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FORMALITIES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Declaration

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Stephen Ridley, April 2013

1 INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION IN THE LITERATURE

In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan the prophet confronts King David with a "spiritual narrative" about a wealthy man who, possessed of large flocks himself, nevertheless chooses to take a poor man's only lamb and serve it up as a meal for a guest. As David listens to the story he is full of indignation and vows that the rich man should be punished. Whereupon he is told by Nathan, "You are the man" and realises that the story illustrates his own crime of taking Bathsheba away from Uriah (and ensuring his death!) even though he had wives, and to spare, of his own. David is suitably repentant but the story concludes with the prophecy that David's child by Bathsheba will die and that his own family will rebel against him.

Here, on the face of it, is a parable a bit like the parables of Jesus which make a moral point or have an immediate impact. On another level however it illustrates many of the problems which accompany the idea of spiritual narrative.

- Even if you hadn't heard the story before, it would make sense, but it might not be the same sense that the original author had. We might understand it as a simple tale about adultery, infidelity or even abuse of power but the main thrust of the story seems actually to be about "theft" – David's crime is that he "stole" Bathsheba when he didn't have to. This is about property rights in the same way that "who gives this woman to be married to this man?" seems a quaint walk-on part for the Bride's father in the present day, but would have had a very different meaning 200 years ago.
- Then again the narrative is part of a much bigger narrative imposed by the Deuteronomic historian,[1] plotting a line of prophecy and fulfilment which threatens but never destroys God's promise of a king on the throne of David (2 Sam 7) but justifies the eventual disaster of the exile in 2 Kings. So this mini narrative plays a part in a much bigger schema of which we may or may not be aware. Does it make a difference?
- There may be wheels within wheels. The story leads on to the poignant death of David's son, but at the time (before it was incorporated into the Deuteronomic plan)[2] it may have served a convenient propaganda purpose to counter any

suspicion that the child was actually Uriah's and promote Solomon's claim as the rightful successor and undisputed son of David when Bathsheba conceives again.

- The narrative evokes a particular response in David, but the response itself is culturally conditioned. Why should a King listen to an itinerant prophet and why repent? Accustomed as we are to constitutional monarchy where the king himself is under the law, [3] David's reaction is understandable, but this model itself was taken from the peculiar Israelite understanding of kingship which filtered into our traditions via the bible and is still enshrined in archiepiscopal anointing at a coronation. A very different reaction is seen a few chapters later, where Jezebel, the daughter, significantly, of a middle eastern king, more typical by the standards of the day, has no hesitation in trying to kill Elijah and any other prophet who stands in her way (1 Kings 17f) and mocks her Israelite husband when he balks at stealing Naboth's vineyard, asking him pointedly "*whether or not he really is king in Israel*" (1Kings 21.7).

All this is by way of introduction to the problems associated with story, but stories are still seductive – the more so if they are part of the common currency of thought and can act as a springboard for cognitive debate or personal deepening. Spiritual narratives have a habit of crystallising discussion over a broad spectrum of human interest.

Biblical Theologians struggle with a statement of Jesus in the earliest gospel that he tells parables so that people might *not* understand (Mark 4.10). The parable of the sower illustrates the point. The disciples don't understand it until the interpretation is given (but does the interpretation go back to Jesus?) [4, 5] and there follows a whole series of parables which are obscure and without interpretation. The story still stands but we are left with the feeling that we may have missed something. Was Jesus really the sort to deliberately confuse people or is this part of a scheme invented by Mark to present Jesus' teaching as part of the 'messianic secret'? Should we search for a simple historical core to the story in Palestinian farming techniques of the time [6] or should we conclude that the story means whatever we think it means, within the hermeneutic tradition of the church. Or is it simply a puzzle which we would not pay attention to if it were not in 'holy writ' and leave it at that?

Philosophers like Anthony Flew [7] found John Wisdom's story of the Gardener extremely congenial to his theory of falsification and used it to demonstrate that someone might persist in their belief in God even if their argument died the death of a 1000 qualifications.

The story is now a staple of A level philosophy text books [8] on the Logical Positivists, alongside Hick's 'Celestial City', Basil Mitchell's 'Collaborator' and Hare's 'Paranoid Student' and are much more easily remembered than the accompanying close argument. Flew's intentions with the story were quite clearly atheist. It is surprising therefore when the story is quoted positively by *theists* to demonstrate the very opposite argument that no-one can prove that God does not exist, and it just shows that He is beyond our conventional instrumentation to detect. If his obituary in the Times (April 14th 2010 following his death on April 4th) is to be believed, Flew would probably not have objected over much to this hijack. Even in his most atheist era Flew had been supportive of the 'cultural effects of religion' and admired 'the moral force of the Christian tradition,' continuing to support RE in schools and the maintenance of a Christian voice in society.

On the other hand there is a sensible question of whether the best stories should exercise control over their interpretation. In other words is all hi-jacking equally acceptable, for example by **Politicians**? Terence Copley [9] remembers a very deliberate twist which Margaret Thatcher gave to two Biblical stories - the woman with the alabaster jar and the Good Samaritan - where the focus was subsumed under a capitalist flag that you have to make the money in order to give it away. His conclusion is succinct. According to Thatcher 'Money enables their actions. They in turn validate the importance of money'. The question this raises, says Copley, is not whether or not Christian acquisition of big-time wealth is *defensible*, but whether this is a *valid interpretation* of two gospel narratives. Copley's conclusion is that the story teller stands at the 'hour glass middle, between the complexities of the narrative and the diversity, concerns and needs of their audience'. Story tellers are custodians of narrative but they should take care never to become violators. This of course begs the question of truth. Does narrative contain a truth which is 'given' which resists false interpretation? And is there a difference between the kind of narrative like Flew's which illuminates a particular philosophical problem in different ways, and the kind of biblical narrative which comes with one over-riding direction and a religious health warning that 'this may permanently change your life'. The word 'spiritual' in the thesis title presents precisely this additional layer of complexity which is not evoked by, say, the word 'ethical'. It implies all the dangerous territory that politicians avoid in discussing Religious Education whilst inviting the suspicion that under the cool academic spotlight it may simply dissolve into nothing, or be better described as something else. On the other hand, in the same way that brain surgeons find themselves drawn at the end of their careers to the problem of human consciousness, so theologians,

psychologists and philosophers are drawn to the question of whether there is something special about some stories and our response to them, which merits attention.

With this in mind the first part of this work is to outline how different constituencies of thought have scrutinised narrative and suggest an investigation to explore some of the issues they raise.

For convenience, despite inevitable overlaps, the literary review is arranged in chapters as follows

1. Theological and Religious Education perspectives
2. Philosophical perspectives
3. Postmodernist perspectives (as an aspect of philosophy requiring special attention because of its emphasis on narrativity)
4. Psychological perspectives related to narrative and conceptual change
5. Practical ways of capturing responses to narrative.

1.1 Theological and Religious Education perspectives

It would be outside the scope of the present review to describe all the twists and turns of theology and narrative in the history of the Christian West let alone within the traditions of other cultures and religions, but it is possible to sketch some of the broad outlines which still define the parameters of modern debate.

Of course the first point to be made in any historical analysis is the starting point that somehow stories were part of a realist repository of truth and that there was some kind of correspondence between what they said and the nature of ultimate reality. Within that basic observation, debate circled around **4 main areas**.

The first is the tension which came to the fore in the reformation as to whether scripture was primarily understood within the teaching of the church ó church preceding scripture if you like, or whether scripture both shaped and corrected the community, defining the

church as those who responded to the word.[10, 11] **To summarise:** *Is spiritual narrative extrinsically defined or is it of itself?*

The second followed from the first, in the investigation of the role both of reason and freewill. If the word was sovereign “*and set out to accomplish what it willed*” in the words of Isaiah 55, beloved of Luther, [12] then the understanding of scripture could never be a purely cognitive exercise, it was about God working in the heart through faith. In the protestant tradition people were *önderö* the word. The logic of predestination and being predisposed or not to receiving the good news remained in the hands of God and not in any rational or volitional movement of our own.[13] The corollary of this was that the word of God stood forever and could not be reduced to anything else, the logical extreme of which was fundamentalism. **To summarise:** *Where might spiritual narrative operate – in the mind or in the heart, cognitively or non-cognitively?*

The third tension gathered around the nature of man. Whilst Reason and Nature were suspect in Protestantism and merely flawed in Catholicism *ó* the location of salvation and response became blurred. What did you expect spiritual narrative to deliver? In the case of Luther [14] or Wesley [15] it was sudden illumination *ó* essentially a conversion experience, their *ö*hearts were strangely warmed. In the case of Aquinas [16] it was the drive to make Christianity intellectually compatible with Aristotle, reserving the right of the church to reveal those aspects of nature which could not readily be known by science or the fallen intellect alone. **To summarise:** *Is there an end to which spiritual narrative is directed – conceptual change, emotional/personal change?*

The final tension arises out of the defining feature of religion which is simply that of Transcendence. One could describe the modern world in Weber’s terms [17] of progressive disenchantment *ó* that the world became progressively more self-explanatory across a whole range of natural sciences and that the very quest for ultimate truth, embarked upon by theologians, resulted in the conclusion that there was none to be found. Spirit itself might in Ryle’s [18] terms be simply a category mistake. **To summarise:** *It may be that we do not have a subject to investigate.*

On the other hand narrative may be the more robust a concept precisely because it has a coherence which defies reduction into the purely measurable or systematic. Narrative can

have a wide appeal ó at one end of the spectrum to realists who take reality and religious script to be identical, right through to the non-realists who believe that there is no ultimate structure of reality to which language relates. In between these extremes are those who take narrative to be 1) cognitive/ propositional or 2) experiential/ expressive or 3) cultural/linguistic. [19] There is obviously enormous scope for investigating the breadth and engagement of people's responses and this may illuminate the nature of the narrative itself. Likewise, stories seem to have the ability to jump cultures, the best ones invoking structures of meaning that are generally *human* rather than culture specific ö ó to quote Hayden White [20]. In other words we can still understand Nathan the prophet and King David across time, culture and geography even if we see the story through different tinted lenses.

The point is that the narrative remains as itself and the question is whether there is any pattern in our responses to it. This is assuming of course that the narratives are before our consciousness in order to provoke a response. Current debate in fact circulates around this problem which is highlighted by the juxta-position of spirituality and narrative. Spirituality on one view may be assumed to arise out of human experience and then becomes enshrined in stories, so spirituality comes first and this validates certain narratives so that they can be *called* spiritual narratives. Our spirituality attaches to certain modes of expression like flowers and candles outside Kensington palace. Or is it the other way round? [21] Spiritual narratives have a classical quality about them which work a bit like Shakespeare ó The öAh that's what I thought all along, but couldn't put it into words before I heard itö- factor. This would be less like flowers outside the gates and more like bible readings inside the Abbey. In other words we need to have a certain religious literacy or ödepositö of narratives which precedes or provides the starting point for reflection, which would not otherwise happen... The fact is that both views converge in the middle so long as there is a shared view that there may be a thing called spirituality. The difficulty arises when a secular culture uses the word öspiritualö in, say a RE framework, and then leaves people to figure out what it might mean!

In the literature there is a clear divide between these two views prompted by the secular wedge. The first is exemplified by the work of David Hay and Rebecca Nye.[22]

In a secularised culture, where for many people the language and institutions of formal religion are absent or unconvincing, the task is to discover in which areas of language and

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behaviour, initial “sparks of spirituality” may be found. Equipped with this information, the curriculum can then be sensitively scaffolded around the realities of human experience.

This method holds out the promise of empirical certainty and something measurable.

In the end, the “map” will be derived from an empirical investigation of the contexts of childhood spirituality, hence allowing the identification of omissions, assumptions and anomalies and eventually the creation of a coherent scientific picture.

There is a catch however

Meanwhile research is in the unenviable position of needing to make a start without having a clear starting point. [23]

Nonetheless Hay and Nye do suggest certain categories which might capture children's spirituality, and, more importantly, they question some of the developmental and cognitive models which have dominated earlier research. David Hay, in the footsteps of the Biologist Alister Hardy,[24] believes that empirical research will reveal that spirituality is part of an evolutionary hardwiring in human beings which precedes any en-cultured religion or spirituality. [25] [26] It is this idea which underpins the expectation that children will demonstrate behaviour which can be called spirituality. Amongst these behaviours the broad categories are as follows [27]

- *Awareness sensing* (which sub-divides into the *here and now* defining how children can be transfixed in the moment, *tuning* which observes moments of extreme empathy and intense sense of belonging, *flow* which approximates to the mastery goals of Pintrich and other psychologists and *focusing* which is loosely defined as the *öfelt senseö* which precedes the *öCartesian intellectualism* which is our cultural heritageö)
- *Mystery sensing* (which sub-divides into *awe and wonder* (understood not as infantile wonder at something not yet explained but as appreciation, say of finitude or the vastness of the universe This is not far from the insights of the existentialists) and *imagination* which steps into narrative or liturgy to experience directly what language may not be able to convey.
- *Value Sensing* (which gives a place to the immediacy of children's delight and despair, their belief in ultimate goodness or order and their search for meaning and experimentation with meaning-making)

It is the last category of value sensing which draws out the contrast from the rival òreligious literacy viewö because it locates the search for meaning not in an intellectual grasping of concepts or even in a developmental östages of faithö idea promoted by people like James Fowler, [28] or earlier, Goldman [29] but in “*the foundational experiences through which issues of meaning become salient to the child*”. [30] This idea found powerful practical expression in text books which found a niche popularity in some classrooms in the 1980s and 1990s, accessing spirituality not through mainstream religious texts but through meditation, guided fantasy and direct experience. [31] This of course is very close to the philosophical ideas of the existentialists that existence precedes essence ó we are thrown into human existence and it is only in this position that the problem of meaning and our direct, unmediated relationship to öBeingö becomes apparent.

This view evidently provides fruitful ground for investigation. If it is experience that counts ó what is it that these experiences bring *to* a narrative? And what is the interaction between narrative and these experiences if the interaction is likely to be in the realm of the empathetic and imaginative rather than the purely cognitive. After all this is a million miles away from Kohlberg’s [32] story of Heinz where the dominant interaction of narrative and hearer is öWhat should he *do*?ö ó in other words a largely cognitive response which can then be measured against some maturational scale. Additionally, Hay and Nye cast doubt on the very ability of language to capture spirituality or even resonate with it ó especially if it is alien to children’s current experience or mode of meaning-making. This sounds a warning note in the structure of any investigation into conceptual change. Would a difference in response amongst children simply be a mirror for their life experiences or would it reflect the direction of the narrative itself, exercising a change of perception?

So for Hay and Nye the experience comes first and the narrative follows. Enough experiences in common would shape the stories which had more or less universal appeal.

Coming from the other direction is Andrew Wright [33] and his concept of òreligious literacyö. The fact that he uses the word literacy is a double edged sword. One assumption is that if children are literate in a *materialistic view of the world*, all the experience in the world will not result in a scaffold for the religious. They simply will not have the language. One cannot assume that experiences happen in a value free zone. The literacy that modern Western children have is mainly materialistic/secular. To counter this, Wright makes the

case for learning the language of religious tradition and narrative which then engenders ideas which would not easily have occurred to children otherwise. Put simply, unless the parable of the prodigal son were part of their lingua franca, would the concept of unconditional forgiveness have arisen naturally in the experiences of children? William Kayø [34] appraisal of some formative studies by Leslie Francis and others is instructive. He summarises the phenomenological and experiential approaches tried in classrooms from the 1970s onwards as doomed to failure simply because the experiential hooks once provided by the churches are no longer there.

In its weaker form this method (phenomenology) simply asks pupils to consider the alternatives sympathetically. But the work of the teacher becomes harder where exemplars of alternative world views become rarer and stranger. It is arguable that the more common materialism becomes, the more difficult it will become to offer a phenomenology of religion in the classroom [35]

The same goes for the experiential approach. If pupils are being asked to see in their ordinary experiences a spiritual dimension there is an assumption that somewhere there is a spiritual dimension

The origin of the concept and its main field of reference has historically been in the area of religion. Where religious belief diminishes, spirituality is likely to lose its primary meaning. In a culture where religious belief is undergoing subtle and extensive shifts, spirituality is bound to become dominated by non-transcendental referents, and this will ultimately have implications for the way it is understood and therefore taught. [36]

Trawling through a weight of evidence from various surveys Kay concludes that in Britain at least there are some solid conclusions about belief in God

- There is a gradual diminution in the percentage of believers in a personal God since 1945.
- A lower percentage of young people than older people tends to believe in God
- The percentage of people which definitely does not believe has risen significantly since 1945.
- As belief in a personal God erodes, the number of people believing in some sort of life force has increased, as have atheists.

On this basis Kay concludes that “*experiential and phenomenological approaches to RE are likely to become more difficult to use as more children are confirmed in a materialistic world view*”. In fact it is more likely that RE syllabuses will be pushed by a generalised

(perhaps ecological) spirituality detached from any strictly religious position. School worship meanwhile “*much criticised and little defended, may eventually be transformed into another activity or dropped altogether*”. [37]

Enter Andrew Wright.[33] He argues alongside Kay that the phenomenological / experiential approach is ultimately failing to understand the actual aims of religion, which is a stab at describing ultimate truth.

We must

seek to penetrate to the heart of religion and ask the critical question: “What sense can we make of the truth claims of the rich diversity of religious and non-religious traditions, both orthodox and heterodox, realistic and non-realistic, sacred and secular, immanent and transcendent?” [38]

This is no quest for abstract academic knowledge, since the truth of the actual order of things in the universe impacts on us on an existential level. He takes the view that the historic tradition of *wisdom* was disrupted by the enlightenment’s polarisation of the rational and experiential ó and that theology was pulled between the twin falsehoods of reified natural theology on the one side and romantic idealism divorced from evidence and knowledge on the other. What was forgotten in the polarity was a concept of faith seeking understanding ó a holistic search for truth. The truth assumed by modern religious education is different. *Either* on the level of immanence we find a pragmatic approach to truth in which religion is not taught as an end in itself, but as a tool for encouraging tolerance and mutual understanding in a culturally divided society (ie RE as thinly disguised PSHE and a government agenda).[39] *or*, if the transcendent element is taken into account, religion is viewed as a human response to the mystery of life and the only valid theological option is that of a universal theology in which all traditions are regarded as equally true or capable of delivering a consensus spirituality (The Hay and Nye approach) . There is no doubt that the format of modern GCSE text books shadow this dilemma. The 2009 AQA specification A is a good example where the chapter on truth and spirituality is dominated by a twin approach of what counts as ‘evidence’ and what as ‘faith’ and reduces religious artefacts to ‘what believers find helpful’. [40] Subsequent chapters on moral issues have this approach. Take the issue first and then cherry pick quotations from various religious sources without illuminating the total orientation within which the quotations might make sense, thereby reinforcing the impression that all religions are pretty well the same thing ‘underneath’. At the same time it becomes incredibly hard to use religions as a commentary on social issues such as drugs or the

media, since no immediate quotations come to mind apart from a few Islamic strictures on alcohol which have to be twisted into service.

Likewise there is an accepted wisdom in approved RE curricula that topics should be ranged under the twin titles of 'Learning about' and 'Learning from' Religion(s). Whilst this became de rigueur under successive governments with an overt multi cultural agenda, the concept had been challenged strongly by Hirst and Peters [41] before the argument shifted broadly against them in the 1980s and 90s. They rejected a

narrowly conceived progressive pedagogy that seeks to enhance the personal freedom and creativity of children but does not sufficiently appreciate that these virtues are vacuous unless people are provided with the forms of knowledge and experience to be critical, creative and autonomous with. The cultivation of spiritual sensibility is not enough: the process of "learning from" religion will be vacuous unless it draws the existential life worlds of pupils into a direct critical engagement with the substance of religious truth claims [42]

Wright's conclusion on this process is that these strands in RE simply replace a *Christian* confessionalism with a *liberal* confessionalism made in the image of late British politics. A more critical approach would involve a real engagement with issues of truth which he summarises quite lucidly [43]

- *If the post-modernists are right and the only reality is that which we create for ourselves then it matters deeply for people who think there is a truth out there (my précis)*
- *If the theological realists are right and we are all capable of experiencing the presence of an objective transcendent being within our own inner space then it matters deeply if we reduce such experience to an aesthetic, cultural or moral level.*
- *If the theological realists are right and the world is properly understood only within the exclusive claims of a specific religious tradition then it matters deeply if we reject that truth.*
- *If the secularists are right and religion is no more than outmoded superstition, then it matters deeply if we think otherwise.*

In terms of spiritual narrative, Wright would take the view that some stories have to have currency in the same way that some great works of English literature inform the way we are able to think about all literature. In recent years the same question has been raised by educationalists about 'child-centred' learning. A primary school lesson was observed in which the story of Snow White was discussed at the level of 'how did the wicked step-mother *feel*' in the hope of finding common ground with 7-year-olds. The question was raised about whether this was the right way in, because the children had no substance on which to base their remarks - knowing nothing of the provenance of the story, nothing of

the Brothers Grimm and not having experienced enough in their own lives to properly understand the question. [44]. This of course is the question confronting academics who have to decide what corpus of 'classic' literature equips someone adequately to understand contemporary literature.

There is a further question with the concept of religious literacy. David Carr, in an interesting article entitled 'Moral Education at the Movies' [45] asks whether some films owe their power to underlying classic narratives which have an enduring 'shape' even if the film director pulls the edges in different directions. [46] The story he examines is the 'Fisher King' where the determining story is the tale of the quest for the Holy Grail. His thesis is that the traditional story of the Grail Knight who overcomes his selfish self in order to pursue a higher moral quest, is mirrored in the innocent fool whose mad quest for a sports trophy eventually brings sanity to a cynical New York radio host. The fool (Parry) and the cynic (Jack) are a cinematic way of drawing out the story by engaging 2 characters to depict the traditional struggle within just one person. Carr's conclusion is interesting.

It is all but meaningless to ask – as a child might – which version (the Arthurian legend or the film) is the true one. the different versions are more a matter of alternative perspective than rival dogma. Indeed the Fisher King motif exerts a hold on us to the extent that we are able – in its various versions – to recognise ourselves in the characters of both Jack and Parry, the grail knight and the Fisher King.[47].

The ability of a good film to retain the original multi-dimensionality [48] of the story is key however. Carr's review of recent Arthurian and Homeric films throws up a remarkable parallel with theological reductionism of religious stories – either in the search for the 'real' Arthur, where the film becomes so true to history that all modern empathy is lost (he calls this the literalist fallacy and applies it to the 2004 film 'Arthur') or in the search for block-buster entertainment where the nuances of a great story are lost in blood and guts action or where a film simply evades the true complexities of moral and human struggle (he is particularly scathing about Troy (2004) which

reduces Homer's work to little more than a sequence of contests of oily muscle, making it hard to appreciate the moral and spiritual inspiration that ... people have discerned in the Iliad. [49]

The point, therefore is that the mythic parameters of the original story are not constrained too much by a one-sided orientation to current entertainment or contemporary human concerns. On the other hand there is a serious question of whether the original story can

stand the weight of significance laid upon it. The actual King Arthur legend was lost in time before Tennyson [50] and Malory [51] wrote their imaginative versions of it which then fed in to the film industry. One might imagine that later development of a story is sometimes better than the original or that in fact the original story exercises less and less control over its own re-writings ó to the point where the re-write is better known but in fact õwrongõ, along the lines of Maggie Thatcher abusing the story of the Good Samaritan in a speech [9] or arguably Mel Gibson taking liberties with the Gospel in his film õThe Passion of the Christ.õ It could be argued that the definition of a spiritual story is one that permits contemporary reflection but is locked into an interpretive framework which protects it from excessive reworking. Ecclesiastical and other religious organisations are extremely effective in performing this task, whereas stories like the Iliad, Arthur or indeed Dickens begin to lose their classic power if the cultic, societal or national framework in which they flourished begins to wither away, unless they have the existential power to survive. But this question returns us to the original debate between Nye and Wright. Do human beings tell stories which survive because they are found to be true of all human beings at all times, or are there different narrative stabs at the meaning of life which compete with one another for each generation's attention and in fact *mould* the way we see things ó not because we are all the same, but because we are amenable to different ways of framing our lives. Or do some stories adhere more closely to a õrealõ state of affairs which is supra-human and command our attention for their dissonance with our present lives as much as their consonance - the classic religious view on life?

1.2 *Philosophical perspectives*

The philosophical debate about story/narrative circulates around two areas of concern ó the first is the nature of knowledge itself and human capacity to know things, the second is the perceived direction of knowledge, whether there is an adult goal of knowing to which education is directed. It is interesting that the Western Philosophical tradition begins with Socrates/Plato and their thought started with precisely the problem of epistemology ó how do we get to know anything? We can easily agree with A N Whitehead that this remains the key concern of all Plato's successors. Indeed

The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. (p.39 Process and Reality [52])

Plato's view of knowledge is of course that we don't get to know anything because we already know it. There are essences or forms or ideas which lie behind the shadowy replicas we see in the material world and the knack is to recognise what we already knew. If our minds can penetrate from material instances to these eternal truths which lie outside time and space, then we are free from delusion and the prison of our senses. The key to knowledge is the soul which has seen the forms in its pre-embodied state and therefore recognises them when it sees them again. This is the subject of Plato's *Meno* where a slave remembers Pythagoras' theorem even though he has never been formally educated [53, 54]. Knowledge is therefore entirely cognitive. The emotions and senses are deeply suspect in Plato and we could imagine that the ideal classroom for Plato would have been one free of distraction and intensely cerebral.

How do we wake up in the first instance however, to the idea that this view of knowledge is correct? Well we are invited to enter into a story told in Republic Book 7 called the analogy of the cave [55]. The details of this are familiar so that the average human being is like a man, chained to his seat, viewing the shadows cast on the back wall of a cave, by a fire at the entrance - a bit like a cinema screen, except that in all respects the prisoners in their seats feel that the projection is real. Only when one man escapes, risking the blindness and ridicule of his peers, does the real light, first of the fire and then of the world (of forms) beyond the entrance, lead to real knowledge. The exploration of this narrative has become the crucial way in for A level students [56] to critique Plato's thought, precisely because it is the clearest encapsulation of his theory of knowledge, summarising in the space of one story all the other phrases which would otherwise be disconnected, such as *no-one sins willingly* (the prisoners are neither blind nor wilful, they are simply mistaken) or Socrates' depiction of himself as the *gadfly of Athens* (stinging unaware people into self criticism) or the *wise-man* in that he knew that he knew nothing (i.e. the shadows of *supposed* knowledge were simply vacuous). The story, in other words becomes the touchstone of the philosophy and also a persuasive tool so inviting people to see things that way.

The question is whether this sort of exploration can be done *any other way* than by a story. In most cases the answer is clearly yes. There *are* other ways of conveying Platonic philosophy and the A level syllabus would survive without the analogy. However there is a possibility that certain insights can be conveyed in no other way. Jacob Howland's examination [57] of stories in both Plato and Kierkegaard suggests that imaginative entry into a story is not only a way of understanding a theory more clearly but may also be a way of deepening reflection in a way that even the story teller may not have foreseen. The story develops its own life as it were. At the beginning of *The Republic* Book 2, Glaucon, as Socrates' antagonist, suggests that he still does not really understand the difference between the just man and the unjust man – believing that the unjust man simply does what the just man secretly *wants* to do but is scared of being caught. He relates the mythos of Gyges' ring by way of illustration, the point being that if someone were to find an invisibility ring they would use it for their own advantage, the just man only failing to take advantage out of fear and for lack of *ōmanliness and vigour* – an argument which comes to fuller prominence in the writings of Nietzsche [58] when he describes the profile of the superman. The point that Howland makes, however, is that Glaucon's tale does not show what he says it shows. The string of events that the unjust man could get away with if he were invisible, ranging from general rape and theft to the seduction of the queen and subsequent murder of the king, are towards the clear end of visible success, respect and goodwill from the very people he had abused. Glaucon's contention that the story illustrated the lack of boldness of the just man, in fact illustrates a different idea that the unjust man, though bold, lacks sympathetic imagination. The story, in a sense is more powerful than the way it is used, yet "*Glaucon's mythos reveals this only to those with ears to hear and eyes to see*" [59] which is quoting Jesus' comments (Mark 4.10f) on the ability of his parables to mean something to one set of people but remain closed to another.

Glaucon's story of course is not a touchstone into one philosophy, as the analogy of the cave is, but does give an entrance into a wide ranging discussion on justice and morality which again has guaranteed its currency in modern philosophy textbooks (e.g. Michael Palmer's *ōMoral Problemsö* [60]). The same cannot be said for the second story that Howland considers – the treatment of *ōAgnes and the Mermaidö* by Kierkegaard in his work *ōFear and Trembling* [61] under the pseudonym Johannes e silentio. The origin of the story is a Danish myth where, in line with ancient stories of sirens, and seductive, but evil,

sea people, the merman attracts then seduces and drowns his innocent human females who are drawn to the shore and his blandishments. Result ó the destruction of innocence and perhaps an admonitory tale about being lured to the wild side. In Kierkegaard's hands, however, the story is twisted into the very opposite ó the merman is broken, not Agnes. Although he achieves his initial aim of seduction to the extent that she is in his arms as he considers plunging into the sea ó her look of absolute trust in him makes him hesitate at the water's edge and his natural element, the wild sea, subsides to an absolute calm. He cannot go through with his plan. This, for Kierkegaard, is the meaning of the story

The merman takes her home again, he explains that he only wanted to show her how beautiful the sea is when it is calm, and Agnes believes him. Then he returns alone, and the sea is wild, but not as wild as the merman's despair. He can seduce Agnes, he can seduce a thousand Agneses, he can make any girl infatuated – but Agnes has won, and the merman has lost her. Only booty can be his; he cannot give himself faithfully to any girl, because he is indeed only a merman. [57][62]

Of course the story encapsulates both Kierkegaard's philosophy and indeed his own personal life. Agnes (reminiscent of Jesus the Agnus Dei) demonstrates the love that God has for the unreformed sinner and it is the appreciation of this love's demand that puts human beings into the crisis of faith which is at the heart of human angst. The dilemma is that the merman knows that Agnes trusts him and further that he conceals from her the lie ó that he intended to seduce her not simply show her the beauty of a calm sea. So the horrible choice is to repent but keep the lie to himself, or to risk telling her the lie and take the risk of faith which is to trust that he is loved enough to survive disclosure. [63]

The difficulty with this story is that the reader cannot really stand outside the implications of the story ó you either enter into an appreciation of the dilemma or you don't. This is what Howland understands as the tendency towards a certain 'turn of mind' and this can only be performed by the story.

This turn of mind involves emotion as well as thought. It is neither simply poetic nor simply philosophical, for it is both narrative and interpretative It involves the co-operation of imagination and intellect. It is what makes it possible to tell and to understand morally profound stories. [64]

It may well be that stories like this are rare. I am uncertain the extent to which 'Agnes and the Mermaid' in whatever version (it goes back to the Old Norse Ballad) is still current or appreciated in Denmark but it features in no recent educational publication and certainly not in Kierkegaard's form. In England, the story of Beauty and the Beast possibly offers an enduring replacement, in the classic components of the wild beast, the secret and the risk

of love freely given. It is interesting that Jeanne Marie Le prince de Beaumont, who brought *La Belle et la Bete* to England in 1745, wrote over 70 volumes of different stories but only this one survived in the popular imagination.[65]

The fact that Howland chose stories from philosophers, Plato and Kierkegaard, who are poles apart in their analysis of human nature, is instructive if we are to progress this section of the current work further. Plato sets the course of Western philosophy on a route which prioritises the cognitive over the affective, whereas Kierkegaard represents a very different way, rooted in inwardness and reflection, in motive and personal decision. The latter is immediately more congenial to discussion of the virtue of narrative and it is no surprise that the briefest description of Plato would be as a writer of dialogues presenting Socrates as the midwife bringing coherent *definitions* of goodness or courage to birth, whilst the barest description of Kierkegaard would be as a narrator of parables illustrating both the absurdity and challenge of the *human condition*.

Between these two however there is a broad sweep of philosophical thought which aligns roughly with the cognitive at one end of the spectrum and the affective at the other.

At the cognitive end is Kant whose *“Critique of practical reason”* is precisely that. [66] Here is the central idea that in our ethical behaviour our feelings are entirely irrelevant. The whole point of Kant’s different formulations of the categorical imperative – including the idea that people have to be treated as ends and not means, or put another way that you should act as if the maxim of your actions should become a universal rule, or put yet another way, that you should behave as *“a rule maker in a kingdom of ends”* – is precisely that feelings and emotions are unreliable. You test your reason to see that it is indeed reasonable. This is very different rationality from Plato which relies on a prior idea of goodness against which instances can be judged. The reason that *“Critique”* can be such a slim volume is that it describes the *technique* for rational judgement rather than the content or definition of ethical behaviour. We cannot know whether there are principles of goodness in the universe nor indeed can we have divine authority as a starting point because we simply can’t know (though even Kant can hope). Equally Kant does not need to delve into the murky waters of intention or consequences because again we cannot know what outcomes stem from our actions – therefore our actions have to be right in this moment and not await the judgement of ends justifying the means. Unsurprisingly Kant

founders in precisely the areas we would expect. What happens when people do not act rationally, where rational compromise between conflicting imperatives is flawed by vested interest or simply leads to the development of a bad will? In ethical terms this dilemma led Kant to conclude that the *ōSummum bonumö* was implied but not completed in this world and that therefore an after-life and the existence of God were logical conclusions (the so called moral argument for the existence of God) and more significantly that the rational ends of man's nature were likely to be fulfilled in a supra-personal History of politics and governments, thus by-passing the evident madness of individuals. In his mature thought (1784 before his death in 1804) he wrote his *ōIdea for a Universal history from a cosmopolitan point of viewö* ó in effect an attempt to map out the course of human history if it were to conform to rational ends. Within the treatise itself, however, the degree of engagement of the individual with this grand narrative is at most tangential.

Since the philosopher cannot presuppose any [conscious] individual purpose among men in their great drama, there is no other expedient for him except to try to see if he can discover a natural purpose in this idiotic course of things human. In keeping with this purpose, it might be possible to have a history with a definite natural plan for creatures who have no plan of their own.(Preface to the Universal History Translation by Lewis White Beck)[67]

In fact he relies on *ōNatureö* throwing up the odd human being like Kepler or Newton who can put the general tide of human development back on track should it stray too far into irrationality. In this respect Kant is very close to Hegel and Marx in a notion of the inevitability of history irrespective of the individual. The *ōstoryö* goes on without us, as it were, though through various levels of rationality we might swim *with* the tide rather than *resist* it. One would expect our own narratives to resonate with the meta-narrative in the exercise of reason. This is where the influence of Kant on educational philosophy, especially developmentalism, is profound. Rousseau's belief in the basic goodness of humanity resided in the idea of the uncontaminated human reason expressible as universal law or principle. When these ideas come through into modern cognitive developmentalists like Piaget [68]and Kohlberg,[69-71] there is the Kantian assumption that education is primarily cognitive and that there are levels or stages of cognitive awareness that children more or less inevitably go through on their way to the goal of a just society. David Carr [72] is insightful when he writes

In response to criticisms of Gilligan and others that “... Cognitive developmentalists have neglected the moral significance of feelings, cognitivists have sought ways of incorporating affect into cognitive stage theory; but such attempts to shut the moral epistemic gate after

the horse has bolted are surely all in vain. Neo-Kantian moral psychologies of a Piagetian and Kohlbergian slant are more or less bound to sideline affectivity from the outset – and that done, all the King’s men cannot return feeling to moral response again [73].

The depth of this insight is confirmed by the anecdotal stories of Kohlberg himself running seminars with his students to draw out precisely those higher aspects of cognitive moral thinking which were supposed to be there at a certain age. The very fact that he resorted to this expedient made the purely cognitive model of development suspect.

Purely cognitive analyses of human learning and education may leave some question marks, but other philosophical models are loath to abandon objective claim. Plato was the seminal thinker behind intellectual definition and the primacy of the mind/soul which for him were identical, as for Descartes and then Kant, with the true *ōselfō*. For his student, Aristotle, the goal of human knowledge was less about the recognition of eternal forms in a world apart, but rather in the actualising of your human *ōformō* in this world *ó* in other words completing your *ōtelosō* or end to the greatest extent possible. One aspect of this thought was that if you paid attention to your nature you would become a good human being, fulfilling what it is to be a human, in much the same way as a cat might be a good cat by fulfilling its potential to catch mice. Taken in a spiritual direction by Aquinas, and, to this day in Catholic theology, the question for human development is essentially *ōformationō* i.e. an education which rests on the Christian description of human nature as both fallen and redeemed and a *ōtelosō* which is to worship God. At root, Catholicism feels it is *ōnaturalō* to be Christian. Taken in a secular direction, Aristotle could be called the father of modern science in that accurate descriptions of human nature from psychology, biology or sociology will give us a clue as to the way we are. The modern attempt to illuminate human behaviour by research into chimpanzees or the human genome are the evident legacy of this strand and of course there is a common aim, to find a deep empirical rootedness for education in one or more provable aspects of human nature. Although Hume’s delineation of the naturalistic fallacy [74] warns against any easy leap for theologians or scientists from the *ōisō* of description to the *ōoughtō* of prescription, there is comfort in these various illuminations. As with Plato, however, there remains the question of the individual’s engagement with these models. It is here that virtue ethics as a different aspect of Aristotle’s thought suggests that the development of *ōcharacterō* rather than the pursuit of *ōnatureō* might be the entry point for theories of human development. Of course nature and character are connected in the sense that it is in the cultivation of certain virtues and habits that we become most completely ourselves, but the advantage to the individual

is that this cultivation enables them to see their life, not as a Platonic cognitive grasp of certain ideals irrespective of life-style, nor even the expression of a theological, psychological or biological substrate, but as a connected and coherent *narrative*. The most powerful modern proponent of this view is Alasdair MacIntyre who argues that modern education is serving a society which is 'compartmentalised' to such a degree that people are unable to see their lives as coherent. He speaks of the

worry of the increasing extent to which each particular area of life is delineated, with its own norms and prescribed rules so that the self is in danger of being liquidated into these roles..., There is literally nowhere "to recollect who he or she is as a human being or to reflect upon what the point or purpose of the whole may be [75].

This kind of narrative unity is, in MacIntyre's view, the goal of human existence. It is only when students are already at home with a variety of kinds of narrative that they can be expected to see the lives of others and their own lives as embodying narrative. Philosophically this is obviously an idea which is congenial to the narrative theme of this thesis as well as resonating with some classical ideas of a liberal education and reminiscent of Aristotle's own endorsement of the theatre - stage as the place where narratives were played out in which people were invited to see their own. At the same time it opens the door to a serious question about modern society. Whilst MacIntyre [76] suggests that teachers in an educational community might begin to find a coherent 'story' of their lives, it is difficult to imagine a similar process going on in the sofa salesman who is driven by rigid sales targets at work, affective demands at home and a consumer narrative on the TV. It would be foolish to assume that young people were any less compartmentalised in their day to day experience and this should be a factor in thinking about spiritual narrative generally, especially if it is thought to deliver some form of personal integration.

The other question which proceeds from virtue ethics is precisely what virtues we are talking about. Aquinas had already added faith, hope and charity to Aristotle's list of Wisdom, Justice, Prudence and Fortitude and in the 21st century we might wish to add virtues like assertiveness or confidence. This of course derives from the initial problem of 'nature' which for Aristotle (and MacIntyre by default) was a single unitary nature of mankind (a bit like the nature of dog-ness or cat-ness) but for modernity may be a whole series of qualities with no one telos in mind and a whole series of possible expressions of self. Secondly - is the story we weave about ourselves a true representation of a 'good'

human being or is it in fact a work of fiction? In an article called "Against Narrativity" [77], Galen Strawson argues powerfully *against* two popular claims – the first that we do, as a matter of fact, live our lives in a narrative way, and secondly that we should do so (à la MacIntyre) in order to develop fully as persons. By contrast, Strawson offers a different perception, that the narrative description of human beings can be broken up into smaller divisions – of *diachronic* (we see ourselves in a Heideggerian [78] way as part of a bigger narrative) *story telling* (a tendency to order reality around a story) *form-finding* (the search for patterns of story) and *revision* (a tendency to revise the narrative as we go along with no strict regard to "truth"). His argument is that the narrativity camp, though sharing a name, is in fact diffuse, and that once divided, a perfectly acceptable further division would be people who are simply *episodic* and fit none of the narrative descriptions. There is no doubt at all that he has put his finger on an idea which is intensely pertinent to the current thesis. Whilst Plato, Aristotle, Kant and others might prefer to subsume under a narrative format both reality and the individual apprehension of that narrative, Strawson argues that there is no need to subscribe to this model, especially when it is a cover-all for underlying differences. For example, Sartre is often held up as the champion of the text or discourse or narrative, but is not very concerned with "the diachronic" in so far as he is mainly interested in short term, in-the-present story telling [79][80]. Likewise, the fact that many story tellers have a revisionist tendency is a strong argument against the ethical desirability of a narrative version of one's life. Quoting Nietzsche, the revision is always in our own favour with scant regard for truth. "“I have done that,” says my memory. “I cannot have done that,” says my pride and remains inexorable. Eventually memory yields” [81][82]. More importantly Strawson claims that narrativity is not a necessary part of the examined life as MacIntyre claims.

People can develop and deepen in valuable ways without any sort of explicit, specifically Narrative reflection, just as musicians can improve by practice sessions without recalling those sessions. The business of living well is, for many a completely non-narrative project.[83].

Strawson does not consider that there may be other philosophical relationships to narrative. The first is that of Nietzsche who neither espouses the idea of a single narrative nor accepts a fully episodic view. His insight is that stories can jostle for control in the centre of one's being. From his own classical tradition, he identified the two rival principles of Dionysus and Apollo in the heart of human destiny. Whilst opting eventually for the triumph of

Dionysus this was never to deny the reality or truth of the rational, artistic Apollonian narrative. The whole point of 'The Birth of Tragedy' [58] was that Athenian theatre managed to present the two in a fruitful tension. We will examine later whether narrative conflict or dilemma may be a useful way of capturing responses to narrative. The ambivalent, veiled, fragmentary story may be precisely the one that provides best access to human self understanding which is beyond the purely episodic or the self-constructed story.

Whilst Nietzsche eventually has more in common with the affective, existentialist commentators on the human condition, Wittgenstein [84] comes in from the ultra rationalist logical positivist wing. His relevance to the foregoing discussion is that his final position on 'language games' suggests that there are at least *rules* for the stories you tell. Theological 'grammar' helps people to frame their own stories within a recognisable set of concepts which have *internal coherence* even if they lay no claims to extrinsic validation. This is a kind of answer to wilful revision. In an article about theologising with children, Gerrhard Buttner [85] argues that a religious 'grammar' assigns a place to the single elements of thinking and also indicates the relation towards reality. A startling example of this theological grammar came to light in the pilot of this study. A question aimed at discerning children's spiritual disposition asked 'Do you think that your behaviour in this life might affect any life after death?' A year 7 child from a Christian background said that this was impossible to answer because "*faith not works dictates salvation and God could choose you irrespective of behaviour, so technically what you did in this life did not affect the next but faith might*". Here was a clear case of a theological grammar dictating the parameters of the story he could tell, even in an apparently neutral research document.

To conclude this section therefore, it is apparent that philosophy entertains different notions of what it is to be human – ranging from a purely *cognitive* view of self, through holistic *formation* along narrative lines to a purely *episodic* self-understanding or models of humanity based on *dilemma/conflict* or inner *coherency*. These views do not so much set the direction for our enquiry as present a list of possible questions to ask. To leave the philosophical enquiry at this stage, however, would not do justice to the huge literature on narrativity emanating from late 20th century post-modernism. It is to that literature that we now turn.

1.3 Post Modernist perspectives

The insight gleaned from Strawson (above) is that the narrative camp shares an interest in narrativity but come from very different ends. MacIntyre finds his philosophy ultimately in Aristotle and an attempt to articulate the eudaimonia or good life that we achieve from fulfilling our nature in an integrated story. The post-modernists enter the debate from a very different mind-set. They start with the assumption that reality is a construct and share a deep suspicion of the meta-narratives ó whether they be Christianity, Marxism or Science ó which attempt to colonise our own views. The word ñnarrativeö can literally be applied to any form of discourse. Carr [86] shrewdly makes the point that if you use the word narrative to describe loosely any form of explanation, if, in other words pretty well anything is a narrative then for all explanatory purposes, nothing is. If this were entirely the case then the post modern perspective could be dismissed as unhelpful to the present work, but in fact the insights of Derrida, Lyotard and especially Ricouer are extremely illuminating.

Inheriting the legacy of the existentialists, especially Heidegger, Paul Ricouer [87] is intensely aware that narrativity is part of our making sense of temporality. Story connects the past, present and future in some way which lends meaning to our existence. Heidegger's understanding of human beings is that time is not a series of present moments or ñnowsö nor should our temporality be seen in the classic Augustinian sense against the backdrop of eternity. The key orientation for mortals is that they are directed towards death and that this is the key definer of time, not an open ended eternity. The question for Heidegger is how you can live authentically between the baggage of the past and the finality of the future. The answer lies in grasping the present in an act of will. This is not the same as simply living in the moment, it is a resolute act where you make the past part of your present and accept it fully in the present ñinbetweenednessö of existence poised between life and death. Living in the present is therefore seen as a series of *ecstases* where we choose to stand out boldly in the flow of time. This is what Heidegger understands by ñRecollectionö which is a primordial appreciation of Being in its vulnerability and courage *before* it was emasculated or concealed by culture. Alongside this is his concept of repetition which emphatically does not mean looking for patterns in cultural history or your personal life, but repeats authenticity in the present.

... Repetition... which produces as it repeats, which produces what it repeats, which makes a life for itself in the midst of the difficulties of the flux. [88]

Narrativity for Heidegger therefore would not be an attempt to invent some kind of harmonious explanation of past present and future but would be a story which crystallises into one key authentic thought. Ricouer calls this the plot's "configuration". The purpose of narrative is to recollect and repeat Being in such a way that it brings us back to ourselves. The art of narrating, says Ricouer

does not merely preserve within-timeness from being levelled off by anonymous and reified time; it also generates movement back from objective time to original temporality.

In this respect he recognises his departure from other post-modernists like Barthes who tend to reduce narrative plot to atemporal machinery or "form". There is no need to dechronologise stories. Stories which crystallise moments of Being are the best form of repetition because they lead to existential deepening. "Story takes us back to the motionless centre of possibilities. The hero is who he was." [87] Some aspects of this analysis are immediately recognisable in the field of theology. Luther's idea of the "Word of God" was that it could never be reduced or reified to words on a page or it produced what it said. The Biblical view of prophecy is that words which contained Being in their first instance might reproduce or "repeat" that Being for a different audience in a different time. Ricouer recognises the connection when he suggests that the Christian story of the resurrection is a kind of repetition i.e. the story becomes part of your being. Likewise the parables of Jesus are blunted if they become an allegory of something else. Part of Joachim Jeremias's [6] motive in de-allegorising the parables of Jesus, in search of an original story on the lips of Jesus, was precisely to preserve the challenge of Being which was latent in the first telling. One of the stories which invited allegory most easily was the story of the wicked tenants, appearing in all 3 synoptic gospels at the start of the crucifixion narrative. It is interesting that in the view of Anthony Harvey [89] and J M Derrett,[90] the original story may have been based on well known Jewish case law which suggested that non-payment of rent over 3 years would give tenants a perfectly *legitimate* claim on the vineyard. The point of the story on the lips of Jesus would have been to subvert the legal assumptions of the audience by the unexpected insertion of a moral claim that they had not expected at all. In Heidegger's terms this would be a narrative return to basic issues of Being.

In terms of spiritual narrative Ricouer makes the profound point that it was the authentic Being in the life of Christ which prompted the kerygma, not the other way round. The death of Jesus gave a deep insight into the problem of Being in the face of death which then prompted the search for the words and acts which led up to the final crisis. These constituted the “*chain of occasions offering moorings for an eventual narrative*”. The fact that Matthew and Luke followed Mark’s basically temporal structure,[91] and added a beginning (the Christmas narratives) and an end (Mark does not really have resurrection narratives) may disguise the fact that many of the stories in the gospels are in fact *ōstand aloneö* pericopes with minimal background scenery and little contextual placement. Perhaps Ricouer’s insistence on the high impact intention of these prior narratives to prepare us for the summative narrative has some credibility. Alongside this, however, is the claim that these stories really did occur in history or go back to a man who did. In other words we do not necessarily have to share Bultmann’s view [92] that the stories simply follow a *ōformö* or that the text has to be de-constructed as purely an invention of the evangelists, though of course theology is at home with this idea.

The other great insight of the post-modernists is that there are powerful meta-narratives *ōout thereö* which invade or colonise our own thinking. One caveat we mentioned about purely existential responses to narrative was the likelihood that such responses do not happen in a vacuum ó they are not value-neutral. Without some rival religious literacy it could be argued that the materialistic meta-narrative might eventually re-define or replace the very notion of the Spiritual. Of course, in the view of many post-modernists, both the spiritual and the materialistic meta-narratives would be equally suspect, and more importantly the *ōsuper-machineö* of the mass media which delivers them. Heinz Streiss [93] gleans from Roland Barthes an excellent example of how narratives are twisted into the service of a larger agenda.

A cover of a magazine shows a young black man in a French uniform looking upwards and greeting the Tricolore. It is obvious that this photograph is not only to be understood on the level of object language, but transmits something else, namely that France is a great empire and all of her sons, no matter what the colour of their skin, serve under the French flag and also that there is no greater argument against all critics of colonialism than this young man’s military salute. The story which the photograph also tells, the personal story of a man who has a name, a unique history and so on is depleted, reduced, vacuated and absorbed by the second semiological system which communicates an ideological message. [94]

Streiss goes on to quote Lyotard with approval, whose argument mirrors Barthes ó that the project of modernity is precisely to produce stories which legitimise meta-narratives ranging from the triumph of capitalism to the victory of reason and liberty. In their service are the visual and auditory õgripping devicesö which hold people in thrall.

The upshot of this argument is that story-telling, myth-making and communities of remembering *appear* to be old fashioned or out-dated because they are resistant to the media machine which promotes a collective story over the individual. Furthermore the attempt in some religious circles to appear modern and õwith itö produces the very opposite effect ó that they risk turning religion and religious themes into entertainment packages. The suggested alternative to absorption by the machine is a return to õdangerous memoriesö and õsubversive narrativesö where fiction, far from being dismissed as infantile, is a welcome weapon to challenge the õrealityö of the meta-narratives. In fact the term fictionality is scrutinised by Gunther Anders [95] because, in the modern media machine, fictional events often assume the character of a real event insofar as they are produced and communicated in the same way as information about real events. In other words the story form may appear antiquated but may have the more power by standing *as fiction* rather than being forced into the service of a wider ideology.

An important element in this emphasis on micro-narratives is the ability to sift a wide range of such narratives, in what Ricouer calls a õlaboratory for thought experimentsö. This should be the essence of Religious Education. Streissø conclusion is a good summary of the post-modern stance towards religious narrative.

Religious education should be education in perception; it should be education in seeing and hearing, a school of fictionality and responsiveness. Fictionality means to realise the difference, to realise the “it-could-be-otherwise” in order to play imaginatively with alternatives. Responsiveness means not only to be aware of the otherness of the other, but, as we can say with Ricouer, learning to see oneself as another. [96]

In practical terms this has direct theoretical application to Jerome Berrymanø õGodly playö which uses figurines of bible stories so that children can ask themselves what the robbers may have thought who beat up the victim who became the Good Samaritanø charge.

On a critical note it could still be asked why *this* narrative should be told and not another, and why subversive is necessarily better than established, but one can understand the power of stories which keep the door open to radical re-thinking about the world and

personal meaning. The super-critical and often destructive strain of thought in the post-modernists is not lightly dismissed and their observation that “*small narratives, unaligned with the meta-narratives*” enable a re-connection with the personal and the heart of Being is pertinent. Furthermore Streiss uses the striking word *öcongealö* to describe the process whereby narrative loses its power and becomes congealed into a theory. The worst expression of this is fundamentalism

which is characterised by the almost complete elimination of fiction.....The religious story about the beginning and the end and the salvation story of humanity is told as if they were natural science theories. Fundamentalism has its own meta-story, which structurally resembles the meta-story of modernity. In fact fundamentalism is a product of modernity and is modern anti-modernism. It is the explicit declaration of the death of fiction in religion. [97]

In many ways this is reminiscent of Heidegger’s complaint about progressive loss of Being. Nothing should distract us from the story which returns us to our basic condition of being thrown into the world as an existence without essence. This story, in its various forms, might be described as the archetypal *öspiritualö* story, in contrast to the encultured congealed stories which simply give the illusion of an essence we can buy into. One way of illustrating these ideas is actually by *telling* a story rather than talking about stories. Anthony de Mello [98] tells the story of a young man in a village who, against all the advice of his elders, sets out in search of the mythical singing stone. Having travelled all his life in this quest to foreign climes and amidst diverse cultures he returns at last to the hills overlooking his own village and there, in the dusk, he sees the market place, unchanged since his youth, with the villagers dancing round a stone which had always been there ó and he hears it singing! This story might be unremarkable in itself except that the same story occurs in different forms throughout the world from the Buddhist tale of the man who sets out to hear the bells of a sunken temple and only hears when he ceases to listen, to the poem *öIthakaö* by Cavafy [99] beloved of end of school ceremonies (itself reminiscent of the Odyssey) to T S Eliot’s *ömy end is my beginningö* [100] to Jesus returning to his roots in Galilee after the resurrection. The really interesting point is that Paulo Coelho’s story *öThe Alchemistö* [101] is the simplest expansion of the original story and is one of the most popular books of the 20th century, selling 65 million copies in 150 countries.

The story could easily be reduced, as Amazon does, to the theme of *öfollowing your dreamö* in rough approximation to the cult of self help books catering for the American dream of success, but the story’s fictional nature itself resists this congelation. More than

this, its content illustrates Ricoeur's theory of the *ōdetourö* or roundabout way that we arrive at understanding ourselves and the world, rather than a straight cognitive or intuitive route to understanding. [102]

The conclusion from this section is that the post-modern watchwords of narrative or discourse need not evacuate the terms of meaning. Particularly in their support for the subversive, micro-narratives which preserve *ōdangerousö* memories of real biographies, or alternatively in their support of challenging fiction, the post-modernists carve out a possible space for the examination of spiritual narrative. The question with these often qualitative philosophies is whether they stand the scrutiny of more empirical quantitative methods. The question of how children actually learn leads us into the next section which encompasses psychological and educational theory.

1.4 Psychological perspectives related to narrative and conceptual change

There are different ways of characterising the last 50 years of educational psychology and ideology but some wide generalisations are possible. The broadest outline would give a high profile to developmentalism of different kinds ó especially Piaget's work on childhood development and Kohlberg's powerful analysis of moral development. For the purposes of this thesis, Kohlberg is a good place to start simply because his interest is focussed on ethical responses which compete with spirituality in being notoriously difficult to capture and because his position has become the accepted jumping off point for critique and adaptation. The kernel of his thought is well known ó that people go through clear stages on the way to mature moral judgment. Loosely partitioned as pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional levels, the full six part scheme is pictured as follows

Level 1 (Pre-Conventional)

1. Obedience and punishment orientation
(*How can I avoid punishment?*)
2. Self-interest orientation
(*What's in it for me?*)

Level 2 (Conventional)

3. Interpersonal accord and conformity
(*Social norms*)
(*The good boy/good girl attitude*)
4. Authority and social-order maintaining orientation
(*Law and order morality*)

Level 3 (Post-Conventional)

5. Social contract orientation
6. Universal ethical principles
(*Principled conscience*)

Proffering a tool for locating responses on a known scale, Kohlberg spawned a whole world of thought amongst neo-Kohlbergians resulting in tests like the Defining Issues Test [103] which analyses the maturity of people's moral responses ó the theory being that unless there is mental imbalance, people do not regress in their moral advance and subsume lower stages into their higher stage responses. Of particular interest for this study would be Kohlberg's identification of higher stage morality with spiritual leaders like Jesus

or Gandhi who espouse universal moral principles which include those dilemmas which might involve a conflict of justice and law.

The absolute key to Kohlberg [70] is that morality is part of an essentially cognitive process and can therefore be taught ó in two ways in particular. The first is through inducing cognitive conflict i.e. to induce confusion and then supply ideas which help to resolve the conflict or absorb it into higher order thinking. This is the point of his classic treatment of whether Heinz should challenge the medicine seller's right to charge full price for his discovery of a new drug or shift to a different perception where a reduced price or even theft is justified. The second method of teaching was through the 'just community' approach [104] where higher order morality might emerge from scholarly debate and participation in 'normative' narratives.

The attraction and power of this system of thought are obvious in an educational context. Most importantly it provided a universal bench-mark against which young people could be measured in terms of cognitive development. With help, they could arrive at higher order ethical awareness which would stay with them unless exceptional circumstances caused them to regress.

The criticisms of Kohlberg are so well-known that there is no need to deal with them in depth in this work except to note that Gilligan's remarks [105] both on gender difference and affect are fundamental. The second key question is just how water-tight and unidirectional are the maturational stages. Brugman is typical of many accepting the basic tenor of developmentalism, whilst trying to reveal other dimensions. Some of Brugman's observations,[106] quoting research from Lind, [107] conclude that within the developmental view of childhood lies the possibility that young people might go backwards in maturational stages if they leave an educational context. Their so-called 'C' scores (consistency scores) go down when they leave the context in which they made progress. At the heart of this insight is Gilligan's original criticism that a purely cognitive measure of maturation largely excludes the affective side. In other words you can completely understand a moral dilemma but it produces no affect in you. Anecdotally this is true of teaching ethics routinely up to GCSE. Pupils are apt to have well-informed views on, say abortion, but they are unable to maintain consistency or logic if a friend of theirs falls pregnant ó implying that the 'stages' of response hold disparate elements [108]

which might give a reading of higher and lower stage thinking simultaneously, rather than the smooth upward trajectory envisaged by some. The transferable observation for spiritual narrative would be that a child could understand fully any given narrative but it might have zero impact on their actual absorption of new concepts. So for Ethics it would be in the *practice* of moral judgment that people develop understanding (which harks back to Carr's endorsement of virtuous habits of thought) whilst for Spirituality you would be unable to make sense of a narrative unless it were already part of your self-awareness or a context which promotes that self-awareness. This would seem to support the argument of faith schools for providing the context in which certain types of awareness are more probable. Brugman suggests that the largely maturational ideology of Kohlberg should be modified by a second strand loosely called transmission/socialization and a crucial third element which he calls the interactional. Engagement with moral issues at a deep level should involve discussion of semi-real dilemmas which are more clear-cut than real dilemmas and possibly better than the purely fictional. That said it is hard to see exactly where the distinction lies between the fictional story of Heinz and these semi-real dilemmas, but the point seems to be that Brugman's dilemmas are meant to be closer to the young person's actual experience and might evoke moral affects as well as cognitive assent. So, typical affects might be anger, shame, guilt or disgust alongside the cognitive aspects of logic, reasoning and choice.[109]. Lind seems to have some success in capturing this range of responses with his Moral Judgment Test which resists a weakness of Kohlberg's original measure (the moral Judgment interview) and subsequent measures like the DIT (the Defining Issues Test of Rest et al) which were susceptible to a higher moral reading if candidates took a political, left-wing stance in their responses. It is precisely Brugman's discussion of the accuracy of these measures, however, which rings alarm bells for any measures of response to spiritual issues. It is hard to establish whether tests of moral competence are measuring cognitive ability, attitudinal responses, or simply consistency (Lind's preferred measure) in the face of counter argument. Kohlberg's own 'Just community interventions' which certainly produced measurable changes in moral judgment might count in favour of an interactional view but then there is doubt about whether the outcomes are a measure simply of students' conformity to a stereotype of social desirability or to verbal dexterity or to teachers' existing intuitions about their students - in other words what you ask, or what people expect is the right answer, is what you get. [110]

Of course developmentalism does not have to follow cognitive lines. A Freudian psychological perspective underpins the thinking of Homer Lane [111] which runs like a thread through Dewey [112] and A.S.Neil [113] and issues in experimental schools like Summerhill which were less about cognitive development and more about the development of effective volition which emerges from the developmental minefield of the standard repressions imposed by adult society and conventional schooling. The moral self on this view does not arrive naturally through maturation or higher order intervention; it arises through the healthy exercise of imagination and fantasy. The connection with story is obvious and understood in a Freudian direction. Lane emphasizes the age of imagination as at least equal in importance to the Oedipal stages of infant sexuality and repression. He also highlights the ambivalence of fantasy (as indeed is the Oedipus myth) as potentially liberating but equally dangerous. On the one hand fantasy and story provide models of mastery and power which are useful for children confronted with the insecurities induced by the adult world, but on the other, such fantasy can be over-indulged if it issues in a false sense of self-importance, an unrealistic view of one's own powers or an over-bearing attitude towards the rights of others. The upshot of Lane's approach is interesting for the use of story in child development, in that stories which deal in the strange, the unfamiliar and the magical are likely to be the currency of the age of imagination, and corresponds with the general observation of teachers and parents, that stories about aliens, vampires and goblins hold as much, if not more interest, for young people than direct extensions of experience such as Bob the Builder or Fireman Sam. [72](Carr)

Other psychologists continue to locate childhood development in a largely maturational/cognitive framework but combine this with a character education view which proposes that moral development results from exposing children to stories about virtue and character and giving them opportunities to create their own meanings from the raw material which comes their way. P.D.Crawford [114] uses Vygotskian psychology to apprehend the process by which young people come to genuinely moral decisions and summarizes the approach as a process of syncretism. Young people tend to bring random thoughts and objects together into syncretic heaps and show a double tendency in doing so. The first tendency is to compensate for the paucity of well-apprehended objective relationships by an overabundance of subjective connections. I understand this to mean that in hearing a story about 3 bears, it is typical that a young child identifies the connection as mummy, daddy and baby bear, whereas on watching a TV documentary

about polar bears and brown bears, the child might jump to the false conclusion that the polar bear is the daddy bear because it is bigger, thus compensating for lack of real understanding by filling in the gaps from subjective experience. The second tendency follows on from the first, which is the inclination to mistake these subjective bonds for real bonds between things [115] (Vygotsky). Underlying both tendencies lies the crucial point that people want to make sense of the ideas and objects before them and this is a dialogue between what has already been experienced and the experience of novelty. Vygotsky's identification of 5 complexes of thinking describes some of the processes (associative, collective, chain, diffuse and pseudo concept) [116] by which young people come to viable ways of synthesizing the information in front of them, and then in a parallel process analyzing these complexes into potential concepts which then become fully fledged and unique creative thought.. The most important point is that these are dynamic methods which crucially are practised as much by adults as children and this is the critical distinction between Vygotsky and Kohlberg. The first aspect of this distinction is that the stages are not maturational as Kohlberg suggests but simply benchmarks in the processes of thinking which originate in a 'Will to meaning' issuing in freely chosen ideas. This allows some distinctions to be made. Crawford for example would identify potential concepts e.g. acting morally out of guilt or obedience to perceived codes, as precursors to morality rather than morality itself - implying that some modes of thinking are higher order than others (much as Kohlberg does). The second aspect of the distinction is that if cognitive thinking and moral reasoning are both driven by the underlying principle of 'meaning-making' it would not be surprising if there were a mismatch between the development of logical thinking and moral thinking within the same individual, not to mention the co-existence within the same person of different levels of thinking pertaining to different situations whether primarily cognitive or primarily moral. If we transfer this insight to spiritual narrative its importance becomes overwhelming. We might expect people to come up with different conceptual constructs of what a story might mean which may not be susceptible to plotting on a maturational graph but may be understandable by identifying the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky's term) [117] from which they come and by identifying the method by which they have reached their present abstraction of meaning. This might be like adults watching children play with toys. A child may have arranged the toys according to an associative complex of colour, or collective complex of 'presents I got on my fourth birthday' which may make complete sense to the child and can be understood readily by the parents. On the other hand, a more comprehensive view

of the toys which includes the ones which don't currently exist might be that they are all either teddies or dolls. Of course this presupposes that there isn't actually any true order, though one arrangement may be more satisfying than another, and the discussion itself may be the object of the exercise. In the same way we might imagine that people, confronted by spiritual stories, might allow their initial analysis to be supplanted by a more satisfying or comprehensive meaning if they were introduced to it. Or would they be more likely to stick with their first interpretation on the grounds that they have found no need to consider another meaning if their current one is consonant with the way they personally view the world and with their current context. It is interesting that Crawford concludes his article with speculation on the kind of educational context which might engender this reconsideration and resist entrenchment within rigid protocols of thought. His feeling is that

with ever intensifying rigour, current mainstream educational practice propels students into systems of thinking and acting that become increasingly regulated by disciplinary codes and prescriptions and increasingly exclusive – even hostile to outside influences. [118]

His alternative vision would be an environment which wholly embraced pluralism and accepted that there might be many centres of intelligibility – thus encouraging an atmosphere where there would not be a *hierarchy* of perspective (a la Kohlberg) but simply an *exploration* of perspectives, some of which may prove to be fruitful but not better than others. His conclusion is an invocation of Heidegger's that when a person surrenders previous thinking in order to participate fully in an immediate experience, he or she expresses a faith in the interdependency of all living processes. This he suggests is not surrender to the purely personal but an acknowledgement of "*the spiritual which is the reality that inter-penetrates all life.*" [119]

In a sense Crawford and Vygotsky appear to be advocating a provisionality of responses which can be entrusted to a deeper connectedness which underlies all our responses. Crawford also recommends an environment which promotes the ability to listen to further ideas and revise ones own, in contrast to an educational ideal which promotes closure of one stage of thinking in order to progress to a higher stage of thinking. In this, however, they may have underestimated the tenacity with which we cling onto our ideas, or our innate tendency to structure experience in a particular way or indeed the importance of doing so. One of the searing insights of Piaget was that children do not come to learning as a tabula rasa. They arrive at novel circumstances with a developing set of strategies which

can en-structure the new. This is particularly true of stories and even more true of spiritual stories where children do not approach new stories without knowing other stories. They know how a story should end – what Piaget calls finalism – and so they come to a new story expecting a happy ending. Anecdotally I know what the subversion of this expectation can cost. In relating the Oscar Wilde story [120] of ‘The Miller and Hans’ (The Devoted Friend) the outcome is bleak. The miller mercilessly exploits Hans’ good will, is completely oblivious to his own selfishness and even delivers the funeral oration when he is entirely responsible for Hans’ death. At the end of the story, three of the Prep school children burst into tears because this was not the happy ending they had imagined. Likewise in Buttner’s [85] analysis of theologizing with children, the very fact that a spiritual story contains a character like God is likely to structure the direction of theology and story in inevitable ways. He quotes a discussion of Piaget where a 9 year old girl asks her father ‘Is there really a God?’ The father answers that he is not absolutely certain, whereupon the girl replies ‘There must be really, because he has a name.’ [121] One could argue, as Buttner does, that because the name ‘God’ can be thought of, then there must be a God – in re – a very close approximation to the ontological argument of Anselm that since God is ‘that than which nothing greater can be conceived’, then logically, *actual* existence is greater than a mere *conception*, therefore God exists. In other words the very existence of the concept of God dictates the outcome of stories told about him. In another example Buttner suggests that the childish question of how God can be everywhere and all powerful, naturally engenders stories which have to run along certain lines. He acknowledges a debt to Wittgenstein’s ‘theological grammar’ which suggests much the same thing – that there is an inner coherency to the syntax of any discourse which determines the parameters of such discourse, but he forsakes this particular way of talking, in favour of a captivating picture which then leads to a mind map. His reason for doing so is that a mind map or story appears to have more ‘imaginary rich’ material which appeals directly to children. As an example he quotes an experiment from Friedrich Schweitzer imagining God as a puppeteer who controls marionette human beings. Used with children this is not simply a story but a visual aid accompanying a discussion of 2 *verbal* aids – taken from the classic debate between Erasmus and Luther on freewill [122]. Erasmus’ contention that freewill existed despite God’s sovereignty, comes from the verbal analogy of father and son in an orchard. Although God (the father) does everything for the child including placing his hand on the apple, the fact is that ‘the child does *something*’ (i.e. freewill). This is in sharp contrast to Luther’s [123] contention that the will of human beings is

more like a horse. It is directionless of itself and is ridden *either* by God *or* the devil. In other words the will of man has no power of its own ó God or the devil directs your every move. Taken alongside these verbal images, the visual puppets became the entrance into a debate - the details of which eventually issue in a simple mind map of the problem of sovereignty and freewill. Buttner is confident that most theological problems can be reduced to a limited number of forms to display the issue and forms of solution and of course his main concern is that adults find penetrating methods of engaging children with these problems. The interest for this thesis, however, is not so much the fact that certain imaginary rich and especially anthropomorphic images are illustrations which give an inevitable direction to debate. Illustrations, in a sense, are at one remove from the original spiritual stories and work precisely because they have already organized thinking in a particular way around themselves and determine predictable outcomes. Luther's revelation that the righteousness of God is not a *demand* but a *gift*, for example, is an interesting template to put over the bible stories and it became a revolutionary touchstone for the subsequent protestant understanding of the New Testament, but certain pieces of scripture crept out from under the edges. Luther raged against the letter of James, [124] calling it a letter of straw, because it simply did not fit his gestalt for the New Testament. If faith were entirely the *gift* of God, then where did James' emphasis on "*works as well as faith*" fit in? So the real interest lies not in the fact that certain templates shape the way in which we see novelty but in what happens where there is dissonance ó either because the template can't be made to fit the new, or because children haven't got a suitable template in the first place or because they have borrowed the *õ*grammar*ö* of one way of seeing and applied it to another. This puts the discussion back one space from the application of templates or scripts, to the stage beforehand which is how they came by those understandings in the first place ó which brings us full circle back to Vygotsky. Nevertheless, overall, Buttner is helpful in his view that in imaginary-rich stories and illustrations, adults and children find some commonality, and indeed that anthropomorphic images conferred on all human beings an evolutionary advantage in that they helped to order our experiences of, or hypotheses about, the world. It is worth noting that in a competition to make quantum physics understandable and the importance of the search for the Higgs boson apparent ó the winning entry envisaged children dropping different sized marbles into treacle [125]. The big marbles find it difficult to move through the treacle because there is a *õ*field*ö* of treacle sticking to them but the smaller ones attract less. Another picture was of a celebrity moving through the paparazzi. The A list celebrity attracts more than the B list. Bingo! - a

quantum explanation of mass. The picture is persuasive because it envisages in a human way a role for a particle that physicists are actively seeking and it fills a hole in the quantum world view. It would make sense if it were true and even children would understand it at the level of treacle, marbles and celebrities. The question for spiritual stories, notwithstanding their persuasive imagery, would be whether they make *enough* sense when competing with an empirical view of the world. Hitherto they have competed with some success, and so it is unsurprising that Richard Dawkins has recruited the makers of Harry Potter [126] to give evolution the same image-rich power that will seriously challenge Genesis at the mythic level (which keys in with Buttner's observations) as well as the empirical. In effect we have one of the most eminent modern scientists saying that the *story* you tell is the key to unlocking human assent and understanding. Or as Augustine put it *ó credo ut intellegam not intellego ergo credo.*

Whilst the above discussion of psychological insights has taken us through developmentalist views (Kohlberg etc) theories of concept formation (Vygotsky's will to meaning) and theories which illuminate the gestalt or grammar which directs interpretation of the novel, there is still something which needs to be said about what motivates young people to change their minds. In one sense all the above theories offer partial answers to this question. Simple maturity explains some aspects of change. A new way of constructing meaning may prove to be more intellectually adequate and complete than the former model. The story which once illuminated a particular problem might be challenged by a different story and be supplanted. There remains a feeling however that a more comprehensive view of the motivation behind conceptual change is necessary. Enter Paul Pintrich who attempts to understand what needs to go on in the mind and the classroom for change to occur. The crucial aspect for Pintrich is that so called *õwarm factorsö* [127] have been the missing element in earlier research which has tended to concentrate on the universal or purely cognitive.

Gale Sinatra [128] in her summary of the so-called warming effect characterised the *õcoldö* thrust of research into conceptual change during the 1980s and 1990s as follows

- the influence of cognitive factors such as students' existing knowledge or misconceptions, on change
- developmental changes in young learners' knowledge representation

- the design of instructional methods to foster change

These factors in Pintrich's view, excluded emotive and contextual factors and, more than that, research into conceptual change was fatally flawed in that scientific, largely quantitative methods had been applied to the classroom in much the same way as you would in a laboratory, leading to the obvious omission of precisely those factors which are difficult to measure against objective criteria. What was being missed was what the students were bringing with them to the classroom including their beliefs about what knowledge actually is (epistemological beliefs), their own personal interests and values, their assessment of their own self efficacy and their own *intention* to resolve conflicts in knowledge or achieve mastery in a subject rather than simply scoring an A grade or relying on purely objective/cognitive measures to commend one solution over another.[129] From the point of view of this thesis the following insights from Pintrich are important.

1. A mastery goal orientation is likely to be better than a performance goal when it comes to looking at a difficult or ambivalent narrative simply because there are no set answers and no rewards. [130]
2. The belief that knowledge is simple or certain hinders conceptual change. This is especially important in the field of spirituality because some pupils from a religious background, especially a fundamentalist one, may have an objective epistemological belief. The recognition of knowledge as constructed rather than absolute, favours change.
3. Interest, values and importance. Some young people bring with them, for all sorts of reasons, a personal interest or a value system which motivates them to attach importance to a task in hand. Discerning this intentionality is just as important as cognitive ability.
4. Self efficacy understood as the learner experiencing an emergent sense of self through control of their learning. In a crucial respect learners of this type do not expect a new experience to reinforce prior behaviours, they expect that in handling a new subject they will gain new insight which helps them to regulate their own future behaviours (Bandura [131])
5. Cultural influences. In some contexts like a faith school there may be greater motivation towards religious subjects simply because of the culture of the school whilst in schools with no such tradition there may be resistance or even hostility.

Self evidently some of these factors are notoriously difficult to capture but they constitute a dimension which cannot be ignored in young people's responses to spiritual narrative. That said, Pintrich wanted more than simply a description of people's responses. He did not want simply to record people's subjectively experienced or believed realities. He wanted motivational science to be precisely that – a science which demanded *warrants* for those beliefs and statements about truth. A second theme in his writing was that any understanding of human behaviour should be multidisciplinary, drawing on areas as diverse as philosophy, anthropology and neuroscience. The final theme was that there should be an emphasis on use-inspired basic research which avoided the old spectrum of psychological theory at one end and classroom practice at the other. So research should be theoretically informed but rigorously verifiable in practice. One can understand that researchers were left with a tough legacy to aspire to after his death in 2003 – but it was worth aspiring to in the sense that it took seriously what individual young people brought with them to learning (the warm factors) and demanded that these factors be examined critically, largely because the older cold methodologies simply did not explain the differences between children who, against maturation scales of age, context and cognitive ability, *should* have responded in similar ways but evidently did not.

1.5 Practical ways of capturing responses to narrative

There are plenty of ways of using narrative to evoke response, and the following are designed to be illustrative of general approaches rather than schemes to be copied. Perhaps the most important distinction to be made is over the exact role of the narrative.

- The first approach is to use narrative as the starting point. The story invites you into an imaginary field where the parameters of the story allow the exploration of ideas to take place. So the point is not to question whether the narrative is 'real' but whether it provides a space in which ideas can be explored which may not otherwise be tapped.
- The second approach is rather different. The narrative is not the starting point but the *endpoint* which emerges from a complicated problem. Here the narrative acts as a kind of short-hand or crystallisation or summary statement of a complex of ideas or a means of ordering a set of ideas or meanings.
- The third is that the story itself is not just a 'field' in which you explore other problems or an end point after discussion, but is a narrative which carries its own meaning which creates its own dilemmas and evokes its own responses, or more complexly, gives a real jolt to the hearer's existing perceptions.

An example of the first approach comes from Nancy Bouchard's ideas of using a narrative approach to moral experience, using dramatic play and writing [132]. Overtly indebted to Tappan and Brown [133, 134], who, in line with Pintrich had tried to rebalance the purely cognitive with the affective and conative, Bouchard is interested in how young people come to be authors of their own moral development rather than simply through intellectual assent or moral reasoning. In her view the essence of this moral authorship is fluid, responsive and relational.

Rather than seeing lived experience as a subjective realm from which individuals must detach themselves in order to arrive at an objective view of the world, lived moral experience is taken to be a privileged moment in the construction of the moral self precisely because of its subjectivity.[135].

Likewise the moral self here is not a disembodied subject but is understood to be incarnate, inexorably embedded in relationships[136]. The upshot of this approach is to provide an environment which does not have the confessional aspects of psych-drama (i.e.

it is not about uncovering pupils' souls) but does encourage moral *authorship* in the sense of owning responses within the environment. The space she envisages for this exploration is a labyrinth. In her 'perception' stage, she invites the students to imagine labyrinths, perhaps reflecting on stories about heroes in such places and exploring how a labyrinth might be perceived in the middle of the night, on a summer's day, in wartime etc. The next stage, 'exploration', gets students used to the idea of resolving dilemmas in imaginary 'fields' but they assume the character of a three-headed being composed in fact of 3 individuals, but acting as one character of different aspects. One head, in a situation, say, of being confronted with a fantastic feast, might say 'I feel like I ...'. On the other side the head will say 'But they tell me I ...' and then the head in the middle has to make a decision. The head in the middle is the only one who can make decisions but it has to consult the other two heads first. This way of making decisions is then transferred into the labyrinth for the 'actualisation' stage. In the labyrinth the 3-headed character meets all sorts of moral problems posed by people they meet on the way. Bouchard gives as an example the person who offers you wealth and health on the condition that you give up 2 of your heads. You cannot decide by yourself. What do your heads say? Or what if you meet a child with a contagious disease who will die if you cannot take him out of the labyrinth with you? The final stage is 'retroaction' where, first with group discussion and then open questioning from the teacher, like - 'What did you decide to do?', 'Do you think you made the right decision?', 'What did you learn from this decision?' - the young people are encouraged to reflect on, and then write in a journal, the decisions which though fictional, engaged them personally in authoring the outcomes.

Evidently this is a fruitful way of proceeding with moral dilemmas and offers a possible entrance into spirituality in much the same way that, in Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress', Christian meets all sorts of characters on the way to the celestial city. Nor is it far removed from the concept of the Mr Men characters who offer young people all sorts of challenges and insights into different ways of being in the world. The interest in Bouchard's approach is that we not only empathise with the characters in the book but actually *enter into* the narrative and own the decisions that are made. Of course the familiar problem with a technique which explores moral decisions is that they are precisely that - they require a decision and demand a course of action, whereas spiritual stories may not hold out the possibility of definite outcomes, apart of course from conversion or metanoia which may not be accessed by a question from a child or a giant in a labyrinth. However the concept of an imaginative environment which offers a risk free place for taking risks is potentially

brilliant (Ryngaert [137]) even if the spiritual playground may at times be differently populated than the moral one.

Bouchard, by setting the stage, as it were, in which we can be actors is firmly in a tradition which goes back to Greek tragedy and more recently to MacIntyre who feels that it is easier to understand ourselves in the roles of Prometheus, Antigone or Hamlet as victims of divine caprice, tyranny or character defect, than as collections of atoms or molecules pushed or pulled this way or that by blind and impersonal cosmic forces. Indirectly this points up another aspect of Bouchard's work which is that you don't question the stage or setting. Although we routinely live in the critical worlds of the natural or social/scientific, these worlds are neither narrational nor identity-constitutive. We are reminded of Jung's contention that the person who lives under the influence of the archetypes whether through religion, story or myth, is in fact closer to objective reality than the person whose identity has been restricted to a naturalistic or one-sidedly intellectual view of himself. (*Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains*" - [138]). If some of these archetypes are projected on the cinema screen rather than in type or on the stage, then this is simply a twist on the theme Bouchard is trying to express. Despite some of Carr's reservations that cinema is largely *derivative* from great literature and remains incapable of depicting "music only" or the insights of great sculptors, it has an extraordinary power, to give visual substance to the unseen, to suggest and evoke. This power is at least as potent as anything on stage. In fact, when exploring a spiritual idea like miracles or the afterlife, the first port of call for many teachers would be films like "Skellig" or "Meet Joe Black" which have the whole cinematic resource to depict the mysterious, the alien and the transcendent alongside the everyday, the human and the immanent, and arguably in a more succinct and immediate way than the book. So as a practical way of engagement, films are possible additions to Bouchard's dramatic expressions. On the other hand, for a thesis on spiritual narrative, the medium of film says both too much and too little. In using "Skellig" in a class about miracle, I was faced with either using the *whole* film which then *became* the spiritual narrative rather than the engaging context for discussion and empathy, or I used selected bits of it which then simply became *illustrative* of some prior theory of miracles or of a different spiritual narrative, say aspects of Christianity, which may never have been intended by the authors of book or film. Likewise the plethora of characters and

action and sub-plots which populate any film, makes our own ability to enter the film more difficult and less personally engaging. On balance therefore, Bouchard's minimalist setting is more congenial than a heavily populated one or one which is so visually distracting that it effectively excludes us from full participation or turns itself into a package which is primarily for entertainment rather than reflection.

An example of the second approach comes from Kate Hawkey [139] whose interest is the effective teaching of history through narrative over-view. Her starting point is the suspicion of story telling which crept into expert opinion in the post-war period. The charge levelled against using narrative in history teaching was that

the past had been selectively quarried for stories with moral purpose, stories of progress, heroism and triumph over adversity, and that the model of teaching and learning was the simple transmission from teacher to passive pupil[140].

Replacing narrative in the 1970s was a view enshrined in the Schools Council History 13-16 Project (SCHP then SHP 1976) that skills should be separated from content to such an extent that in an exam a child could be asked to use his *skills* to analyse sources without any necessary *knowledge* either of the context of the source or its larger historical setting. The question for Hawkey is whether the return of a form of narrativity might be an antidote to this fragmented approach. In practical terms this came down to a methodology partly borrowed from the CHATA project (Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches) which looked at themes of causation, explanation and evidence; and research carried out by Pomson and Hoz [141] which moved away from linear (causal, chronological) views of history and concentrated on concept mapping which was largely non-linear and spatial. The result was a small but powerful experiment on 53 children from 2 secondary schools which asked them to arrange a set of cards about the Norman Conquest, in such a way that connections could be shown. There were no explicit chronological or linear clues in the cards and the children had to explain how they linked the 10 cards together, if at all. Hawkey's most interesting finding was that many children decided on one main story around which to cluster the cards. So 'the Battle of Hastings' became the touchstone for a number of the cards but was not an adequate device to include items like the Domesday Book which came from the subsequent period. Another method of ordering the cards was to place the 'Historians' card right at the centre displaying the historiographical idea that what we know of the period is 'constructed' rather than objective. An interesting reminiscence of Pintrich's contention that effective learning might be connected with a

constructivist view of knowledge. In some ways the whole exercise replicated many of the observations made by Hayden White's article entitled 'The Value of Narrativity in the representation of reality' [20]. The cards resemble the disconnected annals of St Gall which White holds up as an example of history without narrativity, where there is no overview of *why* things happen, only *that* death and events happen to people. The process whereby Hawkey's young people struggle to impose narrative on disparate cards is precisely the process whereby the annalist of St Gall may have become a competent historian. Hawkey's research, though it comes from a different end than Bouchard, is nevertheless useful, because once perception rises above the most simple connections (many children never got further than saying the Domesday book and the Anglo Saxon chronicles were both books) there is an active concern to make as much sense as possible out of as many cards as possible, even though there may be corners which don't quite fit. Obviously there is no doubt that this is intellectually 'set up'. The writer of the cards *does* have overview and knows that there is a way or ways of making sense of all the cards, whether chronologically, thematically or rhetorically – but like the moral dilemmas experienced in the labyrinth, this encourages the young people to gnaw at the problem and revise their solutions, seeking a single narrative which will make sense of the data. Also, quite evidently, the arrangement of *history* into a narrative does not have an immediate point of contact with *spiritual* narrative but, a bit like asking 'What is Hamlet really all about?' – the narrative we tell *about* the narrative is the one that reveals most about how much we have seen or understood. Likewise our own emergent story which derives from the story we have just heard, will have gaps and omissions, emphases and highlights which the original story keeps in tension whilst our own is an extrapolation. But of course this reveals precisely where we are at. As a method of accessing our current conceptions, Hawkey's is a powerful one.

A final approach to narrative response is discerning the points at which a story comes hard up against our existing representations of reality. This can happen in a number of ways. One response is denial or hostility because it is impossible or difficult to see a different story. De Bacher [142] thinks that this may work in two ways. The first involves the epistemological beliefs of the hearer and their need for closure against new perceptions. One of these closures may be as simple as the fact that the story comes from a religious stable. The child's view of himself as irreligious may be sufficient to make all engagement impossible. On the other hand some apparent engagement or agreement with a moral or

spiritual position may be fake rather than real. So De Bacher mentions the position of Iranian children who are *constrained* to say that they would never drink (alcohol) because their whole culture and training demand closure on the possibility of another view. There is absolutely no doubt that cultural closure may be a factor in what strikes us as almost wilful interpretations of spiritual narrative. A fascinating study entitled 'Prodigal sons and family values in 18th century France' [143] shows that preachers and philosophers used the story to illustrate not the radical and potentially subversive message of forgiveness but the necessity of firm discipline in the first instance, so that prodigality would be nipped in the bud. More recently there has been a study of sports films which follow a narrative structure of winning and sometimes losing respect [144]. So while the protagonists are often women, Jews, Afro Caribbean or Asian minorities who win through and gain respect, the originally *subversive* commentary on prejudice is hi-jacked to serve a different narrative of *competitive individualism* and the all-American dream. With this in mind it could be that given the subversive edge in most religions, the best narratives may be those which challenge closure or resist hi-jack most directly. One example of this is what Andrew Wright calls 'variation learning' [19]. With a Finnish colleague, Elina Hella, he set up a study to track the disjunction between a prior *understanding* of a religious phenomenon and the *actual* phenomenon. With some Finnish students the trick was to point up the variation between a theological understanding of Lutheranism as a vehicle of God's grace and a sociological understanding of Lutheranism as an aspect of natural culture. Whilst the study acted to underline Wright's thesis of religious literacy a subsidiary point is that there is a disjunction between what you *thought* you knew and what you now observe. However this need not result in a politically correct tolerance which simply allows that there are an infinite variety of spiritual expression all of equal validity. Rather, the conclusion is that there is an ontological reality somewhere out there – in other words there is a Truth to be found – but for the moment our knowledge is contingent and incomplete. This amounts to an epistemic relativism but it is not to say that all knowledge is simply an expression of opinion. The position of such a truth seeker is that they have faith in their existing understanding but it is subject to revision. Both the humanist and the religious would be united in the classic Augustinian analysis of faith in search of understanding which effectively excludes the fundamentalist of any persuasion but does not concede that 'none of us know anything really'. In terms of this thesis, it would be important for Wright that different yet valid perceptions of narrative stand side by side with the intention of challenging or enriching one another in a common quest for understanding.

But perhaps there are narratives which are disturbing in and of themselves. Indeed this may be the absolute hallmark of spiritual narrative. This would be the view of William Kirkwood [145] who examines in detail two so-called self-confrontation parables ó from the Jewish and Zen Buddhist traditions. The first is a classic tale of the encounter between Israel Baal Shem Tov and a village Rabbi, Jacob Joseph. The story goes that Jacob Joseph is enraged when he finds the House of Prayer empty of congregation because they have been enthralled by a preacher telling stories in the village square. In a rage, Jacob Joseph demands that the stranger be brought to him to explain himself. The tale finishes as follows

The custodian presently brought the Baal Shem to the rav (head of the village law court), who, not rising to greet him, shouted, "What do you think you are doing? Keeping the people from prayer!" "Rabbi," the Baal Shem said calmly, "anger does not become you. Let me tell you a story." The rav was about to object, but the Baal Shem had already begun.

"Once I drove cross-country with 3 horses - a bay, a piebald and a white horse. And not one of them could neigh. Then I met a peasant coming towards me and he called, "Slacken the reins!" so I slackened the reins and then all 3 horses began to neigh"

The rav could say nothing for emotion." Do you understand?" "I do," said the rav, who burst into tears and wept for a long time. He realized that never before had he learned how to weep. Eventually Rabbi Jacob Joseph became one of the Baal Shem's most loyal disciples.

The other parable is at first extremely obscure... It comes from a collection of 48 koans [146] compiled by a 11th century master of Chōan ó a precursor of Zen - and in Kirkwood's exposition was intended for advanced monks who were aspiring to be Zen masters. The koan in question is called "Cutting the Cat" and goes as follows

One day a monk of the Eastern Hall and a monk of the Western hall had a fight over a cat. Master Nansen saw this so he took the cat and held it up, saying, "If any of you can tell me the meaning of this, I shall not cut the cat." The monks said nothing in reply; Nansen cut the cat in two.

Kirkwood's argument is that these stories are intended to awaken self-confrontation in the hearer. Parables are told to arouse both sympathetic and hostile listeners to recognise and overcome those thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions which impede their spiritual growth. More than that ó this is not simply a challenge to listeners' established beliefs and attitudes, it is meant to evoke in them the certain feelings and states of awareness significant in their own right as the ends, not mere means, of religious discipline. This is evident from the hasidic story [147] where Rabbi Jacob Joseph becomes aware, not only of his stifling behaviour on his congregation, but he himself is released to weep for the first time. His initial resistance to the story is overcome by the story itself which the Baal Shem

inserts just at the point where things may have turned into an argument about the ethics or otherwise of detaining people from their morning prayers. The Zen koan is the more powerful by the extreme act of violence in killing the cat within a Buddhist tradition which values all life. The argument here is that the disciples cannot tell the meaning of the cat in other words their intellectualising is a fruitless exercise compared with the enlightenment they should seek which is beyond rationality. Because they cannot see this, the cat is killed, signifying that intellectualising, literally, can kill life.

The most interesting point in both stories is that both are enshrined in a particular person at a particular place. This particularity and attribution to a particular occasion, oddly makes the story more difficult to deny. One can hardly refute an admittedly invented, non-necessary sequence of unique events. One can doubt whether intellectualising always kills life but it is harder to dispute a story about how Nansen killed a cat when some monks under his tutelage failed to drop their preoccupation with intellectualising [148].

Does the story result in an instant conversion or the instilling of a permanently different perception of the world? The answer is no, but it may give people a glimpse of what it may be like to have achieved a certain awareness or it may be like a splinter in the back of your mind which raises questions in your deepest conscience until it is resolved by active study and discipline. What the story or koan does is to instil the Great Doubt which only enlightenment itself will resolve. Scharfstein [149] quoted by Kirkwood, says that Hakuin, an 18th century master of koans, said

If you take up a koan and investigate it unceasingly, your mind will die, and you will be destroyed. It is as though a vast empty abyss lay before you, with no place to set your hands and feet.....then suddenly you are one with the koan and body and mind are cast off... This is known as seeking into one's nature.

Oddly, in a completely different context, there is an article [150] about mental patients, which suggests that an agreed narrative of recovery by both consumers and practitioners can actually lead to recovery. The article suggests that as the narrative paradigm of recovery becomes more prominent, people with mental illness increasingly adopt it and write about it in their own journals leading to eventual improvement. Kirkwood himself argues that the jolt of a koan is rather like the moment when, in talking to someone with depression, a joke or funny story not only lightens the mood but, for a moment, gives that person the feeling of what it would be like to be free of depression. The story, in other words, not only provokes a cognitive shift but produces the very mood intrinsic to itself.

Pertinent to my own Christian position is Kirkwood's analysis of the Good Samaritan along the same lines as the Hasidic and Buddhist tales. He suggests that the impact of the story lies in the demolition of a legal nicety which uses the definition of a neighbour to absolve oneself of responsibility. The lawyer's request that Jesus answer the question of "who is my neighbour?" was designed to introduce a debate which was current in rabbinic circles and would be instantly recognised today by anyone working in law, the church, social work or the police - namely what are the *limits* of our responsibility and who *exactly* do we have to be nice to? The question is an intellectual trap, but the story which Jesus tells, heads off this debate from the beginning. The lawyer's question implied that *rational, legalistic analysis is the ultimate solution to the problem posed that humans be compassionate. Had Jesus responded with a definition he would instantly have been submerged into the existing debate. As it is he switches the debate from the academic and impersonal to the personal and specific and from the adult intellectual to the child-like emotive.* [151].

Indeed the child-like stance commended by Jesus as a pre-requisite for the kingdom of God (Mark 10.13) may well be precisely that of the young person listening to stories. More than that, we can ask ourselves if there is any technique other than a story which could have taken legal minds so completely by surprise, evoking a grudging acquiescence in a conclusion that had been neatly avoided hitherto. Nonetheless it could still be argued that speaking as he was to a religiously informed audience, Jesus's message at least had the possibility of being understood. The same goes for Rabbis and advanced monks - they should hardly have been immune to the message, and may have been more amenable to change. This is something to be borne in mind when considering responses to spiritual narrative.

The conclusion to this section on practical uses of narrative is

1. That a story can provide the environment for imaginative engagement - a risk free zone for taking risks with ideas.
2. That an original story, especially a multi-faceted one, can provide anchor points which invite our own rendition of the original, revealing en route our own conceptual provenance and personal assumptions.
3. That a story can make a direct impact which challenges long standing assumptions and alters our perspective, either by putting a wedge in the door which at some

point opens wider, or by permitting a child-like or immediate response which bypasses our standard adult rationalisations.

These three possible uses directly inform the research model which follows. A prior question remains however, and that is the difficulty of defining what a spiritual narrative is. In much of the research material there is direct reference to ethics or morality, perhaps because an ethical problem demands some sort of resolution that an affair of the spirit may not. On the other hand it would be extremely difficult to dismiss all moral tales as unspiritual. The parable of the rich fool in Luke 12 could be taken as a moral story about the dangers of wealth, but, set against a back drop of 'you can't take it with you when you go' it has an undeniable spiritual dimension. As a working definition, therefore, I propose to borrow some ideas from Hay and Nye (above) and from the 2004, non-statutory framework for RE produced by the DES/QCA. The broad definition coming from the former would be "*Narratives which have the potential to evoke behaviours of Awareness sensing, Mystery sensing and Value sensing*". More succinctly I would summarise this as "*stories which directly or indirectly, mythically or ontologically point towards transcendence (which may be clothed in the immanent) the numinous (to quote Otto) or matters of ultimate concern (to quote Tillich and the existentialists).*" In real terms this might include stories which feature a divine being or are embedded in a context which assumes one. Meanwhile, in an educational schema (the 2004 framework) which asserts that children can learn about and from religions the definition, and sheer range, of what they might learn, is instructive

Children should ask questions about personal identity, values and commitments, relationships with others, the meaning and purpose of life and ultimate truth.

Stories which raise these issues could presumably claim to be spiritual. At any rate, in research terms, it could be that the definition of spiritual is a vain quest. Hans-Gunter Heimbrock [152] exposes the difficulties of defining the word 'sacred' in that most stories which bear the title, do so because they have been validated as such by successive generations and cease to be regarded as such if they have 'nothing to say'. In short, a bit like God, we cannot hope to define the word spiritual into existence. The real test is whether something which claims to be spiritual actually evokes a response which indicates that it might be. So perhaps we should return to this question at the end and not the

beginning. In the meantime the pressing question was simple ó which story should become the focus for research?

2 WHICH STORY SHOULD BE THE FOCUS OF RESEARCH?

The literary review has shown how extraordinarily difficult it is to pin down the concept of 'spiritual narrative'. Whilst, over history, certain stories become 'canonical' in the texts and traditions of different religions, it is not at all clear that all or even most of them 'deserve' the title, or by what criteria they might qualify, or why other stories – ghost stories, fairy stories, batman stories? – might or might not. This is why the foregoing attempt to locate research within the academic literature is important, first to identify the ways in which different constituencies of thought might think about narrative in general and spiritual narrative in particular and second, as it were, to put the invisible man within such a shower of ideas that he is delineated less by what he is in himself and more by the way ideas deflect from him. Of course theologians are used to the problem of trying to talk meaningfully about someone who might not be there, often using the so-called apophatic method of saying what he isn't, but largely resorting to story or at least analogy to make the invisible visible. But do they in fact succeed in this intention? If you are an average secondary school pupil – do the stories which claim to be spiritual have any impact at all, and if so, why? Furthermore most spiritual stories live in a context of interpretation – say the church or culture and custom – and so it is more difficult to assess the impact of the story on young people if there is an accompanying baggage of a history of interpretation, except that the very idea of a 'classic' story suggests that the best stories seem to break these boundaries. This led to very serious questions about which narrative to put in front of secondary school pupils.

There were clearly a number of things that the chosen narrative could not be

First it could not be so well-known that in effect there was a conventional way of thinking about it which would stifle reflection, confusion or ambiguity right from the off. Insights from Vygotsky about conceptual progress through challenge and mis-fit, comments from key post-modernists about the danger of existing meta-narratives and the testimony from Christian parables and Zen koans, not to mention the Socratic ideas of *aporia* (perplexity) all suggested that complexity and pushing the boundaries of understanding should be key concerns. This criterion effectively excluded stories like the Good Samaritan where the context of the story is challenging, as is reflection afterwards, but the story itself invites only one conclusion: that the Samaritan is the good guy.

Secondly the story could not simply be illustrative of some prior way of thinking about things. So far as possible the responses to the story should not be intellectually rigged in advance. In other words the story teller might know what *he* thinks of the story but he should not be pushing for a 'correct' answer amongst the hearers. This criterion effectively excluded approaches to narrative which allowed only a limited number of cognitive outcomes on the road to a 'right' answer (this led me eventually to reject an approach which copied Kate Hawkey's technique examining the battle of Hastings and another cognitive model based on comparison of different synoptic gospel accounts of the same biblical narrative - see Appendix 2). It also excluded stories which could be reduced to purely ethical or cognitive outcomes like Kohlberg's classic Heinz story.

Equally clearly, the narrative to be chosen required some positive attributes

First it had to be absolutely classic. In the absence of any water-tight definition of spiritual, the best way forward was to choose something in the mainstream canon of at least one major religion (preferably more than one), and something with a long history of reflection, and indeed current reflection, without being so well-known that responses might be blunted by over familiarity.

Secondly, notwithstanding the traditions of interpretation in which the narrative found itself, it was an ideal that the story should be 'of itself' in the sense that it had an inner dynamic which did not require that hermeneutic context, and could stand coherently without it. In a way this is another way of stating what it is to be 'classic'.

Thirdly it was desirable that it contained language which referred directly to the transcendent or the possibility of 'another world' beyond the purely material. Technically this feature could include many stories from fairy tales to vampire movies but it was an 'at least' requirement of something calling itself spiritual narrative. Interestingly, the registry office's insistence on the exclusion of all transcendent reference in wedding ceremonies, to the extent of excising words like God, heaven and angels, points up the claim of spiritual narrative to be clothed in a distinctive 'grammar' which is recognisable enough to be suspect in an organisation which pursues a grammar 'of this age' - 'the true meaning of 'secular'.

Fourthly, in view of the literary review, the ideal narrative had to be multi-valent in the sense that it might tap emotional and imaginative responses as well as cognitive ones. This criterion seemed important in view of the summary above of what a narrative can provide, in terms of a 'safe' imaginative environment, an anchor point inviting our own re-writing of the story and a provocative device which challenges preconceptions directly. When it

came to devising an instrument for measuring response it seemed very important that even a very complex story was initially allowed to stand for itself without direction, but invited people to enter the story imaginatively. Only later, were possible modes of interpretation offered as solutions but never as the only answer, thus allowing personal re-writes of the narrative and gut reactions of endorsement, hostility or reflection. As far as possible it seemed desirable to have no prior view on how the pupils might respond.

With all this in mind, the eventual choice of the exclusion from Eden of Adam and Eve, seemed an appropriate one. The absolutely classic Garden of Eden story was not on any syllabus, had the virtue of being canonically fundamental to the 3 monotheistic religions and held the possibility of an extraordinary range of responses ranging from Freud to Nietzsche, whilst holding a pivotal position in differing Catholic and Protestant understanding of human nature, the fall and salvation. Whilst being reasonably well-known in outline, the story also has the additional quality of details which prompt perplexity and surprise - like the fact that God makes clothes for Adam and Eve before he expels them from the garden. Though embedded in a hermeneutic tradition, the story has a coherent structure of its own with transcendent grammar which includes God and angels and the ambivalent figures of the snake and the trees of knowledge and life. Of itself it does not articulate the doctrinal disagreements over original sin or the fall and this terminology does not appear in the original text. Instead it speaks simply of a mythical garden which, through the figures of Adam and Eve, both boys and girls can readily enter imaginatively, with or without religious or doctrinal prejudice. That said, the actual story has the potential to provoke a torrent of emotional, cognitive and existential questions around justice, guilt, blame and fairness, as well as knowledge, self consciousness, exclusion and death.

The final factor in choosing this narrative was simply economy. The key concern in the research was to expose pupils to a classic, full-blooded, unabridged, non-sanitised, full of loose ends narrative to see what they would make of it. Everything else was subsidiary to this central aim.

3 DEVISING AN INSTRUMENT TO INTERROGATE THE CENTRAL STORY

In devising a research instrument, the key consideration was to maintain focus on the central story. Thereafter the concern was to tease out and elucidate different aspects of response, with a gradual increase in conceptual difficulty and choice. The final research tool was a lengthy research document but designed to be manageable within a typical 40 minute lesson in a senior school day.

The instrument had 6 parts

Part 1: The story itself and an invitation to give an initial assessment of what it was about.

Part 2: Imaginative engagement with the story. The pupils were asked to imagine themselves as Adam or Eve and answer questions about the garden and expulsion.

Part 3: Short Questions about the pupils' personal and family engagement with religion followed by a 17 question Likert scale Beliefs and Values Grid.

Part 4: Pictures illustrating 3 themes of Knowledge, Expulsion and Death, with short questions asking them to choose which pictures made most impact and, if possible, why.

Part 5: Religion. The pupils were presented with 4 theological extrapolations of the original story, comparing Adam and Christ. They were asked to choose the best and worst explanations or suggest a better account of their own.

Part 6: Overall meaning. The pupils were presented with 5 different ways of making overall sense of the story, and asked to choose best and worst and rank the others in between, with an opportunity to suggest a better account of their own.

The full version of the research instrument can be found as an appendix (Appendix 1) at the back of this document but for clarity's sake I will present each section, as above, followed by the rationale around its creation.

3.1 Part 1 The story itself

YOUR NAME (first and second name)

What year are you in school?

School

Male/female (circle)

The Adam and Eve story is a really old story. When you heard it just now

1. Had you heard it before? **Yes/No** (circle)

2. *What do you think the story is all about?*

- Even if you don't agree with it what do you think the story is trying to tell us about human beings?
- Are there any things that don't make sense in the story? Try to write from memory but you can read the story for yourself if you want to.

(Remember there is no right or wrong answer to this. You can write whatever you think.
No need to write full sentences. Bullet points are fine.)

Did you look at the written story when you wrote your answer? Yes/No

(The written story followed this question in the research document so that the young people could refer to it if necessary)

3.1.1 Rationale behind Part 1

Reading aloud: In every case I read the story aloud to the class in question. Although part of the research document was a *written* copy of what was read (Genesis 3.1-24 New International Version) pupils were told not to read it whilst the public reading was in progress, though they were given the opportunity to refer to the written copy when they were writing their answers (being asked if they had done so on the front page). It was also important that the reading in all cases was done by me so that my style, intonation and engagement (insofar as this was discernible) were the same.

Listening: Most spiritual narratives assume a verbal/aural engagement. Jesus spoke parables to an audience and wrote nothing himself. Old Testament stories were largely preserved verbally in a tribal then cultic context and when written down, such stories from all traditions are repeated orally in churches, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras and mandirs. Whilst preserving the oracy it seemed important not to pollute the response to the narrative by context or persona, so the context was always a classroom rather than a sacred space and, except in my own school, where not to have worn a dog-collar would have aroused more question than not, I revealed nothing of my clerical status when visiting other schools.

A first attempt to make sense or express puzzlement: On the first page there were 2 access questions, first whether they had heard it before (yes or no) and secondly “*What do you think the story is all about?*” The second question was explained somewhat, and, in particular, gave reassurance that there were no right or wrong answers whilst inviting them to disagree with the story if they felt that way and to express perplexity about the meaning, if any part of the story didn’t make sense to them. They could refer to the written story if they wished (which was overleaf) and the space on the research document gave them an impression of the maximum they could write whilst permitting bullet points and brevity rather than full sentences. The Garden of Eden story confronts pupils with a perplexing number of building blocks ó a more intellectual version of children trying to order their toys by colour or function (Vygotsky above page 28). Is it basically a story of crime and punishment? Is it a story about temptation and consequences? Who or what is the serpent? Who is really to blame? Where does nakedness and shame come in? Why should the tree of knowledge be such a problem? Why does knowledge impact on immortality and the tree of life? What do we make of the punishments ó is this simply an

aetiological myth to explain why child-birth is painful and agriculture hard work, or is it more profound? In many ways this first response to the story was the most important in the research document because it set the scene for subsequent reflection.

3.2 Part 2 *Imaginative engagement with the story*

QUESTIONS: Imagine that you are Adam or Eve

1. What will you *miss most* about your life in the garden?

Answer:

2. Looking back, is there anything that was *bad* about life in the garden even before the snake came along?

Answer:

3. What will be the *best* thing about living outside the garden?

Answer:

4. What will be the *worst* thing about living outside the garden?

Answer:

5. If you got the chance to say **one** thing to God as you leave the garden, what would it be?

Answer:

3.2.1 Rationale behind Part 2

Imaginative questions: These asked the young people to imagine themselves as Adam or Eve and were designed to be as non-directive as possible.

The 5 questions probed how the story made them feel

1. What will you miss most about the garden?
2. Looking back, is there anything that was bad about life in the garden even before the snake came along?
3. What will be the best thing about living outside the garden?
4. What will be the worst thing about living outside the garden?
5. If you got the chance to say one thing to God as you leave the garden, what would it be?

In a pilot research document which was tried on a local school's year 7s, the questions included the first 4 and not the 5th but then asked pupils to fill in a grid which directed them to issues of anger, guilt and shame (Appendix 3). On reflection the grid answers did not elucidate their existing answers and the addition of the 5th question did more to tap their real feelings without prior direction ó typical answers being *"I'm sorry but I deserve the punishment"* and *"Hope I see you again"*.

Imaginative environment: Bouchard's scheme of inviting people into a narrative environment in which they explore situations for themselves, was a fruitful starting point. This is also familiar territory for so-called 'Godly play' which is normally part of a confessional stance practised in churches or in after-school clubs, where children re-arrange the characters and imagine dialogues within the environment of a parable or story. Alongside the practical dimension of how to tap children's responses was also a desire to see whether maturation had an effect on responses ó were younger children, for example, more likely to see the expulsion as the consequence of rule breaking with the emphasis on personal avoidance of punishment by blaming others. Would Kohlberg's categories of pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional be relevant here or Fowler's stages of faith? Would any of the students pick up on a Freudian repressive resonance in a garden where adults until now have been in a state of dreaming innocence, unaware of their sexuality/nakedness? Within the philosophical tradition, would responses tune in with the

existentialists' description of the human condition as essentially insecurity and abandonment, or at the other end with an assertive courage to be (outside the garden) either in the faith tradition of Kierkegaard or the atheist tradition of Nietzsche?

3.3 Part 3 Short questions about the pupils' personal and family engagement with religion followed by a 17 question Likert scale Beliefs and Values Grid

ABOUT YOU AND RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

1. Are you religious, in the sense that you go to church or a place of worship regularly, even when you are not in school? **Yes/No (circle)**
2. Is there anyone in your close family who is religious? **Yes/No (circle)**
3. If you answered 'Yes' to the question above - **Who?**
Answer:
4. Do you know what *kind* of religious person they or you are e.g. Catholic, Sikh, Muslim? Buddhist?
Answer:
5. Are you **quite** religious in the sense that you might go to a place of worship at Christmas or Divali or Ramadan but not much the rest of the time? **Yes/No (circle)**
6. Do you think you know quite a lot **about** religion(s) from your teachers at school, TV and so on? **Yes/No (circle)**

MORE ABOUT YOU AND SPIRITUALITY

Try and score these 1 ó 10. **1** for strongly agree **10** for strongly disagree. Just tick the number

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I am a spiritual person										
2. I believe I have a spirit or soul that can survive my death										
3. I believe in a personal God										
4. I believe God is everywhere										
5. I believe what happens after death is affected by how I have lived my life										
6. I believe there are forces for evil in the universe.										
7. I believe everything happens for a reason.										
8. I believe in life after death										
9. I am a religious person.										
10. Religious ceremonies are important to me.										
11. I believe life is planned out for me.										
12. I believe God is a life-force										
13. At least once in my life I have had a strong spiritual experience.**										
14. I believe that there is a heaven.										
15. I believe prayer has value.										
16. I believe the human spirit is immortal (lives forever)										
17. I believe there is a God										

If you agree quite strongly (if you have ticked 1,2,3,or 4) at question **13 that you have óat least once in your life had a strong spiritual experienceö can you say briefly what this experience was?

3.3.1 Rationale behind Part 3

This section of the research document was a deliberate break between the free response first sections and the later sections which were more directive. In the pilot research document there were *additional* subsections which were much more personal ó asking what sort of family the pupils were from and trying to capture aspects of their relationships with others such as whether they often felt angry, guilty, confident etc. (Appendix 3). Behind this lay a desire to explore any points of contact with Pintrich’s insights into warm conceptual factors. In particular there was an interest in possible cultural factors (like religious family or faith school) which might attach a bias to a respondent in terms of values, interest and importance, or, in other words, give a possible öfixö on where children are öcoming fromö in their responses. The öfixö however would not deliver a complete

picture. The sheer complexity of mapping all the factors which might contribute to responsiveness led me to focus solely on religious/spiritual aspects, and drop the family/personal questions in the final version of the research document. The first few questions therefore were self-designed simply to report family or personal religious connections. The second major part was a grid on a Likert scale to measure beliefs and values. There was some cause to be confident in the grid since it was designed [153] to measure personal belief that was not limited to religious thought. Intended to aid research in psychiatry and medicine and in particular to give a more reliable measure of whether religious/spiritual involvement might be linked with better health, the authors had set out very deliberately to find language which might provoke response from a wide spectrum of humanity, including those near the end of life who might have had cause to reflect on the spiritual, even if personally non-religious, and a wider constituency of people recruited from medical and non-medical settings. The final 17 items (reduced from an initial 47 to 20 and further reduced in this study to 17) research document comprising the most effective questions, performed with high test re-test reliability [154] amongst respondents who ranged from the overtly religious to those with no religious self-description. The revisions I made to the test were on the following basis. The reduction of their final 20 question test to 17 was justified in 2 ways. The first was that the reliability of the Beliefs and Values instrument (which I used) was tested through correlation with an earlier, highly regarded, Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale. The three questions I missed out, compared with the other 17 questions, had significantly lower correlation coefficients with the IRMS. On the other hand these three questions (1. I believe meditation has value 2. I believe human physical contact can be a spiritual experience and 3. I feel most at one with the world when surrounded by nature) were specifically designed to tap *non-religious* responses, so the poor correlation with a specifically *religious* test was not the only deciding factor. So the second, more decisive, factor was duplication and/or clarity. In my version of the test I asked young people to describe in more detail their response to the question of an intense spiritual experience if they felt they had had one. This additional explanation was intended to cover the eventualities of 'being surrounded by nature' and 'human physical contact' if they *wanted* to describe the experiences in that way, without putting words into their mouths. Likewise the question 'I believe prayer has value,' which I retained, had higher test/retest reliability than the vaguer 'I believe meditation has value' and in the event, seemed to evoke strong responses both positive and negative, which a word like *meditation*, subject to wider interpretation, may not have done. My other major

change was to alter the authors' original 5 factor Likert scale (strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree) to a 1-10 scale, thus denying a neutral middle in favour of either 5 or 6, but from my experience of offence-sitting teenagers it is probably justifiable. The slight negative effect of doing this was that 1. counted as strong agreement and 10 as strong disagreement making a 'high' Beliefs and Values score, paradoxically 'low,' but, for the young people, if not the researcher, it seemed quite natural.

The article of which the Beliefs and Values measure was the outcome was fascinating in other respects; especially in drawing attention to the problem of how people without a religious language express personal beliefs and experiences (Wright's remarks on religious literacy are pertinent here). The authors said that this became clear as they interviewed people struggling to express deep feelings in the later stages of cancer, and surmised towards the end of the study that

Such concepts (as spirituality) may only be measurable by language to a limited extent People want to feel, touch and smell their spirituality and the commonest expression of it becomes what we regard as religious. Defining it outside of such symbols is tricky... [155]

This was an additional factor in my mind when I highlighted one of the questions in the grid (number 13 viz 'at least once in my life I have had a strong spiritual experience') and invited those who reported a 'strongly agree' to elucidate the experience at the bottom of the page on the grounds that a young person's experience might not be as extreme as that associated with terminal cancer, but could be just as powerful from their perspective.

3.4 Part 4 Pictures of Knowledge, Exclusion and Death

PICTURES

KNOWLEDGE



Picture 1 (a sculpture)



Picture 2
(a painting of a nuclear bomb) ↗



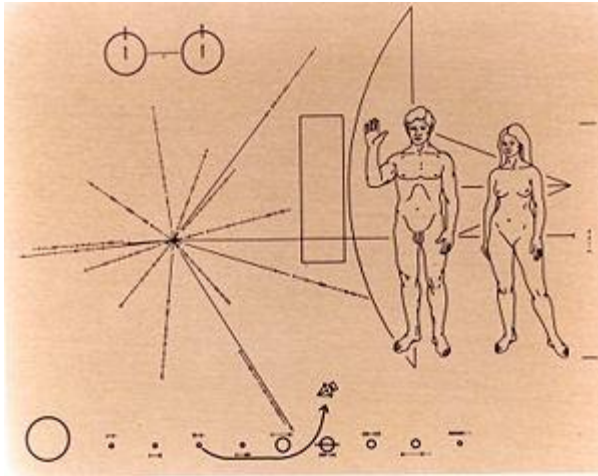
Picture 4 (oil on the beach in the gulf of Mexico) ↗ a photo



←
Picture 3 (a book illustration)

Picture 5

A metal engraving illustrating human size and the solar system, on the Pioneer10 unmanned spacecraft, so that aliens would know who we were and where we were from



QUESTION

In the Adam and Eve story, the snake says that if they eat the apple from the tree of knowledge, they will become *like God* or have *Godlike power*

1. Choose **one** of the pictures from 1-5 above

Explain why you have chosen this picture. In what way may it illustrate what the snake was talking about?

Answer: My chosen picture is number -----

The reason I chose this picture is í í .

2. In the story do you think Adam and Eve *did* become like God? **Yes/No** (circle)
(**write here** if you need to explain your answer)

EXCLUSION FROM THE GARDEN



Picture 1 by Massaccio



Picture 2 by Francis Hayman



Picture 3 from a Mormon Seminary guide



Picture 4 by Pavel Popov

QUESTIONS

Which picture makes an impact on you?

Answer: Number 1 1 .

What do you think Adam and Eve are *thinking* in the picture you have chosen?

Answer:

DEATH

This is a piece of Art by the famous sculptor Damien Hirst. It is called "Adam and Eve Exposed" and has male and female skeletons on 2 beds covered with sheets.



QUESTION

Can you think of any possible connection between this piece of art and the Adam and Eve story? Explain

Answer:

Look at this modern picture



QUESTION

Can you think of any possible connection between this picture and the Adam and Eve story? Explain

Answer:

3.4.1 Rationale behind Part 4

The young people had entered the garden imaginatively in part 2. They had then filled in the Beliefs and Values Grid which required some intellectual focus. The aim now was to return them to the realm of the imagination. An initial thought had been to access possible interpretations of Eden through film excerpts from, say, 'Blue lagoon' or 'The Beach' or 'Lord of the Flies' but, on reflection, the hermeneutic loading of a film director not only interprets the biblical story but also obscures or replaces it (Streissø strictures on entertainment packages are relevant here) notwithstanding the obvious secondary reason of time-constraint. In the event, static images did the job of evoking further reflection on the story without overly directing what the young people should think. Of course my analysis of what I thought the pictures might mean dictated the variety of images I chose, but the pupils were not party to these thoughts and in the event many pupils turned out to be blind to many interpretations I would have thought of as obvious, and picked up messages which I would never have considered. So the following is my rationale without being directive of theirs.

a) Pictures of Knowledge

These pictures, all trawled from images freely available on the internet, were intended to capture cognitive responses and elicit cognitive dilemma. The snake suggests that once Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree of the *knowledge* of good and evil, they will become like God. What does this mean? **Picture 1** depicts a sculpture entitled 'paradise lost' where the manmade world has displaced the natural. I understood this as a negative image of knowledge but it could equally be seen as the triumph of technology. **Picture 2** shows a nuclear explosion which in shape resembles the lollipop trees of a tropical paradise. Very beautiful but also destructive – an ambivalent picture. **Picture 3** is effectively untitled because it is untitled on the internet, but it shows a shining being (God? The Devil?) showing a man a scene of warfare in the abyss below. Is this the temptation of knowledge/power or the consequences of it? **Picture 4** shows a beautiful beach with suntanned holiday makers in the distance and oil pollution in the foreground. The Gulf of Mexico disaster was very much in the news at the time. **Picture 5** is an illustration of the technology that has projected human beings into space and presents human genius at its limits.

The overall picture of knowledge is ambivalent. How can the respondents resolve it fruitfully and will their interpretation be in line with an overall 'take' on the story?

b) Pictures of Exclusion from the garden

The overall intention of this set of pictures was to capture affective responses. How do Adam and Eve *feel*? How do we relate to them? Is this harsh punishment (**picture 1** the angel with a scowl and a sword) or half kindly (**picture 2** the angel leading them by the hand) or is it about clinging together for comfort (**picture 3**) or striding out across the barren world enduring a landscape that will only deliver sweat and toil for Adam and for the pregnant woman the anxiety of bringing a child into the world (**picture 4**). Will there be gender differences in response? Will these responses be consistent with earlier ones? Some of the pictures have a transcendent figure (the angels) whilst others don't. Will 'spiritual' narrative reduce to a commentary on the universal human condition with or without God?

c) Pictures of Death

The overall intention of these **2 pictures** was to capture conative responses – the will to find a meaning in Vygotsky's sense. In the story, Eve's worry is that if they eat the fruit

“they will die” In a sense they do. From a state of innocence they are suddenly confronted with the terrible feelings of mortality and angst of which the existentialists speak. They were always mortal, but now they *know* they are mortal ó the fear of death enters their lives accompanied by the realisation that they will have to struggle from now on. Damien Hirst’s bodies (entitled “Adam and Eve exposed”) like corpses on hospital trolleys, heading for the morgue, their utter mortality exposed, is an interesting picture. On the other hand there is the proud, rebellious man spitting in the face of death and advocating not acquiescence in death but rebellion against it ó a kind of picture image of Dylan Thomas’ “Rage against the night” [156]. These pictures were deliberately at the greatest distance from the pictorial images evoked by the original story. It takes an intellectual leap to connect either picture in any way with Adam and Eve, but the question was who would be successful in making sense of them and why.

The picture questions, in summary, amount to the following interrogations of the narrative

Is the story really about knowledge ó **what do you think?**

Is it really about exclusion ó **what do you feel?**

Is it really about something much bigger, our very mortality ó **how far can you reach in your meaning-making?**

Note that in a sense, none of these questions or answers are exclusively religious matters.

They fit more readily into a frame bounded by the words “ultimate concern” or “values” or “meaning” or “purpose” or “identity.”

3.5 Part 5 Religion

RELIGION



The Christian religion makes a **connection** and a **contrast** between the **Adam and Eve** story and the **Jesus** story as you can see from the medieval picture above.

BUT even within Christianity there are **DIFFERENT** explanations of the connection.

Read the following explanations carefully and decide which explanation is the best and which is the worst. **THE LINES IN RED ARE A SUMMARY.**

Explanation 1. **Adam** disobeyed God's rules so God threw him out. **Jesus** obeyed God's rules so God let Jesus back into paradise along with everybody who believes in him, but will punish anybody who doesn't believe or obey God.

Explanation 2. When **Adam** (meaning all humans) became able to think (the tree of knowledge) he became very insecure and anxious (in the story he realised he felt naked and could not touch the tree of life). Life became an endless battle involving anxiety, pain, hard work and the search for security until you die ó a bit like film-stars seeking eternal youth and loads of money. **Jesus** was not insecure like Adam and showed that if you trusted God you did not have to rely on money or other security. **Adam** illustrates one type of human who is anxious. **Jesus** illustrates a different kind of human who is not anxious.

Explanation 3. **Adam** wanted to be like God (this is what the snake says) by being totally powerful through understanding everything. **Jesus** suggested that being like God was more about being powerless and generous. **Adam** and many human beings (like Hitler and Stalin) want to be God because they think God is all-powerful but **Jesus** doesn't see God like that.

Explanation 4. When **Adam** ate the apple, he lost the innocent trust that he used to have. He became an adult in the sense that he was suspicious of God (hiding in the garden) and felt guilty and exposed ó a bit like teenagers who become awkward with their parents. **Jesus** suggested that a child-like trust was a good thing even for grown ups and trusted in God even when he felt abandoned. **Adam** stands for distrust. **Jesus** stands for trust.

QUESTIONS

1. Which is the *best* explanation of the connection/contrast between the Adam story and the Jesus story? **Answer:** Number -----

2. Which explanation is the *worst* in your view? **Answer:** Number ----

3. Can say *why* you like or dislike a particular version?

Answer:

4. Do you think there is a better explanation than the ones provided above? Write your version here if you can think of one.

Answer

3.5.1 Rationale behind Part 5

In Christian theology there is enormous speculation about ‘The Fall’ and ‘Salvation’. Christ is seen as the antidote to the fall but the mechanism of this is far from clear. The 4 explanations of the connection are intended to give the respondent a glimpse of how the Eden story might ‘fit’ with an overall spiritual perspective of human purpose and destiny. The point of four different perspectives is to assess what makes most sense to whom and why, and perhaps most importantly, what makes least sense.

Compared with the rest of the research document this was quite difficult territory for pupils who are relatively unschooled in theology and this is why complex arguments are reduced to summaries in red. Likewise there would be no claim here to give a complete account of Christian reflection on Fall and Salvation. The most obvious omission is the fact that Christians claim through baptism, grace and faith to be ‘in Christ’ rather than simply ‘like’ him but for the sake of clarity these summaries may still be defensible. It was important that the four explanations put in front of the pupils had credibility and were valid interpretations of the master story, hence the following elucidation

Explanation 1 has biblical support in Romans 5.18 and 19. “*Then as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous*”. In different ways in both Protestantism

and Catholicism the corollary of this becomes true ó that if we remain like Adam we remain under condemnation. If we stick with Jesus we'll be alright. There is a simple equivalence of sin and acquittal, condemnation and righteousness, disobedience balanced by obedience, with variation in how these are understood. Alongside this tradition we might expect elucidation from Kohlberg's conventional morality and other developmental models.

Explanation 2 also has biblical support without the easy balance of 1. The academic view of Romans 7 is that Paul, autobiographically, identifies with Adam who can't do right for doing wrong. Everything he tries to do comes apart in his hands. The very thing he thinks will deliver salvation does not, and he is in turmoil until Christ delivers him. Within the gospel tradition, without the overt reference to Adam, Jesus meets typical human beings who have invested their reality in wealth (e.g. the rich young man Mark 10.22) legal righteousness (The Pharisees in Matthew 23) and power (Pilate in John 19) whilst he himself commends that people don't run after things to assuage anxiety (the Sermon on the Mount ó Matthew 6.25) but should seek first the kingdom of God. Alongside this theological rationale is the existential perspective that angst is at the heart of the human condition. Of the existentialists, Kierkegaard commends radical faith as the antidote to this paralysis and Heidegger commends living in the moment of decision whilst abandoning the securities of the past and the lure of the future. The best commentary on this view comes from Paul Tillich whose *Systematic Theology* describes the Adam and Eve myth as a universal state of *ödreaming innocenceö* (shadowed in childhood and adolescence) where freedom and divine destiny are in harmony but inevitably become actualised leading to *öestrangementö*. The Adam and Eve story is recapitulated in every individual and every human history ó stories which, although left unarticulated in the Bible, are clearly symbolised in the events which follow the Adam and Eve story. Thus we have estrangement between man and nature (the expulsion from Eden) between brother and brother (Cain and Abel) and nation and nation (tower of Babel). For Tillich, estrangement has 2 movements ó the first is Hubris which involves turning away from God to make oneself the centre, the second is concupiscence which is an attempt to draw the world into oneself in the form of abandonment to sensuality ó from sex to greed. This explains the examples in the longer explication of the rubric in Explanation 2. [157][158]

Explanation 3 has overt support in another Adam/Jesus correspondence in 1 Corinthians 15.47 where investment in the purely material (the first Adam) will not get you through. *“As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this brothers; flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”* One of the earliest hymns in Christendom refers to Jesus as the one who precisely did not snatch at equality with God but took the form of a slave (Philippians 2). There are several theological commentaries lying behind this explanation. The first comes from Reinhold Niebuhr’s classic book *“The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Perspective* [159]. Niebuhr was deeply influenced by the experience of world war and recession and identified the Adam and Eve story with 2 strands of sin – the religious sin of rebellion against God and the moral sin of injustice to your fellowman. Depending heavily on Kierkegaard’s concept of Dread as a description of the human condition, he, like Tillich, identified anxiety as the conscious awareness of our freedom and bondage issuing in a basic anxiety. In this state of anxiety we are *“tempted”* either to deny our limitations through pride or to violate our freedom through sensuality. In turn he influenced Dietrich Bonhoeffer with his *“Christian Realism”* and Bonhoeffer’s identification of Nazism, as an evil but valid expression of man’s search for security (Hubris), matched by the acquiescence of the German people (sensuality), informs the socio/political slant of explanation 3. One of the best commentaries on this idea comes in John Robinson’s *“Honest to God”*. [160] Meanwhile Nietzsche’s *“Death of God”* necessitating *ourselves* as Gods or supermen in his place, is the philosophical counterpoint to the Christian perspective.

Explanation 4 appeals to those who reject the identification of Adam’s sin with a breach of law and locate it rather in a breach of trust or faith. A commentary on this again appears in Romans where Paul is considering the distinctiveness of the Christian relationship with God. Roman 8.15 *“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry Abba father it is the spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God”*. The passage concludes that the creation itself which fell with Adam is awaiting the liberation of the children of God. The implication is that it was not so much a *trespass* that destroyed humanity; it was death (basically lack of belief/trust) which came riding on the back of sin (Romans 5.12) because we could no longer trust anything in the midst of our finitude. This would make sense of

the curious detail that God goes on caring for Adam and Eve, who in effect exclude *themselves* from the garden through a radical lack of trust in God, and reliance solely on themselves, in contrast to children who trust naturally and ðaccept that they are acceptedð (to use Tillich's phrase) despite the experience of doubt and histories of distrust. Explanation 4 therefore gives a more personal, everyday dimension to the insights of Explanations 2 and 3. This is not simply the pop star or celebrity (Explanation 2) or the vaulting ambition of Hitler (Explanation 3) but something which can be experienced by teenagers in very ordinary ways.

Conclusion

The overall rationale for this section is to test whether a story which has been central to the Christian understanding of human nature, resonates at all with young people. The fact that in the Genesis story Adam and Eve have apparently done something wrong begs the question of what exactly is wrong. Is it because they have broken a *law* which then requires a saviour figure to compensate for it, or is it simply an insight into a peculiarity of all human beings that they experience finitude and estrangement? In other words ðfallennessð as the classic Christian description of the human condition, is deeply embedded in the Adam and Eve story (though the word is not used) and the counterpart ðsalvationð story tries to offer a solution to whatever ðfallennessð is. This is not to say that the Christian description has a monopoly on analysis of human nature, which explains why respondents were invited to express a different view if they wished, at the end of the questions. The question remains, however, that within *the tradition of explanations* the respondents have the choice of which one (and they may all be ðwrongð) makes most sense or any sense to a child of the 21st century. Perhaps more importantly, granted that explanation 1 (about trespass and righteousness) is still mainstream in some of the more assertive Christian churches ó how popular or unpopular, meaningful or meaningless, will it prove to be?

3.6 Part 6 Overall Sense

We have looked at different aspects of the story of Adam and Eve. As the last part of this exercise, please choose which of the following makes most sense to you and why? **THE LINES IN RED ARE A SUMMARY OF DIFFERENT OVERALL VIEWS OF THE STORY**

Number 1. Don't break rules or you'll get punished

- God made the Garden and Adam and Eve.
- He gave them the rules
- They broke his rules
- They deserve to get punished
- It's up to God to decide how they can make amends if at all.
- We are all guilty.

Number 2. Don't be tempted to do something if you don't know the consequences

- Adam and Eve were basically OK
- The snake tempted them, they didn't think it through and spoilt everything
- God should not really blame Adam and Eve. They were just a bit weak that's all.
- It's all a bit of a mess

Number 3. You've got to take a few risks as you grow up. It was always going to happen.

- Adam and Eve were innocent like children but they were always going to grow up
- It's not fair to punish them for growing up
- Adam and Eve are now a bit like God. They can take adult decisions.
- God will just have to live with that.
- God will have to treat us like adults

Number 4. It's a story about loss and regret and anxiety. We are adults now but we look back to a golden age of innocence when we were loved and secure.

- We all feel naked, guilty and stupid sometimes
- We all feel excluded and anxious sometimes
- We all feel that once upon a time we were secure and loved but now we feel quite insecure and anxious.
- It would be quite nice to think that there was a God or someone like that who still cared for us and made us feel secure.

Number 5. It's a story about being bold enough to live our lives without any help from God or anyone else. We are clever and tough enough to survive even if it's a hard world out there.

- We all get to feel guilty and naked at times
- But it's no good getting upset about it.
- The fact is we are really clever, our eyes are wide open and we can see how things are.
- We don't need God or anybody else to tell us what to do.
- We can rely on ourselves.
- The world is a tough place but we can manage.

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Number 6. You may think of a **better** meaning to the story, or a kind of combination of the others. Write your version here if you want to.

You may like some of these meanings better than others.

Can you arrange them in order. the one you like best at number 1 and the one you like least at number 5. See if you can rank the others somewhere in between.

Best Story is number 1 1 1 ..

In between number 1 1 1 1

In between number 1 1 1 1

In between number 1 1 1 1

Worst Story is number 1 1 1 ...

Can you say why you like your number 1 story best

Question: Do you think you have changed your view of the story between the beginning and the end of this exercise? **Yes/No**

Question: Would you be willing to do a short interview (no more than 10 minutes max.) about your answers, at a later date if I got in touch with you through the staff at your school? **Yes/No**

MANY THANKS FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND HELP

3.6.1 Rationale behind Part 6

The final section was an opportunity for the respondents to opt for one final summative statement of what the story was all about, after all the questions they had been through, or to substitute a better explanation of their own. The idea was that having been asked for their raw response at the beginning of the research document, would they stick with their original view or would they change when confronted with completely different or at least nuanced alternatives? Again rubrics summarised each overall view but these were in fact problematic. In the pilot study, the decision was that the rubrics should still be firmly within the dynamics of the narrative, so although the arguments remained largely the same - the rubrics in the pilot study read

1. It's Adam and Eve's fault
2. It's the snake's fault
3. It's God's fault
4. Don't blame anybody. It's just a story about the anxiety of growing up and looking back to a more secure time. God was kind of right. We feel bad.
5. Don't blame anybody. It's just a story about getting on with our lives without any help and without looking back. The snake was kind of right. We shouldn't feel bad.

In the end I was uncertain that blame and fault should feature in every heading because this gave an overall slant towards a penalty/punishment view of the story ó an almost juridical view ó which of course could be seen as a big feature of the story, but is maybe not the whole story. On the other hand, by making the headings more general and dropping the mythic elements of God and the snake, there was a certain reduction of the narrative form (a bit like reducing the story of Red Riding Hood to the simple question of whether small girls should obey their parents). On balance I tolerated the reduction because the new rubrics gave the best chance of tapping developmental theories ó would younger pupils show more inclination to opt for number 1 (Don't break rules or you'll get punished) would older ones prefer number 3 (You've got to take a few risks). And it gave an opportunity for atheists/agnostics to find a response in number 5 without the complication of thinking about the role of the snake. The feeling of unsatisfactoriness was mitigated somewhat by the fact that again, the young people were asked to choose best and worst,

and invited to rank the other responses between. It was hoped this would reveal something of interest.

At the very end of the research document was a question of whether they thought they had changed their minds about the story from the beginning through to the end, and a further question of whether they would be interested in a follow-up interview. In the event I hoped that the answers to both these questions would be effectively redundant if the research document did its job of eliciting transparent answers on the day. The hope was that the answer to the first question would effectively be obvious from internal consistency or otherwise, and that the wealth of information generated from a 12 page research document offered to 182 young people should offset the need for interviews.

4 PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

4.1 The Sample: Who filled in the research instrument?

Three co-educational senior schools, all in County Durham, attempted the research document and three year groups from each school ó cohorts from years 7, 9 and undifferentiated sixth form (years 12 and 13). The schools were chosen because they represented different constituencies.

The first school was St Johnø School and sixth form college in Bishop Auckland. Opened in 1964 and with 1300 pupils it is the biggest school in Bishop Auckland. At the time the initial research was done, it was a typical Voluntary Aided Catholic school and Sixth Form College with the usual governance coming from Catholic Diocesan and national education boards. Its status has changed slightly since, becoming an academy in 2011. In the area of Bishop Auckland it tends to be a school of choice for many parents who perceive its insistence on school uniform, discipline and academic results as positive factors. Its GCSE results run about 10% higher (on government targets for 5A*-C including English and Maths) than other local maintained schools and slightly above the national average (2009 65%, 2010 63%, 2011 68%).As an oversubscribed school it is able to apply faith criteria over admissions and places, and places Religious Education at the core of the curriculum alongside a steady insistence on collective worship. A few minutesø walk from the centre of Bishop Auckland it has predominantly local intake though some children are bussed in from the local area.

The second school was King Jamesø School in Bishop Auckland. With smaller numbers, at around 900 pupils, it is a former grammar school in impressive buildings with a history going back to 1605. It followed County Durham as a whole in becoming a comprehensive school and has joined St Johnø in gaining Academy status, also in 2011. At the time of research however it was still a typical medium sized Community Maintained school located very centrally in Bishop Auckland and with a long history of community engagement particularly through shared sports facilities. Generally speaking St Johnø has been locally perceived as the more academic school but King James holds local affection going back many years and most of its pupils live within walking distance, whilst others,

like St Johnø, come in by bus from further away. The school observed the regulatory framework for RS in the curriculum but collective worship was less regular and less Christian-specific, favouring a more generalist approach, including other faiths and assemblies which had a higher Personal and Social Educational flavour. Like St Johnø, King James is oversubscribed, so parents do not regard the school as second best and are supportive of the school. The point of choosing these two schools, only a mile apart, was that they shared parental support, local intake and culture but had the interesting components of differing faith observance and commitment and slightly differing emphases on achievement. It was also reasonable to expect some polarity in their clientele ó in other words some parents may have opted to send their pupils to the Catholic school because of its ethos whilst others may have consciously chosen against the Faith aspect or simply in favour of King James. Of course the Catholic school had some control, on faith grounds, over intake.

The third school was Barnard Castle School, an independent school, 14 miles away from Bishop Auckland but drawing its day pupils from a wider radius than the average maintained school. Boarders (constituting nearly two fifths of a senior school of 540) are both national and international with native boarders often funded by the Ministry of Defence. With a non-denominational Christian foundation, but generally Anglican liturgy, the school has a chapel which is in daily use for collective worship and observes Sunday and seasonal Christian services. RS matches timetable allocation with other subjects up to year 9 but becomes optional at GCSE, unlike the Catholic school which maintains a universal coverage into the GCSE years. This was a consideration in deciding to choose cohorts from years 7 and 9 rather than the GCSE years so that there was closer comparison between the schools. The school is effectively non-selective, the main criterion for entry being the ability to pay school fees though there are a limited number of assisted places. With small classes and generally motivated parents and pupils, the academic results are higher than the national average (generally 90%+ on the 5A*-C including Maths and English) and the school carries this high in its consciousness. I am both teacher and Chaplain at this school, and included it in the research as a kind of foil to the other two maintained schools.

For convenience it was easy to abbreviate the Independent School to the letters IS but of course the other two schools were both maintained schools. In the end it was simple,

though slightly misleading, to call them FS (Faith School) and MS (Maintained School) and I have retained this nomenclature of IS,FS and MS, throughout this work.

One might have expected different responses to come out of these diffuse constituencies so one aspect of analysis was to monitor possible differences between schools as well as commonality within year groups and changes from one year group to another. Given that they were all co-educational the impact of gender on response was worth recording as well.

4.2 *The Sample: Numbers and Gender*

It seemed important that pupils should respond to the research document in a usual setting ó their normal timetabled lesson with their usual teacher, with myself invited as a guest. This technique did not deliver perfect gender balance nor an entirely neutral setting (the lessons were all Religious Studies lessons) but a religious research document delivered, say, to a timetabled history class would have lost any gain in neutrality to perplexity of expectation.

The children sat in their usual places, in one school clustered around tables accommodating between 4 and 8 pupils facing one another, but the teacher and I ensured that the research documents were filled in individually without collusion. Some of the classes had gender imbalance ó notably in the MS where girls: boys in year 7 was 28:11 and in year 9 14:25 ó but in the event this threw up some interesting data which may not have emerged otherwise. The slightly disappointing aspect of the research was the relative paucity of sixth formers compared with the lower years. This was partly because sixth form groups in any A level subject tend to be quite small but there were other factors at work. In the MS (although it was the second largest school) there were very few takers (3 in total) for RS A level, whereas the FS offered a group of 10 and the IS a group of 11. Without knowing in advance what would come out of the data, I was interested to see if there were peculiar factors at work in pupils who had opted in to RS rather than simply accepting it as a compulsory subject amongst a host of others on the lower school timetable. So the sixth form acted as a voluntary foil to the lower years' compulsion. In the event the sheer quantity of data coming from just 24 6th formers evoked some gratitude that there were not more of them. Meanwhile years 7 and 9 were at sufficient distance from one another

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chronologically to register maturational theories if they were present, without spilling over into the opt-in status of RS in the GCSE years.

In all, 183 pupils filled in the research document, generating a huge amount of material.

The breakdown of numbers was as follows

Year	Type of School	Total Numbers	Girls	Boys
7	FS	23	13	10
	MS	39	28	11
	IS	15	7	8
9	FS	24	12	12
	MS	39	14	25
	IS	19	6	13
6th Form	FS	10	6	4
	MS	3	2	1
	IS	11	4	7
Total	All Schools	183	92	91

4.3 Dealing with the Sample

It soon became apparent that the weight of information coming in from the young people needed treatment in such a way that conclusions and outcomes could be gathered together in meaningful ways. The initial temptation was to range information by year group but this meant that themes were lost in translation, making it difficult to pursue them between year groups. A thematic approach based initially on the different parts of the research document and then observing these themes play out and morph in different age groups, seemed to be a more fruitful approach. There was then an obvious need to pursue themes through different parts of the research document and pull everything together at the end. The data likewise was both qualitative and quantitative and did not resolve itself easily into separate lumps of thought. This was unsurprising in a research method which was as non-directive as possible and encouraged a wide spectrum of response. A quantitative approach was useful initially however because the numbers suggested avenues of investigation which were then evidenced by the qualitative comments. So in one instance I changed the general order of the research document which gave structure to the thematic approach, in order to give a firm quantitative anchor point before riding out the waves of diffuse material yielded by the rest of the research document. This anchor point was the section asking short questions about family/personal religious background, and then pursuing very specific information through a 'Beliefs and Values Grid'. This was an obvious starting point to get an initial fix on the 'spiritual temperature' of the pupils which became a useful reference point later on. Thereafter, different parts of the research document yielded very diffuse information. The imaginative stroll in the garden, for example, produced densely packed and highly individual responses which needed coding by theme/subject in order for any patterns to emerge. Other parts of the research document demanded only the number of a picture or the rank order of overall meaning, and this was easy to staticise, but the *intentionality* lying behind these choices relied heavily on those pupils who gave substance to the numbers by writing comments. In some instances, it required minute attention to detail and lengthy argument to illuminate what exactly lay behind the figures and comments. This in turn led to a dilemma in presentation which is that conclusions, reached at the end of labyrinthine discussion, lost their own impact and became disconnected from the previous findings. This led me to invert the normal order of *discussion then conclusion*

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to one which *led with the conclusions*, then evidenced them and finally returned to a summative statement later on, to extend a theme into the next section or add new ones.

The final element to take into account was the expectation that although themes find themselves embedded in typical individuals; the individuals have their own agenda, as it were, lying alongside the themes. This observation entailed a case-studies chapter looking at individual responses across the whole research document and indicating the points of resonance and dissonance with the general themes.

The overall format for presenting results is therefore as follows, with each section beginning with an 'advance conclusion' for clarity

1. A quantitative 'fix' on the respondents (the personal and family questions and the 'Beliefs and Values Grid'. Part 3 of the research document)
2. The story itself and initial responses to the story.
3. Imaginative engagement with the story
4. Pictures of Knowledge, Exclusion and Death
5. Religion & theological reflection on the implications of the story
6. Overall Meaning
7. Case studies & selected pupils from years 7,9 and 6th Form
8. Overall conclusions: What does it all add up to?

5 A QUANTITATIVE “FIX” ON THE RESPONDENTS

5.1 *Advance conclusions*

From the 17 question “Beliefs and Values Grid” where answers were ranked 1 for strong agreement and 10 for strong disagreement in response to a series of spiritual/religious questions 3 important conclusions emerged.

1. Across every school and age group a greater percentage of girls were more likely to show strong agreement in their beliefs and values scores. A greater percentage of boys were more likely to express strong disagreement.
2. The Catholic School in Year 7 was, for both boys and girls, *much more* responsive on the beliefs and values grid than the other two schools.
3. Overall in Year 7 and 9 the Maintained School scored “stronger disagreement scores”. In Year 7 the children at the Maintained School scored an average of 6.9 per question (over the 17 questions) in contrast to 3.6 (FS) and 6.1 (IS) and in Year 9 an average of 7.1 in contrast to 5.34 (FS) and 5.34 (IS).

A fourth important conclusion emerged when the strength of response to certain questions was put in rank order for each school. Whilst all the schools tended to have similar items in their top eight, the Faith school children especially in year 7 broke with the other schools in ranking “religion specific” items like “belief in a personal God” much higher. This seemed to persist into year 9 but slightly weaker.

A fifth important conclusion emerged when the responses to questions of personal/family religion were ranged alongside the “Beliefs and Values Grid” scores. In Years 7 and 9, personal religious practice coupled with religious practice in a close family member showed a connection with strong agreement scorings on the grid. Lack of such influence corresponded very closely with disagreement scores. Whilst personal/family influence or lack of it tracked the highest and lowest beliefs and values scores in sixth form, this correspondence in middle scores declined sharply in sixth form suggesting that sixth formers’ assessments of their own *beliefs and values* became de-linked from personal and family engagement *with religion*.

Overall this quantitative aspect of the research document pointed to 2 **“super” conclusions**

1. Individuals completing a research document *as* individuals nevertheless combined in their answers to suggest a *“culture”* of agreement with certain beliefs and values (the FS) or a *“culture”* of disagreement (the MS)
2. The culture seems to have different strands, some residing in the school and some deriving from family background. Personal or family engagement with religion, or lack of it, seemed to track very high or very low beliefs and values scores in years 7 and 9 but tracked less closely the middle scores, most noticeably in sixth form. Gender also comes into play but there is some evidence that whilst gender differentials persist, they respond to the prevailing culture of school and home.

5.2 Evidence: The Beliefs and Values Grid

Key
Highlighted in blue : The occasions when girls have õhigherõ agreement scores than boys.
Highlighted in red : The occasions when boys have õhigherõ agreement scores than girls.

School	Girls	Boys	Total	
FS Year 7	13	10	23/23	
Average score on a 1-10 scale over 17 questions on the Beliefs and Values grid	3.18	4.15		
MS Year 7	27	10	37/39 (1 boy & 1 girl didn't fill grid)	
Average score on a 1-10 scale over 17 questions on the Beliefs and Values grid	6.95	6.9		
IS Year 7	7	8	15/15	
Average score on a 1-10 scale over 17 questions on the Beliefs and Values grid	5.79	7.21		
FS Year 9	11	12	23/24 (1 girl didn't fill grid)	
Average score on a 1-10 scale over 17 questions on the Beliefs and Values grid	5.31	5.82		
MS Year 9	14	25	39/39	
Average score on a 1-10 scale over 17 questions on the Beliefs and Values grid	5.54	7.92		
IS Year 9	6	13	19/19	
Average score on a 1-10 scale over 17 questions on the Beliefs and Values grid	4.37	5.79		
Sixth Form taken as one group	12	12		
	4.32	5.79		
Whole of Year 7: Percentage of whole group	Girls	Boys	Cumulative % Girls	Cumulative % Boys
Average of 1 to 3 (up to 51)	19	18	19	18
Average of 4-5 (up to 85)	15	25	34	43
Average of 6-7 (up to 119)	40	28	68	71
Average of 8-10 (up to 170)	26	28	100	100
Whole of Year 9: Percentage of whole group				
Average of 1-3	16	4	16	4
Average of 4-5	29	20	35	24
Average of 6-7	32	36	67	60
Average of 8-10	23	40	100	100
Whole of Year 13: Percentage of whole group				
Average of 1 to 3	33	8	33	8
Average of 4-5	42	33	75	41
Average 6-7	17	33	92	74
Average of 8-10	8	25	100	99

Figure 5-1: Comparison of years in Beliefs and Values Grid

The figures suggest the conclusion that girls were more likely to place themselves on the 'agree' side in answering the beliefs and values questions. There is one obvious exception to this - the MS in year 7. Here there was a big gender imbalance towards girls (27:10 girls: boys) and as a group (against the trend elsewhere) they scored a slightly higher disagreement score than the boys in their class. Furthermore they were able to swing the overall female vote in year 7. Whereas ***the 20 girls in the other 2 schools divided 12:8 across higher: lower beliefs and values scores***, the ***27 MS girls divided 3:24*** which was enough to swing the whole year. One possible explanation is that these girls had very little religious engagement either personally or through their family and this pre-disposed them to score themselves in the way they did. Certainly in the two crucial columns asking about personal religiosity and family connections there were only 17 yeses out of a possible 48 (2 columns x 24 girls). This 34% of Yeses would compare with the 75% figure for pupils with the highest beliefs and values score but this does not seem to be a complete explanation. By chance there was a gender imbalance the other way round (boys outnumbering girls) in the MS at year 9 (25 boys to 14 girls). Here the boys recorded the biggest disagreement score across all schools, opening up the widest male/female gap at the same time. One possible explanation of this is that, in general, on some measures, girls are more likely to record higher beliefs and values scores than boys but that family religiosity and school culture (or lack of it) will push these scores up or down. So a huge majority of girls in a class might swing to lower scores (but still only just catching up the boys) than they might otherwise do, if they were under little religious influence from home or school; and likewise the boys, if they were in a majority, even more so, bearing in mind the existing male tendency to lower scores. This seems to be a possible explanation of the MS figures in year 7 and 9. In a faith school meanwhile the gender differential is maintained but the scores are pushed upwards by school and family influences. This is why in the long run it is more constructive to look at the overall scores (rather than gender divided scores) coming out of the different schools, because this gives a picture of the 'culture' of response. *Overall* in Year 7 and 9 the Maintained School scored 'stronger disagreement scores'. In Year 7 the Maintained School scored an average of 6.9 in contrast to 3.6 (FS) and 6.1 (IS) and in Year 9 an average of 7.1 in contrast to 5.34 (FS) and 5.34 (IS). The smaller numbers in sixth form made comparison by schools impossible.

5.3 Evidence: Ranking of responses to the Beliefs and Values Grid questions

We have seen that in years 7 and 9 the faith school averaged higher agreement scores on the Beliefs and Values Grid than the other two schools. Nevertheless their *ranking* of response to the different questions was very similar. From the chart below it is easy to see that the top eight responses in rank order have a high degree of overlap between the different schools and there was also wide agreement over the bottom eight. The statement that *“Everything happens for a reason”* came 1st or 2nd in popularity across the board, partly, one suspects because it could appeal equally to the person who believes God is in charge and the person who thinks that reason can explain everything. On the other hand, the statement that *“Life is planned out”* invited widespread disagreement, coming alongside the 3 statements that *“I am religious”* *“Religious ceremonies are important”* and *“I am a spiritual person”* in unpopularity. That said there were nuances in response that are worth noting from the chart below.

Key to colours

The blue squares indicate responses which, on average, in a cohort attracted the most agreement, ranking them in the top 8 of 17 answers. The red/orange squares indicate responses which attracted more disagreement, ranking them in the bottom 8 of 17 answers. 9th is uncoloured. Low scores indicate a strong agreement with questions in the Beliefs and Values grid. High numbers indicate stronger disagreement.

	Y7		Y7		Y7		Y9		Y9		Y9		6 th Form	
Questions	FS	Rank	MS	Rank	IS	Rank	FS	Rank	MS	Rank	IS	Rank	All	
Question grid. Q.1 - Spiritual person	4.9	17	7.8	17	5.9	8	5.8	13	7.3	8	6.2	11	4.9	10
Question grid. Q.2 - Spirit/soul survives death	3.9	12	6.2	6	5.4	4	6.3	16	6	3	4	2	4.5	5
Question grid. Q.3 - Personal God	3.13	4	6.38	9	7.20	14	5.5	10	8	13	5.7	10	5	11
Question grid. Q.4 - God is Everywhere	3.00	3	7.13	13	6.27	10	5.5	9	7.8	10	6.2	12	4.7	7

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Question grid. Q.5 - what happens after death is affected by life	3.6	9	6.1	4	6.7	12	5.5	7	6	4	4.6	6	4.3	3
Question grid. Q.6 - Forces of evil	3.7	11	6.3	7	5.8	7	5.7	11	6.3	7	4.5	5	4.3	4
Question grid. Q.7 - Everything happens for a reason	2.4	1	4.1	1	3.2	1	3.8	2	4.6	1	3	1	3.7	1
Question grid. Q.8 - Life after death	3.1	5	5.2	3	5.1	3	5.4	6	5.4	2	4.1	3	3.8	2
Question grid Q.9 I am a religious person	4.2	14	7.6	16	7.5	15	6.1	15	8.4	16	6.2	13	5.5	13
Question grid. Q.10 - Religious ceremonies are important	3.9	13	7.6	15	7.7	17	6	14	8.2	15	6.2	14	6.3	14
Question grid. Q.11 - Life is planned out	4.5	16	6.9	12	6.7	13	6.3	17	7.9	12	7.7	17	6.8	16
Question grid. Q.12 - God is a life-force	3.5	7	7.2	14	7.5	16	5.5	8	8.5	17	6.4	15	6.4	15
Question grid. Q.13 - A strong spiritual experience	4.2	15	6.6	10	5.5	5	5.7	12	7.7	9	7	16	6.8	17
Question grid. Q.14 - Believe in heaven	3.7	10	4.6	2	4.8	2	3.7	1	6.2	6	4.3	4	4.5	6
Question grid. Q.15 - Prayer has value	3.4	6	6.8	11	6.3	11	4.9	4	7.9	11	5.1	9	5.1	12
Question grid. Q.16 - Human spirit is immortal	3.6	8	6.3	8	5.7	6	5.3	5	6	5	5	8	4.8	9
Question grid. Q.17 - There is a God	2.7	2	6.1	5	6	9	4.2	3	8	14	4.8	7	4.7	8
	FS Y7		MS Y7		IS Y7		FS Y9		MS Y9		IS Y9		All Y12/13	

Figure 5-2: Rankings within Beliefs and Values Grid

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The main contrast seems to be in the weight attached to matters of life after death. The **Faith School in Year 7** ranked as their first five

1. Everything happens for a reason
2. There is a God
3. God is Everywhere
4. Personal God
5. Life after death

The 2 other schools, after agreeing on 1 (Everything happens for a reason) were

MS

2. Belief in heaven
3. Life after death
4. What happens after death is affected by your life
5. There is a God

IS

2. Belief in heaven
3. Life after death
4. Spirit/soul survives death
5. A strong spiritual exper.

In Year 7 children in the Faith School tended to rank “*Personal God*” and “*God is Everywhere*” considerably higher both in rank and average score than the other 2 schools, and in both years 7 and 9 were much less keen on the idea of forces for evil. Children in the MS and the IS gave almost equal weight across the board in agreeing strongly with speculation on the after-life ó the middle school exclusively so, and the IS only differing in the notion that they had had a strong spiritual experience. On examination however, where the children had explained their experience, they were almost exclusively experiences about dead relatives or uncanny events.

In **Year 9** the Faith School’s top 5 were

1. Belief in heaven
2. Everything happens for a reason
3. There is a God
4. Prayer has value
5. The human spirit is immortal

The other 2 schools

MS

1. Everything happens for a reason
2. Life after death
3. Spirit/soul survives
4. Death affected by life
5. Human spirit is immortal

IS

1. Ditto
2. Spirit soul survive
3. Life after death
4. Belief in heaven
5. Forces of evil

Again young people in the FS ranked highly an item about “*prayer having value*” in sharp contrast to the MS and in slightly less contrast to the IS, and whilst belief in a personal God had slipped in the rankings from Year 7, they still ranked “*There is a God*” far higher than the MS and slightly higher than the IS.

One tentative conclusion from these relative rankings is that in Year 7 a majority of children at the FS are tending to hold onto some of the more faith specific items in the Beliefs and Values Grid, like a personal God who is everywhere and without serious challenge from other forces for evil in the universe. They are also much more inclined in both Year 7 and 9 to see God as a ðlife-forceö than the other two schools. By Year 9, even if the idea of a personal God has been diluted to belief that ðThere is a Godö, they are reluctant to concede that prayer is of no importance. By contrast, the other two schools have expressed Beliefs and Values largely in terms of the mystery of the after-life without any specific content. So whilst there is undoubted convergence in Year 9 between the schools on ranking and score, there are still subtle differences. It is a pity that the year 12/13 sample was too small for such close analysis, to see if the trend continued. It is also worth noting that the Beliefs and Values Grid had been devised by its authors to maximise the chances of capturing response across a wide range of human experience from the overtly religious to the completely non-religious, resulting in many of the questions being quite general in nature, so it is interesting that, although children across all the schools universally rejected the notion that they were religious, nevertheless, the Faith School children scored highly some *specific* aspects of religion (like prayer) in contrast to the other schools.

The other observation is that, of course the children were not asked *individually* to rank the questions in order of importance, but as *cohorts*, such differences emerge. This suggests

that cultural influences may be working on the individuals ó either from within the school or from outside.

5.4 Evidence: Personal & family religious background shows a relationship with the scoring on the Beliefs and Values Grid

One way of testing the question of cultural influences, at least from family background, was to lay alongside their Beliefs and Values scores, the answers they had given about personal and family religiosity, in answer to the six questions immediately preceding the grid.

A crude way of doing this was to sort the grid scores (a number out of 170 since each of 17 questions could be scored between 1 and 10) from lowest at the top to highest at the bottom and see if there was any connection between the number of *yeses* given to the religious questions. For convenience the scores were divided into four.

1. **1 - 51** (A strong agreement score) meaning that pupils across 17 questions pupils were averaging 3 or less in their answers (3x17).
2. **52 – 85** (A moderately strong agreement score) meaning that pupils across 17 questions were averaging between 5 and 7 in their answers (5x17)
3. **86 – 119** (A moderately strong disagreement score) meaning that pupils across 17 questions were averaging between 5 and 7 (7x17).
4. **120 – 170** (A strong disagreement score) meaning that pupils across 17 questions were averaging between 7 and 10 (10x17)

Meanwhile the 4 questions with yes/no answers asked

1. about regular religious attendance outside of school
2. about any close family who were religious
3. about occasional attendance
4. about whether they knew a lot *about* religion

1 (regular attendance) and 3 (occasional attendance) implied some overlap so there was concern to record **percentages of YES answers** across all 4 columns, then 1,2 & 3

(knowing *about* religion is rather different from being personally religious) then simply 1 and 2.

The most useful overview of the relationship between personal beliefs and values and religious observance is the following chart, plotting grid scores against 'yes' answers to the two questions of regular family and personal religious observance. Whilst the figures are too crude to claim a direct correlation between the two, it is reasonable to suppose that religious observance at home has some kind of influence on how pupils filled in the Beliefs and Values grid especially in Years 7 and 9.

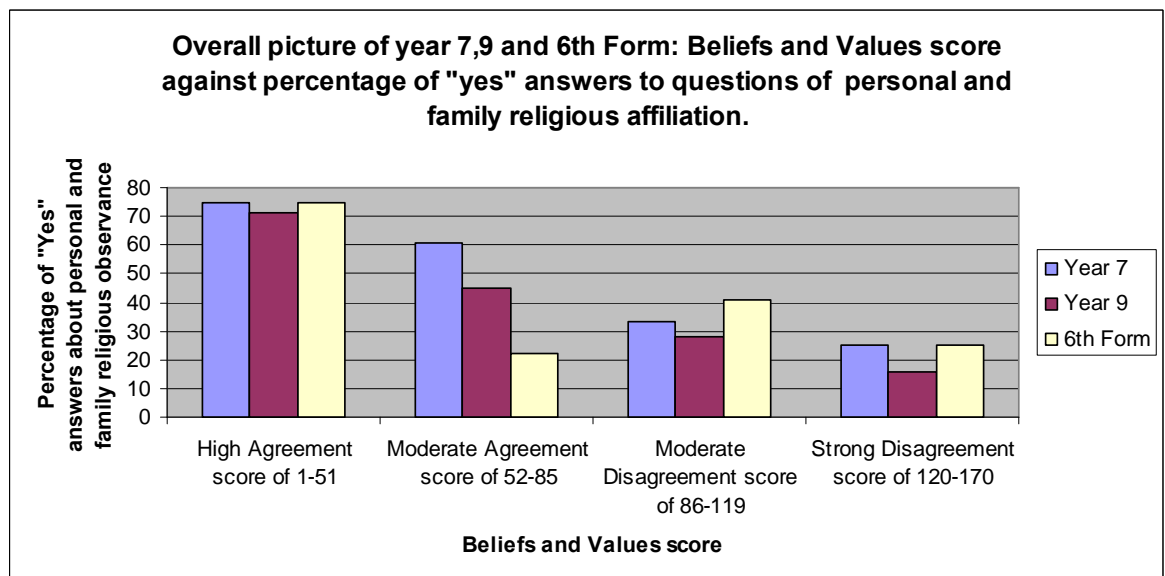


Figure 5-3: The relationship between religious observance and the Beliefs and Values grid

The following lists of figures give a fuller picture which aids further discussion

YEAR 7

Score	Total No. of pupils	4 columns	3 columns	2 columns	FS Nos.	MS Nos.	IS Nos.
1-51	14	42/56= 75%	31/42= 74%	21/28= 75%	11	1	2
52-85	14	38/56= 68%	25/42= 60%	17/28= 61%	5	6	3
86-119	27	47/108= 44%	29/81= 36%	18/54= 33%	7	14	6
120-170	20	22/80= 28%	11/60= 18%	10/40= 25%	0	16	4

YEAR 9

Score	Total No. of pupils	4 columns	3 columns	2 columns	FS Nos.	MS Nos.	IS Nos.
1-51	7	19/28= 68%	14/21= 67%	10/14= 71%	3	3	1
52-85	19	45/76= 59%	29/54= 53%	17/38= 45%	8	2	9
86-119	27	41/108= 38%	21/81= 26%	15/54= 28%	6	15	6
120-170	28	27/122= 22%	11/84= 13%	9/56= 16%	6	19	3

SIXTH FORM

Score	Number of Pupils	4 columns	3 columns	2 columns	FS Number	MS Number	IS Number
1-51	5	17/20= 85%	12/15= 80%	8/10 = 80%	1	2	2
52-85	9	19/36= 53%	10/27= 37%	4/18= 22%	5	1	3
86-119	6	14/24= 58%	8/18= 44%	5/12= 41%	1	0	5
120-170	4	6/16= 38%	3/12= 25%	2/8= 25%	3	0	1

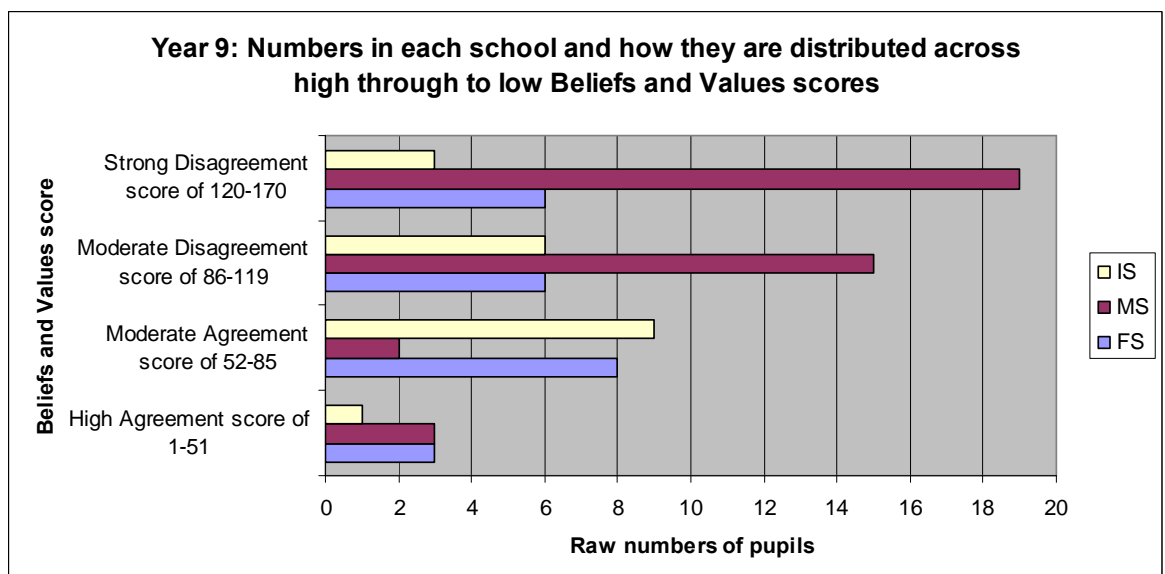
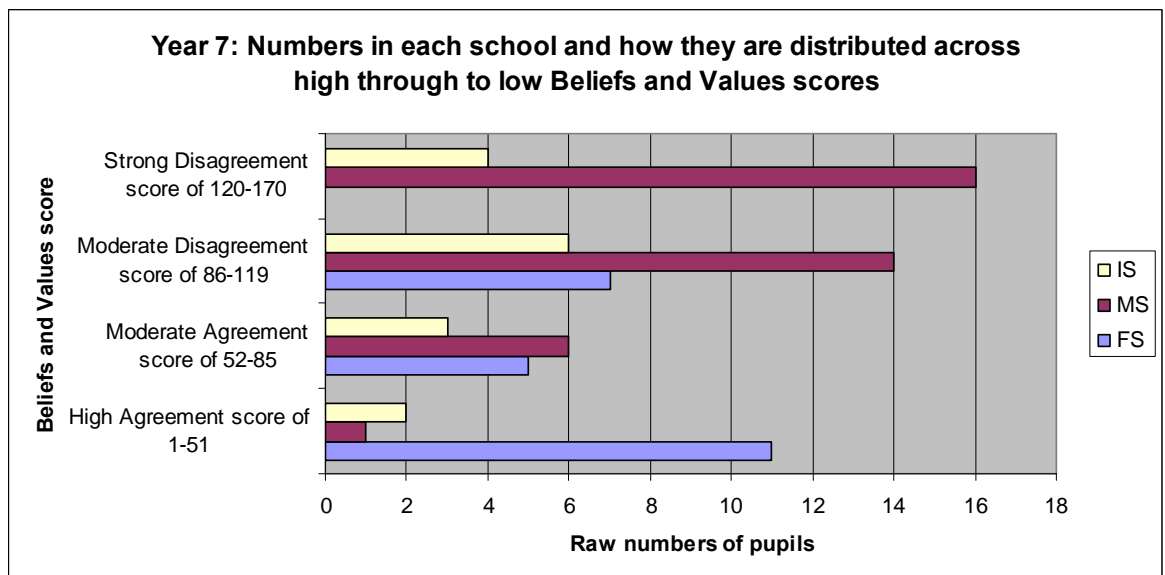
Figure 5-4: Comparison of family and grid answers

The tables appear to support the conclusion that there is a connection between family/personal religious background and the pupils' score on the Beliefs and Values Grid most markedly at the top and bottom end. There are some other points worth noting.

- When we strip out the column about knowing *about* religion there is a sharper contrast at the lower end, dropping from 28% to 18% in Year 7 from 22% to 13% in Year 9 and from 38% to 25% in the sixth form. By contrast, at the top end, there is little change, possibly because children are saying yes to regular *and* occasional attendance but even when the 'occasional' column is missed out the percentage *at the top end* remains fairly static. When the question about occasional personal attendance is stripped out *at the lower end* of the scale, the percentages between 3 columns and 2 columns go up in years 7 & 9 implying that *family* influence is inflating the score rather than *personal* religiosity. When we look at the numbers this is borne out. In Year 7, 4 out of the 10 are *personal* attendance yeses, the other 6 are *family*. In Year 9, 2 out of the 9 are *personal* attendance yeses, 7 are *family*.

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- When we look at the middle ground of family influence related to beliefs and values score we find a smooth trajectory downwards in year 7 and 9 as we might expect from polar contrasts at top and bottom. This is not the case in sixth form however, where pupil scoring moderate agreement on the Beliefs and Values grid have *less* religious affiliation than those with moderate disagreement scores. Perhaps on a very simple level, sixth formers are more likely to formulate their own views irrespective of background whereas younger pupils are still closer in tune with familial influences.
- The numbers of each school in each grouping is also worth noting as the following charts illustrate



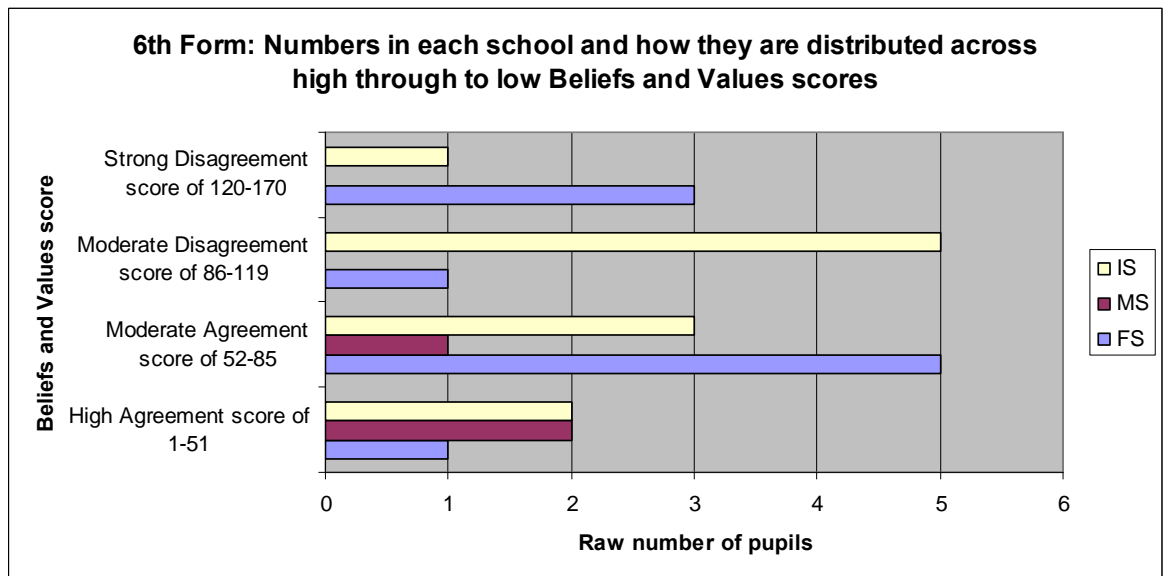


Figure 5-5: Numbers in each school and their scores on the Beliefs and Values scale

In Year 7 the dominance of the FS in the strong agreement camp is particularly striking. In years 7 and 9 the MS has very heavy weighting towards the stronger disagreement end. Meanwhile the *number* of children who fit in the 'very strong agreement category' simply declines in Year 9 but overall the proportion in top half/lower half remains very similar -- 32%:68% in Year 7 against 37%:63% in Year 9 making the contrast *between* schools the more striking. The sixth form meanwhile divide 58%:42% between top and bottom, perhaps reflecting the interest in beliefs/values which led them to study RS in the first instance.

5.5 Themes to carry forward into the next chapter

The themes to carry forward can be summarised as a heightened consciousness of aspects which may be relevant in pupils' responses to the rest of the research document. These include being alert to

1. The distinctiveness of the FS (boys and girls) especially in contrast to the MS. This distinction includes a specific religious 'grammar'
2. Gender

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3. Possible different cultures working on individuals in schools to produce responses which have a collective òlookö as well as reflecting the single concerns of individual children.
4. Differences between years

6 THE STORY ITSELF AND INITIAL RESPONSES TO THE STORY

6.1 *What does the story mean?*

6.1.1 Advance conclusions

This was the opportunity for pupils to give their own unadulterated version of what the story meant. The diversity of the material was immense but coding identified some key themes which were distinctive of the schools from which they came.

In **year 7** the FS said that the story was basically about *temptation* and generally used a grammar which was *religion specific*. The MS felt it was mainly about *obedience and disobedience* and the IS saw it mainly as *consequences*.

In **year 9** the FS retained the language of temptation and trust but had shifted their main focus to *obedience*, the main object of which was *obedience to God*. The MS increasingly saw the expulsion from Eden as a *morality tale about consequences* stemming from greed and selfishness. The IS tended to see it as a *straightforward matter of consequences* (Adam and Eve stepped over a line in the sand) but without attendant morality and without too much reference to God.

The most important difference about year 9 was the tendency in the MS and IS to stand back from the story and begin their description with phrases like "*Humans do this sort of thing...*" BUT this tendency was not seen in the FS. They were still locked into immediate engagement with the story rather than dispassionate observation.

In the **sixth form** the most notable feature was the sheer length and detail of replies which defied coding. However, those with high agreement scores on the Beliefs and Values Grid tended to view the story as a useful commentary on the human condition providing answers about human meaning. Those with disagreement scores had a tendency to rubbish the whole story as illogical nonsense.

6.1.2 Evidence from Year 7

The easiest way of dealing with the replies was to code them in terms of trigger words or concepts in line with the words. So guilt might be the underlying thrust of a reply even if the word was not used. Some children used multiple words, each one of which was logged.

The key words which recurred were as follows

Words/Themes	FS	MS	IS
Temptation	17	3	0
Betrayal	2	2	1
Obedience	7	10	3
Guilt	9	0	3
Despair	1	0	0
Lonely	2	0	0
Trust	2	2	3
Belief	1	0	2
Right/Wrong	8	0	6
Rules	7	0	0
Greedy/selfish	1	3	1
Consequences	6	5	10
Growing up	0	2	0
Evil/snake	0	1	0
Truth	2	3	0

Figure 6-1: Year 7 words about the story

Observations

- The variety and length of responses from the Faith School was much higher than the MS and the IS. 17 out of the 23 respondents actually used the word temptation or a derivative and their vocabulary ranged over a wide variety of possible interpretations of the story. Guilt, obedience to rules and straightforward issues of right and wrong and rules featured in the Faith School response, demonstrating a religious grammar which was not so evident in the other schools.
- By contrast the Maintained School characterised the story mainly in terms of *ōdo* as you are told *ō* obedience but this was related not to guilt or being tempted to act against character or obedience to rules for their own sake but more strongly with awareness of consequences. A typical response was “*it is a moral story of do what your superiors say or you will be punished as the consequences*”. (MS28 Male). The problem lay not in being tempted to defy divine commands but in human greed/selfishness, the inevitable stresses of growing up and the snake being to

blame. There were also objections that they couldn't see what was so wrong about eating an apple. MS27 Female said "*Listen to God or die – it is not the same*". MS25 Female said "*God is unfair. Adam and Eve were like his babies*" MS16 female said "*It doesn't make sense that you get wronged for eating an apple and get killed*".

- The Independent School were in some ways mid-way between the other 2 schools. Moral issues of right/wrong and especially consequences dominated their thinking but without the same reproach or blame as the MS and moderated by issues of faith, trust and guilt – in other words it wasn't simply about disobedience to rules but consequences had to be owned.

6.1.3 Evidence from Year 9

Answers from Year 9 were more complex than Year 7 as the following coding shows and it was more difficult to range answers under headings. I have included the zero readings for Guilt, Despair and Truth because my initial assessment of what the pupils were saying proved to be wrongly attributed and were better ranged under other labels- but the very mis-attribution is in some ways significant in highlighting the difficulty of interpreting the thoughts behind pupil responses. It was also important to be wary of attributing a 'culture' of response except in those instances where the clustering of answers involved such a proportion of pupils as to draw attention to such a commonality.

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		Temptation	Betrayal	Obedience	Guilt	Despair	Lonely	Trust	Belief	Right/wrong	Rules	Greedy/selfish	Consequences/punishment
FS	Number of respondents Who mentioned ↗	6	3	13	0	0	0	6	0	1	2	0	5
24 pupils	% of respondents	25.0	12.5	54.17	0	0	0	25.0	0	4.17	8.33	0	20.83
MS	Number of respondents Who mentioned ↗	7	0	9	0	0	0	2	0	6	4	10	9
39 pupils	% respondents	17.95	0	23.08	0	0	0	5.13	0	15.38	10.26	25.64	23.08
IS	Number of respondents Who mentioned ↗	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	6
19 pupils	% respondents	5.26	0	26.32	0	0	0	0	0	5.26	0	10.53	31.58

		Growing up/responsibility	Evil/snake	Truth	Blame	humans make mistakes	Humans not all perfect	A learning experience	Sentences beginning human ó We
FS	Number out of 24 respondents who mentioned ↗	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
	% of respondents	4.17	12.50	0	0	0	0	0	16.67
MS	Number out of 39 respondents who mentioned ↗	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	14
	% of respondents	0	0	0	5.13	5.13	5.13	0	35.90
IS	Number out of 19 respondents who mentioned ↗	1	0	0	2	1	3	1	10
	% of respondents	5.26	0	0	10.53	5.26	15.79	5.26	52.63

Figure 6-2: Year 9 words about the story

The obvious observation to start with is that the Year 9s had much more to say than the Year 7s and the coding of answers required many more columns. The ability to get outside a bland description and achieve a degree of intellectual objectivity was also apparent. Sentences which began ‘Humans do it. (This sort of thing)’ featured very strongly in the MS (36% of responses) and the IS (53% of responses) but were remarkably lacking in the Faith School (17%). In their case the overwhelming analysis of the story was that it was about obedience (54%) whilst they shared a similar response rate with the other schools that it was about consequences. The word temptation was higher in their priority whilst the Maintained School said that the real problem was a moral problem of greed or selfishness. The overall feeling was that for the FS, the presence of *God* in the story, with the attendant problems of temptation, obedience, the snake and evil ó still dominated their overall verdict on the story. The MS meanwhile *reduced* this problem to a moral story about what humans everywhere get up to, with accompanying moral lessons on consequences and

greed/selfishness and right/wrong, whilst the IS overwhelmingly went for a cool analysis of human motivation and soft-pedalled both God and morality apart from the rule of consequences.

6.1.4 Evidence from the Sixth Form

One obvious point about the sixth form is their analytical ability. Asked at the beginning of the story what the narrative was about, they came up with a bewildering set of replies which interpreted the story variously as an aetiological myth, a commentary on human failings and an Aunt Sally to be shot down. Given the low numbers in the Sixth Form sample it seemed more appropriate to reproduce all their responses and to use the beliefs and values scores (rather than their school cohort) to divide them roughly into 4 as we did above on page 99. If we **highlight the pupils with strong agreement beliefs and values scores** (scores from 1-51) they do seem to come at the story with the intention of finding some immediate relevance to the human condition and are *less critical* about the form of the story. Those with the **strong disagreement beliefs and values scores** (scores from 120-170) however come at the story much *more critically*, reading it simply as a primitive explanation of how snakes and humans don't get on, or simply asking 'why?' questions which put God and the story in the dock. If we extend the comparison with **blue for moderately strong agreement beliefs and values scores** (scores from 52-85) and grey for moderately strong disagreement beliefs and values scores (scores from 86-119) the same remains roughly true though there are descriptive/literalistic interpretations across moderately low and high which throw off any exact division. So the main attention below should be to the **green** and **red** submissions.

Key to Table	
Strong agreement Beliefs and Values Score 1-51	GREEN
Moderate agreement Beliefs and Values score 52-85	BLUE
Moderate disagreement Beliefs and Values score 86-119	GREY
Strong disagreement Beliefs and Values score 120-170	RED

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Anonymity number.	Male/female	
13MS1	M	Do not disobey God, humans will make mistakes in life even if they have been warned. Acting out of selfishness is something we will always do. We will learn the difference between right and wrong but we won't always live our lives that way. Always giving into temptation
13MS2	F	Humans will always make mistakes in life as Adam and Eve made the first one so it is now in human psyche. Humans are selfish with their reasoning for doing wrong. Humans will always give into temptation and we are all in debt to God as he created us so we must obey him or face consequences
13MS3	F	don't eat from a tree if told not to, God is all powerful, man is living through pain due to the deceit from mankind, temptation is wrong, never listen to a snake, we should be crawling on our stomachs, men were told to rule over women, God want humans to be naked, evil is bad for humans to see - it corrupts us
13FS1	M	the story of mankind, gives us teachings if why women have pain at birth
13FS2	F	God created Everything. Adam and Eve went against what God said shows God will punish. how humanity started
13FS3	F	It tells us why we suffer and how humanity reached where it is today. Warns us of punishment if we do not obey God
13FS4	F	God has the power to rule over us, we should follow and listen to the word of God, be careful about the decisions you make in your life, don't be easily encouraged by others
13FS5	M	Why would God not want us to have knowledge of good and evil? Why was the trees there in the first place how did the snake come into being, how was it able to talk and tempt Eve, why did God not give Adam and Eve second chances, was being banished necessary?
13FS6	F	about where humans originate from, what is morally right and wrong lessons in evil, suffering and punishment, roles of man and woman
13FS7	M	moral decisions, attempting to explain how we devise what is right and wrong, humans are easily manipulated by others, will be punished for disobeying Gods orders, have free will to chose what decisions we make
13FS8	M	It's attempting to teach people about morals, rules and to give examples of how to live. Why were they naked when they ate the fruit, if there is such a thing as heaven and hell why is there a passage that says you will return to the dust from which you came
13FS9	F	How sin came into the world, initially through Adam. Humans can use reason but also have animal like descies, temptation to eat from the tree led to the fall. Suffering we endure, childbirth for women and strenuous work for men is punishment for Adam and
13FS10	F	an explanation of how things came to be, why do humans have knowledge of good and evil while no other animal does?- we ate the fruit of knowledge. Why do snakes bite and kill people? We are enemies because the first serpent tricked the first people. Why d

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13IS1	F	Wanting more pleasure and not the quality of a little bit of pleasure. The woman wanted more than she had. Shows the man was incapable of saying no to the woman. Shows if someone goes against the rules they have to suffer the consequences
13IS2	M	about God creating man and women and the women deceiving God by eating from the tree
13IS3	F	God creating the world and it shows that you shouldn't listen to what people say because they could be deceiving you. I think it is implying that men are greater than women because it was Adam who named the woman Eve
13IS4	F	Which path you should take, there are always two options, one is morally right and one is morally wrong it depends on how you choose. Everyone has different concepts of good and evil so there is no right or wrong
13IS5	F	People are easily controlled, tempted etc. we are punished for doing the wrong things. Ignorance is perhaps better than knowledge. Human beings do not like to take responsibility. Adam blames Eve who blames the serpent. Humans have greed in them. They want more
13IS6	M	Humans are ultimately flawed, they are trusting and vain. Doesn't make sense that the garden doesn't exist in real life, a benevolent God is cruel, why would God create a creature that would disobey him
13IS7	M	God made human beings perfect in which condition we did know the things God knew until temptation was too strong and the apple was eaten thus we are now aware of all the hate in the world, where human beings have now become vessels of sin if temptation is too strong
13IS8	M	Humans cannot help themselves and generally when we are told not to do something it is our instinct to in fact do it. Why if God created everything is the serpent deceitful?
13IS9	M	Attempting to convey that all humans from birth must attempt to gain forgiveness and redemption through life. Snakes can't talk meaning it could not be literal but metaphorical
13IS10	M	Human beings are inclined to make mistakes/ break rules and ultimately disappoint the father all mighty. This story isn't actually factual as snakes can't talk and there are no references to dinosaurs so it is just a story to show human flaws
13IS11	M	To obey God. Story tells us how to behave and to obey the words of the lord as well as obeying law. It gives off the impression that humans need guidance. If we don't obey we will be punished by God

Figure 6-3: Sixth Form words about the story

6.1.5 Themes to carry forward into the next chapter

Members of the FS were distinctive in year 7 and 9 both in the range of religious grammar they used and in the relative engagement with the story which was seen as speaking directly to them. On the whole they were less inclined to reduce the role of God in relation to issues of obedience and consequences and they were *notably* less inclined in year 9 to remove themselves to an *objective* stance vis a vis the story. By contrast pupils of the MS and IS, possibly bringing with them less spiritually oriented baggage from home or school, were more likely to reduce the transcendent elements or only mention them critically.

In the sixth form, whilst the contrast between schools was vitiated by smaller numbers, the *öfixö* provided by the beliefs and values scores, revealed that those with high agreement

scores expected the story to deliver direct messages about the human condition whilst the high disagreement scorers acknowledged universal human insights but were much more questioning of the transcendent elements.

The flag for subsequent chapters is the central issue for spirituality which is whether there is another world or not.

6.2 Imaginative engagement with the story: what will you miss about the garden?

6.2.1 Advance conclusions

In **Year 7** all the schools missed the beauty of the garden but then diverged in their interpretations somewhat. The FS felt that the key thing they would miss about the garden was the freedom within it and the *security* it gave them, especially when backed by God's presence. The MS were different and generally in line with the IS. They appreciated the freedom *to do what they wanted in the garden* (a bit like their own garden at home) and especially mentioned the sense of peace and kindness, but they missed the animals, easily available food and the trees, more than any sense of security.

In **Year 9** all reference to God's presence has gone in the FS but has been replaced by an overwhelming sense of missing beauty. Is this a kind of fall-back position? A majority in the MS still miss peace and kindness and also beauty but a lot of them mention *food*. Perhaps this ties in with the key point of the garden that everything was there for them, ready and to hand. The IS clearly see the garden as a kind of temporary stay-over or an escape from the rat race of life.

In the **sixth form** we get a clear sense of paradise lost. This is not just about physical resources being close to hand, but about existential and mental loss. They miss beauty, happiness, God's presence and there is a sense that innocence has been left behind.

6.2.2 Evidence from Year 7

Again the easiest way to deal with varied responses was through coding different words/concepts. The table looked as follows.

	FS	MS	IS
God's presence	5	0	1
Safety/no worries	7	1	2
The animals	3	6	0
Food	3	6	4
Trees	3	5	2
Specifically tree of knowledge or life	3	4	2
Beauty	4	6	4
Happiness	2	0	1
Freedom	0	6	3
Peace/kindness	0	8	1
Things from their own garden	0	3	0
Don't know	0	5	
The whole garden	3	1	
Other	0		

Figure 6-4: Year 7 "What will you miss?"

The striking feature which all the schools have in common is the theme of beauty, though another much more mundane commonality is simply "food"! The MS were also very specific about missing the animals and trees and a sense of peace and kindness ó much more so, in the last case, than either of the other schools.

The FS is the only one to emphasise that they will miss God. The MS think that they will miss the freedom, but it is not clear that this is the same as missing the security of the garden which is the emphasis of the Faith School. Freedom seems to be basically being left alone to enjoy the peace of the garden until God removed their freedom by expelling them. For example MS21 female says she will miss "*being free and living my life with my husband*", MS14 Female says she will miss "*my freedom that God took away from me and the delight of childbirth that had pain inflicted on it*". MS25 Female will miss "*being free and no worries as when they left they had children*". Some of the MS children obviously visualise Eden as the place where they do all the things they do in their own garden ó "*playing on the trampoline and sunbathing*" (MS2 Female), "*playing with my ferrets*" (MS3 Male) and "*playing with my dog*" (MS10 Male), so essentially it is a place of non-interference where they can get on with their lives. The emphasis is on freedom not protection, an afternoon in the park rather than a supervised activity. Standard responses from the FS would be "*safety and God's love*" (FS 5 Female) "*Safety and happiness*" (FS6 Female) whilst from the MS the typical answers would be "*freedom and peace*" (MS34 Female) and "*beautiful trees and peace*" (MS17 Female).

Meanwhile the IS exhibits features of the other 2 schools. A moderate agreement with the FS over security balanced by similar sentiments to the MS on freedom.

6.2.3 Evidence from Year 9

In Year 9 there are some echoes of the differences registered in year 7 in that the MS will miss the security of the garden and ðfreedomö less than the other 2 schools, perhaps because they do not value *security* if it restricts their *liberty*. Many of the IS children however, overwhelmingly see the garden as a place of security and believe it gave them freedom, mainly the freedom not to worry and in some quotations below, the freedom not to work or impress. The garden for them was a kind of stress free environment and this may reflect the mentality of children at a 6 day a week school being pushed very hard to achieve.

The FS children meanwhile do not see the garden as a place of freedom but do miss the *beauty* of the garden in a quite remarkable way. Alongside this response to *beauty* is a corresponding absence of missing *God's presence* which was still strong in the Year 7s. One wonders if the theme of beauty which is strong in all the schools but markedly so in the Catholic school (with peace and kindness featuring in the MS responses) has become a kind of fall-back description to describe transcendence, when God is no longer part of the every day grammar, in the same way that ðspiritualö becomes a better alternative than ðreligiousö.

The chart below gives a snap-shot of the themes which appear to be important in each school.

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		God's presence	Safety/no worries/ease	The animals	Food	The Trees	The tree of life /apples	Beauty	Happiness	Freedom	Peace/kindness	Things from their own garden	Don't know	The whole garden
FS	Number out of 24 respondents who mentioned ↗	0	6	0	5	3	0	9	1	2	2	0	0	2
	% of respondents	0	25.00	0	20.83	12.50	0	37.50	4.17	8.33	8.33	0	0	8.33
MS	Number out of 39 respondents who mentioned ↗	2	6	1	10	0	1	7	3	4	7	0	0	0
	% of respondents	5.13	15.38	2.56	25.64	0	2.56	17.95	7.69	10.26	17.95	0	0	0
IS	Number out of 19 respondents who mentioned ↗	0	8	1	4	1	0	4	0	3	3	0	0	1
	% of respondents	0	42.11	5.26	21.05	5.26	0	21.05	0	15.79	10.53	0	0	5.26

Figure 6-5: Year 9 What will you miss?

These are typical of the Catholic school responses majoring on security and beauty

The view and how safe the garden is FS8 Female

The luxury and beauty FS12Male

Eve would have missed the excellent scenery and the food FS 16 Female

Nature and friendly surroundings FS21 Female

The amazing view and lovely plants FS7 Male

These are typical of the Independent School who see the garden as a place of rest from the rat race.

Not working IS8 Male

The ease of life IS9 Male

Peace and easy lifestyle IS17 Female

You can properly act yourself and doesn't care about what others think about you just pay attention to the natural world around you IS16 Female

These are typical of the Maintained School who had similar numbers mentioning peace and beauty but fewer seeing the garden in terms of security or freedom

Away from people, easier life MS25 male

Peacefulness, fruit, being happy MS36 male

Peacefulness, being happy, the fruit MS18 female

Peace, simplicity and beauty of the garden MS16 female

6.2.4 Evidence from the Sixth Form

The feelings in the sixth form are best illustrated immediately by their comments

being loved & feeling secure with God MS1 Male

being in paradise & doing what was right MS3 Female

Feeling God was on my side. Feeling special FS4 Female

Being trusted by God & the knowledge of the fact that I'd never disobeyed him/let him down FS9 Female

simplicity /no toiling /ignorance is bliss FS10 Female

pure IS3 Female

would miss the ignorance / innocence IS9 Male

being looked after by God. Having a higher power controlling your life IS11 Male

This is very different from the younger years. These are young people on the edge of adulthood wishing they could be children again, rediscovering innocence and ease from the

pain of living and guilt. There are certainly the beginnings of these thoughts appearing in the responses of the IS Year 9s but this is much better articulated and more universal.

6.2.5 Themes to carry forward to the next chapter

Key ideas begin to pile up from this and previous chapters. The overall view of the FS is that there is something transcendent in the garden which commands their attention ó whether this is rules which should not have been broken, a presence and security which they have lost or overwhelming beauty which they miss. The overall view of the MS is that the garden was a peaceful and beautiful environment of trees and animals in which they had radical freedom and all their physical needs (most basically being fed) met. They still miss the peace and kindness and, for the year 7s at least, it was lost through simple greed and selfishness, but there does not seem to be the backward looking regret that the FS have. The IS meanwhile seem to recognise that all actions have inevitable consequences but that the garden represents a temporary respite from all that. This is not regret or freedom but world-weariness. Finally the sixth form let us into the private angst of older teenagers in their view that ignorance in the garden was perhaps blissful and that they miss the childish securities of being looked after and feeling innocent, pure and special.

In terms of the research focus the case is a *cumulative* one that certain trends become discernible in certain groups of children. They simply respond to spiritual narrative in different ways, at different schools and at different ages. This in itself is worthy of further investigation. The broader question to keep in mind is the story itself ó whether it exercises any unique *control* on the ideas that *can* be had about it or whether we would be any the poorer for its absence or reduction into something else.

6.3 *Imaginative engagement with the story: Was there anything bad about the garden even before the snake came along?*

6.3.1 Advance conclusions

The question pointed up the mainly physical concerns of the **Year 7s**. Yes the garden was pretty perfect ó whether their view majored on security or freedom peace and kindness. Why wouldn't it be?

The **Year 9s** however got beyond this purely physical apprehension and parted company on now familiar lines.

The FS were bothered by the existence of the particular prohibition against the apple. That was the problem in line with previous strictures about temptation, consequences and obedience.

The MS thought that the real problem was being spoiled. No wonder it all went wrong. They had had it too easy, in line with their previous thoughts about an environment where everything was laid on.

The IS had felt that the garden was a refuge from the world but knowledge was being withheld from them and this was the problem. The real world is a tough place of real events and you can't live in ignorance.

The **sixth form** followed up on previous thoughts that innocence might be desirable for conscious people *looking back*, but at the time it was *blind* innocence and didn't appreciate what was there in front of it.

6.3.2 Evidence from Year 7

Coding was not as necessary here, as there was general agreement especially between the FS and the IS that the garden was fairly perfect. The MS, however, was not so convinced and an explanation of this came out in the dominant idea, only lightly supported by the other schools, that the key bad feature of the garden was the fact that the forbidden fruit was forbidden! This observation seems to tally with the view expressed above that in the MS view the garden was essentially about freedom from interference, and 'forbidden' was an infringement of this freedom. A typical response was "*nothing (bad) apart from eating fruit from the tree, we could do what we want*". (MS31 Male). Another more insightful remark was that "*God pressured them into being perfect and they were only human*" (MS25 Female).

6.3.3 Evidence from Year 9

Some of the Year 9 comments did not code easily but the following chart shows rough trends

		Perfect before the snake	Lonely/Too quiet	Being forbidden certain things	Nothing to do/boring	Not allowed out/ no freedom	Being blind
FS	Number out of 24 respondents who mentioned ↗	7	0	7	2	3	1
	% of respondents	29.17	0	29.17	8.33	12.50	4.17
MS	Number out of 39 respondents who mentioned ↗	17	0	2	1	5	0
	% of respondents	43.59	0	5.13	2.56	12.82	0
IS	Number out of 19 respondents who mentioned ↗	4	0	4	1	8	2
	% of respondents	21.05	0	21.05	5.26	42.11	10.53

Figure 6-6: Year 9 Was there anything bad?

The two striking results come from the Maintained School and the Independent School. The Independent School's gripe against the garden even before the snake came, is a very specific one. They were not independent *and knowledge was being kept from them.*

People were stuck IS 5 Male

Yes we were practically looked at as if we were not an equal to God although we get punished if we do something we aren't commanded to do IS7 Male

Yes not being allowed to know certain things IS 9 Male

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I didn't know about evil and God kept it from us, we wanted to discover it IS12 Female

Didn't know what evil was because we were protected by a garden IS16 Female

The people couldn't fully see evil or bad. I think seeing evilness is a good thing so you can help IS 17 Female

The Maintained School simply did not see this as a problem. Nearly half of them were convinced that the garden was as near perfect as possible and none of them mentioned the restriction on *knowledge*, criticising instead the lack of complete freedom

They didn't have a lot of freedom MS13 female

The restrictions of life and not being allowed to have freedom MS16 female

Yes there were very strict rules inside the garden of Eden MS24 male

Another tack was that Adam and Eve were basically spoilt and got greedy so this was a bad point. Life was too easy.

Luxury makes man greedy MS26 male

Adam and Eve were spoilt so they became greedier all the time and wanted more luxuries MS20 male

The Faith School meanwhile were much more interested in the *restriction of a particular rule*. So although one of them said that they were being kept from the truth, the majority response was that they had been *specifically forbidden* the fruit off the tree. It was the particular prohibition which was important, the rule that could not be broken rather than what it was that was being prevented. This perhaps indicates a culture slightly more inclined to endorse absolute rules.

6.3.4 Evidence from the sixth Form

In support of the advance conclusions above, it was evident that the sixth form recognised the dilemma of an idyllic existence predicated on ignorance and restriction rather than knowledge and freewill. Their answers showed more sophistication than those from the lower years and one suspects that growing maturity and recognition of the ambiguities of adult life are coming into play here. The following are a sample of the comments made.

Rules enforced by God. Should be given the ability to make own rules/ decisions FS 7 Male

Can you have free will without knowledge of good and evil? If not are you still human in the sense that we know with freedom FS10 Female

Not knowing the truth about the whole world and being kept under control MS3 Female

Adam and eve were oblivious. You need evil in order to appreciate good FS9 Female

Ignorance, being unaware of anything. The beauty etc could not be appreciated because we lack knowledge IS5 Female

We were oblivious to everything IS7 Male

Restrictions of the ignorance IS9 Male

6.3.5 Themes to carry forward to the next chapter

Certain themes are beginning to crystallise out in the different schools, especially after year 7. The MS have strong ideas about freedom from restriction. The FS have an awareness of an authority or rule lurking in the background which commands attention. The IS have an increasing sense that autonomy is of critical importance but this is not the same as unrestricted freedom. The year 9 IS in fact have more in common with the sixth formers in becoming aware that blind obedience or unbridled freedom are not the only ways of being. This theme becomes more important in later chapters. So far as response to the story is concerned, the remarkable fact is that a relatively simple narrative evoked such diverse replies and such a quantity of material indicating real engagement.

6.4 Imaginative engagement with the story: What will be the best thing about living outside the garden?

6.4.1 Advance conclusions

This question really allowed the pupils to explore the idea of freedom ó a theme which was becoming well articulated in different ways by the different schools.

In **Year 7**, the best thing about outside for the FS was being öoff the leashö but the leash was still there. The MS felt that the outside world was the normal one and revelled in it, whilst the IS took freedom as an opportunity to be independent.

In fact Year 7 cemented the theme into **Year 9**. The FS tended to give very short answers which did not define freedom as anything except öfreedom fromö. The MS were much more explicit about exploring and adventure whilst the IS pursued their idea of independence.

The **sixth form** were almost entirely uniform in their appreciation of freedom and no rules, but coupled physical freedom with the important intellectual freedom of knowing the truth and living in the real world. The FS sixth formers appeared a little more conservative than their peers in that they still interpreted freedom as an opportunity to explore different places and meet other people as though they were new to this permission rather than veterans.

6.4.2 Evidence from Year 7

The overwhelming answer from the Faith School was “*freedom/no rules*”. 17 out of 23 came out with this clear message with very few other comments. The MS and the IS were much more complex in their responses, to the extent that trying to code their answers in easy columns (which had been easy in the FS instance) was simply not possible. The following table of the MS responses may illustrate this

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		Not being bossed by God	Freedom/no rules	Meet other people	Nothing good about outside	Free to be alone	Other	Don't know
MS1	F						nice	
MS2	F						fresh air	
MS3	M							1
MS4	F							1
MS5	F						nice	
MS6	M						lot of fruit and trees	
MS7	F				1			
MS8	F						nature	
MS9	M						training my dog	
MS10	M						playing football	
MS11	M						no snakes	
MS12	F						healthy environment	
MS13	F						no snakes	
MS14	F		1					
MS15	F						having clothes	
MS16	F							
MS17	F		1				more peace	
MS18	F							
MS19	F							
MS20	F		1					
MS21	F						I can be the ruler	
MS22	M						being able to see	
MS23	F						getting away from the snake	
MS24	F	1	1				You could live a normal life with your own rules but if you were in the garden you follow God's rules	
MS25	F						You don't have to be perfect not what God wanted them to be	
MS26	F							
MS27	F		1					
MS28	M		1					
MS29	M						peaceful	
MS30	M			1				
MS31	M		1				Freedom of doing what you want	
MS32	M							
MS33	F							
MS34	F						wearing clothes	
MS35	F						a proper life with children	
MS36	F						no temptation	
MS37	F		1					
MS38	F						having clothes	
MS39	F						free stuff	
		1	8	1	1	0		2

Figure 6-7: Year 7 MS ideas about the garden

What the children appear to be saying is that outside the garden is the normal environment of freedom from constraint. They use words like “*normal*” and “*proper life*”, a world where they play football, there are no snakes and there is fresh air (as if the garden had been stale or restrictive) and clothes. What was good about *inside* the garden is precisely the same as what is even better *outside* the garden ó an uninhibited life where they do ònormalö things. This is very different from the Faith School who are now *off the leash* but remain aware of the security they have just left. They are ambivalent about the world, the MS children are not. This may actually be at the heart of spiritual awareness ó whether there are two worlds or just one. For the Maintained School it seems that the òotherö world has no claim on them and if it tries to lay claim, it is resented. They are the rulers in their own world. The Independent School meanwhile do not go quite as far. If the Maintained School’s watchword is freedom full stop, the IS emphasise the freedom to be independent. So a typical response would be “*you look after yourself*” (IS7 Male) or “*You would see more places gain enemies and friends and get more experience*” (IS11 Female) or “*able to start a life and build houses and other buildings*” (IS12 female).

6.4.3 Evidence from Year 9

What was bad about the garden in the first place provides a foil for talking about life outside the garden. The Maintained School see life outside the garden as an escape from being bossed about by God and look forward to meeting other people and especially exploring the world.

God won't be telling me what to do MS1 Female

God won't boss me around and do as I please MS18 Female

Not restricted MS25 female

Independence, freedom not being puppets for a higher being MS25 Male

Seeing/exploring the world MS33 Female

More to do MS27 male

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Exploring and adventuring the world MS22 Female

More freewill to adventure and no limited space MS19 Female

The overall impression is that exclusion from the garden is actually an opportunity to be welcomed. The world outside seems a brighter place as opposed to the restrictions of the garden. Two of the boys mention looking at flowers as a good thing about outside and a girl talks about the sunshine as if there had been no sun in the garden.

The attitude is summed up by MS 34 Female

To explore different adventures through out the universe of the world

In the Independent School the word or the concept of independence is the most frequent qualifier of freedom so í

Freedom, independence IS4 Female

Freedom, independence and discovering yourself IS7 Male

Find things of your own learn for yourselves and not have it handed to you on a plate IS13 Female

Independence IS11 Male

Getting the sense of achievement for getting stuff IS2 Male

You would be able to see evil or bad IS17 Female

The Faith School are much closer to the Maintained School in their responses but without a single criticism of God. They simply talk about having more freedom to meet other people, explore and do what they want. One boy mentions independence but his is a sole voice and they do not seem to have the vibrant colours of freedom that the MS have. Very short

answers and the word freedom are the hallmark of their responses with one girl (FS23 female) saying that the best thing about outside would be obeying Godö echoing the ancient Christian doctrine of freedom lying in service. The best description here would be the sense of freedom from restriction but without much idea of what this will look like in practice apart from meeting different people and places.

6.4.4 Evidence from the Sixth Form

In many ways the sixth form don't add much to the sentiments of the younger years. Where they do, it is generally a reflection around living a real life with full decision making and autonomy.

For example

Living in reality and seeing the true meaning of life IS1 Female

You can make your own decisions about good and evil IS4 female

Experiencing, character building, chance to build a life and adapt FS3 Female

Freedom. Not contained in the garden or ignorance FS9 Female

Freedom and knowledge IS5 female

Total free will; FS5 Male

There may be slightly more hesitance in the FS students in that some of them are still at the exploring stage of freedom and interpret it less as total freedom and more as an opportunity to sniff the air outside and do a few new things

For example

New experiences and a different life FS1 Male

Seeing other things, meeting human beings FS4 Female

New experiences FS6 female

You will know where you stand, so you wouldn't be under pressure to do perfectly good
FS8 Male

6.4.5 Themes to carry forward into the next chapter

Spirituality is largely encompassed in the idea that there is a spiritual realm. One major theme which emerges from the preceding chapter is that the story itself (inside the garden/outside the garden) urges some account of the two different realms of inside/outside. The stark message is that the MS feel at home *outside*, and regard it as *õnormalö*, the FS feel more at home *inside* the garden and regard outside as more challenging simply because it means relinquishing the familiarity of garden. The IS might see the garden as *respite* but feel the pull of autonomy.

6.5 Imaginative engagement with the story: what will be the worst thing about living outside the garden?

6.5.1 Advance conclusions

In **Year 7** responses all mentioned physical insecurity of one sort or another. The garden was a place safe from the threat of animals or hunger. In **Year 9** however the differences which had already emerged between schools, came out again. For the FS one aspect of being outside was the impossibility of ever returning, for the MS the chief draw-back was that the ease of living was withdrawn ó it was simply a hassle being outside. Meanwhile the IS resigned themselves to self-reliance and hard work.

The **sixth form** represented an extension rather than a change of themes though their answers were more likely to consider the more generalised psychological aspects of exclusion such as fear of death, suffering and hardship

6.5.2 Evidence from year 7

This was the question which evoked least disagreement between the schools. All of them mentioned insecurity of one sort or another (from lack of food and shelter to fear of wild

animals) and a number felt that one problem would be loneliness or getting lost. The profoundest comment came from MS14 Female who said the worst thing about being outside was that “*you had to do everything you want*” ó a recognition of the tyranny of *freedom*, having recognised earlier the tyranny of God.

6.5.3 Evidence from year 9

Nothing sprang out of the results except that the FS children were the only ones who suggested that the worst aspect would be the impossibility of ever going back.

Never be able to go back FS7 Male

Not being able to go back in FS15 Male

It will be lonely having no one else there FS22 Female

The other aspect was the sense that the outside was lacking in nature and was generally scary. The outside world was barren by comparison.

Leaving the nice surroundings FS 1 Female

No nature FS2 Female

No vegetation FS 12 Male

There won't be fruit to eat of the trees FS19 Male

The overall impression is that the garden was idyllic and that the outside world is barren and bereft of beauty and indeed of trees, vegetation and people.

One boy ventured to say that *everything was bad about outside.* (FS5 Male)

By comparison the Maintained School generally think that being expelled from the garden is óa bit of a painö. They won't have everything to hand any more

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Wouldn't have everything I need around me MS13 Female

Not having everything to hand and struggling for what I need MS16 Female

Having to worry about more stuff MS17 Female

One girl obviously thinks that the biggest nuisance is that she will now have to walk to the garden (MS2 Female)

A lot of them worry about being cold because of course they are naked but there is also a strong sense that they have been abandoned and left without help. Their entitlement has been taken away.

No advice or help MS1 Female

Lonely, uncared for by God away from familiar surroundings MS19 Female

Will be lonely and isolated MS20 Male

Not knowing what to do, how to keep myself safe MS22 Female

Not knowing what to do because they don't know any different MS33 Female

The outside world holds some terrors, as it does for all the schools, but unlike the Faith School the general perception is that the world outside has been there all along and that they are simply moving from a secure environment into a less protected one. This world is not empty. It is already peopled as the following comment illustrates.

Meeting new people will be scary because there has only ever been me, Adam, the serpent and God MS14 Female

The Independent School, having seen independence as the bonus of moving out of the garden, can also see the flip side ó that independence means self reliance and hard work. The worst aspect of living outside is í

All the hard work you would put in IS2 Male

Working IS8 Male

Having to work to do everything IS9 Male

Having to work for your food IS14 Male

Independence IS11 Male (having given exactly the same answer to the bonus of expulsion)

The key seems to be exposure and possible vulnerability which is accepted, but there is a price to independence.

You are exposed to everything good and bad IS17 Female

6.5.4 Evidence from the sixth form

The sixth form repeated many of the practical considerations of the lower years like

no complete safety anymore FS6 Female

difficulty finding food, shelter and water FS2 Female

conditions, lack of shelter MS1 Male

but the overall verdict centres on mental conditions and shrewd awareness of the cost of unprotected living

harder to live, have to tackle the real world. Garden was simple and easy FS3 Female

extreme suffering in the instance of illness, natural disaster, abuse FS9 Female

extreme suffering IS4 Female

death and hardship IS7 Male

God being off the scene is also a problem

being controlled by another human rather than God. God was more likely to control in a nice way rather than Adam MS3 Female

the thought of not being forever looked upon by God IS8 Male

knowing I have betrayed the word of God and this could effect people forever FS4 Female

worry about the meaning of life IS9 Male

uncertainty IS11 Male

6.5.5 Themes to carry forward to the next chapter

The conclusion to this section is again nuanced after the homogeneity of year 7. The Faith School still hankers after the garden and finds the outside world alien and threatening and essentially lacking in beauty. The Maintained School find little difference between the garden and outside, regretting mainly the ðhassleö of not having everything to hand when they want it. The Independent School simply accepts the consequences of independence, believing that hard work would be the main negative of the ðreal worldö but that this is an inevitable concomitant of freedom. The difference between Faith and non-Faith Schools might be summarised in the Faith School boy whose opinion of what was bad about the outside world was simply “*Everything*” (quoted above FS5 Male) and the Independent Schoolboy who thought there was “*nothing wrong, in my opinion*” (IS7 Male)

Meanwhile the sixth form begin to reflect on what being flung into the world might mean ó from uncertainty, to the knowledge that there is no safety net from death and suffering and (for the more religious ones) no guardian who will bale them out.

6.6 *Imaginative engagement: If you got the chance to say one thing to God as you leave the garden, what would it be?*

6.6.1 Advance conclusions

The year 7s generally say sorry to God as they leave the garden. A few don't and this is where the interest lies. The trend becomes much more definite in year 9 where there is a clear division between hostile MS students, argumentative IS pupils and still (generally) grateful FS pupils. The sixth form are slightly more philosophical, employing a number of arguments to analyse the expulsion and push a case for restoration or making the best of it. The comments across the years again seem to contribute to the cumulative argument that the different schools demonstrate a different *cultural* tone which is especially apparent in years 7 and 9, lending some credibility to the idea that it is what the pupils bring with them to the narrative, rather than a universal cognitive/maturational ability, which shapes their responses.

6.6.2 Evidence from year 7

At first sight the expression of regret is the main aspect of all three schools' responses though the Faith School and Independent School have the highest proportion. The real difference lies in outright hostility and a number of comments which cannot be properly coded

	FS out of 23	MS out of 39	IS out of 15
Positive sorrow/regret	20	15	6
Positive thank you	3	4	1
Request for 2 nd chance	4	2	3
Negative ó sorry but ö	1	1	0
Negative thank you but	1	1	0
Demand for 2 nd chance	1	1	0
Outright hostile	1	6	3
Blame God	0	0	1
Blame others	1	2	1

Figure 6-8: Year 7 "What would you say to God?"

The main defining feature of the MS is the tendency to question and blame. MS 6 Male simply says "he's not going", MS12 Female says "God you seem kind and loving on the outside but inside you show no mercy". MS23 Female says "Wouldn't you want me to be

happy?” MS25 Female says *“Sorry I can’t be your perfect human”*. Others question why the snake came (MS7 Female) or why they were not allowed to eat the apple (MS2 Female). Another aspect is an element of final negotiation ó please make sure that in the unprotected state outside the garden, you *“keep bad people away from them”* (MS 19 Female) or help them to distinguish between good and bad (MS18 Female) or provide some clothes (MS39 Female) which, in fact, in the story, God does.

The IS again is more inclined to question the expulsion but more from the point of mature negotiation so IS15 Male asks *“If you damn us to punishment what about our children?”* and another reflects that *“he will go, knowing that he’s here for a reason”* (IS14 Male). On the other hand some are more straightforward. *“Bye get lost, don’t care”* is one female response (IS2) and another boy simply says *“curse you”* (IS2). It should not be said that these responses are absent from the FS but they are less frequent and tend to be moderated. So FS3 Female says *“Thanks for looking after me but you should listen to me first before chucking me out”* The general theme is regret e.g. *“Sorry for what I have done and thank you for guarding me”* (FS8 Female) and *“I respect your judgement I can travel and go, for I will go and live my life in peace and in sin”* (FS21 Female). The general tone is more deferential and appreciative but regretful.

6.6.3 Evidence from year 9

In some ways this final analysis of the original narrative crystallises everything that has gone before. The most striking feature is that the MS children were more likely to express a variety of responses, and overall were much more likely to question God, blame him or be outspokenly hostile towards him. By contrast, the Faith School were much less inclined to criticise God and generally parted on good or at least accepting terms. The Independent School shared the Faith School’s tendency to be polite and were more likely to say thank you for their stay in the garden, even if now it was being terminated.

The hostility of the MS school was well articulated

Thanks would have been nice of you to forgive me one little mistake MS18 Female

Sorry...but you said you were forgiving. Where is my second chance MS19 Female

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I thought you were forgiving but you lied MS26 Male

Oh my God you are so evil you are the devil I spit on you MS34 Male

You think you have punished us but you have given us our freedom a chance to prove to you that you are not needed. I hope you regret this until your end. MS35 Male

The trees weren't cursed and the serpent was right MS38 Male

Jog on my world now lol MS15 Male

Why would the tree in the middle of the garden be a threat to life and be cursed for the rest of your life MS39 Female

Compare the Faith School comments which are generally positive

Thank you for everything FS4 Female

See ya later now FS7 Male

Thank you for letting me stay in the garden. Goodbye FS9 Female

Please forgive me FS22 Female

This is not to say that there isn't some hostility, for example

No bother don't care FS20 Female

The Independent School tended to argue the case and give God some advice into the bargain

Is this going to make you happy? Now you are just with animals.IS8 Male

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Mankind will ruin the world IS11 Male

(Summary) you can't keep stuff from us. We'll find out anyway IS12 Female

There is no point in hiding evil it will be revealed soon IS16 Female

They also reacted as though God had given them a brief respite from the trials of life - a bit like a sleep-over at a friend's

Thanks for letting me stay IS5 Male

Thank you for letting me in in the first place IS17 Female

Thank you for letting me stay. I love you God IS18 Female

School	Positive sorrow regret	Positive Thank you	Request for another chance	Negative - sorry BUT	Negative - thank you BUT	Demand for another chance	Outright hostile	Blame God	Blame others	Good humoured adult acceptance/advice	Other
FS No. out of 24 respondents who mentioned ↗	5	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	13	1
% of respondents	20.83	8.33	4.17	0	0	0	4.17	0	0	54.17	4.17
MS No. out of 39 respondents who mentioned ↗	10	2	0	1	1	2	5	4	1	8	0
% of respondents	25.64	5.13	0	2.56	2.56	5.13	12.82	10.26	2.56	20.51	0
IS No. out of 19 respondents who mentioned ↗	5	5	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	7	0
% of respondents	26.32	26.32	5.26	0	0	0	15.79	0	5.26	36.84	0

Figure 6-9: Year 9 "What would you say to God?"

Even the hostile remarks are a kind of admonition to God

Let me lead my own life with no interrupts so we know what we ourselves should and shouldn't do IS7 Male

I would probably beg for forgiveness or make as many offensive remarks as possible in the given time IS2 Male

This isn't as bitter as the MS ó more a conversation with someone you disagree with.

6.6.4 Evidence from the sixth form

Granted that the sixth form had some interest in doing RS A level, we might expect that they are at least courteous to God and this is generally what we find, though we find a higher likelihood of pupils expressing regret/gratitude if they are relatively high in the spirituality scale and more hostile if lower.

Of the former we get comments like

Sorry please don't hate me MS3 Female (score 39)

I am sorry for not listening to your word and being tempted by the serpent FS4 female(score 56)

Thank you for your creation of me and the world. I will be constantly thinking of you and will try to look after your world IS3 Female (score 63)

Ask for help and guidance of what to do next FS3 Female (score 50)

or we get criticism of God on religious grounds e.g.

They have made one mistake in life and I believe it is unreasonable punishment for someone who is all loving MS2 Female (Score 42)

Is it worth believing in God as you have already chosen our paths, is it worth believing if you will not allow free will FS7 Male (Score 68)

Of the downright hostile remarks we get

Don't tell me what to do as I'll do as I please IS2 Male (Score 105)

sexist bugger FS10 female (score 166)

Sorry but I'm only human IS9 Male (score 108)

7 CONCLUSION TO THE IMAGINATIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE STORY

There are a lot of things going on within the year groups, between the year groups, within each school and between each school. In a sense this highlights the difficulty of investigating differences in *öwarmö* conceptual factors because these influences may prove to be diffuse and hard to map. One way of tackling this difficulty is to imagine typical children from a particular culture and school, growing up through the year groups we have investigated. They are confronted with the Adam and Eve story. How are they likely to respond?

The **FS child** from a religious home already has a vocabulary for talking about the story when she arrives in **year 7** and rates herself high on the Beliefs and Values Scale. It's a story about temptation, God is personal and real and she will feel bad about expulsion from a perfect place which gave her a feeling of security. The world outside is insecure by comparison and she will apologise to God for fouling things up. She has broken some kind of rule but it is more than that. She has been tempted and betrayed God himself. By the time she is in **year 9**, the immediate awareness of God has lessened but the story still speaks to her directly and she is left with an abiding sense of beauty which had been left behind. Although the outside world beckons she still has an awareness that there is another more beautiful world behind her. The real world by comparison strikes her as hard and in fact quite barren. Given a choice she would go back to Eden if it were permitted. She is left with a feeling that rules are important and generally should not be broken. Faced with a choice to choose total freedom or freedom within parameters she would choose freedom within constraints because she feels safer that way. She carries this suspicion of choosing freedom into her **sixth form** and interprets the garden now as a symbol of lost childhood innocence. She is aware of having *öfallenö* from something but this does not lead her to reject God in a hostile way but mainly to question his kindness and miss the times when she was his friend. Conceptually the meaning of the story has always been framed by her family and school. There are two worlds and the world in which she lives is never quite as perfect as the one she has *öleftö*.

The **MS child** from a non-religious home has not been directed to the story before in a focussed way, though he may have heard it before. He emphatically does not think of

himself as either religious or spiritual. At home and school in **year 7** he has been brought up with the idea of rules and the story about Eden is clearly about rules, obedience and inevitable consequences. There are lines that cannot be crossed and the relationship doesn't really come into it. Eden sounds like a good place. It's well equipped though a bit restrictive, a bit like escaping to the park with his mates and his dog, on a Saturday afternoon. He likes the idea of trees and animals and fruit hanging from the trees and appreciates the beauty and sense of peace. By **year 9** he looks at the story much more critically and thinks that life in the garden is almost self-indulgent. He doesn't get the same sense of freedom there. There are some rules which get in the way as well and he feels restricted. It's a bit like the park is too small and the park-keeper seems to think he shouldn't be there, so he yells a few insults at the keeper and goes off to explore a much bigger park which seems bigger and brighter. He doesn't look back. No regrets. By **sixth form** he thinks of the story as a stupid, illogical myth and can't understand why people take it so seriously. He especially doesn't like the idea that there is another power which can tell him what to do. Some of his friends however quite like it as a story, especially the girls who think that it is a myth about the human condition but he thinks they should simply live in the real world which is the only one there is and full of exciting possibilities. He has moved on and the story does not feature in his life.

The **IS boy** comes from a background which knows the story and in year7 he thinks of himself as being quite spiritual because he goes to chapel everyday and his parents approve of religion generally without being terribly religious in themselves. He is used to the idea of rules and consequences without thinking that the rules have particular moral content. In **year 7** he politely apologises to God on the way out of the garden but thinks that he hasn't done all that much wrong. By **year 9** he has decided that he has to stand on his own two feet and has to go it alone without God. The garden was a place where knowledge was withheld from him and this can't go on. On the other hand, in the real world, the weight of responsibility and autonomy is considerable and the garden represents a kind of holiday from life, a bit like the occasional sleep-over at a friend's. The world is a bit of a drag, but you have to cope with it and in fact, increasingly he likes to take full control of his own life. Intellectual control is an important part of this autonomy and by **sixth form** he has developed a view on the garden myth, choosing either a friendly but essentially autonomous stance towards God, or a cool position outside the story looking at the ideas contained within it without necessarily being personally engaged with it.

Obviously the descriptions above are generalised but they are earthed in the responses coming out of the research document. Perhaps more interesting is the role of the story itself in unearthing responses which might not otherwise emerge. The narrative is like a boulder thrown into the stream of a young person's life which forces the water to flow round it in interesting directions. This keys in with some of Kirkwood's observations about confrontational parables and indeed with Jesus who describes his own narrative as the rock which is either the corner stone or the stumbling block. The question is whether this continues to be a fruitful analogy into the rest of the research. And of course it does not resolve the question of whether boulders in streams are useful, nor how big, nor how many or what shape they take.

8 PICTURES OF KNOWLEDGE, EXCLUSION AND DEATH

8.1 *Pictures of Knowledge*

8.1.1 Advance conclusions

In the earlier years the Faith School had a tendency to interpret the ambivalent figure of the angel more logically in line with the story of Adam and Eve, and the bomb as resembling the tree of knowledge, whilst the Maintained School proffered a bewildering array of possible interpretations, indicating less adherence to a guiding narrative and a tendency to assimilate the meaning to other pictures of power (the nuclear bomb). In choosing 'paradise lost' as an alternative to the 'bomb' and the 'angel', the Faith School again demonstrated a tendency to draw out the negative implication of the fall interpreting the upside down world not as a triumph for man's creative/destructive genius but as a brute undermining of the created order. The Independent School meanwhile - like the Maintained School - pursued a similar theme of power in their interpretation of the angel and confirmed this by a heavy weighting towards the bomb picture in Year 9. Their universal rejection of options (4) and (5) was made more significant by the fact that in the few answers commenting on these pictures, wider messages indicating the genius of man putting a spacecraft into space were completely swamped by more superficial observations like Adam and Eve sharing a theme of nakedness with the graphics on the explorer.

The overall conclusion about the sixth formers is that they arrive at more logical hermeneutics than their younger counterparts, but have their own problems. The conservatively religious take a firm and unflinching line. *They know what the picture is meant to mean.* The strongly secular have selective blindness to certain undeniably religious elements in the pictures and pick upon the aspects they can agree with. The more liberal religious can come up with highly nuanced answers or simply trip themselves up on conflicting aspects of theology. There seems to be little doubt that having a prior stance towards new material is a useful way of sorting out meaning - but of course alongside this insight is the thought that perhaps at this stage there is fore-closure on thinking which prevents rather than promotes conceptual change.

8.1.2 Evidence from Year 7

Of the 5 pictures, the overwhelming choice in year 7 was of 1, 2, and 3 and against 4 and 5. Number 4 featured oil in the Gulf of Mexico which was a current crisis and 5 was a portrait from the voyager spacecraft óso both were the most modern. The other 3 ó of an inverted natural and mechanistic world, a nuclear bomb in the midst of paradise and an ambivalent picture of a shining figure with a kneeling man, attracted much more attention, reminding us of elements in the literary review, suggesting that the mythic and fictional may have just as much sway as extensions of real experience in young people’s minds.

The breakdown of votes was as follows

School	Picture 1 Paradise lost	Picture 2 Nuclear bomb	Picture 3 Shining figure	Picture 4 Oil	Picture 5 Spacecraft
FS out of 23 respondents	8	4	8	1	0
FS % of respondents	34.78	17.39	34.78	4.35	0
MS out of 39 respondents	5	10	19	2	2
MS % of respondents	12.82	25.64	48.72	5.13	5.13
IS out of 15 respondents	3	5	4	1	2
IS % of respondents	20	33.33	26.67	6.67	13.33

Figure 8-1: Year 7 Pictures of Knowledge

In choosing mainly 1 and 3 the **Faith School pupils** saw direct continuity with their interpretation of the Adam and Eve story. The shining figure they interpreted mainly as God showing Adam the consequences of his actions. It was generally *not* about power or control but about *consequences* or simply similarity with the story or a sense of regret. Of picture 3 they said

I believe this scene actually happened FS 1 Female

The angel is speaking to Adam saying is this what you want for your future FS 12 Female

I don’t know that was the nearest, most similar FS Female

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God said that he will put enmity between man and snake. There was a war in the picture

FS 11 Male

Adam disobeyed God FS 16 Male

Even the one dissenter who chose the oil picture 4 said that it showed how cruel we are to the world FS 18 Male

The responses to picture 1 were mainly negative

In the garden it is the greenery and the metal side is outside the garden FS2 Female

If you eat from the tree the world will turn upside-down FS9 Male

Everything was nice before machines came FS22 Female

In choosing picture 3 overwhelmingly, children at the **Maintained School** tended to see it mainly as a *picture of power*.

It looks like the powers that God has MS2 Female

She is strong and powerful MS4 Female

It looks like it MS7 Female

It has God on it MS8 Female

Looks like God is giving a person God like power MS36 Female

Looks like the person is giving the other powers or something MS38 Female

This was also what attracted them to the picture of the nuclear bomb.

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It represents a lot of power plus nukes are awesome MS28 Male

It shows power and life forces of God MS30 Male

He has God powers and he created the explosion MS11 Male

A large bomb has gone off and everything has disappeared like in the Adam and Eve story MS18 Female

Returning to picture 3, the alternative view was that it was simply the most *religious* looking

It's the most religious MS29 Male

It looks the most religious MS17 Female

The **Independent School** were more similar to the MS in their responses, picking up on the theme of power

Because a nuclear bomb has a lot of power like God IS3 Male

It shows a power controlling the world IS5 Male

Because a nuclear bomb is powerful like God IS 10 Male

Because it is showing that they are controlling everything IS15 Male

Because it looks like the man is controlling everything just like God IS5 Female

Interestingly, although the pictures contained the prompt that they were about 'Knowledge' most of the pupils did not make a direct connection with man's destructive or constructive side even when the more modern pictures could have done so. So in response to the voyager space craft they assimilated the meaning to the story, so picture 5 meant...

It is like Adam and Eve naked. Learning a lesson IS12 Female

Because the clothes vanish in the story IS13 Female

This may be an indication that once children are locked into a particular *grammar of interpretation* this becomes their touchstone for further interpretations. In this instance the FS were applying their existing perceptions of the story to the pictures in front of them (a religious provenance may be an obvious influence here) but for whatever reason the other schools brought a *öpowerö* interpretation to the story. In the IS context it is worth noting that a number of the boys in particular came from military backgrounds and this could be a factor in what they brought to the story or it may be a simpler spin-off from the increased awareness of the military in Britain generally.

8.1.3 Evidence from Year 9

The numbers choosing each picture were as follows

	Paradise lost (1)	Nuclear bomb (2)	Angel and Adam (3)	Gulf of Mexico (4)	Explorer (5)
FS 24/24 completed this section	7	9	8	0	0
% of those who completed the section	29.17	37.5	33.33	0	0
MS 33/39 completed this section	9	11	7	3	3
% of those who completed this section	27.27	33.33	21.21	9.09	9.09
IS 19/19 completed this section	2	11	4	2	0
% of those who completed this section	10.53	57.89	21.05	10.53	0
76 respondents from all 3 schools	18	31	19	5	3
% out of 76 respondents	23.68	40.79	25	6.76	3.95

Figure 8-2: Year 9 Pictures of knowledge

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The nuclear bomb attracted most attention from all the schools but especially the Independent School. The Independent School were also the most articulate in explaining their choice of the nuclear bomb. In large part it meant that the snake had been right. They now had God-like power.

It is a nuclear explosion which can be so catastrophic it is a God like power of destruction
IS3 Male

Man has the power to destroy life just as God is suppose to be able to IS9 Male

This picture shows life and oasis but also power and destruction so they would have God like power IS12 Female

It reminds me of the world and how powerful God must be to create it but also the power humans have to destroy it IS15 Male

That it is a nuke and people have the power to take life like God IS 8 Male

These views are echoed by the Maintained School e.g.

If mankind gained the power to create and destroy like a God; it would only end in mass destruction MS35 Male

In the Faith School there was more inclination to link the shape of the mushroom cloud with the tree in Eden

Where the nuclear bomb blows up there is nothing left and if you get kicked out there is nothing there FS 6 Male

It looks like a tree and Eve eats an apple off it FS15 male

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But this was not universal. The main point is that most of the Year 9s picked upon the destructiveness of knowledge but not on the potential of knowledge for good. Of the 3 pupils who picked the voyager spacecraft

One of them said that it indicated Adam and Eve *“having a wide knowledge of things others don't understand”* MS26 Male

Another simply commented that he's chosen the picture because *“I have seen it before”* MS34 Male and the last chose it as a scientific fall-back.

I believe in a steady state but there is no photo of that so I've chosen what I believe if there isn't steady state MS38 Male

This rather gloomy assessment of human nature might be evidence of the existential scaffolding expected by Hay and Nye to underpin religious experience generally. On this level the Adam and Eve myth might be deemed to have a universal quality which appeals across cultures and generations.

Meanwhile the understanding of knowledge as destructive persisted as the touchstone for the other pictures, but some schools were more successful than others in according significance to the pictures which did not shout one particular meaning. This was true of the ambivalent picture of the angel and Adam. The **Faith School** in particular were certain that the bright figure was an angel or God warning mankind about what would happen

This picture stood out from the rest. It shows a man being showed war by an angel. This is what the snake was talking about because he talked about good and evil FS9 Female

She is showing him what the outside world is like, like chaos FS10 Female

It represents war FS16 Female

There is too many hates in the world FS13 Male

It represents war and the world is full of war FS24 Male

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These views had consistency, perhaps because they already had a narrative of what the story meant. Their logic was that God expelled mankind and that here was God or his angel telling mankind what the consequences of his actions were ó namely chaos.

The **Maintained School** did not have the same narrative so the ambivalent figure of the òangelö could mean several things.

So one boy thought it was simply Adam and Eve

I like the art work and it shows Adam and Eve MS3 Male

Another girl thought it was God

It shows God and he is helping someone in life but it could be someone who is having a religious experience MS14 Female

Yet another girl is confused by who might be telling who to do what

Gives me the impression that the angel/God is telling the man to go to the war and fight (inflict pain) like when the snake tells Eve to eat the fruit he tries to inflict pain MS18 Female

There is an attraction to the picture but the explanations don't make sense or there is no controlling structure which unites individual views.

The angel gives me the image by the way it is positioned that it is giving the man power over the city MS21 Female

They are looking down on everything so they can see everything MS32 Male

There is suffering below man MS37 Male

So whereas the Faith School had remarkable unanimity in interpreting the picture as an angel showing mankind the future, the Maintained School were all entirely individual.

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The **Independent School** with only 4 pupils choosing this picture, are also struggling to make sense of it, 2 of them deciding that this is a different representation of the tempting of Adam but then getting the snake, Angels and Eve confused.

The snake is tempting Adam and Eve since the angel is trying to tempt Adam IS18 Female

The angel is like Eve tempting Adam to eat the apple. Under pressure and temptation could get the better of him. God's just in the sky looking over them; all things under them are the garden IS4 Female (Even though it is quite evidently NOT the garden below them but a kind of warlike abyss)

It shows power IS19 Male

It shows lots of people suffering below a platform the platform could be where God is and the people on the platform could be Adam and Eves vision IS1 Male

The conclusion to this section is that some views of the world resonate across a wide spectrum of culture and person ó the violence and destructiveness of mankind being one such view. On the other hand there is evidence that such shared perception erodes when faced with ambivalence. In this respect the Faith School seemed more likely to extend their existing perception into the ambivalence in order to make sense of it. The other schools meanwhile struggled to do this. They had no template for doing so with the result that replies were all individual attempts to bring order to a picture which invited interpretation but did not have the immediacy of the nuclear bomb or its ease of interpretation.

8.1.4 Evidence from the sixth form

On the face of it the sixth formers are no different from the younger years in their overwhelming choice of the bomb and the angel. Their reasons are better thought-out however.

The conservatively Christian girl (FS 3) knows exactly what the bomb means

We chose to go our own way and we think it is for the best but in the end it will catch up to us

Another girl links it directly to the narrative

The snake spoke to Eve about how if she ate the fruit from the tree she would have more knowledge. This could reflect the idea that knowledge is power however can also destruct - represented in something such as a nuclear bomb FS4 Female

The strongly atheist girl FS10 reads *Paradise Lost* in an optimistic way, interpreting it as a sign of Man's ingenuity and not as a picture of alienation.

We have knowledge of creation and manipulation of nature. We can alter and create not quite to the extent of God but close

One of the other strongly secular boys makes a similar point

God is portrayed as omniscient so I think the engine/mechanical part of the structure knowledge and the trees below represent the world so kind of knowing everything in the world FS8 Male

The point here is that these pupils do not pick up on the words *Paradise Lost* at all. So far as they are concerned, man is either catching up on God's knowledge or well on the way to knowing everything, with or without God.

By contrast a strongly Christian girl makes a very different point about the same picture

In the same way God created our natural world we have created a manufactured world. We have destroyed our natural world to do this - in this way we are not like God. We are destructive as well as constructive IS 5 Female

One of the boys makes a simple and logical point about the nuclear bomb

God-like power can be destructive and so humans will be able to destroy themselves IS 7 Male

On the other hand, conflicting ideas do jostle alongside one another, as with this comment on the bomb

That the bomb is the wrong answer yet countries disagree today and use these bombs. Which was quite like God when he kicked them out of the garden MS 1 Male

So is the bomb an abuse of Godlike power or simply a replication of it? This pupil is very unsure as is this one who has chosen (very unusually) the oil spill picture.

God has the power to cause devastation and this shows that humans can also. However it can also be questioned as the oil-leak was accidental - punishment from God? FS9 female.

This girl is quite high in the spirituality scale but has not quite sorted her ideas out, getting stuck on whether a man-made problem actually comes from God and is this oil spill a product of fallen-ness or an act of God against it? The continuing struggle is evident.

8.1.5 Themes to carry forward into the next chapter

The most important conclusion to carry forward is that Vygotsky seems to be confirmed in his view that pupils try to extend their existing apprehension of things into new material, in order to make sense of it. In all years we have seen that children who have an existing view of a narrative have a tendency to extend that view to pictures which *could* admit multiple interpretation and in fact *do* with pupils who are not pre-disposed to one interpretation rather than another. Alongside this perception is the thought that culture itself may attract pupils to certain pictures rather than others, perhaps because there are some images in our society or genes which are deeply hardwired. The curiosity about destruction is perhaps one of them ó but there still remains the point about how we integrate this attraction into an individual understanding of the world. In other words there may be universal reasons why the picture of the bomb was important to a wide spectrum of young people but the fact is, that for some of them, it made most sense within an existing grammar or framework of interpretation which had been lent them by their faith, school or family, namely that mankind has a habit of abusing his God-like power and knowledge, in keeping with the predictions of a snake in a familiar Genesis story. It is interesting to speculate as to whether a different secular grammar was informing some of the range of other replies ó namely the view that naked power does not have to be seen as an abuse but as simply a

desirable aspect of being human, without reference to God. Some of the responses could be seen in this way but of course a humanist grammar may have many more different constructions than a more monochrome Christian one and may be obscured by this very multi-valency.

8.2 *Pictures of Exclusion*

8.2.1 Advance conclusions

Responses to the pictures were more difficult to interpret or put into a framework because the pictures themselves did not control the comments that people made. In other words the pupils had an idea of what expulsion meant and attached this to any picture which could reasonably take this meaning. This meant that a simple count of the pictures was not necessarily instructive. It was the commentary that carried weight. However it appeared that in year 7 the MS understood exclusion from the garden as a kind of abandonment ó they were the victims of expulsion. In year 9 there is debate about whether the MS support for the punitive picture of Massacio's angel is actually the flip side of the year 7 feeling of abandonment ó namely that the story is bluntly about punishment without many subtleties and the feeling of abandonment comes from being under God's anger. The FS meanwhile tended to stick with expressions of regret and this is the meaning they attach to most of the pictures ó that they were architects of their fate and not victims. The IS pursue themes of autonomy which we have seen in earlier chapters, namely that expulsion is less about regret or abandonment and more about simple survival. They will have to survive in the real world. The sixth form, in what can best be described as a drift amongst the older pupils to a different interpretation, tend to see expulsion in existential terms as loneliness and estrangement and move away from punitive interpretations towards more hopeful ones ó more like teenagers making an inevitable move away from home accompanied by anxiety as well as anticipation.

8.2.2 Evidence from Year 7

The choices made by the different schools were not easily differentiated but the accompanying comments had a certain direction. Children from the Faith School generally liked the Mormon seminary picture of Adam and Eve holding on to one another and this was universally the most popular. In explaining the feelings portrayed in the picture they majored on the theme of regret and comforting one another.

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They are thinking about what they have done and taking Gods punishment for granted FS4
Female

They are upset they have been kicked out and are comforting each other FS7 Female

They are comforting each other FS12 Female

*They look unhappy so they could be thinking why did we listen to the snake. We could still
of been with God if we did and they are comforting each other but look lonely.* FS13
Female

Pictures 1 and 4 came equal second with the FS but the *thinking* behind the choices
remained the same. So the pupils who chose picture 1

Very sorry because they are being punished FS9 Male

What have we done we should have obeyed God FS10 Male

Why did we eat from the wisdom tree FS20 Male

Equally pupils who chose picture 4 found the same meaning

Why did I do that FS19 male

I'm really sorry it wasn't our fault the snake tricked us FS14 Male

With pupils from the Maintained School there was a clear preference for picture 3 but the
barren landscape of picture 4 was a clear 2nd promoting the over-riding feelings of
abandonment, depression and loneliness which came out more strongly than guilt or regret.

So with picture 3, typical responses were

Why did they get chucked out MS27Female?

Cold, distressed, abandoned MS31 Male

Despair, worry, helplessness, tired, weak MS34 Female

And with picture 4 the same

Abandoned and ashamed of themselves MS21 Female

Disgust in themselves and the land is barren very different from the garden MS25 Female

There is nothing around it is just them MS15 Female

This world is empty MS33 Female

Coupled with those who chose picture 1 of the vengeful angel, there was a clear sense of *abandonment*. Two of the 7 replies suggested that Adam and Eve were in fear of being killed and another 2 were worried about having no clothes. This seemed to fit with the general theme pursued by this school that they were very much on their own and under threat and *victims rather than perpetrators*.

The Independent School meanwhile were heavily in favour of picture 1 but for very diffuse reasons ó from shame, to guilt to nakedness. No safe conclusions can be drawn from this smaller group.

8.2.3 Evidence from Year 9

One might expect the idea of exclusion to be an almost universal existential state and it is this mood of abandonment, regret, loneliness which permeates all the replies almost irrespective of which picture they eventually opted for. However there are some minor emphases which are worth noting. The Mormon seminary picture, as for the Year 7s was the most popular if you counted all the votes across all the schools, but it was the Maintained School which ensured this first place, where it captured nearly 50% of the pupils' responses. The other two schools put the 4th (desert) picture first. The key comment

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which only appeared in the MS contributions was the idea of Adam and Eve *comforting one another.*

Feeling sorry for each other MS9 Male

They feel sad for each other MS12 Male

They feel sorry for each other; it looks like they've actually been kicked out MS11 Male

I believe they seem sad, tired and hungry and are thinking they need each other and are thinking more respectfully MS21 Female

Shows love and hell in dark times MS26 Male

Another MS student who in fact chose picture 4 expressed the same sentiment

Regretting what they have done but I also think that they are happy together MS27 Male

By contrast the Independent School major on the desert scene because of the *practical issues* lying ahead.

When will this ever end, where are we going, where we will get food and drink from IS4 Female

Let's try and find something good out here IS9 Male

Where they are going to go and how will they live with evil IS16 Female

I don't want to leave let's keep walking until we find somewhere peaceful and quiet IS18 Female

Even when they choose the Mormon picture the emphasis is on the comfortless nature of outside.

Great there's no life it's like hell IS12 Female

It shows that they had to live in a horrible place IS2 Male

Where are we going to go IS19 Male

The Faith School also chooses the desert picture but they are not so concerned with practical issues. The main issue is regret.

I wish I never FS1 Female

Lonely, cold, scared FS3 Female

Should we even continue what's the point? FS7 Male

They have made a bad decision and should have listened to God FS9 Female

We should not have gone against orders FS17 Male

Guilty, lonely, angry with the snake, unsure of what to do, annoyed and confused FS 22 Female

The overwhelming feeling with the FS responses is a sense of *regret*, which undoubtedly appears in the other schools but dominates here

Even when they choose the Mormon picture instead, it carries the same meaning

They regret what they have done FS2 Female

They are sad and sorry FS5 Male

They are starting to regret eating from the tree FS18 Male

Wished they never trusted the serpent FS14 Male

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In their expression of regret however, the Faith School have in general *avoided* the punitive picture of Masaccio's angel, whereas the Maintained School have chosen it.

They shouldn't of done what they did MS1 Female

They had sinned MS3 Male

What have we done MS8 Male

Upset that they had to leave the garden and disappointed in themselves for disobeying God
MS13 Female

They are being punished by the angels because of their actions MS33 Female

They have done something bad MS38 Male

The language used of this picture is indistinguishable from the language used by the Faith School but of course it is *attached* to the most punitive image and the most powerfully emotive. For the Maintained School, this is also the second most popular choice so the question remains of why they chose it. One possible reason is that the less religious schools simply have a more punitive view of God in contrast to the faith schools which are made more aware of his kinder side. Another possible answer is that it makes sense alongside others' decisions in their group to choose the Mormon picture ó that they feel sorry for one another. They have been dislodged from a garden which was basically nice and this is bad news. They have made a mistake. But the outside world is not that bad, so the desolate picture 4 is not where their feelings are, and the Mormon picture speaks more of human kindness ó humanism in the best sense of the word. They simply feel sad for one another and regret losing their place in the garden. They feel kicked out so their best bet is to comfort one another. For the Faith School meanwhile, their regrets make sense in the context of the outside world being a desolate world and home is now behind them. They would like to be back in the garden if they could and it's their loss rather than God's punishment which bothers them. They miss God even though he may be angry. This world is a cold and friendless place. For the Independent School, it's a matter of going it alone and making the best of things. They can be self-sufficient without too many regrets, whilst

remaining anxious about food and shelter. Yes they will have to find a place in the world but it can be done.

Pictures	Angel with sword (1)	Smiling angel (2)	Mormon picture (3)	Desert picture (4)
FS 22/24 completed this section	4	1	8	9
FS % of those who completed this section	18.18	4.54	36.36	40.91
MS 34/39 completed this section	11	1	16	6
MS % of those who completed this section	32.35	2.94	47.06	17.65
IS 19/19 completed this section	3	4	4	8
IS % of those who completed this section	15.79	21.05	21.05	42.11
TOTAL 75 respondents from all 3 schools	18	6	28	23
% of 75 respondents	24	8	37.33	30.67

Figure 8-3: Year 9 pictures of exclusion

Of course there is danger here of filling in the gaps and ascribing different motives to the same words and phrases but in the context of earlier answers and the striking preference for some pictures rather than others, this analysis may not be too far from the mark.

8.2.4 Evidence from the Sixth form

If, in the first set of pictures we see the same choice of pictures, as younger years, but for different reasons, in the second set we see a definite drift in preference away from punitive images or even the mutual comfort image (the Mormon picture) and *towards* the scene of estrangement and isolation depicted in the Pavel Popov picture.

A number of them comment on the separation of Adam and Eve.

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Adam looks annoyed and angry with head down walking in front of Eve FS 5 Male

Wondering if God's punishment was too intense, Adam disapproved of Eve's decision FS 7 Male

Adam is angry with Eve therefore walking away from her head down IS1 Female

What they are going to do now outside of the garden and how they don't truly understand each other when they are walking one in front of the other and not side by side by each other in the picture IS2 Male

How lonely the world is IS5 Female

We are the forgotten people IS10 male

That they are lost with no guidance in a horrible environment IS11 male

Two of them sum up the situation very succinctly

What have we done IS7 male or simply

Shit IS6 male

The comments above encompass students who are at the 'strongly agree' (the liberal religious) and the 'strongly disagree' ends of the spirituality scale. It is interesting however that some of the more conservative religious at the top of the scale are still much more inclined to invoke traditional thoughts and images and they are inclined to choose either picture 1 or 2, rather than the Popov painting.

I don't think Adam can handle the thought of being banished, I think Eve is still trying to take it all in but worried MS3 Female (conservative religious who chooses the smiling angel image and is trying to make sense of Eve's expression in contrast to Adam)

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They are ashamed of what they have done, feel horrendous for being tempted and thinking they could ever be like God in any way (conservative religious who is the only one who chooses the vengeful Masaccio image)

MS4 female

The notable exception to this is the atheist girl at the strongly disagree end of the scale who chooses one of the traditional images but for different reasons.

Adam is being taken by his wrist and is holding his head in his hand; he is reluctant to leave the garden and is deeply ashamed. Eve is looking up, tentative, but stepping forward. She accepts her punishment and is hopeful for redemption

Just as earlier, this student had an upbeat take on knowledge, so she draws a more positive note from the picture of exclusion, noticeably picking the smiling angel rather than the vengeful angel. 4 students (all girls) chose this picture; two of the others (the 3rd is the conservative religious **MS3 Female** highlighted above) are also inclined to pick out an *optimistic* element in the exclusion, rather than unadulterated remorse and regret.

They are moved by the garden and what they see and feel very special but at the same time confused IS3 Female

They are being shown that there are other choices, another place to live. I think they feel trusted IS4 female

Overall the conclusion from this section is that there is a very clear move away from punitive images except in the most conservatively religious, *or* a softening approach to exclusion which looks to a more hopeful outcome *or* (and this is the dominant drift) a much more pronounced movement towards images of existential estrangement.

8.2.5 Themes to carry forward into the next chapter

As we said at the beginning it is not so much the *choice* of picture, as *why* they chose it which counts in this section of analysis, but even from the numbers there appears to be a leaning, with age, towards certain pictures rather than others- notably the Pavel Popov (Desert) picture which takes 50% of the sixth form whilst not being a majority choice anywhere in year 7 and not the most stand-out choice in year 9 apart from the IS.

	Paradise lost (1)	Nuclear bomb (2)	Angel and Adam (3)	Gulf of Mexico (4)	Explorer (5)		Angel with sword (1)	Smiling angel (2)	Mormon picture (3)	Desert picture (4)
Year 7										
FS 21/23 answered this section	8	4	8	1	0	23/23 answered this section	5	4	9	5
% of respondents	38.1	19.05	38.1	4.76	0		21.74	17.39	39.13	21.74
MS 38/39 answered this section	5	10	19	2	2	36/39 answered this section	7	4	15	10
% of respondents	13.16	26.32	50	5.26	5.26		19.44	11.11	41.67	27.78
IS 15/15 answered this section	3	5	4	1	2	13/15 answered this section	6	2	3	2
% of respondents	20	33.33	26.67	6.67	13.33		46.15	15.38	23.08	15.38
Year 9										
FS 24/24 answered this section	7	9	8	0	0	22/24 answered this section	4	1	8	9
% of respondents	29.17	37.5	33.33	0	0		18.18	4.55	36.36	40.91
MS 33/39 answered this section	9	11	7	3	3	34/39 answered this section	11	1	16	6
% of respondents	27.27	33.33	21.21	9.091	9.091		32.35	2.94	47.06	17.65
IS 19/19 answered this section	2	11	4	2	0	19/19 answered this section	3	4	4	8
% of respondents	10.53	57.89	21.05	10.53	0		15.79	21.05	21.05	42.11
6th Form										
23/24 answered this section	5	7	7	3	1	24/24 answered this section	1	4	7	12
% of respondents	21.74	30.43	30.43	13.04	4.35		4.17	16.67	29.17	50

Figure 8-4: All Years pictures of knowledge & exclusion

In general however the pictures did not convey a meaning to the pupils. The pupils *already* had a meaning which they applied *to* the pictures. One interesting example of this is that of all those who chose the Popov painting none of them mentioned the obvious fact in the picture that Eve is heavily pregnant. The only pupil (in Year 9) who even hints at it is not explicit.

They have to keep going and try and survive because *they need to make a whole load of humans* MS22 female

This seems to indicate that pupils simply filter out elements which are not foremost in their experience. Would young people in their 20s, with a baby on the way, have answered differently? Perhaps. More interestingly, although, in the story, they have just heard that the curses of the fall are pain in childbirth and endless toil and sweat against a hostile environment ó this interpretation does not feature in the responses to the pictures. Cognitively we might expect some features of the picture to contribute extra elements to a pupil's understanding but in general we don't see this. What we do see is a common thread running through the conservatively religious which brings existing perceptions to the pictures and interprets them in line with these pre-conceptions. The *pictures* of knowledge and exclusion do not explicitly confront the viewer with a hermeneutic. The vengeful angel does not carry a label saying 'vengeful angel' and the more 'kindly angel' might have suggested that to me but may not have said that to others, so there was no guiding hermeneutic for choice. In effect this meant that the pictures were more likely to say whatever pupils wanted them to say and this is precisely what we find in the choices above. In fact we saw in Year 9 that pupils could choose *different* pictures but come from the same stable in their interpretation of them. For example it was quite possible for some children to choose the Mormon picture but find in it a picture of guilt and remorse, more easily associated with the angel pictures, rather than the more common theme of mutual comfort. Perhaps the lack of mythic elements played a part here that in that guilt/remorse, especially for the more secular child, doesn't require the sword of *God* in the background. On the other hand, despite this ambivalence underlying choices, broad themes could still be detected. ***In the younger years the constraints of doing wrong and getting punished ride high in their awareness alongside mutual support. In older teenagers the loneliness and increasing awareness of anxiety and self reliance lead to a choice of Popov's blasted landscape and disjunction of relationships.***

8.3 *Pictures of Death*

8.3.1 **Advance conclusions**

The final pictures (of death) in the series of Knowledge, Exclusion and Death were by far the most obscure of all the illustrations and this explains why the approach towards the responses differs somewhat from previous chapters ó since differences *between* the schools eroded but there remained divisions between those pupils who registered strong agreement in their answers on the Beliefs and Values Grid, and those who did not. In year 7 this division holds true with the strong agreement cohort believing that Adam and Eve died much as the Bible predicted they would if they ate the apple, and won no victory . At the other end (those who expressed most disagreement on the Beliefs and Values scale) in both year 7 and 9 there was a feeling that Adam and Eve had won some kind of victory over against God but this became diluted by a much more general view that you had to do something before you die which could be held by religious and non-religious alike. The biggest difference emerged at sixth form. In this age group, those who had aligned themselves most in agreement with the Beliefs and Values scale, expressed sentiments that were found in similarly placed year 7s but there was a much stronger inclination amongst *all* types of pupils to believe in a kind of heroic ðcourage to beð *with or without* God, which tallied with their previous interest in the estrangement and loneliness they detected in the wilderness of Pavel Popov.

8.3.2 **Evidence from Year 7**

The **Year 7s** in particular had difficulty moulding their thoughts around the 2 pictures which to me signified a forlorn death and a rebellious, defiant man. In general the more religious made a better attempt at interpretation. The **two dominant interpretations from those who recorded strong agreement on the Beliefs and Values Grid** were that ðGod had warned them that they would dieð and here they are dead. Of the rebellious man, their comment was that ðYes Adam and Eve *should* be ashamed because they had done wrong and ðNo they hadn't won any victory at all BUT they might have a partial victory if they tried to get back into God's good booksð.

They have left the garden so are showing what could happen without God FS4 female (score 37)

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They were ashamed of what they did and they should do something about it before you die
FS3 female (score 60)

They were bad so they died FS 6 female (score 20)

Adam and Eve were bad so they died. I think it is interesting but disturbing FS7 Female
(score 46) who then said

Adam and Eve should amount to do something that is a big achievement

They were ashamed to die because they betrayed God and achieved no victory MS31 Male
(score 70)

Adam and Eve didn't do anything to help humanity before they got kicked out FS13Female
(score 100)

At **strongly disagreeing end of the Beliefs and Values scale**, the pupils show a wider spread of response but some of them pick up on the rebellion against God implied by the second picture.

They left the Garden of Eden thinking they won MS11 Male (score 93)

Adam and Eve achieved defying God MS28 Male (score 158)

Or perhaps Adam and Eve won in a back-handed way because although they were expelled from the garden, they still fixed it for God to look after them! Or their victory consisted in the very fact that now they were knowledgeable.

They had victory by having God care for them MS34 Female (score 157)

Their eyes were opened and given clothes to wear MS38 Female (score 161)

One of the most insightful replies came from a Maintained Schoolgirl who wrote of the 2 pictures

They were so lonely and abandoned that they died MS21 Female (score 124)

They saw the fruit and tasted it before they died

8.3.3 Evidence from Year 9

The Year 9s by contrast coalesce more strongly around the idea that you have to do something before you die but there is still the view held by those with high beliefs and values scores that Adam and Eve have actually achieved *nothing* for humanity and should be ashamed.

So at the “strongly agree” end of the spectrum we have

Yes I think it’s saying that Adam and Eve should be ashamed as they did nothing for humanity IS18 Female(score 49)

That they have done something wrong in life FS8 Female(score 44)

Adam and Eve made a mistake and haven’t done anything to be proud of FS9 Female (score 52)

Yes because they didn’t do anything good in the story MS25 Female (score 38)

Or, as with the Year7s, there is the idea that they should try and make it up to God out of shame for what they did.

Ashamed to be banished, they would be doing good for future mankind MS16 Female (score 36)

At the “strongly disagree” end however, the pupils turn their backs on a sense of shame and conclude that humans have to strike a blow for freedom and independence

Yes Adam and Eve weren't afraid to die MS11 Male (score 170)

Adam and Eve were not ashamed of what they had done MS32 Male (score 170)

They died but they disobeyed God to win their freedom MS13 Female (score 111)

I think there is because they went against rules, for human freewill MS26 Male (score 142)

Yes because of freedom IS7 Male (score 152)

Yes because they want to prove to God humans are good IS9 Male (score 138)

Between both ends of the spectrum, however, there was wide agreement that you had to do something positive before you die. In a sense this was the anodyne message which few religious or non-religious people could disagree with. It neither implied that you should act out of shame or guilt (though one or two clung to this idea) to prove yourself, nor a kind of defiance in an independent world. It came out as a simple truth.

They have to do something for humanity before dying FS18 Male (score 160)

Don't die until you do something FS14 Male (score 79)

Don't you dare die until you win for human kind and others FS12 Male (score 74)

Does something with your life before you die FS5 Male (score 76)

The connection is do something good before you die. Adam and Eve did that MS38 Female (score 136)

It's connecting with dying without achieving something MS4 Male (score 117)

To make the most of life MS3 Male (score 109)

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It is difficult to make clear sense of what is happening in Year 9 but there appear to be two movements.

The first is that in content and ideas there is little difference from Year 7 except that the Year 9s are more coherent in articulating their views. If there is maturational aspect here it is not that older children have different ideas ó they don't ó but they have a wider repertoire of language and experience to draw on in expressing these ideas.

The second is that although the *poles* of agreement/disagreement on the beliefs/Values spectrum seem to dictate the travel of thought in children who are predisposed to a certain world view whether religious or secular, there is more apparent convergence in the middle and agreement on interpretations which sound very much like the platitudes of advertising and the lingua franca of parents and schools ó basically ***you have to achieve something before you die***. This kind of conclusion, stripped of either shame or rebellion is the fairly neutral conclusion to which children from the middle ground are drawn.

The interesting observation is that when we come to the **sixth formers**, there is very little difference from Year 9. The only noticeable tendency is for those expressing strong agreement on the Beliefs and Values grid to become more sharply delineated. So the pupils at this end of the spectrum simply say that Adam and Eve got it wrong.

No Adam and Eve got wrong and did not appear to make victory for humanity MS3
Female (score 39)

Adam and Eve should be ashamed to die. They have not had any victory for humanity FS4
Female (score 56)

Adam and Eve should be ashamed because they didn't overcome their enemy, serpent, they went for their best interest and not others IS1 Female (score 58)

Or they opted for the view, familiar from the lower years that, once banished, you should try to make it up to God

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You can't die until you have won Gods respect, so in Adam and Eve it could have been a test by God to see if they won his loyalty and maybe God sent the snake to test Adam and Eve IS3 Female (score 63)

People are ashamed of dark thoughts and our fallen nature; feel unworthy of God until we do good. Links back to being kicked out of paradise IS5 Female (score 50)

Whilst this view is not entirely confined to this polarity (e.g. this reply from someone further away ó “*Adam and Eve and humans should be ashamed until they have sought redemption*” IS 9 male score 108), it is the linkage to shame or some sort of abiding obligation to God which is striking about the pupils who link themselves strongly with a distinctive set of values and beliefs. Below this strong agreement however it is difficult to distinguish ðatheistö from ðtheistö because both of them are happy with the idea of freedom and standing in your own humanity, so the following quotations *from a range of spirituality* are basically saying the same things.

They got knowledge for us FS10 Female (score 166)

Adam and Eve gave humans free will and the right to choose so they weren't ashamed to die IS4 Female (score 96)

If Adam and Eve had died without some repentance or 'victory for humanity' death would be a shame IS7 Male (score 109)

Adam and Eve have won the ability of free will within everyone, so now understand that they should be able to die FS7 Male (score 58)

Yes they risked their lives and endured punishment so we could live FS6 Female (score 69)

This last comment is prefaced by another commenting on the Damien Hirst sculpture, which suggests that God has been too tough on Adam and Eve

Maybe God is not proud of how he treated them so he wants them forgotten; only the story lives on (also FS6 Female score 69))

In many ways this picks up the idea expressed in the pictures of exclusion that there is a kind of heroic abandonment about Adam and Eve which appeals to sixth formers generally- or at least those who are not wholly wedded to the idea of guilt and shame at expulsion. They are going to have to live with their victory even if they are forsaken.

8.3.4 Themes to carry forward to the next chapter

The inclusion of death in the pictures section was with the expectation that, especially at the upper age range, they might evoke a discussion about finitude, the insecurity of life and the fact that there is no safety net. Perhaps there was also a hope that the pictures might polarise debate between those who reach out for the hand of God in the midst of their finitude and those who simply rage against the dying of the light. As it turned out there was polarisation of a different kind especially in the younger pupils between those who saw death as a shameful consequence of the fall with no victory and those who interpreted death as a kind of sad reminder of humans left abandoned by God. Whilst the pupils who had registered strong agreement on Beliefs/Values remain fairly fixed in their views, those registering strong disagreement in year 9, become more assertive in their belief that 'you have to do something before you die' and actually free-will and standing on your own two feet are important. Again at sixth form the same polarity expresses itself at one end in the belief that humans should be ashamed of themselves, whilst, at the other end, pupils tend to swap the robust self assertion of the year 9s for a more reflective attitude that Adam and Eve are tragic/heroic trail blazers for humanity's freedom without having to spit in God's face. The general current of responses, if such a current can be detected, is from a perception of death whose backdrop is God and judgement to one which is simply about Humanity making the most of life and living courageously. This is not far from the existentialist perceptions of authentic existence, the courage to be and religionless religion.

9 CONCLUSION FROM THE PICTURES SECTION OF THE RESEARCH DOCUMENT

If we plot a typical course through the pictures as we did earlier through the imaginative engagement with the Garden of Eden, it is probably not fair to track typical responses through the different schools. A fairer picture is gained from a broader brush stroke of the pupils' relative placing on the Beliefs/Values spectrum whichever their actual school. Whilst the 'strongly agreeing' in the younger years are mainly found in the Faith school and the 'strongly disagreeing' in the Maintained school, the distinction does not hold quite as true in year 9 and definitely not in the sixth form. The following typical youngsters therefore have to be imagined for the moment against a featureless background apart from their score on the Beliefs and Values Grid.

In the pictures of knowledge, the youngster with strong agreement score on the beliefs and values grid at **year 7** is clear about the message coming through. The triumph of machinery over greenery, the mushroom cloud in the middle of paradise both spell out the negative consequences of disobedience from God. The shining figure showing a man the warlike abyss below simply has to be the angel showing Adam what the future looks like and the future is bleak. By **year 9** this youngster is even clearer in his views though the awesome power of the nuclear bomb impinges most strongly on him. The bomb is an abuse of knowledge and a destructive consequence of expulsion from Eden. He is haunted by regret in years 7 and 9 and sees in the picture of Adam and Eve walking with their arms around one another a sadness which comes from falling out with God. Not quite believing that God is wholly punitive he is drawn to the picture of the slightly kinder angel in year 7 but overall, by year 9, simply veers towards the bleak picture of the couple struggling across a parched land, because it symbolises the barren landscape at the maximum distance from the verdant environment of Eden. This is the image which stays with him most strongly at **sixth form** though he is ambivalent about whether he should pursue the logical language of being punished for disobedience or simply indulge the feeling of being isolated and alone which is shared by many of his contemporaries, religious or not. When he sees the Damien Hirst picture his first inclination from year 7 to sixth form is that it shows the shame and terrible fate which ensued from Adam and Eve's disobedience. The picture of the rebellious man is faintly insulting to God because he is proclaiming at best a hollow victory, and even in the sixth form he will concede only that Adam and Eve may have

struck some blow for freewill but stops short of scoring points against God's righteous judgment.

The youngster at the strongly disagreeing end of the Beliefs and Values grid in **year 7** is drawn to the picture of the nuclear bomb because it is an awesome picture in itself without need of explanation or direct connection to the Eden story. He also likes the picture of the shining figure because this is *supposed* to be a religious story (very few of the pupils, religious or not, are attracted to the modern pictures of oil spills or spacecraft) and here is a religious picture. In fact it ties in with the nuclear bomb. The shining figure is offering the man some power. He still generally thinks this in **year 9**, maintaining his admiration for the sheer destructive power of the nuclear bomb. By **sixth form** he realises that knowledge can have its negative side but, in general, man-made science can order the natural world and it is right that nature is subordinated to knowledge in the picture of machinery and greenery. Eventually mankind will have Godlike power if he hasn't already. But talking about God raises the question of being 'kicked out' from Eden. This is definitely how he feels in year 7 (he feels abandoned) and increasingly in year 9. God has put them to the sword (the angry, punishing angel is a fair description of God) and now Adam and Eve must stick together and comfort one another because no-one else will. They don't want to go back to Eden, though it was an easier more secure place. They may be risking death but at least they can shake a fist at God and win some kind of victory for humanity. You've got to do something with your life before you die and man has awesome power at his disposal. By the time he is in sixth form he is fairly set in his view that man and women have to strike out across the desert of the world and be prepared to live courageously without looking back. Adam and Eve are his heroes for humanity against any claims that God might have 'ó even though this feels lonely and bitter at times.

10 RELIGION – THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STORY

10.1 Advance conclusions

The following table provides an overview of how the different year groups responded to the 4 versions of the theology of Adam and Christ

The figures represent raw numbers in each cohort	(1) Obedience disobedience		(2) Secure Insecure		(3) Powerful powerless		(4) Trust distrust	
	Best	Worst	Best	Worst	Best	Worst	Best	Worst
YEAR 7								
FS	8	3	3	4	7	7	2	8
MS	8	14	4	6	10	6	11	4
IS	0	5	1	0	5	1	2	2
YEAR 9								
FS	7	4	3	4	2	6	5	2
MS	10	9	6	2	1	9	9	6
IS	9	5	3	4	2	3	3	5
6th FORM	7	6	6	6	4	9	7	3

Figure 10-1: All Years reflection on Adam and Christ

A graphic way of displaying the choices is as follows. I have omitted the Year 7 IS choices (they are displayed in a later chart) because they were such low numbers.

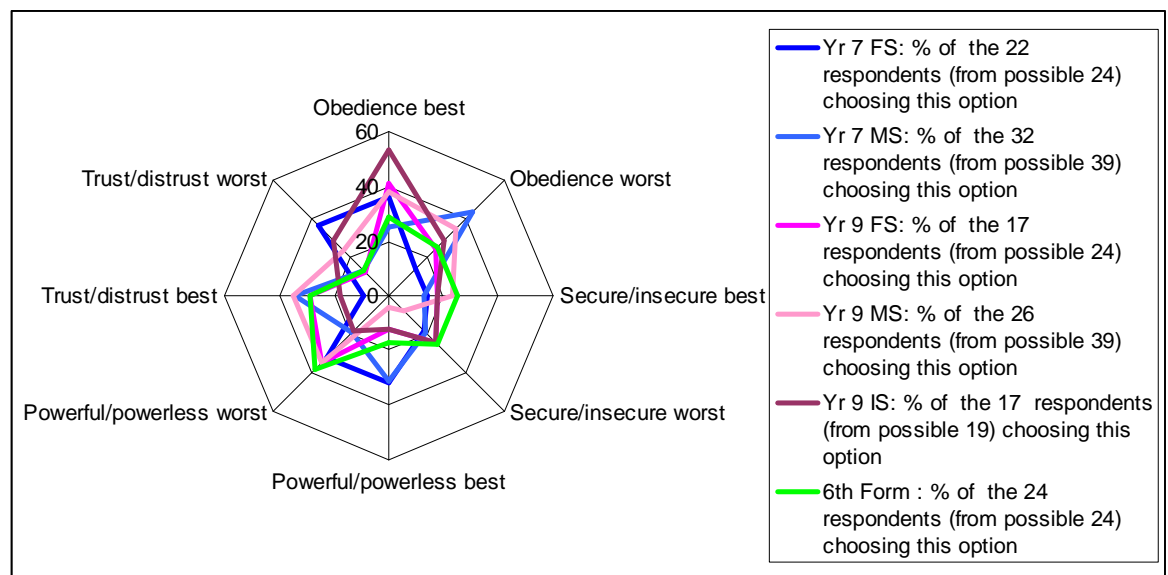


Figure 10-2 All years reflection on Adam and Christ - radar graph

In **year 7** there was a clear divide between the FS and the other two schools. The FS were clear that Christ's obedience was the objective counter-balance to Adam's disobedience and treated more 'touchy/feely' explanations with suspicion, especially the explanation which invited them to see trust/distrust rather than rule breaking as the best solution. The MS were completely the opposite – adamant in their opposition to obedience/disobedience (as were the IS) and most in favour of trust/distrust. All the schools were suspicious of any explanation which talked of insecurity or anxiety but were open to the suggestion (less so in the FS) that Jesus was an antidote to Adam's power hungry attitude.

In **year 9** the picture was much more complex. The obedience/disobedience paradigm retained its force with the FS as a default position, often without explanation, but many of the boys in the MS also voted for this – for a completely different reason, that it was the most *straightforward* explanation – 'cross the line and take the consequences'. Articulate opposition to this paradigm came largely from girls who disliked it, either because it offended their theological view of justice or because it was an attack on their unbelief. The other explanation (trust/distrust) was attractive to two sets of pupils again for two different reasons. For those who objected theologically to the obedience/disobedience model it was an escape route to a more kindly view. For those who disliked the feeling that the obedience/disobedience was coercing them into belief, the simple analogy of teenagers and parents seemed more 'normal'. The alternative explanations featuring insecurity or powerlessness were much less important in year 9.

In the **sixth form**, the obedience/disobedience solution was the great divider of opinion alongside the idea of power/powerlessness. In fact it was easier to track what they did *not* like than what they did. Whilst in the end they followed the year 9s in supporting the 4th option most warmly, for the religious this was an acceptable fall-back and for the less religious it was simply an uncontentious choice in much the same way that straightforwardly punitive views obviated the need for any deeper reflection.

10.2 Evidence from Year 7

The year 7 responses can be expanded from the overview table as follows

Year	Obedience/disobedience		Secure/Insecure		Powerful/powerless		Trust/distrust	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best (2)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst (3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)
YEAR 7								
FS 22 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	8	3	3	4	7	7	2	8
% of the respondents choosing this option	36.36	13.64	13.64	18.18	31.82	31.82	9.09	36.36
MS 32 out of the 39 possible respondents answered this section	8	14	4	6	10	6	11	4
% of the respondents choosing this option	25.00	43.75	12.50	18.75	31.25	18.75	34.38	12.50
IS 8 out of 15 possible respondents answered this section	0	5	1	0	5	1	2	2
% of the respondents choosing this option	0.00	62.50	12.50	0.00	62.50	12.50	25.00	25.00

Figure 10-3: Year 7 Adam and Christ

A graphic way of displaying the figures is as follows though there should be some wariness of the IS profile simply because of the low pupil numbers responding to this section.

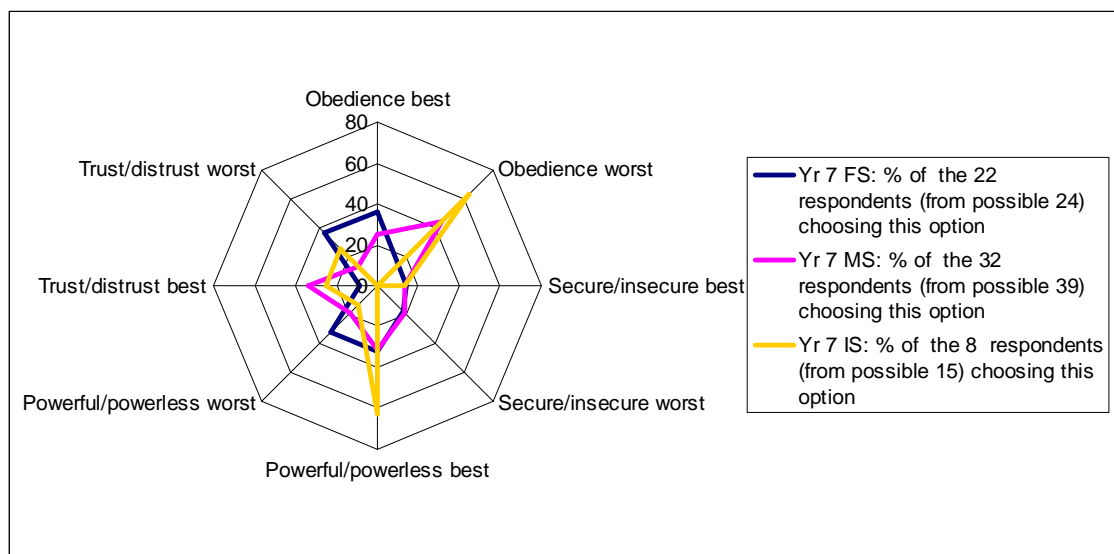


Figure 10-4: Year 7 Adam and Christ Radar graph

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The most striking point is that the Faith School like best the traditional explanation of Adam disobedience/Jesus obedience and dislike the explanation of trust versus mistrust. The Maintained School are precisely the opposite, liking 4 best and 1 least. The Independent School joined the MS in disliking 1 and had a preference for the statement about power and powerlessness.

The interesting thing is that the FS did not really come up with an explanation of why they dislike 4. In fact 2 of them suggested that they disliked 4 because "you should trust God" but this misunderstood what the description was saying, seeing it as part of the condemnation of Adam rather than an endorsement of Jesus. On balance they seemed to be implying that obedience not trust was the key to the theology. The pity was that so many put 4 as the worst explanation without writing why, and many put 1 as their first choice without explanation. On the other hand the children who broke ranks with the trend and voted against 1 were some of the most thoughtful/reflective. FS7 Female said that she "*didn't like the idea of Jesus obeying one little rule and getting in (to heaven) and Adam and Eve making a solitary mistake and not getting in.*" She put 4 first instead. Two boys FS 19 and 20 Male didn't like 1 because it "*didn't explain it right*" and "*it doesn't include enough information*". The only FS girl who came out very strongly in favour of 1 was also at the very top of the Beliefs and Values Grid. She wrote that 1 showed "*that everyone is not the same*" implying that she approved of a theology which emphasised division and judgement.

In the Maintained and Independent School the ***opposition*** to 1 was far more likely to be the theme than preference for their best choice 4 in other words 1 was the great divider.

This one makes no sense MS12 Female

I don't like number 1 as it is a brief explanation with no evidential background MS14 Female

We all do things wrong but we can make up for them MS20 Female

Dislike 1 because it is forcing you to believe in God MS23 Female

No it sounds awful and bias MS33 Female

Didn't like 1 it's way too simple MS33 Female

1 is too short of a description IS3 Male

It is too demanding on being perfect IS15 Male

The favourite alternative for the MS was precisely the least judgmental and most homely. The other 2 examples mentioned pop stars and dictators but the analogy in 4 was childhood trust and innocence.

The positive response here was evident

They disobeyed Gods rules you cant trust anymore, you're not a real family MS10 Male

4 is best because it explains more and is easy to understand MS20 female

Easy to understand MS31 Male

The few MS children who supported 1 tended to do so because it was about law and crucially it was simple to understand. They did not seem to be endorsing the religious implication.

I like 1 because it is right MS28 Male

I can understand it MS32 Male

I like it because I've always believed in it MS11 Male

The only theological *defence* of 1 came from a girl in the MS (MS15 female) who was one of very few children with *low* beliefs and values scores, *but* who both attended church and had relatives who did.

She wrote *God was upset with Adam and Eve so they got thrown out, however Jesus was trustworthy and did no sin*

Whilst 2 held very little interest for any of the children, number 3 had powerful support in all the schools with equal opposition in the FS but nowhere else. The theme of power did seem to be of interest especially to the IS children who had been interested in the allure of power in previous questions.

10.3 Evidence from Year 9

The basic preferences are shown in the chart below but any easy colour coding would be misleading since the choice of a particular theology appears, on inspection to be motivated by different interests amongst the pupils as we will see subsequently.

YEAR 9	Obedience/disobedience		Secure/Insecure		Powerful/powerless		Trust/distrust	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best (2)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst (3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)
FS 17 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	7	4	3	4	2	6	5	2
% of the respondents choosing this option	41.18	23.53	17.65	23.53	11.76	35.29	29.41	11.76
MS 26 out of 39 possible respondents answered this section	10	9	6	2	1	9	9	6
% of the respondents choosing this option	38.46	34.62	23.08	7.69	3.85	34.62	34.62	23.08
IS 17 out of 19 possible respondents answered this section	9	5	3	4	2	3	3	5
% of the respondents from all schools choosing this option	52.94	29.41	17.65	23.53	11.76	17.65	17.65	29.41

Figure 10-5: Year 9 Adam and Christ

Again a graphic display, on the next page, makes the figures clearer

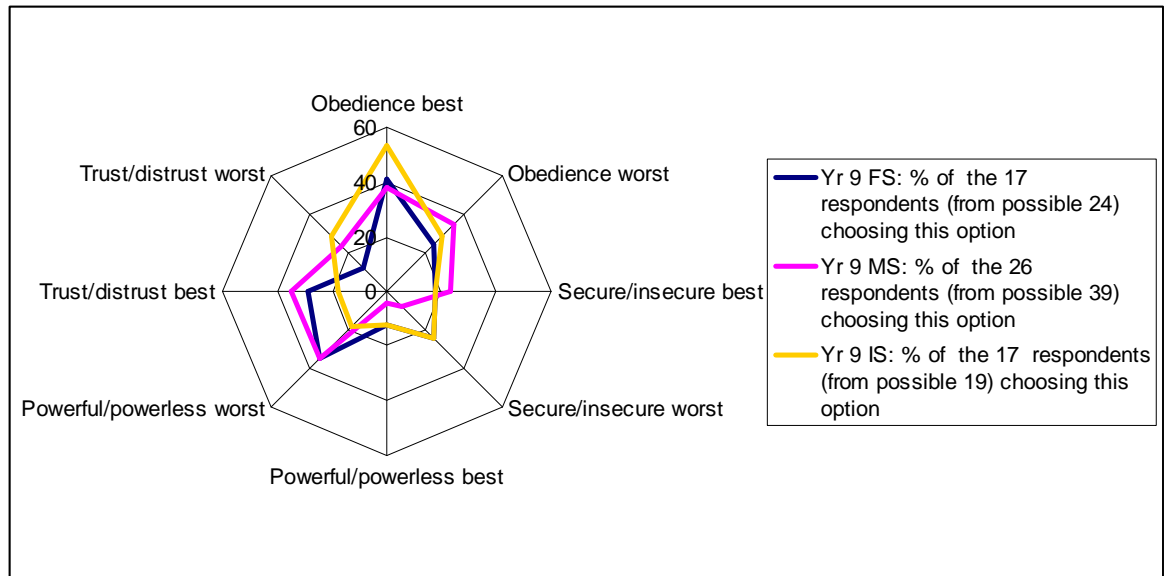


Figure 10-6: Year 9 Adam and Christ Radar graph

The most striking difference from the Year 7 responses lies in the relative acceptance of the obedience/disobedience paradigm of Adam and Jesus. In Year 7 the MS and the IS were markedly against this model with only the FS strongly in favour. In Year 9 we find that it is the strongest choice in every school and markedly so in the Independent School. The Maintained School maintains the strongest opposition to (1) but the balance has still swung towards agreement. On the face of it, this is not what we might expect. Given that (1) is the most juridical of the possibilities and mentions blunt punishment and reward we might expect Kohlberg's maturational structures to come into play implying that children become less wedded to black and white answers as they get older. But here is the opposite. When we look at the responses underlying the figures, the picture is more subtle however.

The pattern in the **Faith School** was the same as at Year 7. A number of people put (1) as their first choice but with no explanation of why they thought this. The one boy who expressed support did so because it was the simplest equation of Jesus and Adam

Like 1 because Jesus obeyed, Adam did not FS14 Male

In all, 5 out of the 7 responses in favour of (1) were boys

The 4 critics of (1) were all girls and 3 of them expressed their views

Don't like 1 because it says that God will punish people who don't follow God's rules and God must love everyone no matter what FS 9 Female

Don't like 1 because it does not mention forgiveness when Adam did something wrong
FS22 Female

Like 4 because he can't punish people in the way we think FS8 Female (in preferring
answer 4 to the implied punitive model of (1))

In other words the considered *opposition* to (1) was stronger than articulate support and came from girls. In Year 7 by contrast, much of the *support* for (1) in the Faith School came from girls but was not expressed in comments.

The suspicion that boys might be swinging the figures in favour of (1) with girls expressing the most opposition seems to be confirmed when we look at the MS and IS, both of which have a numbers imbalance in favour of boys (MS 14:25 Girls: Boys and the IS 6:13).

9 out of the 10 supporters of (1) in the MS are boys and 7 out of the 9 in the IS are boys, and they have their reasons

The first one is simple MS37 Male

I is quick and easy to understand MS30 Male

It made sense MS9 Male

It makes sense to me MS10 Male

I is very logical IS1 Male

I is simple and a good idea IS6 Male

Meanwhile the MS and IS girls, as in the Faith School, come up with most of the best opposition.

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God will punish anyone who doesn't believe in him and I don't believe in him MS31
Female

4 gives detail and evidence unlike 1 MS 13 Female

4 is simplified to an everyday experience MS16 Female (she appears not to like 1 because it is too theologised)

I think God would not punish someone just because they didn't believe IS17 Female

The few girls who *do* express support from the MS and IS are unusual. The girl from the Maintained School (below MS25) comes 23rd in the year group in the Beliefs and Values Grid (ticking every box for family and personal Christian commitment) and the girl from the Independent School (below IS13) is 3rd in the grid averaging less than 3 on the 1-10 scale with the admission that most of her family are religious and she attends church regularly (I also knew that she is from a family of 3 generations in the army, which might lend an extra layer of conservatism). Her comment below shows more than average awareness of the New Testament temptation narrative as well as the Adam and Eve story.

It's using Adam as a rep of all of us IS13 Female

Adam gave in to Satan's temptations but Jesus resisted and obeyed God MS25 Female

It doesn't follow however that faith is automatically conservative. All the girls (quoted above) who speak critically of (1) do so because they are challenging the theology *but from a position of faith*. IS17 female above is from a Catholic but non-practising background (beliefs and values score 112). FS9 Female and FS22 female have beliefs and values scores of 52 and 65 respectively and critique (1) from a practising Catholic background and (unusually in a Catholic school) an Anglican background of regular weekly attendance.

Opposition from boys however is mixed

One lad from a beliefs and values score of 138 sees (1) as an attack on his unbelief.

I like it (explanation 3) because it brings up the modern day. I don't like 1 because it is all explained and based on belief IS9 Male

And another is even blunter

Because I'm not dead and I don't believe MS20 Male (implying that he didn't like the threat of punishment for non-believers). His beliefs and values score was emphatically secular at 154.

Likewise support for (1) in the *Maintained School* tends to come from the most secular boys with beliefs and values scores entirely at the lower end between 160 and 170, in sharp contrast to the Faith School boys whose support comes from beliefs and values scores in the upper end. This may corroborate the feeling expressed about Year 7 that pupils from a faith background and pupils from a secular background, choose (1) for different reasons – the former latching onto a simple theological equation of Adam and Jesus, obedience and disobedience which they have probably heard in school and church, and the latter because it is the clearest exposition of crime and punishment which avoids the complications of the other answers.

An interim conclusion is as follows

- That the theology of (1) has a particular attraction for pupils from the Faith School and is likely to be a default position in the absence of any positive comment. Pupils in the other schools can be attracted to it especially if they have a family faith background and high beliefs and values score.
- That the Maintained School have a stronger hostility towards it.
- That girls in all the schools are more likely to articulate this hostility if it is articulated, unless they have strong faith reasons otherwise
- That boys from the Maintained School and Independent School are more likely to support (1) for its ease, clarity and logic rather than any deeper reason. Gender imbalance towards boys, within the Year 9 Maintained School and the Independent School is sufficient to swing the vote in favour of (1) but not enough to disguise a well articulated antipathy especially from the girls.

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The second highest score amongst all the schools went to explanation 4 which suggested that the problem with Adam was not so much disobedience as a loss of trust. Jesus meanwhile stands for trust renewed.

As we saw above, if people chose (1) as the worst explanation they were likely to give (4) as the best. Across all the schools, this was the case for 8 girls and 2 boys.

Some of the comments were very well-framed and 2 of the girls had chosen to expand their answers further.

FS9 Female says *“don’t like 1 because it says that God will punish people who don’t follow God’s rules and God must love everyone no matter what”* and then adds another comment *“.Adam and Eve should accept advice from God but they should live their own life how they want to and take any consequences from bad decisions”*

From the Faith School they seem to be saying that rules aren’t everything and advice rather than command works better in a relationship of trust.

Another girl from the Faith School thinks that Adam should not be judged too harshly which is why she takes exception to (1)

Don’t like 1 because it does not mention forgiveness when Adam did something wrong
FS22 Female. She then adds

Adam was tempted by the snake and in the end he gave in to it. Jesus was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights in the desert by the devil but he resisted

In the Maintained School, another girl (MS13 Female) who chose 4 against 1 wrote an additional comment

God trusted Adam and Eve. They disobeyed him and broke the trust between themselves and God, they were banned from the garden and forced to leave

MS14 Female wrote that she had chosen (4) because 4 was a really good description involving everything from the true story.

At the same time she was aware of the relativistic nature of all the explanations

No there isn't any right or wrong version because no one has actually witnessed the true story

Two of the Maintained School girls said plainly that they like (4) because it was the closest to real life

4 is simplified to an everyday experience MS16 Female

It relates to actual life now MS19 Female

The boys who ventured an explanation of why they chose 4 are much less clear or at least less detailed.

Explanation 4 as it's the clearest MS32 Male

It shows how others are more powerful and you must obey them IS7 Male

All humans are impure and evil and conscious and anxious because there are humans that aren't IS11 Male

The last 2 interpretations are very difficult to follow. I take them to mean them that life is a bit more complicated and humans a bit more frail than rules alone will cater for.

The clear conclusion from this section is that people choose 4 either as a theological escape from the other options, especially (1), or because it relates most clearly to teenage situations of mistrust. Most striking is their lack of interest in explanations 2 and 3 which suggest that anxiety or the thirst for power might illuminate the Adam/Jesus parallel. In Year 7 there had been considerable interest in explanation 3 but this has all but evaporated except for a consistent criticism from various pupils that Adam, in their view, was *not* trying to be God, so the description was unfair. (FS2 Female, FS21 Female and IS5 Male). Explanation 2 gained most support from the Maintained School but with little comment. Those who did comment were attracted by the ease with which they related it to daily life and possibly celebrity culture.

It describes it to be the most believable MS5 Male

I think I believe in a mix of 4 and 2 MS27 Male

By contrast a Faith School girl chose 2 against 1 because she felt that the emphasis on frailty rather than culpable disobedience was better

It shows humans as scared and needing guidance FS23 Female

This section has been dealt with in some detail because it touches upon a number of theory-based concerns

The first is that of religious literacy. Pupils who opted for or against (1) had a number of profiles. In the Faith School, pupils either chose it because it was their default position or criticised it because the theology was found wanting, but the motive is theological in both cases. In the MS and IS there are other factors at work. Opting for (1) did not seem to be *theologically* informed but might be informed by prevailing views in society on fairness or punishment. Where pupils voted for (4) the motives also differed. Did they relate to this explanation because it was the closest to their experience as teenagers or was it theologically informed as a better alternative to (1)?

The second is that of development.. When the boys simply commented that they had chosen something for simplicity's sake or logic's sake, is this simply a gender difference or are they less mature (in Kohlberg's terms) than the more thoughtful girls? Against Fowler's stages of faith, does the dilemma over (1) indicate a maturing approach as they reject simplistic codes of offence and punishment?

The third is the relative strength of cultures which appear to be playing on students. When a pupil gives a comment which is unusual in her context and we then discover that this seems to tally with an unusually high or low reading on the Beliefs and Values Grid ó how seriously should we take this and what does it mean? The present evidence seems to suggest that family and religious background can produce counter-cultural effects especially in the Maintained School. On the other hand, it could be that a prevailing secularism in society at large is responsible for the moderation of stringently religious

views in the Catholic school, alongside any maturational effects or changes induced by a broader religious literacy.

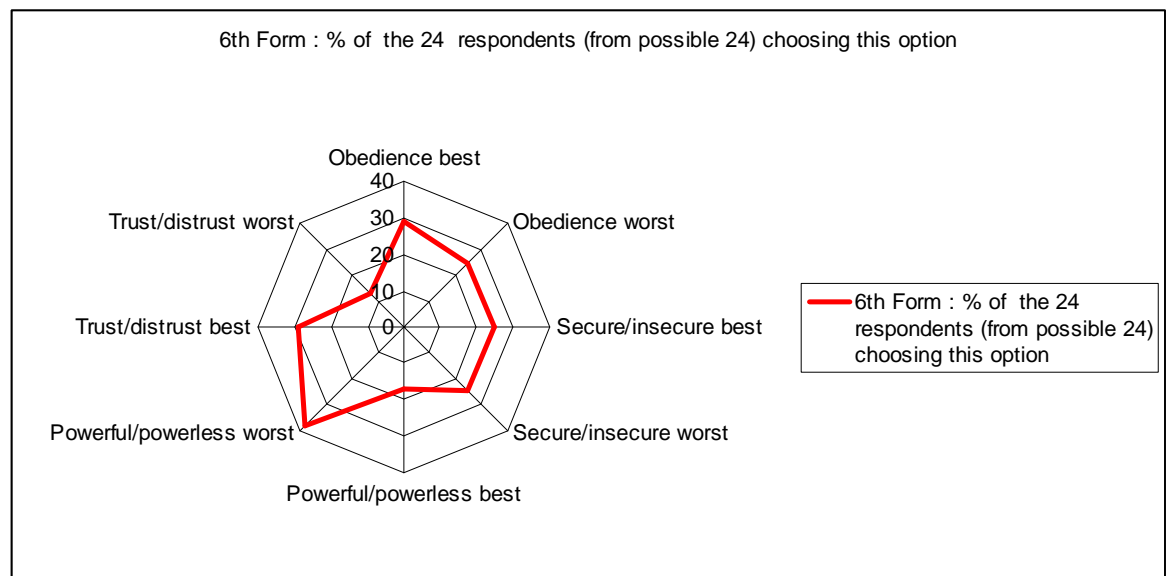
10.4 Evidence from the Sixth form

Again the extrapolation from the larger table has to be treated with caution because the figures require explanation.

	Obedience/disobedience		Secure/insecure		Powerful/powerless		Trust/distrust	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best (2)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst (3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)
6th Form 24 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	7	6	6	6	4	9	7	3
% Of the respondents answered this section	29.17	25.00	25.00	25.00	16.67	37.50	29.17	12.50

Figure 10-7: Sixth Form Adam and Christ

The graph makes the choices clearer.



The first thing we find is that the surprisingly high vote for option (1) in **the sixth form**, disguises the same ambivalence as we saw in Year 9.

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One of the conservative Christians opts for it because she understands the whole Adam and Eve story as basically about punishment.

1 is about punishment. 2 doesn't have anything to do with the point FS3 Female

On the other hand one of the liberal Christians opposes it fiercely on theological grounds

Dislike (1) because it portrays a God that is unjust and is prepared to punish people for exercising their free will IS6 Male

Equally one of those who registered the strongest disagreement on the Beliefs and Values scale, opposes (1) because

Dislike the thought of God punishing anybody who doesn't believe in God IS8 Male

One of the most interesting replies came from a Faith School girl who put 1 *or* 4 as best choice and commented

You must be worthy of trust, it works both ways, obey God and you will be rewarded FS 9 Female. She was evidently trying to tie together an essentially legalistic theme with one of relationship.

One of the most significant debates in the sixth form answers circled around the question of God's power, and option 3 attracted hostility from students at both ends of the Beliefs and Values scale.

IS11 male simply stated baldly that "*God is not powerless*" in rejecting 3

Two of those who expressed strong disagreement on the Beliefs and Values Grid also objected

Dislike 3 as Jesus supposedly doesn't see God as being all powerful FS5 Male

In 3 Jesus didn't do God justice FS8 Male

Both of these boys put (1) as their best choice, confirming the suspicion that some of the more secular respondents prefer legal clarity and God to remain God in a conventional sense even if they do not have a personal faith.

A more conventional answer, more in line with the boys in Year 9 and also putting (1) first and (3) worst was

I is a simple explanation Adam was not trying to be like God he just made a mistake FS7
Male

Or

Comparing a small mistake to a ruthless dictator (is wrong) MS2 Female

And another, approving (3) without actually understanding it, was

3 shows Adam as a dictator and Jesus as an obeyer of a dictator being God IS2 male

By contrast, however one girl who was just below the cut off line for the highest beliefs and values score, votes *for* (3) on the grounds that it is a

*Better interpretation, I like the idea of God being all powerful and **Jesus doesn't see this***
(my bold italics) FS4 female

The upshot of this debate is that there are certain ideas which challenge secular and religious people to the core. The clear impression from the sixth form answers was that here was an idea which evoked serious challenge, like (1) and it could not simply be let go. Reaching beyond the insights of Year 9s, at least 3 of these young people sensed that the power or powerlessness of God might be a deeply serious issue.

In all, 10 comments were trying to make sense of (3) and another 5 challenged or approved of (1). This is a large expenditure of energy from sixth formers nearing the end

of a long research document, notwithstanding their interest in RS. By contrast, seven students put (4) as their first choice but used the comment not to justify (4) but to reject the different alternatives. The simple explanation of trust/distrust seemed not to require any defence and was acceptable to religious and secular alike. This recalls the theoretical model suggested by Vygotsky that knowledge proceeds as much by dissonance and conflict as it does by resonance with existing ideas. (4) Was the easy option, (1) and (3) created the challenge.

Again we may be able to detect a difference in maturity here. Whilst the Year 7s and 9s have got a fair idea of whether they support (1) or feel discomfort at it, they are less well equipped to think about (3). Even so, some of the sixth formers are clearly struggling!

10.5 Themes to carry forward to the next chapter

In Year 7 we found that the Faith School liked the traditional balance of Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience whereas the other two schools rejected that option mainly because they detected a theology of acceptance only if you believed in God. In reaction, the Maintained School chose the familiar (and more secular) analogy of teenagers ill at ease in the presence of parents (option 4) and saw that Adam's main fault lay in seeking after power (this had been their main understanding of the pictures they had seen earlier). **In Year 9** the picture changed with all three schools giving a 'yes' to option 1 but for different reasons. The Faith School for the same default theological reasons as Year 7 (the more liberal theologians providing articulate critiques however) the Maintained and Independent Schools because it was the simplest and most straightforward, especially in a year dominated by boys (the girls providing the strong opposition to this view). Religious and secular alike voted heavily *against* option 3 about power either because they misunderstood, and thought that Jesus was being compared to Hitler or because God's power was non-negotiable and they didn't like the idea of powerlessness, or because they felt that Adam was being treated unfairly because he was *not* on a 'power trip' when he took the apple. The 'trust/distrust' option provided a welcome escape route to children from the FS and MS but not the IS who seemed to prefer the straightforward logic of obedience/disobedience and whose interest in autonomy perhaps did not attract them to the 'trust' option. The Maintained School meanwhile broke ranks with the other two schools and picked on the analogy of celebrity culture as a means of understanding Adam and Jesus, perhaps again because it reflected some of their current 'grammar' . **The sixth**

form, meanwhile reflected the same mixed reasons for choosing option (1) but regarded option 3 about God's power as even more intellectually challenging. Meanwhile option 4 proved attractive not in itself but as an anodyne alternative to other options, for religious and secular alike.

So much for a general description. The question is how to get above the array of detail in these responses. In previous chapter conclusions there has been an attempt to draw stereotypical characters into service to exemplify the most likely avenues that they might take in their thinking ó especially taking into account their background whether religious or secular. This becomes more difficult in the present chapter because no longer are we tracking unforced responses to material which admits of different interpretations (we agreed that the pictures for example did not shout a particular meaning and that pupils brought meaning to them rather than from them), but suggesting very precise interpretations of the story which force the young people to take a position with regard to them. The emphasis is therefore on what the interpretation does to the pupil, and some interpretations undoubtedly provoke much more reaction than others. Explanation 11 ..

“Adam disobeyed God’s rules so God threw him out. Jesus obeyed God’s rules so God let Jesus back into paradise along with everybody who believes in him, but will punish anybody who doesn’t believe or obey God.”

11 .. produced a particularly interesting shape

Those who from their beliefs and Values scale and from subsequent comments, revealed themselves to be religiously sensitive had two responses. If they supported the statement they very often did not explain why. This suggested that it was an automatic rather than reflective response except amongst some highly (conservative) religious in all years who knew why they supported it. If they opposed it, it was for theological reasons. They didn't like (1) because there was something in it which offended their view of God. Again these young people either knew why they didn't like it or just felt that something wasn't quite right. Their expression was better by gender (the girls were more reflective) and age.

Those who could be classed more secular also had two responses. If they supported the statement it was because it was a simple equivalence of crime and punishment which struck them as economical and basically correct. If they opposed the statement it was because they felt they were being propelled into a belief in God that they didn't like, and

chose an alternative view which demanded less of them. Again, many of them were not clear why they felt uncomfortable but by gender and age the arguments got clearer.

One important conclusion from these observations is that both faith and lack of faith go in search of understanding when they are confronted with something which both challenges them and gives them a grammar with which to articulate their support or opposition.

This is further illustrated by the sixth form who begin to realise that the statement about power and powerlessness might also pose a challenge. For the conservatively religious a powerless God rattles their view of a deity who can judge and punish, so they oppose it. For the more liberal religious it offers a theological solution to a problem they have been struggling with, namely the question of whether God is a tyrant, so they support it. For the non-religious it may help to bring the story into the modern day which effectively reduces the story to a human myth so they can support it. Or they oppose it in solidarity with Adam, who, in their view never wanted to be God but simply made a solitary mistake which was punished too much and reinforces their sense of outrage against God.

But without the interpretations of the story before them there would be no grammar of expression, and indeed we have seen that even with the grammar in front of them, there is no necessity to get beyond their default positions of faith or non-faith and no need to see a challenge in the words. This would be a bit like singing 'Jerusalem' with great gusto without realising that the words commit you to a weird belief that Jesus once came to England. Both atheists and theists can sing it with equal enthusiasm. But once you do realise the implications of the words, do you stop singing with such enthusiasm or do you continue to let the tune sweep you along so long as you don't think about it too much. The answer from the preceding evidence is that pupils begin to be less enthusiastic about the 'song' when they are illuminated by an interpretation of the words which points up the 'wrongness'. The most interesting aspect of paradigm (1) was the way in which it split conservative and liberal religious pupils and provoked an even fiercer response from students who were already hostilely predisposed to the story. On the other hand there were students who continued to sing the song without looking at the words too closely – both the religious pupils who accepted without thinking a normative contrast between the old Adam and the new for religious reasons and the non-religious students who accepted the contrast with equal alacrity because it fitted a secular view of punishment and redress. These responses however raise a much deeper question about the relationship between narrative and theology. If the narrative itself still exercises control over the kinds of theological ideas which can be held about the narrative, nevertheless some theological reflections can

be drawn so tightly that they restrict the multi-dimensionality of the original story and polarise responses around a single interpretation of the story rather than the story itself. In other words, whilst theology crystallises some of the issues raised by the narrative it cannot hold them in the same fruitful tension as the original and runs the risk, like Victorian palaeontology, of classifying fossils in such a way that re-classification under a different (say Darwinian) system becomes well-nigh impossible. The real interest of the present thesis is that having seen a fresh, spontaneous response to the narrative engendered by family and school culture, in the opening sections of the research instrument, these immediate responses then come hard up against stylised theological extrapolations which have a higher demand. The trick is to observe what happens when pupils' views bounce off these harder edged interpretations or use them as a means of articulating the thoughts which had been implicit in their earlier responses but could not be properly 'framed' until they had the words. Can we discern, in other words, the processes by which pupils reject some options, warm to others and come to an eventual view? This leads us to the next chapter but also prompts the necessity for a further chapter which tracks real rather than stereotypical children across all their responses to the research document to see how they reach an interpretation which is satisfying to them.

11 OVERALL MEANING

11.1 Advance conclusions

This section of the research document was an attempt to refine further the possible meanings that pupils might be drawn to as explanations of the original narrative. It was a refinement especially in that it required them to identify not only their best interpretation but the one they viewed as the worst and the rest ranked between. As the last act of interrogating the narrative it was useful in pushing the young people into a final answer ó with the one draw back that they might not want to be pushed. Arriving at the end of a lengthy research document it was perhaps a step too far. In year 7, 7 out of 23 in the FS, 9 out of 39 in the MS and 8 out of 15 in the IS *failed to answer at all*, whilst in year 9 the figures were 11/23, 21/39 and 2/19 respectively. These numbers don't seem to respond to any particular interpretation and are probably normal range for pupils whose focus is beginning to wane. More interesting are the figures from those pupils who *did* respond but simply scribbled down the numbers rather than writing any comment. Typically it was the boys. This is well illustrated by the MS who had a number imbalance (25:14) in favour of boys in year 9 and only 4 out of 18 responses had comments attached, whilst in year 7 where the balance (27:10) was in favour of girls the response rate was much higher ó 24 out of a possible 29. On the other hand, in year 9 there is still an extreme paucity (4/21) of response in the MS, when we consider that 14 out of a possible 17 replied with comments in the independent school and 10 out of a possible 11 commented in the Faith School, so we have to consider the possibility that by the end of the research document, faced with difficult theological questions, the most secular school was simply not prepared to engage as fully as the other two and that this is not entirely explained by the gender bias.

Overall the responses to a final interpretation of the narrative followed the structure laid down by the previous section.

In **Year 7** the most noticeable difference lay between the FS and the MS. The FS detected that option 4 (about angst) and particularly option 5 (courageous living without God) were secular options and decisively rejected them in favour of interpretations which supported rules and consequences. The MS, whilst preserving a liking for rules and consequences, gave their top vote to risk taking and growing up (option 3) with the most articulate defence of this option coming through their comments. Elsewhere however, their

articulation of ideas was not so good, implying an unfamiliarity with the grammar which might have helped them do this.

In **Year 9** the results require closer inspection because of the lack of comment from the MS, as mentioned above. However whilst the FS showed a certain drift towards risk (option 3) rather than rules and consequences, they were still opposed to the secular alternatives, with only occasional girls breaking ranks and considering more liberal approaches. Meanwhile the boys in the MS piled heavily into interpretations of the story which were straightforwardly about rules/consequences but especially heavily rejected the angst interpretation. This seemed a rejection of the whole process of reflection because it implied a self-absorption, guilt or insecurity that they simply didn't feel, in favour of the language of rules, penalties and consequences and risk. Even the atheist option 5 held minimal attraction. The IS meanwhile broke dramatically with the other 2 schools in a huge rejection of rules and a decisive vote in favour of risk taking and living courageously without God (the atheist option) ó in line with their earlier views on autonomy and their notable rejection of trust/distrust as a description of Jesus/Adam in the previous section.

In the **Sixth Form** there was a return to interest in rules, swung by a high second-best vote, but the most interesting shift was a first time vote of half the year group in favour of the angst option or the atheist option.

11.2 Overview of Years 7, 9 and Sixth Form

The purpose of the following chart is simply to give an overview of the response rate in the different schools and year groups and to track any ocean currents in the nature of response. In fact only one major current breaks through the mass of data(which in general requires closer discussion) and that is the gradual shift away from a rules and consequences mentality in the lower years towards a preference for risk and boldness in the later years.

Key: In the chart below I have high lighted in light yellow the shift in 1st preference votes across the years and in light blue the options which attracted the most opposition. Although I have noted the second best and second worst votes, it is important to use these sparingly in any conclusions since there is no accurate way of knowing how close a second best vote is to the first choice or how abhorrent the second worst is after the first worst.

Year	Rules		Consequences		Risks		Anxiety		Bold	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best (1)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst (3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)	Best (5)	Worst (5)
YEAR 7										
FS 17 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	4	4	6	1	2	1	3	5	1	7
% of the respondents choosing this option	23.53	23.53	35.29	5.88	11.76	5.88	17.65	29.41	5.88	41.18
MS 30 out of 39 possible respondents answered this section	8	7	6	2	9	8	4	7	1	6
% of the respondents choosing this option	26.67	23.33	20.00	6.67	30.00	26.67	13.33	23.33	3.33	20.00
IS 7 out of 15 possible respondents answered this section	1	3	2	0	1	3	1	0	2	1
% of the respondents choosing this option	14.29	42.86	28.57	0.00	14.29	42.86	14.29	0.00	28.57	14.29
Raw Numbers of 1st choices added up from all 3 schools	13	14	14	3	12	12	8	12	4	14
Raw numbers of 2nd best/2nd worst added up from all 3 schools	16	2	17	8	4	10	6	9	#	18
Addition of 1st and 2nd choices	29	16	31	11	16	22	14	21	11	32

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Year	Rules		Consequences		Risks		Anxiety		Bold	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best (1)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst (3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)	Best (5)	Worst (5)
YEAR 9										
FS 13 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	1	3	4	3	4	2	2	4	2	2
% of the respondents choosing this option	7.69	23.08	30.77	23.08	30.77	15.38	15.38	30.77	15.38	15.38
MS 18 out of 39 possible respondents answered this section	8	1	6	4	2	1	1	11	3	3
% of the respondents choosing this option	44.44	5.56	33.33	22.22	11.11	5.56	5.56	61.11	16.67	16.67
IS 17 out of 19 possible respondents answered this section	4	8	0	3	7	2	3	1	4	2
% of the respondents choosing this option	23.53	47.06	0.00	17.65	41.18	11.76	17.65	5.88	23.53	11.76
Raw numbers of 1st choices added up from all 3 schools	13	12	10	10	13	5	6	16	9	7
Raw numbers of 2nd best/2nd worst added up from all 3 schools	9	10	11	9	17	4	5	12	6	13
Addition of 1st and 2nd choices	22	22	21	19	30	9	11	28	15	20
6th FORM 24 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	7	8	4	4	1	2	5	5	7	5
% of the respondents choosing this option	29.17	33.33	16.67	16.67	4.17	8.33	20.83	20.83	29.17	20.83
Raw numbers of 1st choices	7	8	4	4	1	2	5	5	7	5
Raw numbers of 2nd best/worst choices	6	2	4	5	8	6	2	6	3	5
Addition of 1st and 2nd choices	13	10	8	9	9	8	7	11	10	10

Figure 11-1: All years overall meaning of the story

As suggested above, there seems to be an element of cross-over in the options that young people would choose or reject. By sixth form the year 7 suspicion of òliving our lives without any help from God or anyone else has changed to a positive option. Likewise the strong support for rules and consequences in year 7 has switched to a balanced suspicion

amongst the sixth formers. Behind this generalisation however, there exist genuinely different perceptions which the figures disguise. For now the generalisation is best expressed in a radar graph, where some of the differences stand out clearly especially in the western hemisphere of the diagram.

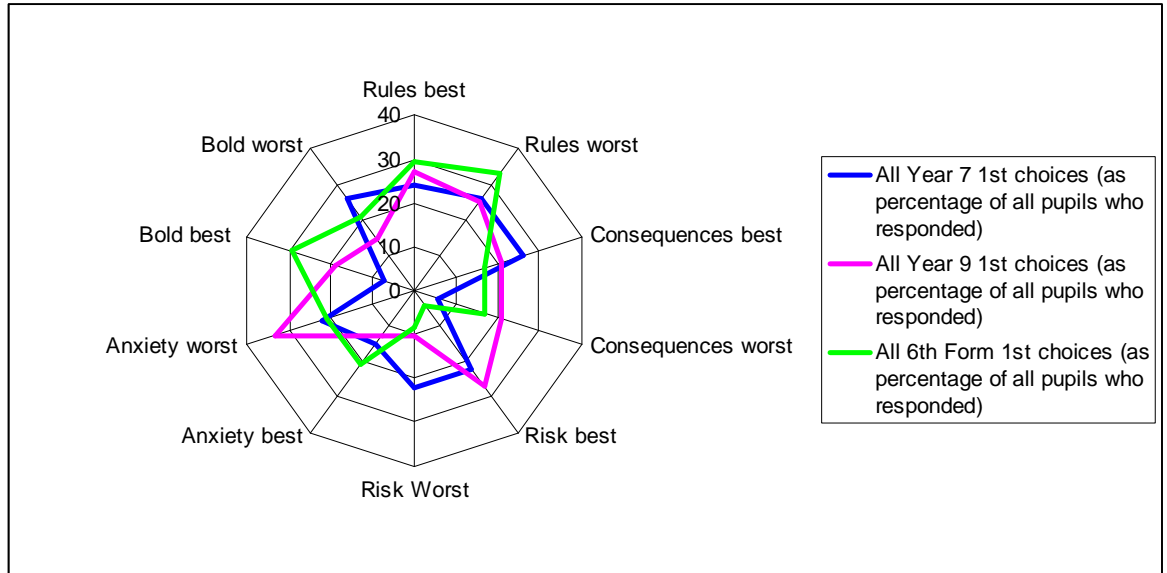


Figure 11-2 Radar graph of all years overall meaning of the story.

11.3 Evidence from Year 7

If we extrapolate just the year7 data from the chart above, it becomes clear where the votes of the year 7s lie.

Year	Rules		Consequences		Risks		Anxiety		Bold	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best(1)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst(3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)	Best (5)	Worst (5)
YEAR 7										
FS 17 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	4	4	6	1	2	1	3	5	1	7
% of the respondents choosing this option	23.53	23.53	35.29	5.88	11.76	5.88	17.65	29.41	5.88	41.18
MS 30 out of 39 possible respondents answered this section	8	7	6	2	9	8	4	7	1	6
% of the respondents choosing this option	26.67	23.33	20.00	6.67	30.00	26.67	13.33	23.33	3.33	20.00
IS 7 out of 15 possible respondents answered this section	1	3	2	0	1	3	1	0	2	1
% of the respondents choosing this option	14.29	42.86	28.57	0.00	14.29	42.86	14.29	0.00	28.57	14.29

Figure 11-3: Year 7 making sense of the story

Differently expressed, with the percentage of respondents rounded up to the nearest integer, we can see the following spread of response amongst the schools in year 7

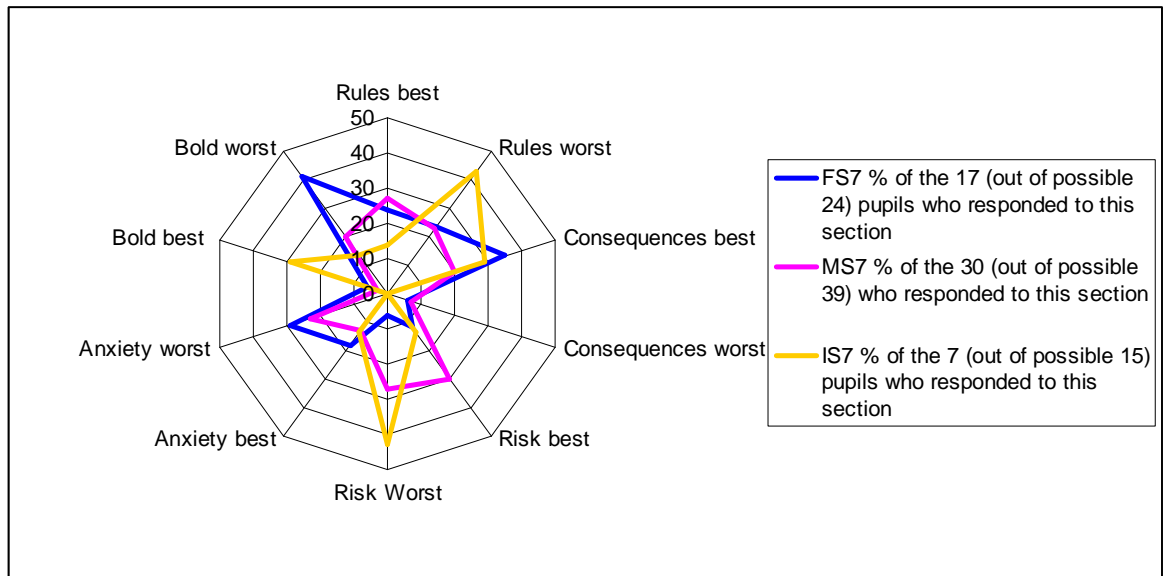


Figure 11-4 Radar graph of Year 7 overall meaning of the story

The most interesting statistic coming from the Faith School is the strong opposition to the atheist interpretation number 5 both as first worst and second worst. This was mirrored but less strongly in their opposition to an explanation which suggested loss and anxiety (number 4) which could also be interpreted as a secular view-point. Their most positive response was to the idea of consequences (description 2) which scored heavily on first best and second-best. The first description about rules and punishment divided pupils as a first choice but came a close second to consequences on the next best vote.

Whilst the Faith School obviously centred on answers 1 and 2 the Maintained School clearly put answer 3 about risks into the debate- coming top in the first choice vote BUT this answer also attracted big opposition and overall, answers 1 and 2 came out on top in the first and second first vote. On the other hand the written defence of answer 3 in the Maintained School was better than any other answer whilst the defence of rules was much less well articulated if at all.

Everyone takes risks and without risks life would be boring and we're just human MS 12 Female

I like it because I think it's a life lesson MS22 Male

It's the most reasonable MS25 Female

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It is right we are just children MS27 Female

It is true that they are like kids and they will take time growing in to grown ups and God can call them and treat them like adults MS 30 Male

People have to grow up and try things for themselves MS32 Male

Two of the most articulate defences of 1 came from girls who had defended the analogy of Adam disobedient / Jesus obedient in the previous theological question.

It is the most truthful and makes sense to me more MS15 female. This girl had an interesting profile in the Beliefs and Values Grid. Although her score was 126 (towards the unspiritual end) she answered yes to all the questions about whether she and her family were religious, so it is quite possible that (1) for her was typically the default religious position as we have seen in the Faith school.

The other articulate defence of (1) came from a girl with a beliefs and values score of 88 (towards the higher end) but she claimed no religious background.

It tells you to be good in life or you will face the consequences MS17 female

MS36 (score 161) and MS 38 (score 161) females however were more typical of 1ø defenders in saying that it was “*simple to understand*”. Compare this to the solitary defender of 5 (whose worst option was 1) who advocated a bold life irrespective of God, on the grounds thatí

It's what I believe in and is how I would like to live my life MS 21Female (score 124)

The Maintained School also had 6 pupils putting answer 5 as the second best answer and 3 of these 6 put the òriskö answer top ó perhaps indicating a greater preparedness to express a rebellion against rules and consequences.

One interpretation of this section is that rules and consequences played well in both the Faith School and Maintained School but probably for different reasons ó the Faith School deriving from a religious sense of obedience in opposition to perceived atheist or rebellious

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answers and the Maintained School deriving from ethical conservatism without a religious flavour and tempered with more support for risk and bold living as part of a process of growing up.

11.4 Evidence from year 9

Again if we extrapolate the figures from the bigger chart we can see where the votes lie

Year	Rules		Consequences		Risks		Anxiety		Bold	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best(1)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst(3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)	Best (5)	Worst (5)
YEAR 9										
FS 13 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	1	3	4	3	4	2	2	4	2	2
% of the respondents choosing this option	7.69	23.08	30.77	23.08	30.77	15.38	15.38	30.77	15.38	15.38
MS 18 out of 39 possible respondents answered this section	8	1	6	4	2	1	1	11	3	3
% of the respondents choosing this option	44.44	5.56	33.33	22.22	11.11	5.56	5.56	61.11	16.67	16.67
IS 17 out of 19 possible respondents answered this section	4	8	0	3	7	2	3	1	4	2
% of the respondents choosing this option	23.53	47.06	0.00	17.65	41.18	11.76	17.65	5.88	23.53	11.76

Figure 11-5: Year 9 making sense of the story

Differently expressed, with the percentage of respondents rounded up to the nearest integer, we can see the following spread of response amongst the schools in year 9

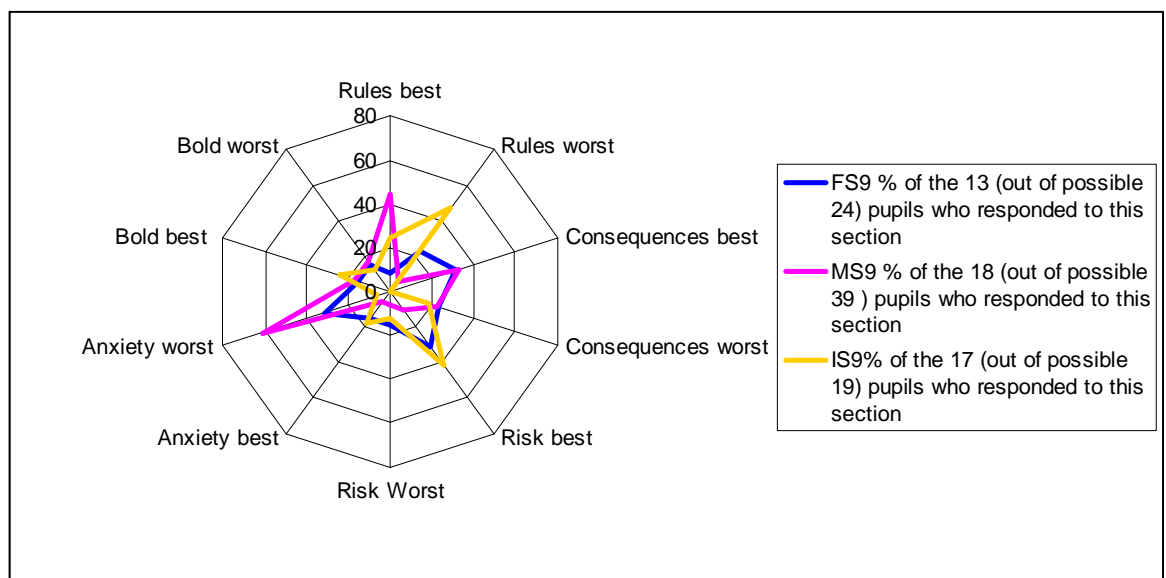


Figure 11-6 Radar graph of Year 9 overall meaning of the story

There were a lot of gaps in answering these final questions on the sheet, with the exception of the Independent School, so caution is needed. However there do appear to be some quite significant emphases where the percentage of response might reflect the kind of percentage we may have expected from the whole cohort.

The key features are as follows. **The Faith School** remained basically conservative. Although answer (3) about taking risks came top in the first choice slot, a lot of pupils put obedience to rules as their second choice. The boys especially seemed to take this tack.

FS6 Male says “*in life you have to take a few risks*” (answer 3) but puts (1) as his second best choice with the most secular answers (4) and (5) occupying last place.

FS15 Male and FS17 Male have the same combination but setting out from consequences (answer 2) as top choice with 1 as second best and 4, 5 as worst.

Several of the girls followed a similar pattern ó generally avoiding the secular alternatives (4) and (5) but happy to toy with (2) or (3) and naming rules as the second favourite e.g.

FS20 female	3	5	1,4,2	it makes more sense than every other one
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Figure 11-7: Individual Year 9 answer to "meaning"

A group of girls however started in a different direction. 3 of them cast (1) as the villain and their second worst was the equally conservative consequences (answer 2) and favouring (3) (4) or (5) as their top interpretation of the story.

So a typical pattern from these girls would be as follows

Pupil	Best	worst	next best/middle/worst	comment
FS8 female	4	1	3,5,2	it tell you about having advice but living your own life
FS2 female	5	2	3,4,1	it explains what life is about making decisions for ourselves
FS9 Female	3	1	5,4,2	

Figure 11-8: Year 9 FS girls & the meaning of the story

The conclusion is that the Faith School, with some notable exceptions, mainly girls, *looks* as though it has liberalised but culturally hasn't shifted much.

By contrast, the **Maintained School** on the face of it, votes overwhelmingly for the 'conservative' answers and strongly against the 'Godless' answer (5). By far the most interesting fact however is that *only 4* out of the 18 who answered at all (out of the 39 who could have done so) made any *comment* whatsoever. Furthermore 16 out of the 18 responses were from boys, only 2 girls answered at all. The 4 responses in total were as follows

MS4 male	2	1	3,4	it gives you more information
MS16 female	4	2	5,3,1	it is simple, I understand the story to be
MS30 male	2	5	1,5,4	if you don't know the consequences don't do it
MS38 male	5	2	3,4,1	explains story in detail

Figure 11-9: Year 9 MS responses on the meaning of the story

The descriptions of *why* they chose these answers is sparse, but on examination they do show consistency with previous answers

MS4 Male had answered the previous section with the words

"I like it because it sounds right" where, as here, he had listed the punitive model of Adam/Jesus as the worst option but this reveals little of his thinking apart from the surmise that (1) had overt religious content whereas (2) did not.

MS16 Female had answered the previous question with

4 is simplified to an everyday experience (the trust/distrust answer) and again had rejected the punitive answer as the worst

MS30 Male had gone for the punitive answer in the previous section on the grounds that

I is quick and easy to understand

So his basically rules and consequences approach in this section is understandable

MS 38 Male didn't answer the previous question but his parting comment to God on exiting the garden was

The trees weren't cursed and the serpent was right

His choice of the 'atheist' answer here is entirely consistent, putting the (2) and (1) answers worst and second worst respectively

Granted the overwhelming preponderance of boy respondents over girls we might expect the same pattern favouring rules and consequences which we had seen in the previous section and this is what we find in the raw *numbers* but of course without the additional *comments* which might have corroborated it. Equally understandable is the extraordinary vote against explanation 4 which described the story as primarily about regret and anxiety. 11 (all boys) out of the 18 respondents, had labelled it as the worst option and another 5 (also all boys) had put it as second worst. The only person who made it top choice was a girl and 2 out of the 3 who placed it second best were girls. This raises interesting questions about a theological theme which has dominated the latter part of the 20th century – that it has apparently little appeal in the modern day and especially not to boys of a certain age. It is also interesting that where boys broke ranks with the male trend to value rules and consequences and opted instead for something more overtly agnostic, they chose 5 (a story about how we should be bold enough to live our lives without God) but (2 out of the 3) with 4 being rated as their *worst* choice, even though it might have been considered a secular alternative. This again seems to confirm that there is a cultural stream going on especially amongst the boys at the Maintained School which is simply resistant to anything which invites them into a dualist framework of considering their existence as a 'fall' from

something else. *There is this life and there are rules and consequences, nothing more, or simply an imperative to be tough in a tough world.*

Alongside this observation is the fact that the lack of responsiveness to this final section is itself significant. The MS children were not as *motivated* (a la Pintrich & Vygotsky) to engage with hard cognitive interpretations of a story, especially perhaps, when they became aware of what they were signing up to. Whilst it was still a story their responses could be unforced and unconscious to the extent that there was no pressure to align with one interpretation rather than another and where the story could still be story rather than a 'religious' story.

Finally we come to the **Independent School** which not only had a high response rate but parted company with the other two schools in almost all respects.

The most significant feature was the opinion that human beings had to take risks. 14 out of the 17 respondents put this as their first choice or second best choice. Their reasons were as follows

It explains life the best IS12 Female

It just makes the most sense IS17 Female

It's right IS8 Male

I agree that it will make you stronger. If you never risk anything you won't know what it's about and they will never know the consequences IS18 Female

They are only human IS4 Female

It's true IS13 Female

It's noticeable however that the pupils who came out most strongly in favour were girls. In fact all 5 of the girls who replied, put this first choice (the split of girl/boy respondents was 5:12). The boys on the other hand divided between 'conservative' answers and strongly atheist answers.

Very like the Maintained School, the boys who put 1 first, did so because it seemed the simplest or most logical.

It seems to be true IS1 Male

It's very straightforward IS3 Male

It's correct I think IS 5 Male

You have to obey rules or there are consequences IS14 Male

The most important observation however is the marked contrast overall with the other two schools. On both rules and consequences, the Independent School registered very little support. Even more significantly 4 of the 5 boys, who chose the atheist answer 5 as their best choice, registered 1 or 2 as their worst. 5, in their view í .

It made the most sense IS2 Male

And wasí

The most truthful IS9 Male

So it is in their overall support for risk, their concerted rejection of rules and consequences and greater support (or at least *less* antipathy) for the ðatheistö answers 4 and 5 that the Independent School children are distinctive.

Conclusion on this section

All this confirms previous trends which suggest that the different schools follow a grammar of explanation which is most readily to hand. The **Faith School** follow a grammar which is reluctant to drop a religious language of absolute rules and consequences but will allow ðsafeö fall-backs like risk, rather than going for explanations which are overtly atheist or agnostic . The **Maintained School** has language of ðthis worldlyö rules which entail consequences but these are a *sufficient* explanation of life without resort to answers which imply a fall from grace or a rebellion against God ó simply

because these explanations are not on their radar. The **Independent School** espouses the individualistic answer of taking risks but is happy to see this as part of a bold atheism or over against a culture of rules and consequences. Another way of identifying these grammars might be to describe the Faith School as "under authority" the Maintained School "asserting their own authority and freedom from constraint" and the Independent School as "taking responsibility for their own autonomy".

11.5 Evidence from the Sixth Form

The extrapolation from the larger chart is not as informative as the earlier years because there is no division between the types of school ó the numbers being insufficient to make an effective comparison. However the figures remain useful if we use the *scores on the Beliefs and Values Grid* to make a guess at where the young people are öcoming fromö. First the table

Year	Rules		Consequences		Risks		Anxiety		Bold	
	Best (1)	Worst (1)	Best(1)	Worst (2)	Best (3)	Worst(3)	Best (4)	Worst (4)	Best (5)	Worst (5)
6th FORM 24 out of 24 possible respondents answered this section	7	8	4	4	1	2	5	5	7	5
% of the respondents choosing this option	29.17	33.33	16.67	16.67	4.17	8.33	20.83	20.83	29.17	20.83

Figure 11-10: Sixth Form making sense of the story

Expressed graphically this presents as follows

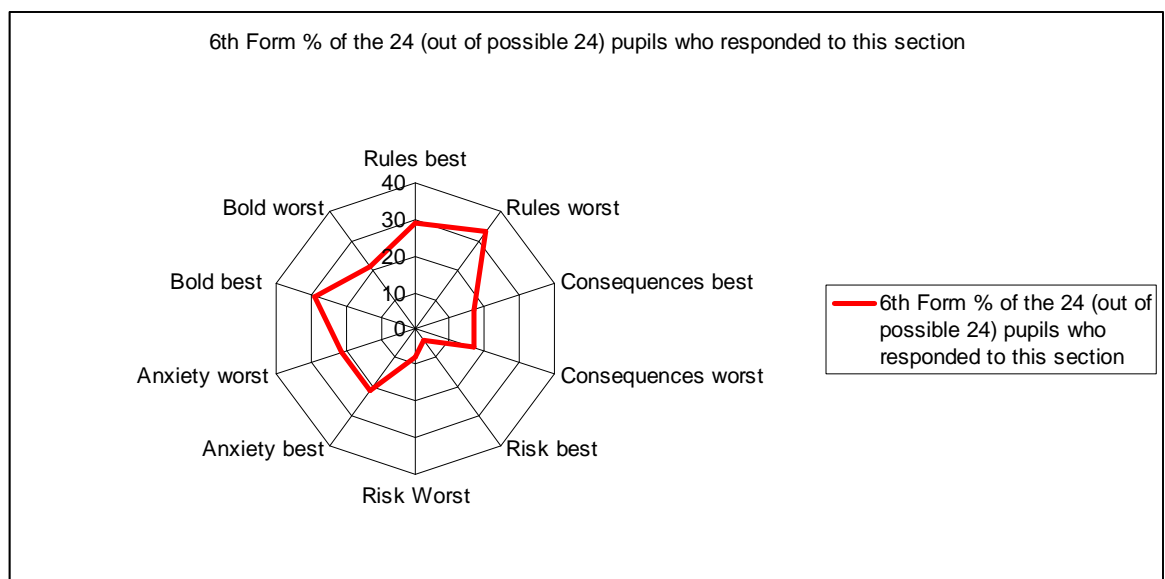


Figure 11-11: Radar graph of 6th Form overall meaning of the story

The sixth formers were unusual of course in another significant way, in that they had all opted into an RS A level and this further reduced the likelihood of meaningful difference between the schools. The usual gender difference held however in that girls were more likely to have stronger agreement scores on the Beliefs and Values grid, as we can see in the following chart.

Whole of sixth form: % of whole group. Group size 12 girls, 12 boys	Girls	Boys	Girls % in each division: Cumulative	Boys % in each division: Cumulative
Percentage of pupils in Strong agreement (Scores 1-51 on the Beliefs/Values grid)	33	8	33	8
Moderate agreement: Scores 51-85	42	33	75	41
Moderate disagreement. Scores 86-119	17	33	92	74
Strong disagreement. Scores 120-170	8	26	100	100

Figure 11-12: Sixth Form Beliefs/Values grid profile

Whilst 8 out of 12 girls cluster at the 'stronger agreement' Beliefs and Values score, the boys split evenly between top and bottom with most clustering around the midpoint with 3 boys occupying the bottom four places.

There the normal expectations end however. 3 out of the 4 *strongest disagreement* beliefs and values scores come from Faith School sixth formers and the strongest disagreeer is doubly unusual in being a girl *and* from the faith school. In addition it is noticeable that only 5 of the 24 students replied 'Yes' to questions of personal religiosity and 4 of these were in the cohort of 5 students who occupied the top beliefs and values scores from the grid.

We might therefore expect answers from this cohort which are not school specific or background specific but do agree with their Beliefs/Values scoring whilst not being uniform.

Three of the 5 sixth formers with top agreement scores and personal religiosity connections, opted for the conservative explanation (**option 1**) of 'Don't break rules or you'll get punished'. Their explanations were as follows

True life story MS2 Female

That is how I see the Adam and Eve story to be most like. To me I see the tree of temptation as a real test from God not just an observation. To me mankind failed God therefore we must live with the consequences MS3 Female

a warning about punishment, not just a story saying we all do wrong, there is no point to the story if people don't get any guidance from it FS3 Female

In sharp contrast, another of this top 5 comes up with completely the opposite point of view. In choosing **option 5** (It's a story about being bold enough to live our lives without any help from God or anyone else), he writes

It puts some faith in humanity IS 6 male

He was the one who expressed a critical note in his opening analysis of the story and later, when debating the Adam and Jesus connection argued against a simple obedience/disobedience model on the grounds that he

Disliked it because it portrays a God that is unjust and is prepared to punish people for exercising their free will.

This person who rates high on the Beliefs and Values Grid is clearly making a theological defence of human freedom against conservative explanations which describe God as a bully. As a religious person you can still 'have some faith in humanity'

The 5th member of this top group (IS 6 Female) who had again seen the existential implications of the narrative (above) opted for 'it's a story about loss and regret and anxiety' (option4) but unfortunately made no comment on why she did so. Elsewhere however she had linked universal human feelings of shame to the original myth as follows

“People are ashamed of dark thoughts and our fallen nature; feel unworthy of God until we do good. (This) links back to being kicked out of paradise”.

In these 5 replies we seem to have thoughtful and indeed deeply religious responses but coming from very different stables. Three are conservative religious who expect the bible to have a literal and direct truth. The other two expect the narrative to deliver not direct moral messages but a kind of commentary on the human condition. In this respect, they end up much closer, but for different reasons, to 4 students at the **strong disagreement end of the Beliefs/Values grid** and personal religiosity table as follows:

3 of these 4 choose **answers 4** (anxiety and regret) or **5** (being bold enough to live our lives) for the following reasons

Number 5 because

It applies more to everyone FS8 male

Number 4 because

I believe it to be most true and most able to relate to IS8 Male

Number 4 because

I felt like the story of Adam and Eve is a myth making sense of humanity in the world. 4 fits with this FS10 Female

Like many of the boys in Year 9, the final member of the group goes for the ‘conservative’ answer 1, not for any great existential resonance but simply because it is the most straightforward

Plain and simple rules, easy to understand FS 5 Male

The main point to be made about the sixth form answers is that they are much more likely than the younger years to choose **option 5** as the most satisfactory meaning of the narrative. In Year 7 there had been considerable opposition to this solution, a slightly more tempered opposition (4:3 against) to it in Year 9 and now in sixth form, nearly a third of

the students giving it their first vote with an equally balanced for/against on first and second votes combined.

Apart from the pupils already quoted above ó the other comments about 5 are revealing

At times in life we have to be independent and make decisions for ourselves regardless of our religion and beliefs MS1 Male

I do not believe that we need help from an external being that may not exist in order to have a good life MS7Male

It shows that humans shouldn't be dependent on another person but just themselves IS2 Male

Humanity can survive, we have to get over things and enjoy life IS7 Male

It's true IS9 Male

All five of those who voted 5 as the *worst* interpretation also put answer 1 or 2 (the most conservative answers) as their first choice, indicating a strong conscious awareness that 5 could be seen as opposing conventional religion.

The other interpretation which made ground in the sixth form was **option 4** (the story about loss and regret and an earlier golden age)

In the younger years it had met with strong opposition apart from the Independent School. Now numerically and proportionately it gets more on the first vote than any other cohort. Interestingly again it tends to be the IS students who vote for it (4 out of the 5 *first* votes) and 1 out of the 2 *second* votes ó possibly implying as we have noted above that angst is more likely to be part of the Independent School psyche. Some of the comments in favour are

It's true it covers all aspects of living through life IS4female

It co-ordinates with what I feel about God and what I believe in IS15 Male

As with the opposition to 5 the opposition to 4 comes from those who put the most conservative answer (1) down as their first choice, labelling 4 as the worst. This seems to confirm that 4 or 5 can appeal to liberal religious or atheist, but emphatically not the orthodox religious. The reverse is also true. Six of the pupils who put 5 as first choice, labelled 1 or 2 as their worst and four of those students who chose 4, labelled 1 or 2 as their worst. This opposition came equally from students across a wide spectrum of spiritual affiliation, just as the adherents of 1 or 2 could support laws and consequences from a religious *or* a humanist standpoint.

11.6 Themes to carry forward into the next chapter

It is difficult to hold onto the key themes in a chapter which necessarily involves complex discussion. However there is descriptive clarity and I think conceptual clarity.

On the *descriptive level* the following conclusions are certain.

In **Year 7** there is clear support for rules and consequences and an aversion to meanings based on risk, anxiety or bold rebellion.

In **Year 9** there is a clear move away from rules and consequences and much more support for risks as you grow up but still resistance to angst and rebellion (answers 4 and 5) except from the Independent School.

In the **Sixth Form** there is re-balancing in favour of rules and punishment, less certainty about consequences or risk and the highest first time vote for angst and rebellion.

The difference between the year groups is most evident in the response to answer 5 where opposition gradually softens until the 'atheist answer' appears much more acceptable as a proportion of the year group and more importantly across a spectrum of secular (as we might expect) and liberal religious. The general current is away from a hefty reliance on answers 1 and 2 in year 7 towards answers 3,4 and 5 in the later years.

Overall on the *conceptual level* this ties in quite closely with Kohlberg's thinking on maturational ethical stages, that an early insistence on rules, gives way with time to more considered 'upper stage' thinking. The difference we have noted is that school culture or religious affiliation is also acting on responses. These figures are not simply a necessary concomitant of growing up. Students have definite reasons of their own for opting into

certain interpretations and hopefully some of the analysis above illuminates these factors ó especially in the comparison of one type of school with another. At this stage we might agree with some of Kohlberg's maturational observations but balance these with õwarmerö factors from Pintrich. The other key observation is that when the narrative is õreducedö to a number of viable interpretations the pupils reveal a bewildering range of responses which are **rooted** in their family and personal religiosity, gain **definition** in the culture of their schools but then issue in **choices** which are highly individual but essentially understandable. In the gradual accumulation of evidence across the research instrument it has been possible to discern an individual will to meaning which makes rational choices in the face of perplexity and either seizes on a grammar in front of it as a vehicle for thought or defaults to an existing pre-disposition (õit's the simplest/most logicalö) or simply decides not to engage, or just flounder, for lack of suitable ways of thinking. Even more importantly there appears to be tentative evidence not only for different types of faith in search of meaning, but also different types of non-faith (i.e a secular grammar) in search of meaning. The relevance of spiritual narrative may lie in its power to suggest a great many viable interpretations without necessarily being reduced to any one of them, unless (and this is an important õunlessö) the individuals involved are conservatively religious or pre-disposed against any religion.

Eventually the only way of testing this idea is to track real responses rather than stereotypical ones and determine how õrealö individuals make sense of the story in front of them but with the benefit of knowing where they õfitö in terms of Beliefs and Values and Family culture

12 CASE STUDIES – SELECTED PUPILS FROM YEARS 7, 9 & SIXTH FORM

If the evidence so far seems to indicate that people arrive at a narrative with a predisposition ó especially if they come with a history or culture of pro or anti religion, one way of testing this would be to track some individual responses across the whole research document and see just how consistent they are ó and indeed how consistent they *think* they are, in that the final question asks them bluntly whether they think they have changed their minds over the course of the investigation.

The best way of illustrating this is to pick representatives, male and female from opposite ends of the Beliefs and Values spectrum, trying to ensure that they have also completed the research document fully. In **Year 7** the following charts were forthcoming

12.1 Year 7 - selected paradigms

Name	Sophie	Holly	Ollie	Thomas
Code	FS23 female	MS14 female	IS1 male	MS28 male
Beliefs and values score	17 Strong agreement	148 Strong disagreement	36 Strong agreement	158 Strong disagreement
Yes/No answers to 4 questions on personal and family religious observance First 2 answers most important	YY mum, dad, sisters, parents friends Christian NY	YY grandma NY	NNNY	NNNY
What is the story all about	gratefulness, temptation, guilt, breaking rules, doing wrong	greed and learning to grow up and understanding	I think the story is about trust because each animal trusts another and eats fruit. I think it means you should trust people, but don't trick them into doing wrong things because you will be punished more.	it is a moral story of do what your superiors say or you will be punished as the consequences
What will you miss most about the garden?	Everyone from the garden	my freedom that God took away from me and the delight of childbirth that had pain inflicted on it	The freedom and the lovely plants	the nice food, being treated well, the calm peace

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Was there anything bad about the garden Even before the snake?	they would not be able to eat from the tree	the only thing bad about life before the snake was that they couldn't come	no	no Everything was fine
What will be the best thing about living outside the garden?	you will be free no one can tell you what to do	you will be free to do what you want	Having something to do and see more animals	freedom
What will be the worst thing about living outside the garden?	not having God around	you have to do Everything you want	being a slave instead of being able to roam freely	you can't have the fruit
What one thing would you say to God as you leave the garden?	lqn so sorry lord please forgive me, I hope we will meet again	sorry	I'm sorry God but I know I deserve this "person"(prison? - looking at previous answer)	That's so unfair my wife didn't tell me this it's her fault banish her WHHYYYY!!!
Pictures of Knowledge				
Which picture?	nuclear bomb	voyager spacecraft	paradise lost sculpture	nuclear bomb
Why this picture?	it shows Everything we are doing to the world in one picture	it shows Adam and Eve with the powers of God by creating the planets and stars	Because God can see exactly what's happening at all times so this is what Adam and Eve imagine themselves to be able to see and do.	it represents a lot of power plus nukes are awesome
Did Adam and Eve become like God?	once they did wrong they knew to put it right like God	no I don't think Adam and Eve became God like because the snake was deceiving them and a piece of fruit cannot give you power	No. I believe God sent the serpent to see whether they would betray his orders and then would they lie. I believe God set it up.	no they can't create stuff like he did, he has more power they are treated like slaves
Pictures of Exclusion				
Which picture makes an impact?	Vengeful angel	vengeful angel	Pavel Popov	Mormon picture
What are Adam and Eve thinking?	they should always listen to God and no one else	They feel they have betrayed God and been selfish and done wrong. They are upset	They are probably sorry for themselves and a bit sulky that they blew their chances to stay in the garden.	that what they are doing is bad and they don't want to do it
Pictures of death				

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Connection between Hirst sculpture and Adam and Eve?	nothing	it links them together as at the start of the story they cant see and don't know what to do	no not really	God said if they ate the apple they would die and they ate the apple
Connection between "ashamed to die picture" and Adam/Eve	Adam and Eve should be ashamed for what they have done	no there isn't a connection	definitely not	Adam and Eve achieved defying God
Adam and Eve comparison with Jesus story				
Best Explanation ?	1 - disobedience/obedience	3 - power vs powerlessness	3 - power and powerlessness	1 - disobedience/obedience
Worst explanation ?	4 - distrust/trust	1 - disobedience/obedience	1 - disobedience/obedience	2 - insecure and anxious
Say why?	it shows Everyone is not the same	I don't like number 1 as it is a brief explanation with no evidential background	Because number 3 says Adam wanted to be like God which is why he betrayed God's orders	I like 1 because it is right
Making sense of the story				
Best story	2- temptation & consequences	4 - regret & anxiety	1 - don't break rules or you'll get punished	3 - take a few risks to grow up
Worst story	4 -regret & anxiety	3 - risks as you grow up	3 - risks as you grow up	4 - regret and anxiety
In between rank	1,3,5	1,2,5	2,4,5	1,5,2
Why you like the best story	it shows that we are not like God and God is better than anyone	It is a story of growing up and becoming wiser in time. Its about understanding and greed	no answer	it's the best because its true it is what happened
Have you changed your view of the story?	Yes	No	Yes/No maybe	No

Figure 12-1: Year 7 paradigms

Sophie, coming from the Faith School, with a strong Christian background and answering 1 to every Beliefs/Values question, including the comment that her religious experience was “*seeing God for a second*” ó gives answers which could not be more typical.

She has a strong awareness of guilt and doing wrong, her last words to God are a plea for *forgiveness* and her verdict on the fairness of consequences is simply that “*it shows that we are not like God and God is better than anyone*”. She rejects outright the more secular alternatives which play on common angst or bold living without God and her support for Jesusøobedience against Adamø disobedience is rooted in the awareness that “*Everyone is not the same*” ó there is a clear division between the believer and the unbeliever. Her interpretation of the nuclear bomb (“*it shows everything we are doing to the world in one picture*”) is right in line with these beliefs and logically rejecting the more general Year 7 concerns to glorify power. In her view the destruction is a direct consequence of rebellion from God. The difficult picture from Damien Hirst simply means that “*Adam and Eve should be ashamed of what they have done*”. Small wonder that the *vengeful angel* captures her vote because it illustrates the truth that they should have listened to God and no one else. Although she thinks that she has changed her views by the end ó there is actually no evidence of this. She has been fiercely consistent all the way through but has found her õgrammarö within the research document to furnish the thoughts she already had.

Holly, from the Maintained School, is an interesting example of someone who rates herself low on the Beliefs/Values scale but admits to a religious background. In contrast with Sophie she uses none of the language of temptation or guilt and she leaves the garden with a perfunctory “*sorry*” obviously feeling that she has been deprived especially of the joy of pain free child-birth. For her the story is primarily about greed and selfishness for sure, but mainly about growing up – *in wisdom and understanding*. This assessment of the story at the beginning and end of the research document is almost identical, so she seems to be correct in her opinion that her views do not change from the beginning to the end. On the other hand she does show evidence of religious reflection on the story. The greatest benefit of being outside the garden will be freedom but it will also be the greatest flaw. Even if the throne of God is empty, the throne of God remains and it can be a curse. She is also aware of the religious implications of the equation of Adamø disobedience vs. Jesusøobedience and homes in on its brevity and “*lack of evidential background*”. By this she seems to

mean that the theology is not illustrated in as immediate way as some of the others. In choosing as the best meaning the explanation that Adam wanted to be like God and grasped at Godlike power ó it is difficult to join up all her thinking however. She chooses the voyager spacecraft because it shows Adam and Eve “*with the powers of God by creating the planets and stars*”, but then says that in fact they did *not* have Godlike powers because the snake was actually lying and anyway a piece of fruit can’t give you power. This is why her overall explanation that the story was mainly about *misguided* greed/selfishness is a sensible solution. The fact of growing up involves some internal conflict but this is primarily around our feelings not around God. So we all feel naked, guilty and stupid sometimes (her chosen interpretation of the story) but this is not primarily about *shame* (she doesn’t respond at all to the òashamed to dieö illustration) it is mainly about human *frailty* not about strident rebellion. This is what the Damien Hirst sculpture says to her, that ó they are as they were in the beginning ó “*they can’t see and don’t know what to do*”. Humans grow wiser with time, which is why the bald idea of taking a few risks as you grow up doesn’t appeal to her (this was her *worst* interpretation) neither does outright bold living without God (2nd worst). There *are* rules and consequences (she puts these 2nd and 3rd in rank order) and there will be *regret and anxiety and mistakes* (option 4 is her first choice) but this is entirely human and understandable. In choosing option 4 she goes against the general trend in the MS and has something in common with both the religious and secular children who choose it in opposition to the Godless answer whilst not being wholly convinced of rules and consequences. The impression we are left with is of a girl who, from a religiously informed background, has thought about the story, considered her own position and interpreted the story sensitively and entirely in a humanist/existential direction. In a way she has accepted the Christian *analysis* of the human condition (selfishness, power-hungry, clueless) without taking on board the specifically transcendent bits. One could say that en route, however, she has struggled more than Sophie to find her ògrammarö in the story but she has come out with something which is coherent, whilst also being understandable within her background and school.

The remaining 2 examples, whilst hailing like Sophie and Holly from the top and bottom of the Beliefs/Values spectrum, are not as consistent in their answers.

Ollie comes to the story with no religious family background and his first stab at interpreting it is odd, believing that the animals in the garden ate fruit and trying to make this into a point about trust, but tuning finally into a theme of not betraying trust otherwise

you'd be punished more. One interesting addition from this pupil is his description of a spiritual experience which was unusual in being one of the few comments which did not define spirituality as dead relatives or ghostly experiences.

I felt it was my lucky day because loads of brilliant things happened to me after a few gloomy days (a volunteered expansion on question 13 which asked about spiritual experiences)

On reflection, one wonders if this reveals quite a lot about Ollie's other answers. As a ministry of defence boarder arriving in school in Year 7, it might be that gloomy days punctuated by bright spots count as a commentary on parts of his personal life.

Like many of the more religious answers, Ollie feels that the world outside the protection of Eden might be quite harsh but in contrast to many pupils, both religious and secular, Ollie will not find freedom *outside* the garden, he was freer *within* it. This tends to be an independent school insight. In fact, outside, he will be a "*slave*", unable to roam freely and the only attraction of outside will be "*seeing more animals and having more things to do*". The default position of the real world however is slavery and lack of freedom, a generally gloomy outlook of autonomous grind which is only brightened occasionally. His choice of the Pavel Popov painting is in line with this, interpreting their demeanour as "*sorry for themselves and a bit sulky that they blew their chances of staying in the garden*". This idea that Adam and Eve "blew it" follows through to his choice that the best explanation of Adam is that he snatched at Godlike power and his overall conclusion that the story implies "*don't break the rules or you'll get punished*". In this scenario he will certainly not entertain the idea of taking risks (his worst choice) or living boldly without God and does not understand the picture of the rebellious man. The choice which doesn't really make sense is relegating the obedience/disobedience story to bottom place when all his other choices would seem to rank it higher. At two places in the research document, however, Ollie is struggling with the idea that the expulsion from the garden might all be some sort of *trick* (either genuine deception from the snake (don't trick someone or the punishment will be worse) or God sending the snake as a kind of test to see if Adam and Eve would fall for it. ("*I believe God set it up*"). So possibly Adam's *motive* for breaking the rules (wanting to be like God) was more important than simple obedience or not, at one point, but in the end, whatever the motive or deception, the rule *was* broken and punishment followed. But this is a tricky set of answers and Ollie evidently hasn't got an existing grammar which will help him make up his mind. What his set of answers

suggests is that in the absence of a clear mind-set, deriving from active religious background (Sophie) or erstwhile background leading to critical reflection (Holly), it is much more difficult to impose order on a complex story and there are likely to be bits which don't quite hang together. In Ollie's case the underlying touchstone for his quite unusual answers might be his own negative personal experiences of the 'outside' world, and his high beliefs and values score might simply reflect a sensitive soul rather than anyone well-versed in religion. On the Beliefs and Values Grid his only scores above 5, were 6 (i.e. moderate disagreement, in answer to the question of whether he considered himself religious) and 8 (strong disagreement) as his repudiation of the importance of religious ceremonies. So here is someone who is self-consciously *not* religious and lacks a cognitive religious grammar BUT he has personal reasons for being reflective, and arrives at the story trying to wrest meaning out of it with the *maturational* tools to hand (Year 7s on the whole are more inclined to take rules and punishment seriously, as we have seen) but with some personal 'warm' factors playing as well.

The last in the series of Year 7s is much more straightforward. With a score of 158 out of a maximum of 170, **Thomas** sees himself as robustly in disagreement with the Beliefs and Values set before him. For him the story has an obvious meaning – "***a moral story of do what your superiors say or you will be punished as a consequence***". From there on in, everything is lined up. His version of freedom is the familiar Maintained School one of entitlement and cries of foul if anything is withdrawn or threatened (especially an entitlement to material privileges like food or the right to take the fruit). Thus there is a clear problem with God because he has got the power and power matters. This is the attraction of nuclear bombs because they are "***awesome***", but Adam and Eve have clearly "***not got Godlike power because they can't create stuff like he did, he (God) has more power – they are treated like slaves***". In this scenario, the conclusion is quite blunt. In a stand-off with God you are simply going to lose, so the Mormon picture shows Adam and Eve in a bad situation "***and they don't want to do it***". The meaning of Damien Hirst is in-line as well. God (note it is ***God*** not the snake) said they would die if they ate the apple and here they are dead. But this doesn't mean that you should be ashamed. You leave Eden with an ill grace, accusing God of unfairness, and blaming your wife, and your interpretation of the rebellious man is precisely that - Adam and Eve have "***achieved***" ***defying God***. The story is absolutely not about interiority or anxiety; it is simply about breaking the rules of superiors. Thomas, like many of the Maintained School and boys in

particular, thinks that simple obedience and punishment is so obvious that ***“I like I because it is right”*** and that the best explanation is that the kids grew up and God will have to live with that ó This version of events is ***“the best because it’s true, it is what happened”***.

Where these ideas come from cannot be defined. They may be peculiar to the school, or local and wider society or certain families, but they are coherent enough to suggest a *culture* of ideas and are as conclusive in their way, as evidencing from Matthew’s gospel that his readership had judaising tendencies, without knowing exactly how they came to be. The question arises of whether this culture of ideas is as coherent in its way as the answers appearing from a network of individuals like Sophie within Faith Schools. Is Thomas as much a representative of a secular ötakeö on the narrative as Sophie is of a religious one, and is his assessment that he has *not* changed his mind about his stereotyped answers more or less worrying than Sophie’s contention that she *has*?

12.2 Year 9 – selected paradigms

Some of the trends identified in Year 9 generally are well illustrated in these paradigms. First there is the tendency to stand back from the story and generalise about what humans do. Second there is the observed move away from the more judgmental accounts of the narrative both by religious and secular. Third there remains a distinction between the poles of militantly religious and secular but in the liberal middle there is considerable convergence.

Name	Apple	Alisha	Joseph	Kate	Alex
Code	MS16 female	FS2 female	MS27 male	FS8 female	IS9 Male
Beliefs and values score	36 (strong agreement)	147 (strong disagreement)	40 (strong agreement)	44 (strong agreement)	152 (strong disagreement)
Yes/No answers to 4 questions of personal & family religious observance First 2 answers most important.	YY grandparents Christian YY	NNNY	NY mum Christian (he has own religion) NY	YY mum & grandparents catholic YY	NNNY
What is the story all about	Life, punishment for doing wrong, greed, temptation, selfish. Things that don't make sense are why God made clothes for Adam and eve after punishing them and why God cursed them	trust, God trusts them, responsibility, betrayal, following Gods rules	We can't resist something we're told not to do. Why that tree why not another?	Humans not doing as they are told, humans are easily persuaded. I don't understand how Adam and eve found the tree and how they got in the garden	Humans are changeable and can be tricked. The whole story doesn't make sense.
What will you miss most about the garden?	peace, simplicity and beauty of the garden	friendly surroundings	I don't know because I've never been there	the view and how safe the garden is	not having to do anything
Was there anything bad about the garden even before the snake?	the restrictions of life and not being allowed to have freedom	no freedom	no death just eternity in a garden	no	yes not being allowed to know certain things

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What will be the best thing about living outside the garden?	experiencing new things and to see the rest of Gods creations	freedom	more to do	different views	no tempting trees
What will be the worst thing about living outside the garden?	not having everything to hand and struggling for what I need	no nature	all the wild things that could kill you	no freedom and wouldn't be good if weather is bad	having to work to do everything
What one thing would you say to God as you leave the garden?	I am sorry for disobeying you	see ya	where will I go when I die	good bye	I didn't like the garden that much anyway
Pictures of Knowledge					
Which picture?	1 - sculpture of paradise lost	1 - sculpture of paradise lost	nuclear bomb	1 - sculpture	2 -nuclear bomb
Why this picture?	Everything happens for a reason in y case the reason is God. This picture shows something controlled everything. I think the snake controlled and deceived eve.	it shows the garden on the bottom of what they could see and the outside world is on the top (what they could see after eating the fruit)	something is bad and I can see that but the painting is good and I can also see that	it stands out to me and make me just focus on that one	man has the power to destroy life just as God is suppose to be able to
Did Adam and Eve become like God?	yes	no		no one can be another God	no
Pictures of Exclusion					
Which picture makes an impact?	3 - Mormon picture	3 -Mormon picture	4 - Pavel Popov	4 - Pavel Popov	4 -Pavel Popov
What are Adam and Eve thinking?	how they betrayed God and what they are going to do next	they regret what they have done	regretting what they have done but I also think that they are happy together	they are disappointed on what they have done	lets try and find something good out here
Pictures of death					
Connection between Hirst sculpture and Adam and Eve?	shows Adam and eve can never be the same in the way they think so they are separated by gender	They are dead but alive. They needed to be protected by God to live which is why in the case they were dead until God protected them then they were breathing again	they are together and they have been exposed	they are safe and dead	no its just a random sculpture
Connection between "ashamed to die picture" and Adam and Eve?	ashamed to be banished, they would be doing good for future mankind		he is naked	that they have done something wrong in life	yes because they want to prove to God humans are good

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Adam and Eve comparison with Jesus story					
Best Explanation?	4 - trust/distrust	4 - trust/distrust	2 - insecure/anxious and 4 trust/distrust	4 - Trust/distrust	3 - power/powerlessness
Worst explanation?	1 - obedience/disobedience	3 - wanting to be like God	1 - obedience/disobedience	1 - obedience/disobedience	1 - obedience/disobedience
Say why?	4 is simplified to an everyday experience	3 because Adam is not trying to be God	1 is worst because Jesus had to sacrifice himself in the end and 4 is best because I believe that	like 4 because he cant punish people in the way we thinks	I like it because it brings up the modern day. I don't like 1 because it is all explained and based on belief
Extra comment	God trusted Adam and eve when they disobeyed him, the trust was lost so God banished them to make them suffer		I think I believe in a mix of 4 and 2	they should not do as they are told but take advice from God	
Making sense of the story					
Best story	4 -regret and anxiety	5 - live without God	2 - temptation/consequences	4 - regret and anxiety	5 -live without God
Worst story	2 - temptation/consequences	2- temptation/consequences	4- regret/anxiety	1 - rules and punishment	2 - temptation/consequences
In between rank	5,3,1	3,4,1	5,3	3,5,2	3,4,1
Why you like the best story	it is simple, I understand the story to be	it explains what life is about making decisions for ourselves	(no explanation)	it tell you about having advice but living your own life	the most truthful
Have you changed your view of the story?	Yes	No	(no answer)	No	No

Figure 12-2: Year 9 paradigms

For **Alex**, coming from the strong disagreement end of the Beliefs/Values spectrum, the story in general makes no sense, but if it means anything at all, the myth of Eden is a symbol of not having to do anything, whilst the real world is all about work. (This view was common amongst the Independent School pupils). The biggest draw back of the garden was being kept ignorant and on balance it was a relief to leave the garden; he **“didn’t like it that much anyway”**. Once these parameters are drawn however, everything else falls into place. The nuclear bomb reveals the destructive side of knowledge. In a wearisome world the bid is on to find anything good **“out here”** and man is in a gritty race to prove to God that **humans are perfectly good** whilst not becoming like God themselves. The Adam and Eve sculpture does not speak to him ó it is just a **random sculpture**, and he

turns his back on the most theological explanation of the Christ-Event ***“because it is all explained and based on belief”***. His own observation that man seeks power, makes sense because it ***brings in the modern day***. His absolutely logical conclusion is that man has to be tough enough to live without God and repudiates any divine law of temptation and consequences or rules and punishment. This is simply ***“the most truthful”*** statement of the meaning of the story. Overall this is exactly the sense of the story that we might expect from a self-sufficient Year 9 student in the secular tradition. As with Thomas in Year 7 there is a clear belief that this in fact is the *only* truthful way of interpreting the story, and both in different ways are entirely coherent.

At the other pole is **Apple**. Just as Alex is different from Thomas, so Apple differs from Sophie in Year 7 but builds an equally coherent picture in line with religious expectation. The key word for her is relationship rather than blind obedience. She leaves the garden with the words ***“sorry for disobeying you”*** but it soon becomes clear that the snake is partly to blame. He ***“controlled and deceived Eve”***. In a sense they do become like God but they are still seeking relationship with God. This explains Apple’s choice of analogy which likens Adam and Eve to teenagers becoming awkward with their parents. It shouldn’t be a simple case of obeying rules ó the good thing about option 4 is that ***“it is simplified to an everyday experience”*** and she proceeds with the words

God trusted Adam and Eve when they disobeyed him; the trust was lost so God banished them to make them suffer

Overall the story makes sense as adults looking back on a golden age of childhood trust in a peaceful, beautiful garden which is then ruined by adolescent distrust. She warms to this because ***“it is simple. I understand the story to be (that)”***. The extraordinary thing is that at the beginning of the research document she says she doesn’t understand why, in the story, God clothes Adam and Eve after punishing them. The easiest explanation to hand would have been that God keeps the channels of love and care open even with errant children, but Apple thinks God needs more leverage than this, suggesting above that ***“he banished them to make them suffer”*** and buy themselves back into God’s good books. Adam and Eve, *having been banished, would work really hard for the future of mankind because they are ashamed of what they have done*. This is probably exactly the fall-back position we might expect however from a girl who can no longer hold to a wholeheartedly

punitive version of the story but still wants to emphasise moral effort and God's justice *within a relationship*. An interesting question would be the forces on a Year 9 girl which might look for this kind of coherence. Certainly religious discussion at home might play a part, but it is also open to the question of whether a secular insistence on tolerance (she comes from the Maintained School which overall in years 7 and 9 was more hostile to religion) was pushing a *moderation* of views towards the more liberal end of Christianity or whether this is simply part and parcel of the growing maturity which sees shades of grey rather than simply black and white.

On the face of it, **Alisha**, decidedly at the disagreement end of the Beliefs/Values spectrum, with a score of 147, appears to agree with Apple. In her case however the choice of the homely teenage analogy is not to maintain a relationship with God, or explore the guilt of growing up or mitigating banishment, it is to support her final conclusion that *“life is about making decisions for ourselves”*. So she waves a cheery goodbye to God at the gates of the garden (*“see ya”*) and concludes that we should be bold enough to live without him (the *“atheist” option 5*). One detects a kind of distance between Alisha and the story she is commenting on. She can see that *“Adam and Eve regret what they have done”* and the Damien Hirst sculpture inspires a strange explanation of *how they were alive whilst God was protecting them*, but this doesn't seem to engage with her own worldview, and the Adam and Eve story seems to be consigned to the past. She herself appears neither regretful nor in need of protection so there is a curious disjunction. In choosing the picture of paradise lost there is no judgement on the destructiveness or otherwise of knowledge. The mechanical world is simply on top and it's what they *could see after eating the fruit*. Although she takes issue with the idea that Adam wanted to be God (she doesn't like **3 because Adam is not trying to be God**) it is almost as if God ought to be off the scene altogether and the whole story holds only passing interest as a curiosity inviting comment. Perhaps this is one of the most challenging notions for this thesis that stories held to be classic in the religious tradition are simply becoming rather odd curiosities in a secular world, not demanding of close attention or engagement. If Alex represents *“thinking secularism” in opposition to a religious story*, Alisha represents comfortable secularism, at home with itself, and *unaware of any challenge from religion*. In a year group and school where full completion of the research document, especially in the latter stages, was patchy, it was good that she at least was held long enough to reach her conclusions, even if en route, it may have been largely an academic exercise.

The last 2 respondents, **Joseph and Kate**, scored high on the Beliefs/Values scale but Kate came from a Catholic family and was obviously practising Christian herself, while Joseph said his mum was Christian but he ðhad a religion of his ownö and did not worship either regularly or occasionally. Together they are a good illustration of the developing conclusion that immersion in a particular hermeneutic tradition whether secular or religious, gives coherence to answers whereas lack of such immersion leads to disjunction. **Kate**, like Apple, is trying to form a notion of the story which moves away from punishment (she prefers option 4 over the obedience/disobedience option number 1 *“because he (God) cannot punish in the way we think*) but still allows that *“they are disappointed on what they have done”* and *“no-one can be another God”*. The connection with the rebellious man picture is that *“they are ashamed at what they have done”*. So how does she square her desire to dampen punitive language whilst retaining her default interpretations of the story which contain the clear message that Adam and Eve have done something wrong? The answer is that Adam and Eve *should have taken advice from God*. They *“should not do as they are told but take advice from God”* and (later on) *“it tells you about having advice but living your own life”*. This is an alternative solution to Apple’s preferred one which says that you can make up for shame and banishment by doing good things for God and humanity. Kate’s even more liberal solution is that you can get along with God and lead your own life *so long as you listen and take advice*.

Joseph on the other hand does not seem to have a conceptual touchstone for interpreting the story. He is uncertain whether to pursue a theme of temptation/consequences or trust/distrust and ends up opting for both. What he seems to be struggling towards is some idea of *togetherness* in the midst of abandonment. He makes a rather odd comment in choosing the Pavel Popov painting that they ðare regretting what they have done *but I also think they are happy together”* - quite a lame remark on a painting depicting Adam stalking 50 yards ahead of a pregnant Eve in the desert. On the Damien Hirst sculpture he says again that *“they are together and they have been exposed”*. Meanwhile he struggles in his opposition to the proposal that Christ’s obedience balances Adam’s disobedience because he realises that *“Jesus had to sacrifice himself in the end”* so presumably just being an obedient good guy is not enough, but he can’t expand on this enigmatic statement and settles for saying he likes the homely analogy of teenage relationship. The overall impression is that someone who is religiously literate but not mainstream, is battling to sort out a tumble of ideas evoked by the story, but not succeeding terribly well.

12.3 Sixth form paradigms – the religious ones

Name	Sophie	Matthew
Code	MS12 female	IS13 male
Beliefs and values score	39 (strong agreement)	36 (strong agreement)
Yes/No answers to 4 questions on personal and family religious observance. First 2 answers most important.	YY mum Christian protestant YY	YY father, uncle, aunt, cousin Christian NY
What is the story all about	don't eat from a tree if told not to, God is all powerful, man is living through pain due to the deceit from mankind, temptation is wrong, never listen to a snake, we should be crawling on our stomachs, men were told to rule over women, God want humans to be naked, evil is bad for humans to see - it corrupts us	Humans are ultimately flawed, they are trusting and vain. Doesn't make sense that the garden doesn't exist in real life, a benevolent God is cruel, why would God create a creature that would disobey him
What will you miss most about the garden?	being loved and feeling secure with God	the security that is offered
Was there anything bad about the garden Even before the snake?	not knowing the truth about the whole world and being kept under control	no
What will be the best thing about living outside the garden?	being allowed to do what I want for example wear clothes	freedom from its constraints
What will be the worst thing about living outside the garden?	Being controlled by another human rather than God. God was more likely to control in a nice way rather than Adam	no protection
What one thing would you say to God as you leave the garden?	sorry please don't hate me	you make no sense
Pictures of Knowledge		
Which picture?	3 - Angel and Adam	none chosen
Why this picture?	Man seeing both good and evil. He is down on his knees being shown evil by good and the bad looks too powerful for him to handle	The whole point of 'Godlike' powers is that they remain with God. It defeats the point of them if man has them
Did Adam and Eve become like God?	No	No there is no fixed definition of God but any divine being is meant to be entirely separated from all else, making it impossible for Adam and Eve to become like God. Alternatively you could say that God is eternal and because they didn't eat from the tree of eternal life Adam and Eve weren't
Pictures of Exclusion		
Which picture makes an impact?	2 - kindly angel	4 - Pavel Popov
What are Adam and Eve thinking?	I don't think Adam can handle the thought of being banished, I think Eve is still trying to take it all in but worried	Shit

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Name	Sophie	Matthew
Code	MS12 female	IS13 male
Beliefs and values score	39 (strong agreement)	36 (strong agreement)
Pictures of death		
Connection between Hirst sculpture and Adam and Eve?	their relationship has been broken and they appear to be in separate sections	they were just human
Connection between "ashamed to die picture" and Adam and Eve?	no Adam and Eve got wrong and did not appear to make victory for humanity	No connection
Adam and Eve comparison with Jesus story		
Best Explanation?	3 - power/powerlessness	4 - Trust/distrust
Worst explanation?	2 - anxious/not anxious	1 - obedience/disobedience
Say why?	dislike 2 because I don't see Adam as an anxious being surely it was guilt that made him hide	dislike 1 because it portrays a God that is unjust and is prepared to punish people for exercising their free will
Extra comment		
Making sense of the story		
Best story	1 - rules and punishment	5 - live without God
Worst story	4 - regret and anxiety	1 - rules and punishment
In between rank	2,3,5	2,3,4
Why you like the best story	That is how I see the Adam and Eve story to be most like. To me I see the tree of temptation as a real test from God not just an observation. To me mankind failed God therefore we must live with the consequences	it puts some faith in humanity
Have you changed your view of the story?	Yes	Yes

Figure 12-3: Sixth Form paradigms - the religious ones

Sophie and Matthew both score strong agreement on the Beliefs/Values scale and both of them have religious backgrounds and a record of religious attendance. It becomes evident however that they come from very different camps ó Sophie being much more conservative in her views than the more liberal/critical Matthew.

For **Sophie**, God is all powerful, and although the garden kept humans in the dark and under control ó God's control was *more benevolent than Adam's was likely to be*. She wants to stay in with God. *"Sorry, please don't hate me"* she says as she exits the garden. She has a pretty negative view of humanity and possibly men in particular. Adam is unable *to handle* the evil he is shown by the angel, nor the thought of banishment. In fact

in her opening statement *“evil is bad to see, it corrupts us”*. One aspect of the fall is that Adam and Eve fall out. For her the Damien Hurst sculpture speaks of a *broken relationship*. Adam and Eve emphatically *have won no victory for mankind*. She is also quite clear that Adam’s sin was that he wanted to be like God and aimed for power, and he shouldn’t be excused on the grounds of feeling insecure.

Dislike 2 because I don’t see Adam as an anxious being surely it was guilt that made him hide

In the end her conclusion is absolutely in line with what goes before. The message of the story is that you should not break the rules or you’ll get punished. The secular alternatives, numbers 4 and 5 are at the bottom of the list and she knows why

That is how I see the Adam and Eve story to be most like. To me I see the tree of temptation as a real test from God not just an observation. To me mankind failed God therefore we must live with the consequences

The key phrase here is that the story is not just an observation. For this girl the story is *real*. Her description of the story at the beginning of the research document is precisely that ó a description not a critique. Mankind really is fallen and there really is a God to be answered to.

Matthew on the other hand is much more critical, yet takes the story ó and for him it is just a story ó seriously. Nothing for him makes sense. *The garden didn’t exist for real, a benevolent God shouldn’t be cruel and why should a creator God produce beings capable of rebellion*. This is a theologian talking, and on leaving the garden he simply tells God that *he makes no sense*. The interesting thing is that, were it not for his Beliefs/Values score, we would not recognise his answers as in agreement with those values at all, apart from the fact that he is well-informed in his critique. The only hint that God is on his radar is his concerted effort to prove that if there is a God, he has to *be* God. Adam and Eve can emphatically not be Godlike. Eventually this is his biggest gripe, that God shouldn’t really be punishing humans. The Damien Hirst picture, for him, means that Adam and Eve **were just human**. When they find themselves in Pavel Popov’s desert their reaction is the standard cry of humanity *“shit”!* He doesn’t respond at all to the picture of the rebellious

man, because for him, humanity is not in rebellion. They have simply fallen out with God (like the teenagers in option 4) in an act that is palpably human ó namely choosing for themselves.

Dislike 1 because it portrays a God that is unjust and is prepared to punish people for exercising their free will

In the end the only verdict he can reach is the apparently atheist one (option 5) - to live as if God doesn't exist because it's the only verdict which ***puts some faith in humanity.***

Anything is better than acquiescing in a view of God that is less than God should be.

The fact is that there is evident tension here however. Matthew realises that he is straining against the very structure of the story in order to reach his conclusion and there is a certain tetchiness in some of his answers. He has excellent reasons for critiquing the story but he is a theist and therefore cannot discount the story out of hand. If he were an atheist his answers would be 'cleaner' in the sense that he could simply dismiss the myth as myth. But he realises that the story is fundamental and that there are inevitable elements which don't fit. *In the narrative* there evidently is shame and nakedness, expulsion and guilt, and the question of punishment is one that has to be confronted. One could argue that there is a more authentic feel to Sophie's sense-making or indeed Kate or Apple's accommodations (above) than Matthew's. Matthew is simply not at ease with himself for having a view of God which *rationaly* doesn't quite match the story in front of him. Meanwhile his very rationality makes it more difficult for him to relate to the story existentially in order to accommodate the mythic elements. In this respect he plays theologian to Sophie's fundamentalism but she *sounds* more in tune with the narrative. In the end he is forced into an 'atheist' interpretation (a la Socrates, David Jenkins and Bonhoeffer) of the story in order for it to make sense, but few spectators would understand this.

In this respect Sophie and Matthew probably *are* telling the truth when they say that their views have changed between the beginning and end of the research document. Sophie has come to a view of the story which is articulate and makes sense of very difficult issues. So has Matthew. The very process of articulation makes a difference to them and presents

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itself as a conceptual shift; even though we might take it as simply the revealing of what, from their background, was already there.

12.4 Sixth form paradigms – the non-religious ones

Name	Merryn	Lewis
Code	FS 13 female	FS13 male
Beliefs and values score	166 (strong disagreement)	129(strong disagreement)
Yes/No answers to 4 questions about personal and family religious observance. First 2 answers most important.	NY(my sister or at least claims to be) (Christian though I don't think she knows which branch) Y (only because my family takes me) Y	NN (Methodist) NN
What is the story all about	an explanation of hoe things came to be, why do humans have knowledge of good and evil while no other animal does?- we ate the fruit of knowledge. Why do snakes bite and kill people? We are enemies because the first serpent tricked the first people. Why do woman suffer in maternity? The first woman tempted the first man. Why do men have to work in the forest? Because he disobeyed God and was punished. Genesis chapter 2 - God made Eden. He made Adam from dust and placed him in the garden, Adam was lonely, God made animals, which Adam named. Adam was still lonely so God created a woman from his rib. He told them not to eat from the tree in the centre of the garden, but the serpent deceived Eve who also gave the fruit to Adam, they were ashamed when they realised they were naked and hid. God knew they had all disobeyed and punished each. Issues - if they did not have knowledge of good or evil before disobeying can they justly be punished, like cursing a one month old baby for not asking to use the toilet before going	It's attempting to teach people about morals, rules and to give examples of how to live. Why were they naked when they ate the fruit, if there is such a thing as heaven and hell why is there a passage that says you will return to the dust from which you came?
What will you miss most about the garden?	simplicity of life, no toiling for food or suffering in labour or knowledge, 'ignorance is bliss'	the perfect life aspect
Was there anything bad about the garden Even before the snake?	Can you have free will without knowledge of good and evil? If not are you still human in the sense that we know with freedom	threes a tree which shouldnd be touched
What will be the best thing about living outside the garden?	Freedom. Not contained in the garden or ignorance	you will know where you stand, so you wouldnd be under pressure to do perfectly good
What will be the worst thing about living outside the garden?	suffering and babies they go hand in hand	working for good

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Name	Merryn	Lewis
Code	FS 13 female	FS13 male
Beliefs and values score	166 (strong disagreement)	129(strong disagreement)
What one thing would you say to God as you leave the garden?	sexist bugger	wow Willis you do exist
Pictures of Knowledge		
Which picture?	1 - paradise lost	1 - paradise lost
Why this picture?	We have knowledge of creation and manipulation of nature. We can alter and create not quite to the extent of God but close	God is portrayed as omniscient so I think the engine/mechanical part of the structure knowledge and the trees below represent the world so kind of knowing Everything in the world
Did Adam and Eve become like God?	Yes more God like at least. We have the image of God and now knowledge and freewill. Huzzah	no the snake made up a load of old cobblers to see what would happen when you disobey God
Pictures of Exclusion		
Which picture makes an impact?	2 - kindly angel	4 - Pavel Popov
What are Adam and Eve thinking?	Adam is being taken by his wrist and is holding his head in his head; he is reluctant to leave the garden and is deeply ashamed. Eve is looking up, tentative, but stepping forward. She accepts her punishment and is hopeful for redemption	in that situation think they would be disappointed t
Pictures of death		
Connection between Hirst sculpture and Adam and Eve?	Exposed suggests they should be visible and naked yet they are not. In the story their nakedness was exposed. They are covering exposes their disobedience	both are excluded and dead
Connection between "ashamed to die picture" and Adam and Eve?	they got knowledge for us	no answer
Adam and Eve comparison with Jesus story		
Best Explanation?	4 - trust/distrust	1 - obedience/disobedience
Worst explanation?	2 - anxious/not anxious	3 - power/powerlessness
Say why?	2- Jesus was anxious before the end	in 3 Jesus didnt do God justice
Extra comment		
Making sense of the story		
Best story	4 - regret/anxiety	5 - live without God
Worst story	2 - temptation/consequences	1 - rules/punishment
In between rank	3,5,1	2,3,4

Name	Merryn	Lewis
Code	FS 13 female	FS13 male
Why you like the best story	I felt like the story of Adam and Eve is a myth making sense of humanity in the world. 4 fits with this	it applies more to Everyone
Have you changed your view of the story?	No	No

Figure 12-4: Sixth Form paradigms - the non-religious ones

These two sixth formers think of themselves as profoundly in disagreement with the Beliefs and Values statements, but, from their introductory remarks, they are well acquainted with this narrative and others connected with it, and especially in Merryn's case, bring a lot of prior reflection to the story in hand.

Merryn's lengthy description of the story at the beginning of the research document is a chance to show off a great deal of knowledge ó accepting the narrative as aetiological myth (why do snakes bite people, why is there pain in childbirth etc...) descriptive of the human condition (the loneliness and toil of man) and raising profound philosophical issues such as

if they did not have knowledge of good or evil before disobeying, can they justly be punished, like cursing a one month old baby for not asking to use the toilet before going

In this sense she can get 'above' the narrative to a place where she can cheerfully call God a "sexist bugger" and suggest that outside the garden is where *suffering and babies go hand in hand*. Additionally she thinks of the narrative as delivering ideas about humanity which are worth considering. So in answer to the question of whether Adam and Eve have become God-like, she is quite happy to say that in some ways they have ó *they already had the image of God and now they have knowledge and freewill as well – huzzah!* She travels easily from sensing what Adam and Eve are *feeling* ...

(Adam is being taken by his wrist and is holding his head in his hand; he is reluctant to leave the garden and is deeply ashamed. Eve is looking up, tentative, but stepping forward. She accepts her punishment and is hopeful for redemption)

í to a really critical question about whether the story can really be about human beings as we understand them

Can you have free will without knowledge of good and evil? If not are you still human in the sense that we know with freedom

The overall impression is of someone who knows the story extremely well, takes it seriously as a jumping off point for comments and ideas, both critical and appreciative, and in the end accepts it as an insight into the human condition, without being religious about it

I felt like the story of Adam and Eve is a myth, making sense of humanity in the world. 4 fits with this

It is worth noting that answer 4 is less aggressively humanist than answer 5 and the transhistorical view of the human condition in 4 probably answers the question of whether a *chronological* fall from innocence to knowledge is actually likely of real humans as we know them. In view of this, Merryn obviously thinks that the Bible narrative is a ðonce upon a timeö story which still has value, but she is not going to acquiesce in secondary theological extrapolations of the story if it doesn't resonate with a human reality. So the easy contrast of Adam anxious/insecure versus Jesus not anxious/not insecure will not do because ***“Jesus was anxious at the end”*** (a reference to Gethsemane?).

So at the end, Merryn doesn't think she has changed her view. It was mythical at the beginning and mythical at the end, but the story usefully illuminates some aspects of humanity without entailing any religious affiliation or commitment. The Bible story for her is more like a piece of classic English literature. It is not about God and salvation, it is about human beings, their myth making and the quest for meaning.

Lewis is very different. Although there is Methodism in his background it is not current either for him or his family. But neither does he appear particularly hostile to religion except what we might infer from his Beliefs and Values score.

For him the story is as follows

It's attempting to teach people about morals, rules and to give examples of how to live.

It is essentially a this-worldly story and some bits of it don't make sense or simply arouse passing curiosity without being too bothered to try answering

Why were they naked when they ate the fruit, if there is such a thing as heaven and hell why is there a passage that says you will return to the dust from which you came?

The interesting thing is that Lewis sticks with the programme that it is simply a moral tale about Adam being deceived by a ***“whole load of cobblers”*** from the snake into disobeying God which then resulted in punishment. This explains why he is quite happy to rate the obedience/disobedience as the best interpretation of Adam and Jesus whilst ignoring the theological problems which might have exercised others. Bluntly God has got the power and he can use it. This is why he rejects the idea that Jesus might be challenging the idea of God's power in answer 3

In 3 Jesus didn't do God justice

The morality tale only hangs together if people do wrong and get punished for it, but of course it wasn't entirely Adam and Eve's fault, so at the end of the research document the black and white scenario of ***“Don't break the rules or you'll get punished”*** is relegated to the bottom rank but the idea of ***“don't be tempted to do something if you don't know the consequences”*** is raised to 2nd place but not as high as his general idea that we can get along quite happily without God (*the atheist answer 5*). And he has already suggested a reason why this might be better. Once you're outside the garden

You will know where you stand, so you wouldn't be under pressure to do perfectly good

Furthermore, if heaven and hell are off the cards, there are no more real sanctions left. We'll simply end up with the negative fact of ***working for good (i.e. forever) and returning to the dust from which we came.*** A bit like Alisha (above) we have a perfectly straightforward way of making sense of the story without appreciating that there might be more to it, or indeed expecting that there may be. It is simply a story. Like Merryn, Lewis has not changed his view. He was simply being asked to comment on a story and he has made sense of it according to his own lights, but it is no big deal.

13 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS: What does it all add up to?

The thesis set off with the intention of surveying how pupils respond to a spiritual narrative. The 'Fall of Man' portrayed in Genesis 3 is theologically complex, rationally and emotionally challenging and falls into the 'master myth' category which echoes in literature from 'Lord of the Flies' to Macbeth. Put in front of young people from years 7, 9 and 13, in its fundamental scriptural form, the question was what the narrative would bring to birth from their minds and whether any patterns could be discerned in the wealth of material that a 12 page research document generated. The size of the task and the demand of the title were challenging in two crucial ways.

First, the word spiritual is itself problematic. Much of RS in recent years has been reduced in education, to a measurable outcome in terms of **ethics** (the story tells us that this is what we should do) or **dogma** (this story describes what this group of people believe) or **theology** (this story can act as a commentary on human life in relation to God in the following ways). The difficulty with a research document examining spiritual narrative was to tap a *free* response whilst allowing pupils to explore ideas or give them some avenues to help resolve perplexity, without leaving them in a trackless sea simply inviting the response 'I dunno!' On the other hand the literature coming from psychology in particular was that a dose of perplexity was not a bad thing and it was undesirable to dilute the genuine complexity and impact of the Genesis narrative. The important point was to interrogate the narrative whilst still allowing it to stand in its own right and without assuming that there was any right answer.

The second challenge was that even if the research document achieved its aim of recording responses without leading the participants to any specific or pre-ordained conclusion, would the factors influencing response actually be discernible? Granted that a child's response to a story might be influenced by any number of factors from their parents or perhaps grandparents to school culture, media culture and friends and society at large, what were the chances of separating these strands or recognising their operation in written responses to a research document? The answer was a proper humility about our ability to do this and a restriction at least in intention to a series of hunches deriving from the literature, leading us to test some areas rather than others, such as age and gender, family

and personal religious background, school context and most importantly their own written attempts to make sense of the narrative. Even so, at best we stumble to only a tentative conclusion *that* there are influential factors at work without being certain that we can give a complete description of what they all *are*.

That said we can draw the following conclusions as they emerge from the data.

13.1 Conclusions: A quantitative fix on the respondents

The Beliefs and Values Grid, initially designed to get a rough reading of reflective ideas from patients under-going treatments for life threatening diseases and deliberately angled to register response from the deeply religious to the consciously non-religious, acted like a values thermometer to get a quick 'fix' on the pupils completing the research document. Two clear facts emerged from this survey and two opaque ones.

The first clear result was that the Faith School registered significantly 'stronger agreement' scores on average than the Maintained School and Independent school in both years 7 and 9.

The second clear result was that there was a strong resonance between 'yes' answers to 4 questions about personal and family religious observance, and the averages on the Beliefs and Values Grid. In some ways this is a tautology. If you go to church and say that your parents do, you are likely to put 'strongly agree' against a battery of questions. Overall about 3 out of 4 of the children registering strong beliefs and values scores came from religious backgrounds. The exceptions - those with religious background but scoring themselves low on the Beliefs/Values scale and vice versa - later turned out to give some of the most intriguing answers, illuminated to some degree by this very mismatch.

The first more opaque result was that girls appeared to be in stronger agreement with the beliefs and values in the grid than the boys did in most schools and across most year groups. The opacity derives from the result in the maintained school year 7 where the conclusion does not hold true. In a class with a preponderance of girls, the boys scored fractionally higher and there are multiple possible explanations of this. Perhaps the imbalance of girls made the boys more 'feminine' in their responses than they might have been and the scores converged. Perhaps the girls, when they dominate, are more 'ladette'

than they might otherwise be and have less desire to strongly agree with a set of beliefs and values. Perhaps it is simply a feature of this particular year group in the maintained school. In the year 9 cohort the difference between girls and boys was the most *pronounced* of all but in this group the *boys* were dominant, leading us to speculate that the more girls the greater the convergence, the more boys the greater the divergence. Whatever the reason the general conclusion is that girls are more switched on to beliefs and values. Later on we found girls are more likely than boys in both years 7 and 9 to critique spiritual/value ideas in articulate ways. The gap closes by sixth form.

The second opaque result came from the *ranking* of certain answers on the Beliefs and Values Grid. Although on average there were definite differences in the *strength* of response between the schools the fact was that the top 8 items (out of 17) were generally the same in attracting support BUT with some exceptions in the Faith school. Whilst the MS and IS concentrated almost exclusively on questions about heaven and life after death, the Faith school in both years 7 and 9 hit on more specific items. In year 7 they ranked 'God is everywhere' and 'belief in a personal God' much higher than the other two schools and in year 9 hung onto the statement that 'there is a God' and 'prayer has value' in comparison with the other schools. They were also less inclined to take a dualist view of the world in that they ranked belief in forces of evil a few places lower than the MS and IS. The crucial point is that whether from family or school or both, there are obviously *cultural* influences at work here which exert themselves on *individuals* filling in a research document. The opacity lies in how much weight we can put on these rankings and whether we can also detect a trend away from 'God is everywhere' and 'personal God' in year 7 towards the more anodyne 'there is a God' in year 9, which remains distinct from the other schools, but may also represent a dilution within the Faith School. This remains unproven.

13.2 Conclusions: Year 7 responses

The most important conclusions circled in most part around the difference between the Catholic maintained school (the FS) and non-faith maintained school (MS).

The first observation was a cumulative one concerning both the vocabulary and theological reach of the FS. In their basic description of the story their use of language from

temptation to guilt was more specific and more expansive than the other schools. They had a grammar to play with. This helped them when less obvious elements of the research document required interpretation. They were more likely to extend their existing interpretation of the story into their analysis of the 'shining figure' picture whereas the other schools were much more diffuse in their interpretation or concentrated on just one aspect (power) rather than the ambivalence of being shown where knowledge and power might lead. More of them expressed sorrow and regret at leaving the garden and individuals within the cohort were the only ones to say that they would miss God as one of the big negatives along with a feeling of insecurity. Their response to the pictures of exclusion was generally of having done wrong and regret ó whichever picture they chose. Statistically, the most profound aspect of the FS submission was their preference for the straight disobedience/disobedience model of Adam and Jesus and their vote against the distrust/trust model ó in diametric opposition to the MS. This reinforced the growing conclusion that absolute rules and transgression of such a rule appeared to play more strongly in individuals from a faith school.

The second definitive movement was their strong opposition to the perceived secular answer 5 and their moderate opposition to the other secular answer 4. These two aspects suggest an alignment with a theology which lends structure to the whole narrative. It seemed likely that children in the faith school had a prior orientation to the narrative.

In the case of some individuals one suspected that this orientation was unconscious (in Fowler's sense) ó those who chose some answers without explanation - but in some cases it was evidently conscious. Most importantly there was also conscious *challenging* of this orientation by some of the Faith School children who disliked the 'expected' answers for very good theological reasons.

Some individuals took issue for example with the idea that Adam's small transgression could have such consequences.

The maintained school meanwhile were less likely to be absolutist in their view of rules. The most hostile remarks to God came from the maintained school and they were much less likely to use the language of guilt and temptation and more likely to use the language of blame and self-excuse. There was some evidence that they also had a different view of freedom from the FS. Both inside the garden and outside, freedom was perceived as the normal activities of children, from playing on the trampoline to walking the dog. The garden was 'OK' so long as freedom was not restricted. Unsupervised activity would

probably be the best indication of the MS mentality whereas the outside world for the FS was tinged with anxiety and insecurity. The IS came somewhere between these two positions, hinting at a kind of gritty self reliance and autonomy outside the garden.

In the theological answers towards the end of the research document, the MS were defined by opposition to an obedience/rules mentality in the same way that the FS had been opposing secular/atheist answers. They were also more likely to choose the option that you had to take some risks in order to grow up and were more inclined to reinforce this perception by ranking higher the secular answers 4 and 5. The notable exception to this was a tendency amongst a significant minority to agree with the FS in choosing rules/consequences answers ó not for theological reasons but because they were the õsimplestö or most õlogicalö.

Overall the most significant conclusion was the most general ó that the FS had a sense of loss and regret coming from somewhere else (God, the rule that had been broken, an ideal state which had been lost) whereas the MS did not share this view. If the ultimate hall-mark of spiritual narrative is that it paints a picture of transcendence,(another world which is *real* in some kind of way) ó then the Faith school perceived this much more strongly than the Maintained school, who actively resisted this õclaimö on their freedom, yielded only to the logic of rules and punishment without a sense of guilt or regret, and responded to exclusion mainly through blame and a sense of being abandoned.

Summary:

The Faith School:

- Wider and more specific religious vocabulary.
- Used an existing grammar to order ambivalence.
- Strong awareness of guilt, rule-breaking and favoured this, over simpler versions of trust/distrust
- Accepted freedom but with a sense of regret
- Awareness of God and overt rejection of secular alternatives
- Challenges to this mind-set came from a theological direction and mainly from girls

Maintained School

- Narrower religious vocabulary. Less guilt. More blame and self-excuse
- No shared grammar, more individual in response to ambivalence

- Rejection of rulesø orientation was the default position, with the most penetrating secular criticism coming from girls. Boys, who chose rules, did so for logic or simplicity.
- An assumed freedom. More prepared to commit to öriskyö living and resented claims on their freedom. More likely to feel abandoned than regret.

Independent school

- Smaller cohort so less subject to analysis
- Tendency to interpret freedom as autonomy and self-reliance rather than ölibertyö (MS) or öoff the leash but looking backö (FS)
- Positioned roughly between FS and MS but more aligned with MS.

13.3 Conclusions: Year 9 responses

There was a clear difference from year 7 in the ability to get above the narrative and start with sentences like öHumans think/have a tendency/do í ..the followingö though with the FS notably lagging behind the other two schools. There were echoes here of Pintrichø observation that non-absolutist approaches to knowledge may be more beneficial for eventual mastery.

The series of questions asking the pupils to enter imaginatively into the garden, saw opinions which were in embryo in year 7, come to birth more obviously in year 9. The FS vocabulary centred around Temptation and Obedience the MS stood back from the narrative and made it more about Selfishness and Greed.

Their views on the garden and outside were revealing. The FS were most sure of the *beauty* (was this a dilution from a year 7 tendency to *miss God?*) of the garden whereas the outside world was barren by comparison. The IS continued a theme found in year 7 that outside the garden was the world of self reliance and work, whereas the garden had been a refuge from worry and the necessity of working. The MS felt that the garden had been a place of peace and kindness, though some concluded later that this had led indirectly to people becoming spoiled and greedy. The real contrast between the schools came out when they were asked what was wrong with the garden. The IS were convinced that the real

problem was the with-holding of knowledge and autonomy. The MS saw only that their freedom had been impugned, whereas the FS located the problem, not in a general restriction of freedom but in a particular prohibition ó they were forbidden to eat the particular fruit. When they are expelled from the garden, the MS are inclined to see outside as a brighter place with lots of freedom to explore, though the ease of provision in Eden will be missed. In their last comments to God they are most likely to be hostile, feeling that they have been dislodged from a peaceful and easy life. The FS replicate the MS in welcoming the opportunity to explore but do *not* see the outside world as a brighter place. In fact quite the opposite. Outside the garden is more barren and they regret the lack of opportunity to return to Eden. They are much less likely to criticise God on exiting the garden. Meanwhile, armed with knowledge, the IS now have the chance to do things for themselves. Their last remarks to God are generally polite or inviting reflection from God, implying that the garden was a welcome respite ó as if they had been there for a holiday.

Moving onto the pictures of knowledge, the biggest differentiator between FS and MS was the shining figure. As with year 7 the FS brought their own narrative to the picture, interpreting the figure as an angel pointing out to Adam the consequences of his actions. In addition a significant minority linked the nuclear bomb picture to the òmushroom/lollipopö trees of Eden. The MS lacked this hermeneutic touchstone and were entirely idiosyncratic in their interpretations of the angel, and found the immediacy (but not the symbolism) of the nuclear bomb picture a more straightforward choice. The IS shared the MS's difficulty in interpreting the angel but were clearer in their stronger preference for the nuclear bomb, that the picture showed what man might do with his autonomy and almost God-like powers. This strong streak of self-sufficiency ran like a thread through the IS responses including the pictures of exclusion. Their overall concern was how they would survive in the outside world. Likewise the FS continued the backward glance to Eden and their choice of whichever picture carried the same theme of regret. Mindful of the fact that in general, the outside world is not so daunting to the MS (so the desert picture did not have the same appeal as for the other schools) it is perhaps unsurprising that in picking largely (as all the schools did) the Mormon picture of Adam and Eve, they majored on the theme of comforting one another rather than survival or regret. Interestingly this theme of mutual human support may be the flip side of the second favourite choice in the MS ó namely the punitive angel of Masaccio. The level of support for this picture solely in the MS does require explanation and the most likely is that they share a punitive (the FS preferred the

kindlier angel) image of God which acts as an incentive for human cohesion and resentment against God in the wake of expulsion.

In the final theological responses some interesting contrasts appeared between boys and girls. In considering the similarity and contrast between Adam and Jesus, the boys (and the MS had a large proportion of these) clearly had a preference for a straightforward disobedience/punishment framework on the grounds of logic. Theological objection to option 1 came from girls, irrespective of school, and they were better thought out in choosing option 4 whereas the boys who rejected 1 in favour of 4 were less articulate in their reasons.

In the final attempt to make sense of the story, the replies required a great deal of close analysis to discern what was going on, especially in distinguishing the conservative from a faith position and the conservative from a non-faith position. The most solid conclusion was that answers featuring feelings of anxiety did not appeal to boys at all, and even if they chose the atheist answer (option 5) they were more likely to choose rules and consequences (1 and 2) as the next best option rather than the 'feely' answer 4. Girls meanwhile, especially those from the faith school who mounted a resistance to the conservative theology, saw the virtue of 4 against the atheist answer 5. The other conclusion was that when the chips were down, all 3 schools demonstrated a 'cultural response' which was inline with their school's drift throughout the research document. The Faith School had always been rule oriented and remained so. The MS had always soft-pedalled regret in favour of plain logic and commonsense even if this meant that they were the aggrieved victims of it in terms of expulsion from the garden. The IS had always pitched for self-sufficiency without resentment and this showed in the extraordinary difference in their responses which rated growing up and risk much higher than the other schools but backed this up with an explicit rejection of rules and consequences and less antipathy to straightforwardly existential or atheist responses. Our previous conclusion seems to hold that the schools do appear to have an encultured response which is 'under authority' in the FS, 'asserting their own authority' in the MS and 'simply autonomous' in the IS.

13.4 Conclusions: Sixth Form responses

In the sixth form, the direct correlation of family influence and score in the Beliefs and Values Grid is beginning to erode, especially in the middle ground. The extreme poles at the top and bottom end retain the association but it appears that in the majority middle, sixth formers have formed their own views on spirituality irrespective of background. At the poles, meanwhile, there is some evidence that views have crystallised out into constructs which are coherent and logical but may have selective blindness or filters against bits of the story which don't fit.

Both in the length of their answers and in the bewildering variety of answers, the sixth form are much more difficult to bracket under generalisations. In writing their initial understanding of the story it was possible to detect the poles of extreme religious and extreme non-religious from their fierce inner coherence but it would have been difficult to identify, say, the liberal religious and the liberal humanist, had not the spirituality scale predisposed us to look at their answers in that light.

When compared with years 7 and 9 it was possible to detect broad currents or 'ocean drift' in interpretation. The most noticeable was an increased empathy amongst the sixth formers with the written explanations involving human angst and straightforwardly robust atheism. Most importantly, some of the religiously liberal were prepared to choose these options rather than concede to answers they viewed as abhorrent to their view of God – this in contrast to younger years who fought shy of going that far, when expressing a protest. In the pictures too there was a clear drift from the more punitive images towards the more angst laden – especially the picture by Pavel Popov which was interpreted with much more insight than in year 7 and 9.

Perhaps of most significance was the fact that conflict and dissonance played heavily in the sixth form. They detected the challenge of the Adam and Jesus equilibrium and spent more time questioning the obedience/disobedience paradigm and the power/powerlessness paradigm than they did in promoting an acceptable view. Especially at the extreme religious pole however, this mental struggle was not in evidence because they already had a set view of the 'right' answer – confirming Pintrich's strictures about absolutist views of knowledge being a hindrance to conceptual change.

Overall in the comparison of the different years, no one year could lay claim to a wider range of ideas than the others ó it being true only that the sixth forms had a greater sophistication of expression and articulation. So whilst there was a drift in *preference* for some ideas rather than others (e.g. the angst solution) this did not mean that the ideas were absent in lower years, implying that a maturational view of age-appropriateness to certain concepts cannot go entirely unchallenged ó at least in spiritual narrative as opposed to overtly *ethical* narrative. In fact it could be argued that decisive foreclosure on ideas is more a feature of sixth formers who have ðformed a viewö whereas in lower years there is still ambivalence and reassessment or simply confusion. On the other hand there may be a distinction to be made amongst those whose fore-closure is unconscious (like some of the year 9s who were convinced of a simple, logical answer) against those whose foreclosure is conscious and deliberate. The thing that cannot be doubted is the drive for closure of meaning. In all years there was a worrying at the bone of meaning which even in the absence of a clear provenance of interpretation, tempted young people nevertheless to give it their best shot. Of course this was the biggest limitation of the current study in that it proffered insight into the discrete concerns of year 7s, 9s and sixth form but offered no longitudinal view of an individual who might find a kind of closure in year 7, subject to critical self-review in year 9 and then perhaps again in year 13. There would also be the question of which narratives had the depth and multivalency to sustain this enquiry in the same individual at different times in their life and issuing in different interim answers. This endorses the intuition that the number of these narratives or master-myths may be relatively small, with numerous variants articulated in different generations for different audiences, but presented for renewed scrutiny through national or religious traditions which preserve them. So far as this study was concerned, the best that could be offered was a final chapter which looked at the ways in which individuals, despite the constraints of a differently sectioned research document, in fact came up with remarkably coherent ðolutionsö or at least transparent struggles for meaning.

13.5 Conclusions: Case Studies of selected pupils from years 7,9 & Sixth Form

Again there is a risk of simply repeating the content of the chapter but the following conclusions are fairly clear.

In all three year groups it is clear that an existing structure of thought acts as a touchstone for interpreting the narrative. Students with a strongly religious background and a strong perception of themselves as spiritual are likely to come up with answers which are internally coherent. The conservatively religious are, on paper, the most successful at stitching the different jig-saw bits of the narrative together because they have an existing grammar of God, Sin, Temptation, Disobedience readily to hand. The liberally religious have a more difficult task, especially the theologically minded, because they have certain ideas which seem to be in conflict with the narrative or they are aware of cultural norms (say non-punitive tolerance) which they want to accommodate in their account. At the other end of the cognitively agnostic/atheist are inclined to achieve answers which are equally coherent. As it stands, the narrative can become a relatively simple moral tale of greed/selfishness and consequences with the problem of transcendence on the back-burner, or it can be understood mythically as a classic insight into the human condition, along the lines of Shakespeare, and involving a suspension of disbelief in the interests of fuller exploration. Chapter 12 saw all these approaches in play. By far the most interesting results however were those individuals who came to the narrative with neither grammar nor prejudice. In their transparent struggle and often failure to find coherence, lies the greatest strength and weakness of spiritual narrative because it begs the question of why they should struggle over this particular narrative, whether the narrative can bear the demand for meaning laid upon it and whether if it were never placed before people, anything would really be lost or gained in the sum of human knowledge. That said, the narrative *was* placed before young people and the following are the broad conclusions.

13.6 Broad conclusions

Pupils respond to spiritual narrative in different ways. This study indicates that they are influenced by

- Their religious background and practice (or lack of it) especially their close family, but not to any great extent by their knowledge *about* religion
- The culture of the school in which they find themselves

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- Their age. There are different emphases commonly found in year 7, 9 and sixth form.
- Their gender.
- Their will to meaning

Notwithstanding the streams of which they are part and the fact that schools demonstrably produce *collective* differences in response, the key defining influence is the last item, namely the individual's drive to find meaning and coherence ó the ðwarmö factors according to Pintrich.

There is evidence that an existing grammar of response can lead (for both secular and religious youngsters) to interpretation which has the benefit of inner coherence at one end and the disadvantage of conceptual foreclosure at the other.

There is evidence that the *absence* of a spiritual grammar may lead to the benefit of conceptual struggle at one end or the disadvantage of having so few hermeneutic resources to hand that the narrative delivers only limited meaning or is simply dismissed as having no meaning at all.

There is evidence that the process of interrogating a narrative leads some young people to an awareness of conceptual incoherence which may lead to conceptual review.

There is evidence that written articulation of possible interpretations of a narrative forces young people into conceptual dilemma and hard choices. Likewise it seems that ambivalence and multivalency at the heart of the actual narrative story or in a pictorial representation of the narrative, prompts conceptual conflict requiring an attempt at resolution. However these resolutions and choices may not exhaust all the possible options and there was evidence in the study that *opposition* to certain solutions was as motivating as positive choice.

There is some evidence that spiritual *ideas* are not the preserve of any particular age but that some ideas are more *prevalent* in certain age groups than others, whilst the ability to articulate these ideas expands with age. This marks a difference from *ethical* enquiry where much of the debate in recent years has followed Kohlbergian lines of ideas linked to

maturation. This is not to say that maturation has no part in spiritual narrative but it is more likely to be connected with stages of *affect* (for example the 6th formers' increased awareness of estrangement or the Year 7s instinctive support for act and punishment) rather than cognitive function.

The final conclusion is simply the observation that spiritual narrative operates in a strange space between the measurable and the transcendent, and has an ability to resist simple reduction at one end and hint at something which stretches human imagination at the other. One gratifying aspect of the study was the fact that in large part, the young people responded with vigour and considerable freedom to those bits of the research document which invited them into the story. This enthusiasm, however, tended to tail off when the interrogation became more intense and there did not exist the cultural motive to persist in the examination. In other words there was evidence that story, especially an engaging spiritual story, seems to evoke response simply by virtue of being itself. So perhaps in response to an earlier question, a 'spiritual' narrative is proved to be so by the range of engagement it evokes. It is also hard to imagine many alternate vehicles (poetry perhaps or music?) which would perform this function quite as well. The simple story of Adam and Eve still seems to have currency and the power to draw out responses in the 21st century, and appears to have done so across different human histories for 3 millennia. The question of who tells the stories, which stories should be told and of how stories might be preserved as part of a wider literacy, (or whether they need to be) amongst generations schooled in competing grammars, is more difficult to answer

14 IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The research began with the intention of exploring if and how spiritual narrative evoked responses in young people. To ask this question in the midst of current practice in Religious Education is important since narrative has been assigned various places in modern curricula. The dominant model in senior schools up to GCSE has been that of 'Learning about' and 'Learning from' religions. In this model, as we reflected in the literary review, spiritual narrative is often used to illustrate a theme which has already been identified. So the Adam and Eve story is brought in to illustrate 'the Christian view' of the origins of evil for example, or 'the doctrine of the Fall'. In other words 'This is what the story means to (Christians)' and 'This is what we can learn from it'. To some extent this tidies up the story into a neat package without dwelling on the elements which might challenge this solitary verdict or evoke different verdicts.

An alternative approach is to find spiritual narratives which are less multivalent in the first place and more amenable to fitting themes or topics. GCSE students are prone to have a number of narratives at their disposal which can be used in a number of contexts. The 'Woman caught in adultery' can be adduced to argue permissive views on sexual ethics or simple compassion and tolerance, and the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep, and the Sheep and the Goats can be aligned easily with charitable concern, attitudes to crime, punishment and forgiveness and universal human rights. Whilst the choice of these stories arguably involves less reduction to the nuances of narrative than the more radical reduction of the Adam and Eve 'master myth', it illustrates a tendency to uproot stories from their original context and embed them within a different literacy – namely a largely secular, liberal confessionality, as Wright argues. In a sense this is not especially undesirable or unexpected. The evangelists, after all, had their own purposes in selecting some parables rather than others. Luke's fondness for 'forgiveness' stories is matched by Matthew's leanings towards 'judgement' stories and it could be argued that, albeit in a very different setting, the stories at least retain currency and relevance through their inclusion in modern curricula. On the other hand, Matthew and Luke both operate within the assumption of a salvation story which stretches both before and after them and we should be wary of an uncritical acquiescence in their use within a different literacy, especially one claiming the legitimacy of being Religious Education. One aspect of the

quantitative elements of the thesis was precisely the observation that some children responded in ways that suggested a prior *secular* literacy (partially evidenced by the Beliefs and Values grid and family questions and partially through their written answers) as coherent in its way as prior *religious* literacy and showing the same tendency as religious conservatism in foreclosing on the meaning of the story. Such foreclosure might be reinforced still further by the current trend in curricula to embed stories in an educational context, which might claim to be value neutral but is probably not. With this in mind, the present thesis therefore suggests a different model for the use of spiritual narrative in Religious Education, as follows.

One of the important aspects of the methodology adopted in the thesis was that the young people, from whatever background, were initially immersed in the story rather than any pre-digested material. Furthermore it was an undiluted story, retaining transcendent and mythic elements without concession to a more secular grammar and with all the complexity which defied simple reduction into anything else. The narrative was not simply illustrative of a topic, theme or doctrine nor assumed to be simply supportive of an ethical, moral or citizenship outcome. It was of itself and was the starting point for engagement not the end-point.

A second important outcome of the research was that, in the absence of any prompts as to meaning, the children responded with great freedom and energy within the context of the story itself. Whilst some of these responses, on inspection, suggested that the children were bringing with them influences and grammars from home, family and school to extract meaning from the narrative, they nevertheless gave answers which showed signs of intellectual dissonance and struggle, epistemological challenge, humour and creativity which could not simply be pigeon-holed under maturational or cognitive labels. The method of enquiry as well as the object of enquiry was important. This particular story, the object of enquiry, deserved the title of 'master myth' insofar as it suggested multiple meanings whilst holding all of them within simple narrative parameters. Meanwhile the non-directive method of enquiry gave maximum opportunity for thought and expression and gave space for educational ideals of mastery and the drive to construct coherent meaning. In terms of educational methodology a very important question arises, however. If starting with narrative is the 'right point of entry' how many 'master-myths' are 'out there' which could feasibly deliver this controlled multivalency? In fact there

could be quite a number, giving rise to the hope that the methodology of narrative firstö might be viable. Within the Christian tradition, the crucifixion narrative would deliver the same multi-valency. Other candidates might be the Liberation from Egypt, perhaps the story of Jonah, elements of the Joseph story and of King David and of St Paul. The real merit of starting with these narratives however, is that it offers a possible route out of the strait jacket imposed on religious education by phenomenology, thematic approaches and the tacit assumption of uniformity underlying some aspects of multi-culturalism. Once it has been established that some of the founding stories of the great religions offer multiple rather than monochrome insights and a range of options for human self-understanding, rather than a single orthodoxy, it becomes much easier to explore the central theme of religion, which is faith in search of meaning rather than a single meaning in search of a justification. A single example might serve as illustration. One of the concerns of the Adam and Eve story is undoubtedly one of crime and punishment but actually within the story and, subsequently in the Christian tradition, this idea is surrounded by ambivalence and debate. What exactly is their crime and is it really about transgression or distrust? When these ideas are pursued by later writers they take unexpected twists and turns in each generation's search for meaning. For the Deuteronomist the law is 'not far from you' (Deut 30.11) and there *can* be obedience sufficient to stay in the land of milk and honey (Deut 6). For Ezekiel, by contrast, the only way obedience can be guaranteed is through the ritual and cultic washing of the heart (Ezek 36.24) and Eden flows out of the temple (Ezek 47). For Jeremiah, by contrast again, there is a deep cynicism about either the cult or the law delivering righteousness and only a whole new deal will suffice (Jer.31.34), enabling a sober, this-worldly Eden, where people simply live at peace. For the early Christians the dilemma is writ large in a man who dies under the laws of religion and politics but allegedly is righteous and meets the new Eve, in a garden, on Easter day (John 20). In other words, a seminal problem, raised in Genesis, recurs in different ways throughout biblical history. Within this debate, the story, beloved of GCSE candidates, of the woman caught in adultery takes on both colour and context. What should be your attitude to lawbreakers and is the answer simple? Taken beyond the Christian tradition and placed into present history, the dilemma becomes even more dramatic. Is it possible to legislate our way to a utopian society? Can you break the law to uphold the law? Can you command obedience if it is not freely given?

Another aspect of the thesis was that, although certain responses were more likely in certain age groups, they were not confined to those year groups and the difference lay less in the ideas that were expressed and more in the sophistication of expression. This suggests that Religious Education should be bolder in its ambition to bring half-articulated ideas to full expression, and this cannot be done by orienting material solely to the children's current levels of experience or faculties of expression. In the research questionnaire, in my quest to tap children's unforced responses, there was a concern to put choices of expression in simple words without revealing the origins of the ideas. In a classroom context there would be an impetus to take the children's first stabs at meaning and reveal that they are not the first people to have thought those thoughts. So if they scream 'Foul' at God, then Nietzsche has been there before them and if they feel abandoned, then Kierkegaard would understand how they feel. And if guilt plagues them, then Freud has a view on that. Alternatively there is no reason why pictures and film which give living expression to these ideas should not be used more extensively, with the proviso that, unlike the pictures in the questionnaire which did not necessarily carry a conscious meaning, there are film makers artists and poets who are intensely conscious about their work and could act as informed commentary on seminal ideas in religious narrative.

Behind all these ideas, of course, lies a crucial question of theology as well as of education. Religion, at one time or another, is likely to have considered most of the explosive ideas of the human race and incorporated them into story and ritual. These ideas are not easily sanitised, or indeed resolved, especially if they are allowed to speak for themselves and reveal themselves to a free response. Spiritual Narrative, especially that which could reasonably be called master-myth, places these ideas in a relatively safe place where the narrative form itself holds in tension, ideas which both challenge and invite exploration.

In an educational context there are two causes for concern around spiritual narrative. The first is the fear I have expressed, that spiritual narrative in many curricula is locked in a context which reduces its power to challenge, or effectively evacuates it of meaning apart from that which is projected onto it by the prevailing climate of thought, or a religious fundamentalism which tries to lay exclusive claim to the text. The second is the fear that there simply is not the breadth of theological and intellectual literacy amongst teachers to resist such reductionism or recognise a similarity between pupils' first scramblings for

meaning and the mature thoughts of great human beings whose ideas are often found in embryo in the spiritual narratives of religion.

Whilst it cannot be the remit of this thesis to comment on how teachers are trained, it certainly could be concluded from this work that there is some merit in putting great spiritual narratives back towards the centre of Religious Education and retrieving an educational ideal of a search for truth, starting from the avenues of exploration that those stories suggest. This truth might turn out to be subject to revision and correction or better articulation but this should not lead to a cynicism about the search itself ó nor its first stirrings in the minds of the young. The great spiritual narratives of the world are an appropriate starting point for such an enquiry after truth.

15 APPENDICES

15.1 Appendix (1) to research – the Research Document

YOUR NAME (first and second name)

What year are you in school?

School

Male/female (circle)

The Adam and Eve story is a really old story. When you heard it just now

1. Had you heard it before? **Yes/No** (circle)

2. ***What do you think the story is all about?***

- Even if you don't agree with it what do you think the story is trying to tell us about human beings?
- Are there any things that don't make sense in the story? Try to write from memory but you can read the story for yourself if you want to.

(Remember there is no right or wrong answer to this. You can write whatever you think.
No need to write full sentences. Bullet points are fine.)

Did you look at the written story when you wrote your answer? Yes/No

The story (only read this if you can't remember the spoken version)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,
"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

- ¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring ^[a] and hers;
he will crush ^[b] your head,
and you will strike his heel."
- ¹⁶ To the woman he said,
"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;
with pain you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."
- ¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'
"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat of it
all the days of your life.
- ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.
- ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."
- ²⁰ Adam ^[c] named his wife Eve, ^[d] because she would become the mother of
all the living.
- ²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed
them. ²² And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us,
knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take
also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." ²³ So the LORD God
banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had
been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side ^[e] of the
Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to
guard the way to the tree of life.

QUESTIONS: Imagine that you are Adam or Eve

1. What will you *miss most* about your life in the garden?

Answer:

2. Looking back, is there anything that was *bad* about life in the garden even before the snake came along?

Answer:

3. What will be the *best* thing about living outside the garden?

Answer:

4. What will be the *worst* thing about living outside the garden?

Answer:

5. If you got the chance to say **one** thing to God as you leave the garden, what would it be?

Answer:

ABOUT YOU AND RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

1. Are you religious, in the sense that you go to church or a place of worship regularly, even when you are not in school? **Yes/No (circle)**

2. Is there anyone in your close family who is religious? **Yes/No (circle)**

3. If you answered ‘Yes’ to the question above - **Who?**
Answer:

4. Do you know what *kind* of religious person they or you are e.g. Catholic, Sikh, Muslim? Buddhist?
Answer:

5. Are you *quite* religious in the sense that you might go to a place of worship at Christmas or Divali or Ramadan but not much the rest of the time? **Yes/No (circle)**

6. Do you think you know quite a lot *about* religion(s) from your teachers at school, TV and so on? **Yes/No (circle)**

MORE ABOUT YOU AND SPIRITUALITY

Try and score these 1 ó 10. **1** for strongly agree **10** for strongly disagree. Just tick the number

	Strongly agree					strongly disagree				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I am a spiritual person										
2. I believe I have a spirit or soul that can survive my death										
3. I believe in a personal God										
4. I believe God is everywhere										
5. I believe what happens after death is affected by how I have lived my life										
6. I believe there are forces for evil in the universe.										
7. I believe everything happens for a reason.										
8. I believe in life after death										
9. I am a religious person.										
10. Religious ceremonies are important to me.										
11. I believe life is planned out for me.										
12. I believe God is a life-force										
13. At least once in my life I have had a strong spiritual experience.**										
14. I believe that there is a heaven.										
15. I believe prayer has value.										
16. I believe the human spirit is immortal (lives forever)										
17. I believe there is a God										

If you agree quite strongly (if you have ticked 1,2,3,or 4) at question **13 that you have ‘at least once in your life had a strong spiritual experience’ can you say briefly what this experience was?

PICTURES

KNOWLEDGE



Picture 1 (a sculpture)



Picture 2 (a painting of a nuclear bomb)



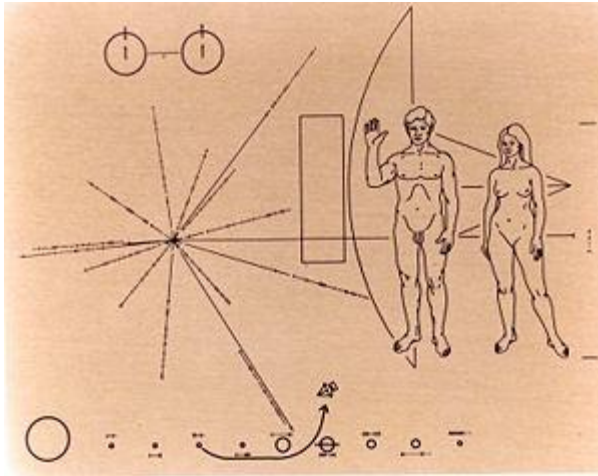
Picture 4 (oil on the beach in the gulf of Mexico ó a photo)↑



Picture 3 (a book illustration)

Picture 5

A metal engraving illustrating human size and the solar system, on the Pioneer10 unmanned spacecraft, so that aliens would know who we were and where we were from



QUESTION

In the Adam and Eve story, the snake says that if they eat the apple from the tree of knowledge, they will become *like God* or have *Godlike power*

1. Choose **one** of the pictures from 1-5 above

Explain why you have chosen this picture. In what way may it illustrate what the snake was talking about?

Answer: My chosen picture is number -----

The reason I chose this picture is í í .

2. In the story do you think Adam and Eve *did* become like God? **Yes/No** (circle)
(write here if you need to explain your answer)

EXCLUSION FROM THE GARDEN



Picture 1 by Masaccio



Picture 2 by Francis Hayman



Picture 3 from a Mormon Seminary guide
Popov



Picture 4 by Pavel

QUESTIONS

Which picture makes an impact on you?

Answer: Number 1 1 .

What do you think Adam and Eve are *thinking* in the picture you have chosen?

Answer:

DEATH

This is a piece of Art by the famous sculptor Damien Hirst. It is called *Adam and Eve Exposed* and has male and female skeletons on 2 beds covered with sheets.



QUESTION

Can you think of any possible connection between this piece of art and the Adam and Eve story? Explain

Answer:

Look at this modern picture



QUESTION

Can you think of any possible connection between this picture and the Adam and Eve story? Explain

Answer:

RELIGION



The Christian religion makes a **connection** and a **contrast** between the **Adam and Eve** story and the **Jesus** story as you can see from the medieval picture above.

BUT even within Christianity there are **DIFFERENT** explanations of the connection.

Read the following explanations carefully and decide which explanation is the best and which is the worst. **THE LINES IN RED ARE A SUMMARY.**

Explanation 1. **Adam disobeyed** God's rules so God threw him out. **Jesus obeyed** God's rules so God let Jesus back into paradise along with everybody who believes in him, but will punish anybody who doesn't believe or obey God.

Explanation 2. When **Adam** (meaning all humans) became able to think (the tree of knowledge) he became very insecure and anxious (in the story he realised he felt naked and could not touch the tree of life). Life became an endless battle involving anxiety, pain, hard work and the search for security until you die ó a bit like film-stars seeking eternal youth and loads of money. **Jesus** was *not* insecure like Adam and showed that if you trusted God you did not have to rely on money or other security. **Adam illustrates one type of human who is anxious. Jesus illustrates a different kind of human who is not anxious.**

Explanation 3. **Adam** wanted to be like God (this is what the snake says) by being totally powerful through understanding everything. **Jesus** suggested that being like God was more about being powerless and generous. **Adam and many human beings (like Hitler and Stalin) want to be God because they think God is all-powerful but Jesus doesn't see God like that.**

Explanation 4. When **Adam** ate the apple, he lost the innocent trust that he used to have. He became an adult in the sense that he was suspicious of God (hiding in the garden) and felt guilty and exposed ó a bit like teenagers who become awkward with their parents. **Jesus suggested that a child-like trust was a good thing even for grown ups and trusted in God even when he felt abandoned. Adam stands for distrust. Jesus stands for trust.**

QUESTIONS

1. Which is the **best** explanation of the connection/contrast between the Adam story and the Jesus story? **Answer:** Number -----

2. Which explanation is the **worst** in your view? **Answer:** Number ----

3. Can say *why* you like or dislike a particular version?

Answer:

4. Do you think there is a better explanation than the ones provided above? Write your version here if you can think of one.

Answer

MAKING SENSE OF THE STORY

We have looked at different aspects of the story of Adam and Eve. As the last part of this exercise, please choose which of the following makes most sense to you and why? **THE LINES IN RED ARE A SUMMARY OF DIFFERENT OVERALL VIEWS OF THE STORY**

Number 1. Don't break rules or you'll get punished

- God made the Garden and Adam and Eve.
- He gave them the rules
- They broke his rules
- They deserve to get punished
- It's up to God to decide how they can make amends if at all.
- We are all guilty.

Number 2. Don't be tempted to do something if you don't know the consequences

- Adam and Eve were basically OK
- The snake tempted them, they didn't think it through and spoilt everything
- God should not really blame Adam and Eve. They were just a bit weak that's all.
- It's all a bit of a mess

Number 3. You've got to take a few risks as you grow up. It was always going to happen.

- Adam and Eve were innocent like children but they were always going to grow up
- It's not fair to punish them for growing up
- Adam and Eve are now a bit like God. They can take adult decisions.
- God will just have to live with that.
- God will have to treat us like adults

Number 4. It's a story about loss and regret and anxiety. We are adults now but we look back to a golden age of innocence when we were loved and secure.

- We all feel naked, guilty and stupid sometimes
- We all feel excluded and anxious sometimes
- We all feel that once upon a time we were secure and loved but now we feel quite insecure and anxious.
- It would be quite nice to think that there was a God or someone like that who still cared for us and made us feel secure.

Number 5. It's a story about being bold enough to live our lives without any help from God or anyone else. We are clever and tough enough to survive even if it's a hard world out there.

- We all get to feel guilty and naked at times
- But it's no good getting upset about it.
- The fact is we are really clever, our eyes are wide open and we can see how things are.
- We don't need God or anybody else to tell us what to do.
- We can rely on ourselves.
- The world is a tough place but we can manage.

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Number 6. You may think of a **better** meaning to the story, or a kind of combination of the others. Write your version here if you want to.

You may like some of these meanings better than others.

Can you arrange them in order. the one you like best at number 1 and the one you like least at number 5. See if you can rank the others somewhere in between.

Best Story is number 1 1 1 ..

In between number 1 1 1 1

In between number 1 1 1 1

In between number 1 1 1 1

Worst Story is number 1 1 1 ...

Can you say why you like your number 1 story best

Question: Do you think you have changed your view of the story between the beginning and the end of this exercise? **Yes/No**

Question: Would you be willing to do a short interview (no more than 10 minutes max.) about your answers, at a later date if I got in touch with you through the staff at your school? **Yes/No**

**MANY THANKS FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND
HELP**

15.2 Appendix (2) to research – discarded models

Three possible research models were considered, all of which were discarded as unworkable.

Research model one (This was the model which competed most strongly with the eventual model)

To follow roughly Hawkey's arrangement of cards around a theme ó but in much more detail. The intention was to see how children would order 20 or 30 incidents and opinions around a kind of superman figure called Power man (below). This would be followed up by interviews about their arrangement ó the idea being to see if prior knowledge of spiritual figures (power man had some of the attributes and ambivalence of Jesus) would affect their ordering and whether assumptions from their own lives would colour perceptions.

The proposed schema

The idea was that pupils should be given a large number of cards with sentences on, which all add up to the narrative of Powerman. These would be numbered in some way but it would be explained that the numbering was not any clue to how they sequenced the cards. (the numbers would simply aid analysis later). The cards would be headlines about Powerman, soundbites from Powerman himself and things that he did.

e.g **Headlines**

Powerman defends himself

Powerman flies to join the army in Iraq

Powerman is too late to save him

Bush offers Powerman total control of American forces

His mum just doesn't understand him

The Queen offers Powerman a knighthood

Powerman's fatal weakness

Huge bomb destroys white House

Powerman talks to Osama

Powerman's brother is just ordinary
Women flock to see Powerman
No more Mr Nice Guy
Powerman: Is he a catholic?
Bush dies.
Powerman accepts
Powerman and the Drugs companies
Powerman refuses
They shake hands on TV
Powerman kisses him in public
Where has Powerman gone?
Is Osama alive?
Best friend says Powerman is a fake
It was Powerman's fault says witness
Teheran in ruins
This is where he came from
etc..

Soundbites

I've got the power to help
If you've got it, keep it
Power gets in the way sometimes
What's the Koran got to do with it?
Little people matter
So you really want to be rich?
I'll be back
One of these days you'll be sorry
Everybody could be Powerman if they wanted it enough.
They're just jealous
Why are you having a go at me?
I just can't do that even if I wanted to etc..

Events

Powerman wobbles the markets in Hong Kong
Powerman plays to huge crowds
Powerman finds a cure for AIDS

Powerman likes to party

The key to the cards is that the direction of events is not at all clear nor the character of Powerman. The whole point is that there is no clear answer apart from the assumptions that the children make about Powerman. Is it possible to compose a coherent narrative. What doesn't fit? What will they throw out? Will they have to plug gaps? Where do Powerman's loyalties lie? Is he American, British, pro Muslim? Does he help the west in Iraq? Who are his enemies, friends?

Hoped-for outcomes

The format of the answers would be important. They would need to mark the cards which were crucial in their composition and note the omitted cards. They would need to know what swung their assessment of Powerman. In my own school there are significant numbers of MoD children. Does the Iraq/Afghanistan question swing their answers? Will there be gender differences? Religious background differences? Can this be done with different age groups? Schools of a different culture?

Then the question would be posed in interviews as to whether they had considered that Powerman could be construed as Jesus. If so why so? If not, why not? If Powerman were Jesus, would this have helped to structure their narrative? What crucial changes would they make and why? Obviously this part of the interview might have to be much less structured but the recording should give some control.

Reasons for discarding this model

This plan was discarded because inevitably the cards were a double extrapolation – first from the scriptural story and secondly from my own decisions about what should be on the cards. There was also uncertainty about whether the cards gave too much latitude to interpretation leaving the proposed subject of investigation too vulnerable to omission. The fundamental error in this model was in trying to transfer an insight from *history* teaching where there are known outcomes, to an area like spiritual narrative where outcomes are largely unknown or unpredictable. Hawkey's original idea had a controlling epistemology

related to history writing with only a certain number of outcomes. The 'powerman narrative' was impossibly complex with too many possible outcomes occasioned not only by the narrative itself but by the fact that it was, in effect, a narrative *about* a narrative, namely the Jesus story. This complexity was such that that any patterns would have been obscured between schools and individuals.

Research model two

To employ a form of Wright's variation theory to selected synoptic passages from the gospels where there were obvious differences in authorship and interpretation. The intention was to record pupils' struggle with the material and enquire into the methods they employed and reasons they had for their conclusions on issues of truth, authorship and authority.

The proposed schema

Pupils should see 2 versions of the same story and be asked to come to some sort of conclusion about the issues of originality and 'truth' and redaction.

3 passages were proposed

1. Mark 6.1-6 which parallels Matthew 13. 53-8 This is the story of Jesus finding unbelief and rejection from his own family and town. The conventional theology is that Matthew adapted Mark, but the children will not be told that. They will simply be asked to note the differences, anything that surprises them (such as the fact that Jesus had brothers and sisters) and any explanations they give. In fact the parallel passages show Matthew moderating Jesus' inability to do miracles in favour of simply *not* doing any, toning down his family opposition and moderating the snub implied by the designation 'son of Mary' though having to admit son of 'a carpenter' (without mentioning Joseph by name).

2. Matthew 5. 1-12 which parallels Luke 6. 20-26. The Matthew passage comprises the Beatitudes. The Lukan version is much less well known but the theological opinion is that an undiscovered source Q lies behind both because of the verbal similarities. There are

very significant differences however. Matthew spiritualises poverty into the 'poor in spirit' whereas Luke believes that the poor are blessed full stop. Which is truer? Can we tell? What difference does it make?

3. The final passage is one of the few Q parables which appears in both Matthew and Luke.- the tale of the wedding banquet where people are invited but don't come, and the King fills his hall with outsiders. (Matthew 22.1-14 and Luke 14.16-24). In Luke the story stops there, but in Matthew there is the added dimension of one of the outsiders who is expelled for not wearing a wedding garment, which seems a little unfair! The answer probably lies in Matthew's Jewish expectation that if the gentiles come into the church as outsiders then they had better well behave. Luke has no such judgement since he is probably writing for Gentiles anyway. From the children's point of view it is instructive to ask which story they favour and why. The pictorial content also gives an opportunity to tap what view of God they have initially in order to express preference for one rather than another. This could be done imaginatively by taking the part of the rejected guest or getting into the mentality of the people who made excuses. In theological terms, what do you have to do to 'get in' to the Kingdom of heaven and what is expected for you to remain?

Hoped-for outcomes?

Conceptual change, especially the appreciation that ambiguity and not simple truth lies right at the heart of the original deposit of faith.

Reasons for discarding this model

Whilst this schema was looking at very concrete empirical material where actual conceptual change might be measurable, there were two omissions - the first being a simple one of retaining attention in a task which was largely literary/analytic, the second being that narrative impact and indeed spirituality evaporated under a reductionist rational critique.

Research Model three

To use spiritual narratives in the usual early morning school services in school chapel and explore impact and retention in classes later...This was an early ill-informed schema

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backed by a genuine desire to explore whether chapel services had any impact at all! The proposal was deeply flawed by practical obstacles such as whether or not to draw attention to the stories in the first place and whether the measure of impact would simply be that of memory. Nor, in chapel, could there be control either of the year groups to be tested or of the material commanding attention.

15.3 Appendix (3) to research – pilot scheme of research document

(with different rubrics)

MAKING SENSE OF THE STORY

Here are 5 ways of making sense of the story

1. It's Adam and Eve's Fault

- God made the Garden and Adam and Eve.
- He gave them the rules
- They broke his rules
- They deserve to get punished
- It's up to God to decide how they can get back if at all.
- We are all guilty.

2. It's the snake's fault

- Adam and Eve were basically OK
- The snake tempted them and spoiled everything
- God should not really blame Adam and Eve. They were just a bit weak that's all.
- Maybe we should get a second chance.

3. It's God's fault

- After all God made the snake as well as Adam and Eve
- God must have known that Adam and Eve would grow up some time
- It's not fair to punish them for growing up
- Adam and Eve are now a bit like God. They can take adult decisions.
- God will just have to live with that.
- God will have to treat us like adults

4. Don't blame anybody. It's just a story about the anxiety of growing up and looking back to a more secure time. God was kind of right. We feel bad.

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- The story is really about growing up
- We all feel naked, guilty and stupid sometimes
- We all feel excluded and anxious sometimes
- We all feel that once upon a time we were secure and loved but now we feel quite insecure and anxious.
- It would be quite nice to think that there was a God or someone like that who still cared for us and made us feel secure.

5. Don't blame anybody. It's just a story about getting on with our lives without any help and without looking back. The snake was kind of right. We shouldn't feel bad.

- We all get to feel guilty and naked at times
- But it's no good getting upset about it.
- The fact is we are really clever, our eyes are wide open and we can see how things are.
- We don't need God or anybody else to tell us what to do.
- We can rely on ourselves.
- The world is a tough place but we can manage.

You may like some of these meanings better than others.

Can you arrange them in order. the one you like best at number 1 and the one you like least at number 5. See if you can put the others somewhere in between.

Best Story is number 1 1 1 ..

In between number 1 1 1 1

In between number 1 1 1 1

In between number 1 1 1 1

Worst Story is number 1 1 1 ...

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Can you say why you like your number 1 story best

IMAGINE YOU WERE ADAM IN THE STORY

Can you circle where your feelings would be on the following scale.

Really guilty								Not very guilty
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very angry with God								Not very angry
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very anxious about leaving the garden								Not very anxious
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very bothered about wearing no clothes								Not vey bothered
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very angry with the snake and Eve								Not very angry
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Really wanting everything to go back To the way things were								Not bothered if things change
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Glad you ate the apple								Not glad you ate the apple

AFTER THINKING ABOUT THE STORY, CAN YOU ANSWER THESE BIG QUESTIONS

(Remember the ðFall of Manö means this story - of how Adam and Eve ðfellö from innocence and were excluded from the Garden of Eden)

Questions

What was **good** about before the fall? ó *before* they ate the apple?

What was **bad** about before the fall?

What was **good** about after the fall ó *after* they ate the apple

What was **bad** about after the fall

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