especially in terms of being able to collect data about features of domestic tradition entirely relating to women. We learned a great deal about fieldwork, and developed our own technique of 'focused interviewing', using visual cues to elicit responses from children. A reading of Hindu Children in Britain should show the enormous amount of research that went into the project as well as the development of methodological techniques (eg 'focused' interviewing and the use of diaries), injections of theory from different disciplines and analytical reflections on the study's findings. The
Hindu studies and projected studies of other religious traditions became known as the Religious Education and Community Project.

In 1990 I was awarded a grant of £174,000 from the Economic and Social Research Council to extend the Religious Education and Community Project's work in ethnography and religious education with a three year study of the transmission of religious culture to children from four religious traditions in the West Midlands. As far as I am aware, this is the first ESRC grant to be awarded for religious education. The award was to build on my earlier research and development work on ethnographic research and curriculum development work (much of which is included in the books and papers submitted).

Specifically, the grant was for studies of Christian and Sikh children in Coventry and Jewish and Muslim children in Birmingham, linked to curriculum development for schools (funded by other bodies) and to developing and applying methodological ideas both related to field research and to designing curriculum materials based on ethnographic research. Some of this theoretical work influenced the writing of the later drafts of *Hindu Children in Britain* (completed in March 1993).

A number of papers relating to the study of Christian and Jewish children have already been published and two, of which I am co-author, have been included as part of the present submission (Jackson and Nesbitt 1992; Nesbitt and Jackson 1992). Three books based on the ESRC funded studies are in preparation and have been written in first draft (Jackson forthcoming; Nesbitt and Jackson forthcoming (a); Woodward and Jackson forthcoming) together with a series of articles (including pieces on our recently completed studies of Sikh and Muslim children) to be published in refereed journals (eg Nesbitt and Jackson forthcoming (b)).
A curriculum development programme based on the ethnographic studies has been in progress from 1990 under my direction. Materials have been developed in consultation with the ethnographers and families in the field and these have been trialled in Warwickshire schools. The curriculum development work is to be published in stages from 1994 by Heinemann (e.g. Everington and Jackson (eds) forthcoming).

My interest in Hindu studies and ethnography led to the writing of a substantial introduction to Hinduism jointly with Dr Dermot Killingley (Jackson and Killingley 1988). This was followed, at the request of an examination board, with a short introduction to Hindu ethics (Jackson and Killingley 1991) which complemented the earlier volume.

Central Themes of My Work

Like Smart I have always maintained that there is a close relationship between religious studies as understood in higher education and religious education in schools and the exploration of that relationship has been a key theme in my work. This has taken me into issues of methodology in religious education and religious studies, into the experience of ethnographic field research and into the discussion of theoretical issues raised by these studies. Because religious education exists on the ground, so to speak, it has also taken me into areas concerned with the politics of education and of educational policy making (where the subject of multifaith religious education has been a highly contested matter) and into disseminating new thinking in RE through writing for teachers, curriculum materials for pupils, educational broadcasts on radio and television and articles in the educational and national press.
There are three inter-related and overlapping themes to the published work submitted. The first is the discussion of a range of issues related to religious education in pluralistic societies. Here some of the issues raised arise from the experience of ethnographic fieldwork. The second is the ethnographic study of religious communities in Britain, with an emphasis on Hindu communities and the study of children within the communities, and with a particular interest in methodological issues. This work on methodology and interpretation has been as relevant for my work on religious education as it has for ethnographic fieldwork, data analysis and the writing of research reports. The third theme in my writing is the inter-relationship between various aspects of religious studies (especially ethnography of religion) and religious education.

In discussing these themes reference is made to the publications which have been submitted. These include books, chapters in symposia and papers published in refereed journals. The chapters in symposia (unless they appear in one of the books submitted) and the articles in refereed journals have been bound together in chronological order of publication. They could, however, be read in the order in which they are introduced below. In the discussion that follows, most references are to the work submitted. Occasionally, however, there are references to other works from my full publications list.

**Religious Education in Pluralistic Societies**

Jackson (1990a) is a critical overview of developments in religious education in England and Wales since 1944. It provides a historical and theoretical context for discussions of the first of these themes - issues related to religious education in pluralistic societies. The papers submitted have a bearing on the aims and nature of religious education (Jackson 1978b; 1984; 1987a; 1992a); the issue of whether it is possible for religiously committed
people to teach religious education impartially (Jackson 1982b); the ways in which people holding certain religiously exclusivist positions see the relationship between religion and education (Jackson 1990b); and the arguments of writers opposing a multifaith religious education (Jackson 1987a) including those from the radical right of British politics (Jackson 1989d; 1992a). Jackson (1993) gives attention to the methods that can be used in religious education in order to interpret the worldviews of others. This paper includes a short critique of phenomenology, draws attention to issues of power in interpreting ways of life within other cultures and introduces methods from interpretive anthropology as being highly appropriate for use in religious education.

The papers submitted show something of the development of my ideas about the nature of religious education since the late 1970s. There is a continuity in that I have maintained the view that the religious education provided by the public education system of a pluralistic democracy should maintain an openness over questions of religious truth and should require and promote tolerance and understanding of different religious positions. There is also a shift in thinking involving a number of strands which are concerned with the representation of religions, the interpretation of religious material and a move towards acknowledging more fully religious education's potential to promote 'conversation' and 'edification', the capacity to re-assess one's own position as a result of studying someone else's worldview or way of life.

With regard to the representation of religions, my early work adopts a phenomenological perspective, both in terms of its assumption of differentiated religions having close structural parallels and in using the term 'religion' to represent a reification of religions or to delineate a field of study. My work still maintains features of phenomenology (especially the desire to recapture an insider's understanding of concepts and feelings) but has changed significantly. The study of literature on the history of the concepts of
religions and religion (eg Smith 1978); on the role of political power in structuring concepts of religions in certain ways (eg Said 1978); and anthropological writing on the hazards of attempting to empathise with people from other cultures in the field have all led me to reconsider my position. A continuity, however, has been the notion that gaining some understanding of another worldview involves not only learning concepts, but how those concepts relate to one another in practice in the living situation and also how they relate to feelings expressed by individuals within that way of life.

In 1978 I expressed this through seeing a key aim of religious education as the cultivation of a form of religious appreciation:

Having the capacity to elucidate or to appreciate religion...involves stepping back a pace from the devotional in assessing and understanding the relationship between worship and morality, ritual and fellowship and so on. The development of this capacity I would see as one of the tasks of religious education, entirely appropriate to the county school. In a sense then religious education aims at getting the learner to 'appreciate' religion in the same way that music education aims at getting the student to appreciate music. (Jackson 1978b:14)

By 1984 I was using the metaphor of 'grammar' to point up the organic character of discourse within religious traditions and advocating an approach which recognised internal diversity as well as the value of gaining an overview of a conceptual scheme (Jackson 1984:142). Work on the ways in which 'Hinduism' has been represented historically has made me even more aware of the imposition of Western structures on ideas from other cultures (Jackson 1987b; Jackson and Killingley 1988; Jackson 1993).
In more recent times, both for purposes of ethnographic interpretation and for pedagogical purposes, I designed a model that would present a looser, more personal and organic picture of religious traditions than that presented in some versions of phenomenology and which took account of the situational character of ethnicity and of social and personal identity. Combining insights from Wilfred Cantwell Smith's work in Religious Studies (1978) with that of anthropologists (eg Geertz 1973; 1983) and social psychologists interested in the relationship between individuals and groups (eg Tajfel 1978; 1981) I constructed a matrix in which the most generalised 'whole' is the religious tradition which, although inevitably constructed in different ways by different insiders and outsiders, is a reference point for individuals and groups. Next there are 'membership groups' of many kinds (some of them having an 'ethnic' character), each evolving situationally in relation to other groups. Then there is the individual, deeply influenced through the membership of groups and identifiable as part of the wider tradition, and yet being personally unique. The interpretation of a religious worldview (whether by an ethnographer or a pupil doing religious education) involves examining the relationship between individuals and groups, using the wider tradition as a general reference point. Moving back and forth from one to the other (e.g. by setting up activities for teachers or pupils that demand this) increases understanding. In curriculum terms, this 'hermeneutic circle' could involve setting up an interplay between an individual and one or more membership groups (e.g. denomination, sect, home, peer group) or between an individual, his or her membership group and a cumulative tradition (Jackson and Nesbitt 1990; Jackson and Nesbitt 1993 chapter 11; Jackson forthcoming chapter 7; Everington and Jackson (eds) forthcoming).

The hermeneutical methods for interpreting another's worldview outlined in Jackson (1993) do not regard empathy as the central means to grasp what it means to be a person operating within a different worldview. Although I have elaborated this hermeneutical
approach recently, it is prefigured in a passage from Approaching World Religions which deals with understanding the emotional side of religion. The passage, which appears in the context of a discussion of issues concerned with religious commitment and religious education, is sceptical of attempts to understand the feelings of a body of believers or worshippers but speaks of the sense of trying to understand how a particular individual feels during an act of worship, a mystical experience or whatever (1982b:92).

Interviewing is recommended as a method and it is implied that familiarity with the concepts used in the person's way of life is a necessary condition for empathy. This coheres with my later critique of the role of empathy in religious studies advanced by some phenomenologists of religion.

Maybe one's capacity for empathy develops after grasping the 'grammar' of someone else's discourse. (1993:160)

A further development in my thinking is in terms of the involvement of the personal views and feelings of the student in the processes of religious education, of religious education's role in helping young people to formulate and refine their own views on issues with which religions are concerned. In 1978 I wrote:

Actually doing theology (ie engaging in theology as opposed to studying theology) may happen in a religious education class in that some students may be formulating a theological position or adapting one already held in the light of new knowledge and experience. But this is incidental and not central to religious education. (Jackson 1978b:15)

In a paper published in 1987 I gave a different view:
Religious education...should be characterised neither by its database nor by its contribution to pupils' personal development, but by both. Without a study of religions, the subject is likely to attract idiosyncratic and tendentious interpretations of the nature of religion... Without the opportunity for pupils to engage with the material they study - and in some cases making a contribution to it - the subject will have limited personal relevance to those who pursue it. (Jackson 1987a:17)

A further point is made in this paper about the assumption by some religious educators that knowledge about religions reduces prejudice against them on the part of the learner (a position that leaves the way open for those who refute this view to argue that multifaith religious education is pointless). I argue that knowledge and understanding are necessary but not sufficient conditions to break stereotypes and correct false information (1987a:18).

My current view sees religious education as involving 'conversation' - making connections, finding points of overlap and difference - between the student and those under study and as having the potential to 'edify' the student, to provide the stimulus for the learner (whether the pupil in the classroom or the ethnographer studying another worldview) to re-examine or re-interpret his or her own worldview (Jackson 1992a:109-10; Jackson forthcoming chapters 3 and 7). Curriculum materials prepared as part of the Religious Education and Community Project employ these concepts as well as a hermeneutical approach to the study of religious material.

A further difference between this 'conversational' view and earlier positions is a clear acknowledgement that voices from inside the traditions (which might be commenting, for
example, on school policy, aspects of education or social values as well as explaining what it is like to be an insider) need to be taken seriously. This is a point about power and about the relationship between theology and education within the traditions in the political setting of a pluralistic democracy (Jackson 1992 a and b). Members of religious traditions and groups are not simply 'objects of study', but are pupils, colleagues, parents and others whose voices are relevant to the processes of education.

This is a theme which also appears in Jackson (1990b) in relation to exclusivist theologies and education and in Jackson (1989d; 1992a) in relation to the radical right's portrayal of multifaith religious education. Jackson (1992a) is a systematic rebuttal of criticisms of multifaith religious education from right wing writers, some of whom are associated with forms of evangelical Christian allegiance. While rejecting their arguments, some attempt is made to understand the concerns and anxieties which may have led some of these writers to embrace their particular view.

Ethnographic Studies of Religions


Jackson (1976) was based on research in Coventry following studies in fieldwork methods and Hindu culture at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London in 1974. Although a small number of articles dealing with social scientific
aspects of Hinduism in Britain had already appeared, this was the first research paper to be published written specifically from a religious studies perspective. It stimulated the development of studies of diaspora Hindu practice in Britain, at the University of Leeds for example (Knott 1986). The paper deals with a single Hindu festival, tracing continuities in ritual practice and oral tradition from parts of Gujarat, but also noting influences due to migration.

Jackson (1981) focuses on the role of the temple in the religious lives of Coventry's Gujarati Hindus and is included in the first symposium on Hindus in Britain to be published (Bowen 1981). The paper sets Coventry's Gujarati Hindus in the context of other Hindu communities in Britain, briefly explains how Coventry acquired its Hindu population, charts the difficulties the Coventry Gujarati Hindu community had in acquiring a temple site, describes the Shree Krishna temple together with its furnishings and symbols and gives an account of daily acts of devotion, festivals, and the use of oral and written sacred literature. The paper notes the community's wish that a new temple site should be found, a hope that was realised in 1992 with the opening of the purpose built Shree Krishna Temple and Community Centre (see Jackson and Nesbitt 1990 for a photographic record of the temple's development).

Jackson (1985) discusses the literature on the transmission of Hindu culture to children and reports the findings of the first part of a study of formal Hindu nurture. Jackson (1985) and Jackson and Nesbitt (1986) both draw on a study conducted in 1983 and 1984 which concentrated upon the formal aspects of the transmission of Hindu culture. The focus was on supplementary classes run by Hindus in which distinctively Hindu teaching was provided for children of their community. In 1983 I designed and sent out a questionnaire to fiftyfive Hindu organisations and associations (Jackson 1985). The questionnaire returns provided a wealth of information which was employed in the design
of an interview schedule used subsequently by Eleanor Nesbitt to collect further data from ten organisations in different parts of England. The research demonstrated the diversity and the overlap of approaches to the formal transmission of Hindu culture in Britain.

Hindu Children in Britain is the first full length study of diaspora Hindu children to be published. It draws on data principally from a study conducted during 1986-87 funded by the Leverhulme Trust ('Hindu Nurture in Coventry'), together with a limited amount of data from the study of formal Hindu nurture outlined above and from a study of children from two Punjabi Hindu-related movements conducted in 1986-7. The principal aim of the studies was to learn about what I termed the 'nurture' of Hindu children growing up in Britain. Nurture was adopted as an analytic term from the American and British religious education literature (see above, p10) and denotes the processes by which children born into a particular faith community acquire its characteristic practices and beliefs or some adaptation of them (Bushnell 1967; Hull 1984).

I was responsible for the initial design of the research and I contributed to the fieldwork. My involvement included taking part in the initial survey of Hindu life in Coventry; in visiting all the case study families at various times during the fieldwork period and in conducting interviews - especially with members of the families of the children who, in the book, have the pseudonyms Arun, Anita, Deepak and Ritu, Mridula and Sarita). I visited members of Arun's family in Bombay and Deepak and Ritu's family in Delhi in 1987 and collected material which was used in writing chapters 3 and 4. I also kept a photographic record of my contribution to the research. Some of the photographs appear in Jackson 1989a, Jackson and Nesbitt 1990 and on the cover of Jackson and Nesbitt 1993. Others were used in a BBC Radiovision programme on a Hindu family in Britain.
I also had responsibility for introducing theoretical material from ethnography, social psychology, religious studies and philosophy into the research. This influenced the project methodology, the data analysis, the formulation of conclusions and the general style of the book. I was closely involved in data analysis. With regard to writing the book, I am responsible for chapters 1, 2 and 11 (the analytical discussion of the research findings) and co-wrote the rest of the text with Eleanor Nesbitt. Having designed the book we made initial drafts using field notes and edited interview transcripts, and then passed the text of each chapter to each other for reshaping, editing and modifying in the light of new published research or relevant theoretical work. The final text is about half the length of the first draft.

A description of the research (including our employment of concepts and strategies from interpretive anthropology) and an account of our research methods can be read in chapter 2 and the Appendix. Chapter 11 is the key chapter in terms of interpreting our results over all and relating them to other theoretical and ethnographic studies. It includes my outline of an analytical model for interpreting religious research data (see above pp 21-22), and, by way of illustration, applies it to the case of Anita, one of the children who was featured in the research as a case study. The model draws on concepts from the work of Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1978) and from social psychology (eg Tajfel 1978) and has been employed by the curriculum development team of the RECP in adapting material from the Project's research data for use with children and in organising hermeneutical activities for pupils engaging in religious education (Jackson forthcoming chapter 7; Everington and Jackson (eds) forthcoming).

The ESRC study (entitled 'Ethnography and Religious Education') includes a study of the transmission of religious culture to children and young people within selected families of four religious traditions in the West Midlands by use of ethnographic research methods.
Jackson and Nesbitt (1992) and Nesbitt and Jackson (1992) have been included as articles reporting research on Christian children in Coventry, the first of the four studies to be completed. My role has been to assist in research design and data analysis, to supervise fieldwork and to contribute to the writing of research reports. Jackson and Nesbitt (1992) reports that the main variables in the selected children's experience of Christianity were belief, ritual practice, ethnicity and denomination and illustrates, with reference to holy spirit, baptism, holy communion and the significance of saints, the diversity in their experience of rituals and their use of concepts. The article also comments on common features in the children's understanding of Christianity (the importance of God and Jesus; the significance of Christmas). Nesbitt and Jackson (1992) uses data from the Christianity study and the earlier Leverhulme-funded Hindu children study in discussing children's perceptions of their own and each other's religious traditions.

The Links Between Religious Education and Academic Studies in Religions

My work has involved making links between various aspects of the academic study of religions and religious education. One aspect of this has been to write for specialist religious education teachers material drawn from the Hindu tradition which has been hitherto inaccessible or unavailable. For example there was no available material distilling scholarly writing on Hindu festivals and on Hindu ethics and yet specialist teachers were required by examination syllabuses to teach these topics. Jackson (1986) and Jackson and Killingley (1991), both based on library research but drawing, when appropriate, on personal research, were written specifically to meet the needs of these teachers.
Another concern has been to challenge some of the assumptions inherited by religious educators from the academic study of religions, both in terms of methodology (see the discussion of phenomenology below) and in terms of the representation of religious traditions. Jackson (1987b) is a critique of the ways in which 'Hinduism' has been represented in the literature of religious education (especially in Agreed Syllabuses since 1944 and curriculum texts). The paper shows, for example, how assumptions from the study of religions (for example from traditional forms of 'comparative religion') have at times been accepted uncritically by religious educators and have continued to exert an influence on religious education well after they have been challenged in the field of religious studies. The paper also points out the dangers of accepting uncritically representations of the tradition by insiders, who themselves may be influenced by particular theological or political concerns. Recently I have built on the research for this paper, tracing the emergence of the term 'Hinduism' from the eighteenth century and noting how Western, Orientalist structures and assumptions shaped the concept of 'Hinduism' (Jackson 1993:159; forthcoming chapter 4).

Most of my work relating academic studies of religions to religious education is related to my interest in ethnography. There is the obvious sense in which ethnographic studies of the transmission of religious culture to children are relevant to religious education teachers and theorists interested in matters such as the home background of children being taught in school or the relationship between religious nurture and religious education. Some of my publications (see the section of my full publications list headed 'Articles in Professional Journals and Newspapers' for examples) have reported ethnographic research in forms adapted for a readership of teachers.

The principal ways in which my work relates ethnographic studies to religious education, however, are methodological. In a sense the role of the teacher of religious education
(and often the pupil) is analogous to the role of the ethnographer in interpreting social anthropological data. The RE teacher's role is to help others (pupils) to interpret religious material. In engaging in this activity the teacher (and the pupil), like the ethnographer, needs to give attention to his or her presuppositions, assumptions and commitments. Both need to give attention to issues of representation or 'characterisation' (Jackson 1984). Both should be concerned with issues of power and consultation (Jackson 1992a; 1993) and both should foster 'conversation', two way interpretive activity through human interaction in encounters with religion as it is lived and practised by people (Jackson 1993; forthcoming). Arguably both should be concerned with the edification of the practitioner, whether pupil or teacher in school (Jackson 1987a; 1993; forthcoming) or ethnographer engaging in fieldwork or interpreting field data (Turner 1980).

The following examples illustrate some of the specific ways in which my work has made connections between ethnography and religious education. (Not included here is a discussion of the ways I have used ethnographic sources {eg the field notes and audio-taped interviews used in preparing Jackson 1976} in educational broadcasting. A schedule of broadcasts I have scripted and presented is included with my full publications list.)

A particular approach to the relationship between ethnography and religious education is adopted in Approaches to Hinduism (Jackson and Killingley 1988). The case advanced (in chapter two) is that although 'Hinduism' is arguably a false conceptualisation, there exists nevertheless a family of key concepts which (although none of them constitutes an essence) characterise the Hindu tradition. The best way to bring the tradition to life and to demonstrate its internal variety, it is argued, is through illustrating major themes with examples from ethnographic research and the related fields of autobiography and biography. Thus themes such as 'society,' 'mythology and the gods', 'festivals and sacred
'time', 'life-cycle rituals' and 'sects and movements' are illustrated with summaries and
discussions of published and unpublished ethnographic and biographical studies (one of
them from the Religious Education and Community Project's studies of Hindus in
Coventry). The discussion is then extended to take account of the wider tradition and
related to issues of representation and curriculum practice for different age groups of
pupils.

As an analytical framework, use is made of Wilfred Cantwell Smith's model of 'faith' and
'tradition' in attempting to avoid standard Western representations of 'Hinduism'. The
ethnographic case studies are contextualised by chapters in Part One of the book
attempting an overview of the tradition, summarising ways in which religious education
has represented 'Hinduism' in the past, discussing pedagogical issues and introducing
Hindus in Britain. Readers are also provided in Part Three with a critical review of books
and audio visual resources which covers most material available at that time.

**Approaches to Hinduism** was the first theoretically grounded and sustained use of
ethnographic sources in interplay with an overview of a tradition's key concepts and
structures in order to encourage a hermeneutical approach by teachers of religious
education and their pupils. The writing of the book is discussed in Jackson (1989b and
c).

A second use of ethnography in my work in religious education which also illustrates the
inter-relationship of academic and pedagogical studies has been the development of
teaching methods and learning strategies based on ethnographic methodologies. Jackson
(1990c), entitled 'Children as Ethnographers', shows how children can be taught to use
sensitizing activities and simple ethnographic techniques such as observation,
interviewing and analysing documents in their own studies of religions. The chapter also
illustrates how children can use their source materials creatively and reflectively in expressing their own responses to what they have studied and relating it to their own experience (what, more recently, I have called 'edification' (Jackson forthcoming chapter 7)).

My work on the Religious Education and Community Project provides innovative ways of linking ethnography and religious education. One use of ethnography in this context is in the design of curriculum material for use by pupils in schools. Many religious education books and materials present accounts of 'religions' which conform to structures determined by phenomenological methods or in some other way attempt to convey a religion's essence. Some use fictional accounts in order to present an insider's view. As part of the Religious Education and Community Project I developed procedures for moving from ethnographic material to curriculum material in order to provide authentic interpretations which were approved by the insiders portrayed in the text. In this way insiders were involved in the editing process but the balance of content and techniques for relating the experience of the reader to that of the person portrayed in the text were suggested by the ethnographer/curriculum developer. The experimental work for this used data from the Leverhulme-funded Hindu Nurture in Coventry study which was used in the preparation of two curriculum books for children (Jackson 1989a and Jackson and Nesbitt 1990) and of five radio programmes broadcast on BBC Radio Four. A discussion of the processes involved and of the ethical and methodological issues raised is in Jackson (1989b) (also published in another version for a readership of educationists concerned with the humanities (Jackson 1989c)). This discussion formed part of a successful bid to the Economic and Social Research Council which enabled me to develop the Religious Education and Community Project's work between 1990 and 1993, including further theoretical and experimental work on relating ethnographic studies of
religions in Britain to curriculum development (summarised in Jackson forthcoming chapter 7).

My application of ethnographic theory and method to religious education has been extended during the ESRC funded period of the Religious Education and Community Project. This work has also included a reappraisal of phenomenological methods. Jackson (1993) includes a short critique of phenomenology as a methodology for grasping worldviews other than one's own. This is done with particular reference to the work of Gerardus van der Leeuw, a Dutch phenomenologist whose ideas have been highly influential on European and North American scholars in religious studies. The paper goes on to explicate and advocate the approach of the ethnographer Clifford Geertz in interpreting religious worldviews, pointing out the relevance of Geertz's hermeneutical approach to religious education (Jackson 1993: 161-164). This paper has been used by the curriculum development team of the Religious Education and Community Project as a basis for developing my earlier work on pedagogical techniques for helping children to interpret ethnographic source materials from religious traditions (Everington and Jackson (eds) forthcoming; Jackson forthcoming chapter 7). Equally (as outlined above) I applied Geertz's ideas to the Project Team's ethnographic fieldwork methodology. The employment of Geertz's ideas as a methodological and interpretive tool in relation to our work with Hindu children is discussed in Jackson and Nesbitt (1993 chapter 1) in which the methods used for fieldwork, data analysis and ethnographic writing show the influence of Geertz's ideas (eg pp 19-21). Attention is also given to points made by some of Geertz's critics. This passage conveys a sense of how Geertz's ideas have been adapted and applied to specific field situations and to the interpretation of data and addresses the question as to how far can one understand another's worldview.

Summary
In summary, the significance of my work lies in my elaboration of approaches to religious education which draw on different religious traditions and my defence of these against their critics; in making a shift from a phenomenological to an interpretive approach to religious education which recognises historical influences on the formation of our constructions of 'religions' and the internal pluralism of religious traditions and which brings insights to religious education from disciplines such as anthropology and cultural studies; in conducting ethnographic studies in order to portray religious communities in Britain (especially their children) in an organic, living way; in making connections between ethnographic field studies and religious education subject matter and methodology; and in making contributions to the politics of religious education during a time of rapid educational change.

Present and Future Work

Currently I am writing a book on interpreting religious worldviews which draws together and develops some of the ideas outlined in the more recent publications submitted (Jackson forthcoming). The probable title will be Religious Education: an Interpretive Approach. I am also contributing to the writing programme of the ESRC funded studies and am co-author of Christian Children in an Urban Setting (with Eleanor Nesbitt) and of Jewish Children in an English City (with Peter Woodward). I have also recently (with Eleanor Nesbitt) completed two articles reporting the research on Sikh children in Coventry which have been submitted to refereed journals and am supervising the writing of further articles on Jewish and Muslim children. I am contributing to the curriculum materials produced by the RECP under the general title of The Warwick RE Project. The primary school materials will be called Bridges to Religions, and the key stage one pack (five books introducing children from different religious backgrounds studied as part of
the Religious Education and Community Project plus a Teachers' Resource Book) are due for publication by Heinemann in 1984.

Packs for lower and upper key stage two and separate pupils' books for key stage three are in preparation.

I am now seeking funding for a follow-up longitudinal study of the young people who were case studies in the research reported in Hindu Children in Britain eight years on and recently obtained an award from a Hindu source to provide time to develop the proposal and to re-establish contact with the families concerned. These young people, some of whom were not born when I first started working with Hindus in Coventry, are now aged 16-21, and some of them are in higher education. This would be the first longitudinal study of its kind. I have secured funding to extend the Project's curriculum development activities and I am also continuing my work on applying insights from ethnographic theory and fieldwork to religious education.

The Religious Education and Community Project has been visited during the past year by academics from South Africa, Australia, Canada and Norway who are all employing some of its ideas in their own work. I have presented papers on my work associated with the Project in Canada, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and will be presenting a paper at the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values in Germany during the present academic year.

Notes
1 The other aims include the development of a theoretical framework for translating ethnographic source material from the project into material for use in religious education and the development and publication of curriculum materials drawing on the project's
empirical research data and employing the project's theoretical work in religious education.


References


Jackson, Robert (1982b) 'Commitment and the Teaching of World Religions' in R Jackson (ed) *Approaching World Religions*, London, John Murray, Chapter 8, pp. 89-100.


Woodward and Jackson, R (forthcoming) Jewish Children in an English City.
Appendix 1

Robert Mason David Jackson: List of Selected Publications for consideration
for PhD by published work

(a) Books (edited works and scholarly books)


Approaching World Religions (ed), London, John Murray, 1982. (pp206) (including 'Commitment and the Teaching of World Religions' chapter 8, pp89-100).

Approaches to Hinduism (with D Killingley), London, John Murray, 1988. (pp245)

Hindu Children in Britain (with E Nesbitt) Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books, 1993. (pp235)

(b) Short Monographs


(c) Articles in Refereed Journals and Chapters in Scholarly Books/
Symposia (other than those submitted as part of my own edited books)


Appendix 2

Robert Mason David Jackson

Full Publications List to 1993

(a) Books (Scholarly Books and Edited Works)

Perspectives on World Religions (ed), University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1978. (pp263)

Approaching World Religions (ed), London, John Murray, 1982. (pp206)

Approaches to Hinduism (with D Killingley), London, John Murray, 1988. (pp245)


Hindu Children in Britain (with E Nesbitt) Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books, 1993. (pp235)

(b) Short Monographs and Short Edited Works

Hindus in Britain (with H A Kanitkar), University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1982. (pp45)


(c) Books for Pupils


Listening to Hindus (with E Nesbitt), London, Unwin Hyman, 1990. (pp64)

(d) Articles in Refereed Journals


(e) Articles in Professional Journals and Newspapers


'Britain's Hindu Children' (with E Nesbitt), Home and School, Winter 1990, pp56-57.


'Hindus in Britain' (with E Nesbitt), Hindu Today, February 1991, pp5-6.


(f) Chapters in Scholarly Books/Symposia


(g) Chapters in Professional Educational Publications


'The Spectrum of Commitment in Religious Education', Commitment and the RE Teacher - a Symposium, Chapter 8, City of Birmingham Education Committee, 1982.


(h) Scripts for Educational Broadcasts

Radio
Coventry's Square Mile (1) a profile of the beliefs and values of three different ethnic and religious communities in Coventry, with special reference to young people in their late teens. BBC Radio 4 (Schools) transmitted 1975.


A Festival of Nine Nights, a programme about the celebration of an autumn Hindu festival, BBC Radio 4 (School) transmitted 26th October and 2nd November, 1977.

You're All in Charge of Each Other a programme about the work of the World Studies Project, BBC Radio 4 (schools) transmitted 28th October and 4th November, 1977.

Initiation - a programme about the Jewish ceremony of Bar Mitzvah, BBC Radio 4 (Schools) transmitted 9th February, 1979.

Marriages in Britain a programme about two weddings, one Sikh and one Christian which took place in 1978. BBC Radio 4 (Schools) transmitted 2nd March, 1979.

Death Customs - a programme about the ritual and beliefs associated with death and funerals in traditional Chinese religion (Hong Kong) and in Anglican Christianity. BBC Radio 4 (Schools) transmitted 16th March, 1979.


A West Indian Community in Britain in the series Religion and Life, BBC Radio 4, (Schools) transmitted 25th October and 1st November, 1979.

Coventry's Square Mile (2) - Radiovision - a profile in sound and vision (36 frame film strip) of the worship of four religious communities in Coventry. Transmitted 9th March, 1976.

Holi, a Hindu Festival, a programme for primary schools, BBC Radio 4 on 15th, 22nd and 29th January, 1982.

A Spring Celebration, 'Contact', BBC Radio 4, 22nd March, 1983.


Television

Christianity as a World Religion, (written and presented; introducing five programmes made in Atlanta, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Florence and Leicester) BBC 2, transmitted February 1992 and repeated at regular intervals.

(i) Audio-visual Publications


Hindu Festivals, Pictorial Charts Educational Trust, 1982 (four wall charts and teachers' notes).

(j) Reviews