The English School History Curriculum
since 1945:
Its Responses to the Challenges Posed by
a More Ethnically Diverse Society.

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Abstract

In Britain, history has proved to be a useful subject for future politicians and civil servants both at home and in the Empire. The traditional emphasis has been upon British history, and content has focused mainly on great Englishmen and events. After the Second World War, this 'great tradition' came to face a number of social changes which led to a crisis of traditional morals and values. The old style of teaching history, therefore, was perceived to be inadequate.

The aim of this essay is to illustrate how the English school history curriculum has responded to the challenges posed by a more ethnically diverse society since 1945. Although several attempts were made in order to adjust history teaching to the changing society, the National Curriculum, first introduced in 1991, returned to the traditional content and method. This 'authorised version' of history highlighted the common heritage and culture into which all those living in Britain, irrespective of their ethnic origins, should be assimilated. The current Labour government has continued to emphasise the common values and tradition. The outcome of this can be seen in the new National Curriculum for 2000.

1. Introduction

History was established as one of components in the English school curriculum in the nineteenth century. The place and value of history in schools, however, has remained a matter of argument. Traditionally, school history was viewed as a 'received subject,' or as a subject which required the memorising of facts and dates. To an extent, this was a legacy of the
Revised Code of 1862, which formalised the payment by results system. Teachers were now paid according to pupils' performance in an annual examination of the 3Rs; namely reading, writing and arithmetic. History was added to the list of grant-earning subjects in 1875. Under these circumstances the teaching of history tended to be narrowly focused upon preparation for examinations, and pupils were forced to learn the names and dates of great men (and occasionally women) and historical events by heart.

Although the abolition of payment by results brought in a greater freedom for history teachers to teach history in elementary schools, the 'great tradition' of history teaching was to continue for at least a further 70 years. In public schools, history was seen as a suitable subject for those who intended to be civil servants either at home or in the Empire, since history involved the acquisition of past experiences. Thus, it is not surprising that the content of history was mainly British, and was dominated by the study of political and constitutional matters. This was also a model adopted by the endowed grammar schools and, from 1902, by local authority-controlled secondary schools. The elementary school curriculum, which can be found in the Elementary Code of 1904, also followed the public school model. One of the aims of elementary schools, it was stated in the Introduction to the Code, was 'to arouse in them [the children] a living interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind, and to bring them to some familiarity with the literature and history of their own country. The attempt to overcome the 'great tradition' began with a shifting of emphasis from knowledge to methodology. The Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers supported not only the teacher's freedom, but also discussed the method of teaching history in elementary schools. M. W. Keatinge suggested in Studies in the Teaching of History (1910) that secondary school history should emphasise scientific methods similar to those used by professional historians. The emphasis upon teaching historical methods was discussed on many occasions, and by the late 1920s, it seemed to reach the point where 'the value was seen as to lie in the methods of study,' and 'it did not matter so much what the pupils learn so long as they learned how to learn it.' On the other hand, it has been argued that this kind of methodological approach to history teaching, which won the widespread approval of historians, teachers and groups interested in teaching history, was never popular in Britain. Elliott ascribes the reason mainly to the untrained teachers who made up more than half of all teachers in the period of 1918-40. Like methodology, the content of school history was also the subject of reconsideration, influenced by the League of Nations Union formed in 1918 in the United Kingdom. History teaching
shifted from highlighting war-time patriotism to international co-operation during the inter-war years. However, as the threat of war grew, this influence of the Union rapidly diminished, and by the outbreak of the war in 1939, it was completely lost. Naturally, history teaching focused upon patriotism again.¹¹

The changes which occurred in post-war society were significant enough to cause teachers and those who were concerned about the role of history in schools to reorganise history teaching. This reorganisation has taken two main directions. One is 'New History,' in which more emphasis is placed upon skills, such as the use and analysis of sources and the detection of causation in an attempt to rethink the past, than knowledge. The other is a reconsideration of the weight attached to Anglo-centric content, still a matter of argument at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Although several factors may have influenced these reconsiderations, the increasingly multicultural nature of British society is one of the most important.

This essay will examine, firstly, British social changes in the post-war years, and the reason why history has been regarded as important to Britain's development as a multicultural society. Then, I will consider the attempts made to emphasise the importance of historical skills and the rethinking of content, especially moving from the concentration on British history to World History. Finally, history in the National Curriculum of 1991, the revision of 1995, and the new National Curriculum for 2000, will be examined and evaluated.

2. Social Changes: 1945-70

The 1960s saw enormous changes in both society and education. The degree of change has been described by one commentator as 'nothing short of a social revolution.'¹² From 1951, Conservative governments were committed to achieving full employment, and in the period to 1964 British society became more affluent. Ownership of television sets, cars, washing machines, and even houses in affluent new suburban areas was no longer only for the middle classes. Young people could enjoy their secondary school life without worrying about fees and other expenses, which had previously often prevented children from poorer families from attending secondary education. Ironically, as Lowe points out, this affluence coincided with the end of Empire and the noticeable sense of national decline in both economic and political matters.¹³

Among these changes, the increasing number of black immigrants was seen as a factor
likely to re-shape the nature of British society. Immigrants came to Britain as manual labourers after the war, encouraged by government policies which sought to fill shortages in the labour force. As citizens of the Commonwealth, these individuals had the right to enter Britain, and because of the bad economic condition of the Caribbean Islands, they saw opportunities for themselves and their families.

The pace of influx was very rapid. In 1951, immigrants born in the New Commonwealth countries (Africa, Asia, Cyprus and the West Indies) comprised a mere 0.17% of the total British population. This percentage grew to 0.73% in 1961, 2.1% in 1971, and 3.4% in 1981. Moreover, a second generation of black British citizens, born in this country, became established. For example, of the 2.1% cited for 1971, only 60% were first generation immigrant; the other 40% were born in Britain. In practice, however, few were actually treated as British. Moreover, it is necessary to take into account other immigrant groups (Irish, Jews, those from Central European countries, Chinese, Arab, etc.), who made up a further 6.2%(1971).

Another concern was the concentration of ethnic minorities from the New Commonwealth countries in large cities. The degree of concentration varied; for example, 6.39% of the population of Greater London were classified as being from ethnic minority groups born in the New Commonwealth (1978), 6.30% in Birmingham (1971), but only 0.916% in South Yorkshire (1974), and 1.08% in Devon (1974). This is because early immigrants settled as wage-earners in big cities, then, naturally, other individuals from the same country tried to settle in the same area. This concentration sometimes caused fear among the white population living in these areas who concerned that immigrants would dominate the neighbourhood.

3. History in a Multicultural Society

Under these circumstances, it is natural that education was seen as a means of integrating traditional British people and the new immigrants. This manner had been used to assimilate previous immigrant groups such as Jews into the host culture. The acceptance of 'Jewish Englishmen' seemed to offer a good precedent. By the 1960s, education was considered essential for assimilation, because children were assumed to lack prejudice. Schools were seen as racial melting pots, which, however, would be expected to create a British atmosphere for children from immigrant families in reality, and eventually to lead new immigrants to merge gradually with British culture. It would not be a quick remedy, but education was
thought to be a more effective means than legislation to make racial discrimination illegal. This assimilatory view was expressed officially in the Second Report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council in 1964:

if their parents were brought up in another culture and another tradition, children should be encouraged to respect it, but a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of immigrant groups.\textsuperscript{17}

As a natural consequence, the question of the mixing of white British and immigrant children in a classroom arose. The answer suggested by Edward Boyle, the former Minister for Education, in the Commons in November 1964, was that 'no one school should have more than about 30\% of immigrants.'\textsuperscript{18} This kind of thinking explained the introduction of 'bussing' in order to transfer immigrant pupils to schools in predominantly white areas, often against their parents' will.\textsuperscript{19} Additionally, immigrant pupils were encouraged to learn English as quickly as possible, and were discouraged from speaking their own language, at least in schools.

However, it was realised by the later 1960s that this assimilatory response had contributed little. New factors now prevented immigrant groups, especially those who were originally from the West Indies, from merging with British society. Firstly, as has been noted before, they were visible because of their skin colour. This simple physical factor should not be underestimated. Secondly, they were ex-colonials. As Mangan points out, 'The roots of current attitudes to "race" and colour lay deep in the imperial past.'\textsuperscript{20} Thirdly, even the second, British-born generation of those immigrants were not treated as British in practice by their neighbours, and suffered discrimination in such matters as job recruitment and housing. Not only did these external factors make it difficult for immigrants to be assimilated, but also the immigrants themselves tended to keep their own values and cultures. Moreover, it can be little doubted that British society itself, into which they were expected to be assimilated, was in crisis in terms of culture and values. The demise of the Empire, for example, had led to questions about integration.

A new concept of merging, or multiculturalism, had became popular by the end of 1960s. Education was still seen as a key function, since one of its important roles was socialisation, in other words preparation for adult life. However, a more positive approach was now thought to be appropriate. Education had a duty to prepare children to accept a multi-ethnic society,
which Britain had now become. Additionally, as Rattansi points out, multicultural education is based upon the premise that racial prejudice is primarily caused by the lack of knowledge about other cultures. In other words, it is assumed that as one understands better other cultures, prejudice will disappear. Thus, multicultural education sought to help children to understand other cultures and immigrant groups. A 1977 Green Paper, *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document*, remarked that 'Our society is a multicultural, multiracial one, and the curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races that now make up our society.' At the same time, influenced by the Black Power movement in the United States, the importance of identity was being emphasised within ethnic groups.

History as a school subject was thought to play an important role in schools, both for immigrant children to know their roots and for white children to understand other cultures. By the 1980s it had been realised that 'Today's history teachers face the daunting but important task of teaching their subject within a conciliation of cultures.' In 1981, Davies and Whitburn claimed the emergence of the notion of cultural pluralism, maintaining that the study of history contributes to achieving this goal by helping pupils to understand the development of cultural diversity in Britain. They also argued that the development of historical skills, such as the detection of bias, contributes to the formation of pupils' ability 'to understand, respect and empathise with peoples in other times and places,' and maintained that these skills can be transferred to those of understanding the present society. Similarly, Edgington argued in *The Role of History in Multicultural Education* that history is an excellent way not only of leading pupils to a better understanding of themselves, but also of helping them to develop the ability to appreciate other people's achievements.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that too much emphasis on anti-racial policies and multicultural education might lead to a clearer realisation of racial differences, which might be counter-productive. Robert Jeffcoate claimed in his book *Positive Image: Towards a Multiracial Curriculum* that black children themselves might be embarrassed to focus upon their own culture and history while the remainder of the curriculum and school ethos was traditional, white, and European. Under these conditions, Jeffcoate argued, neither black children nor white ones could benefit from teachers' efforts to introduce multiracial teaching.

Nevertheless, it was reported in 1989 that 77 out of 115 LEAs were practising either anti-racist or multicultural education. As the practice of and disputes on multicultural education grew common, the inadequacy of traditional history teaching and content became widely ac-
4. 'New History' and 'World History'

Of the attempts to improve history teaching in order to bring about a multicultural society, there is no doubt that 'New History,' together with the Schools Council History 13-16 Project which appeared in 1972, was most significant and influential. Mary Price's article, 'History in Danger' (1968) can be seen as the starting point of 'New History.' After reporting that history was seen as 'useless and boring' by most pupils, it urged that history should change its emphasis on the teaching in order to survive as one of the most important and useful components of the curriculum. In the years which followed, 'New History' emphasised content less, and more attention was given to the development of historical skills. The child-centred approach of progressive teachers in primary schools, which was encouraged by the Plowden Report (1967), also backed this initiative. As has been noted, however, such a methodological approach itself was not new. What was new, this time, was that changes in society greatly encouraged classroom teachers to develop new practices in teaching history. In 1984 Gilbert argued that the reason for the emphasis upon method, rather than content, partly stemmed from the difficulties of selecting content, which was also accelerated by the transition to a multicultural society.

Another attempt to reflect changes in society was the emphasis upon 'history from below.' In contrast to the traditional content of history, which mostly concentrated on great men and political events, this new approach was more concerned with histories of women, of the working classes, and of Black people in particular. The introduction of Black Studies and Women's Studies in higher education, and sometimes in schools, encouraged this trend. It is, however, sometimes pointed out that teaching Black Studies in schools was problematic, because of uncertainty about who should be taught this kind of history. Some believed that this kind of education should be for all pupils, since multicultural education was expected to promote understanding among children from different backgrounds, including the host culture.

The teaching of World history, including African and Asian history, in order to promote multicultural understanding among children presented further opportunities for teachers. In fact, World history began to be favoured by some teachers in the 1960s, probably influenced by the end of Empire, which required a new view of the world to replace the old imperialistic one. The Department of Education and Science encouraged the promotion of 'a new relation-
ship between British history and that of the world as a whole,' by issuing a pamphlet entitled *Towards World History*, in 1967.\textsuperscript{34} Although World history gained popularity by being included on syllabuses leading to public examinations in the 1960s, there remained doubts about its proper treatment in classrooms. Edgington argued that if it was presented as a composition of many nations' histories, it would inevitably still present a Euro-centric view. A 'Cook's tour' of the twentieth century, he continued, would be no less Euro-centric than traditional English themes, such as the Tudors and Stuarts, and could present a distorted view of other countries.\textsuperscript{35} Similarly, as Shah pointed out, history can increase prejudice more easily than any other subject in schools by providing pupils with insufficient knowledge.\textsuperscript{36} One unforeseen consequence of World history, it might be noted, was the tendency to re-think the content of British history. This was a characteristic of debates surrounding the National Curriculum. Visram raises three questions about defining 'British history' in a chapter in Hilary Bourdillon's edited volume, *Teaching History* (1994). Firstly, she asks whether British history can stand alone, divorced from the countries with which Britain was involved in the past. Secondly, she considers whether histories of these countries should be viewed through the eyes of people who were ruled by Britain. Thirdly, she indicates that the presence of black people in Britain is not a new, post-war phenomenon. Her argument, supported by many historical facts, especially endorses the third point, and she maintains that British history should incorporate each of all these discussions. Black history, Visram argues, is neither something which can be separated from British history, nor which should be left to World history.\textsuperscript{37}

5. History in the National Curriculum

The 'great history debate' in the 1980s and 1990s was, Phillips argues, 'nothing less than a struggle for culture, for identity and for hegemony.'\textsuperscript{38} Although his discussion is mainly focused on the traditional white British cultures and identities - English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish -, not those of ethnic groups other than the British, it can be said that the same argument is applicable for the case of blacks, Asians, and other ethnic minority groups. For, as is often pointed out, 'British' culture and traditions, or 'Britishness,' in the reactionary discourse which led to this 'great history debate' is actually 'English.' In short, 'English' culture was seeking hegemony over the other cultures and identities in both instances.
Through the 'debate,' school history became politicised. It was an arena where reactionary politicians could find a subject to attack as the causes for anxieties in society and uncertainty about direction of the nation. On the other hand, there was an identity crisis because of issues associated with the EU and racial conflicts in Yugoslavia and other countries. The media simplified these complicated arguments and popularised the topic of national identity and history by sensational approaches. There followed a 'moral panic' generated by the media, which is, as Springhall argues, not a recent phenomenon. This 'moral panic' may have supported a return to an assimilatory view of education, which was most keenly expressed in the discussion about school history. In Phillips' words, 'history teaching had become subject to consumption by the public.'

British history came to be treated as an essential grounding for assimilation. Upon leaving office in 1986, Keith Joseph, the Secretary of State for Education, issued a statement, *Without Prejudice: Education for an Ethnically Mixed Society.* His last words from the Department of Education and Science acknowledged the importance of the role of schools to teach all children the contribution of settlers and immigrants to British society over many centuries. He claimed the need to give children a full awareness of cultural diversity in Britain today. However, he also emphasised the need for children of ethnic minorities to accept British culture as the norm. In his words:

these children will for the most part live their lives in this country. They are British citizens: this is their home. British history and cultural traditions are, or will become at least part of the common heritage of all who live in this country, whatever their family origins. Education must ensure that all children have full and equal access to that heritage, so that they can understand the society in which we live. Schools should be responsible for trying to transmit British culture ...

Similarly, in its 1988 pamphlet, *History from 5 to 16,* which was expected to arouse discussion about developing the forthcoming National Curriculum, HMI affirmed that one of the most important purposes of teaching history is to transmit our cultural heritage to new generations and help pupils 'to understand our values.' Immigrant pupils, this document maintained, should be encouraged to understand their own culture and values as well as traditional British ones. An early example of this emphasis can be found in an Historical Association
pamphlet published in 1982, in which the author, A. M. Dyer, claimed that 'the multi-cultural nature of contemporary British society makes the study of British history more, not less, important.'

This view of history teaching suggested the danger of imposing British history as a common culture upon all children including blacks and Asians, because possession of the common heritage is considered essential for social unity. HMI acknowledged this danger, and emphasised the importance and sensitive nature of planning school history courses, taking account of the multi-ethnic society:

History has a particularly important role to play in preparing pupils to participate in a multi-ethnic society... The multi-ethnic nature of British society is a further reason why those people responsible for designing history courses need to be sensitive about the choice of course content.

Does British history mean the revival of the 'great tradition'? Should it include black people's history and an examination of the British imperial past? Is the Euro-centred, or even British nationalistic view, to be adopted? These concerns continued to be underlined by occasional statements made by politicians such as Kenneth Baker, then the Secretary of State for Education, who announced in 1987 that 'We should not be ashamed of our history ... our pride in our past gives us our confidence to stand tall in the world today.' One of his successors, Kenneth Clarke, insisted that the National Curriculum should exclude the study of events which have occurred during the past 20 years. These statements confirm the validity of Visram's attempts to reconsider the definition of 'British history' in the National Curriculum.

In the National Curriculum, first introduced in 1991, history, once threatened with extinction as a school subject, secured its compulsory status in both the primary and secondary schools. It was, however, prescribed that more than one half of all curriculum content should be British history, the rest being European and World history. The 1995 revision of the National Curriculum increased the number of study units to be taught in Key Stages 2 and 3 (7-14 year-olds) due to the removal of history from Key Stage 4 (14-16 year-olds). Although the additional topics were aspects of the past concerned with European and World history, which makes up one half of all curriculum content, the outlook of the curriculum remained quite the same.
This prescription has raised fears among those opposed to curriculum control, including teachers who have been keen to promote new approaches within history teaching. For example, Marika Sherwood, the Secretary of the Association for the Study of African, Caribbean and Asian history and Culture in Britain (ASACACHIB), having examined the Programmes of Study and the Core Study Units of the National Curriculum, pointed out that 'What pupils cannot study is Black peoples in the UK.' She lamented the fruitless correspondence with the National Curriculum Council and the Department of Education and Science, which revealed that politicians and government officials failed to understand that ASACACHIB's 'subject concern was "ethnic diversity" within Britain and not in the world in general.'

Ian Grosvenor refers to the Education Reform Act of 1988, which prescribed the introduction of the National Curriculum, as assimilationist. 'It was a victory,' he argues:

achieved through the creation of a moral panic where everything connected with anti-racist education ... was presented as being ideologically unsound, culpable and at variance with British traditions and values. It was a victory in which the superior nature of the British 'way of life' was asserted over all other cultural variants.

Margaret Thatcher and New Right thinkers disliked anti-racist education because they saw it transforming their traditional perception of British society. The abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), which took place under the terms of the Education Reform Act of 1988, can be explained in this context. ILEA was actively practising multicultural education, and considered by the government as being too radical and having too much power and influence. Moreover, by paying attention to cultural diversity in the world, it may be argued that the History National Curriculum might have tried to escape from recognising Britain as being a multicultural society. In a similar fashion to the promotion of Britain as an 'imagined community' and British traditions as 'invented traditions,' a national history of homogeneous Britain was created for school children. However, as Sherwood argues, 'To ignore the heterogeneity of Britain is to perpetuate the dangerous myth about British homogeneity and "racial" superiority.'

After the implementation of the National Curriculum, the moral panic did not disappear. Nicholas Tate, Chief Executive of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, was active in commenting on citizenship, culture and national identity after 1995. Tate's major
theme, according to Phillips, was that the curriculum should transmit the best of the culture which meant considering the cultural heritages of Ancient Greece, Rome and Christianity, and the tradition of 'high culture' and English culture. Other cultures and other traditions, in Tate's view, could only be preserved through a strong majority culture. In the late 1990s, as Grosvenor states, 'there is no evidence of any policy shift away from the promotion of British culture, history and values as best.'

However, the fact that 'British Society,' as Keith Joseph stated, 'is now ethnically mixed and will remain so' continues to require teachers to seek ways of addressing the actual problems which they encounter every day in schools and which children will have to face in adult life. A number of suggestions for teachers to implement the National Curriculum appeared in professional journals. These articles showed the way in which teachers can make history teaching more interesting and suitable for the multicultural classroom. Interestingly, these articles not only offered suggestions to compensate for the inadequacies of curriculum content but they also increasingly acknowledged the positive possibilities of the National Curriculum, rather than criticising the narrow focus of prescribed content.

The current Labour government seems to retain the assimilation policy which Conservative governments re-adopted in the late 1980s. In terms of multicultural education, although raising educational standards among black and Asian pupils was discussed, Labour remained silent until the Macpherson report (1999) on the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence stressed the need for anti-racist education. The report recommended that the National Curriculum should emphasise the value of cultural diversity.

Meanwhile, 'School history is in the news again' in planning the new National Curriculum for 2000. 'Our national history' which consists of key events and personalities in British history has again become related to national identity. For example, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, in his letter to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) said that 'It is essential that the programme of study provides a clear grounding in the core elements of our national history and the key events and personalities involved.' Similarly, opposing the Tories' accusation that Labour neglected history which gives school-children a sense of national identity, Estelle Morris, Minister of Education, stressed that 'Our priority for the national curriculum is to ensure that important key events and historical figures and developments in British history will be retained. This will ensure that pupils learn the richness of British history.'
The values, aims and purposes of the National Curriculum for 2000 accord with fears and anxieties found in the 'moral panic.' 'The School curriculum should,' it is stated in the *Handbook for Primary Teachers*, 'promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, in particular, develop principles for distinguishing between right and wrong' and 'pass on enduring values, develop pupils' integrity and autonomy ...' The introduction of Citizenship, from September 2002, as part of the statutory curriculum for secondary schools, is consistent with these aims.

On the other hand, in confirming 'equality of opportunity' as 'one of a broad set of common values and purposes,' it states that 'These also include a commitment to valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live.' It seems to be ambiguous about who is referred to as 'our' and who is 'other' in this context. Ideally, perhaps this envisages a collective identity and responsibility as one people living in Britain. There are, however, a number of obstacles to tackle in society, such as the high rate of black pupils' exclusion from schools, the under-achievement of children from ethnic minority groups, and schools' and teachers' institutional racial discrimination. These problems continue to remind people of a clear distinction between 'we' and 'others' within British society.

Grosvenor finds possibilities to 'bring black historical experiences from the margins to the centre of the narrative of Britain's past.' According to Grosvenor, post-1945 Britain experienced the same process as the West had used to produce the Orient, as E. Said claims in his book *Orientalism*. Grosvenor maintains that:

> when politicians, academics, teachers and so forth constructed racialised identities for black migrants in post 1945 Britain, they were at the same time defining, constructing and affirming their own understanding and sense of 'British' identity. In the process of defining their 'Other' they were defining themselves ... Their histories are inscribed within each other, they are not separate.

He argues that blacks did not appear in British history, or if they appeared, they were always seen as problems threatening the stability and peace in British society. In other words, they were racialised. However, in this dialectical relationship where construction of identity occurred, he suggests, the conjunction of 'Self' and 'Other' within British history would be
attained, which would lead to new notions of national culture and belonging. To imagine these new ways of being British, Grosvenor also stresses the necessity of recognising Britain as being, and having always been heterogeneous, rather than homogenous.

The new National Curriculum for history claims to allow greater flexibility by removing requirements for the sequence of study at Key Stages 1 and 3, and to reduce prescription by removing a detailed specification of content of study at Key Stages 2 and 3. However, the frequently used phrases, such as 'local, national, European and World history' and 'Britain and the wider world,' give an impression of lip-service being paid to ethnic diversity. In fact, the prescription of content has changed little, except for some addition and modification of examples. The traditional view of history continues to pose difficulties for those seeking to adapt education for a multicultural society. Perhaps, as Alibhai-Brown argues, 'the real changes will come when middle-class parents' as well as politicians, Conservative and Labour alike, 'decide that such an education is essential for their children.'

6. Conclusion

As has been noted before, neither 'New History' nor history as a means of understanding other people were new. Nevertheless, the attempts from the late 1960s to change the emphasis of the school history curriculum were more successful than ever before. However, doubt must still be cast over the effectiveness of these approaches. Even in the 1980s reorganisation was still in its early stages.

The 1990s saw the introduction of a National Curriculum, presenting, as Visram argues, the government's 'authorised version' of history curriculum for schools. The traditional assimilatory view regarding school history, and education as a whole, re-emerged. Through school history, 'Britishness' was re-invented as a majority culture, and rationalised for the universal morals and values of all people living in Britain. It should be noted that 'the British' is a conceptual identity rather than an actual entity. Therefore, although 'the British' means usually 'the English', it may have been easier for those from white nations to be assimilated into 'the British.' Problems, however, remain in respect of blacks, Asians and other descendants from the former colonies. Moreover, the Education Reform Act of 1988 introduced market forces in education. Open enrolment and parental choice give parents, Grosvenor points out, the rights as consumers to select schools on 'racial' grounds. Thus, racism in education has
been removed as a political issue, but becomes one of the factors operating in the market. In his words, 'Racism was accepted by the state as a market force.'

One success of the history curriculum, according to some, is that it has avoided producing narrowly nationalistic images of the nation. Phillips argues, referring to Goalen's research on the impact of history teaching upon children's sense of national identity, that 'official histories' can help children to balance the often patriotic and sensational images of the nation, a version of 'unofficial histories,' generated through media. This positive view of 'official histories' may be, Phillips also admits, too optimistic, and it requires further research to draw conclusions, and perhaps another decade or two to see the results.

Nevertheless, Phillips highlights the importance of teachers' roles in this balancing process. Similarly, although Grosvenor blames the proposed 'new' history curriculum's failure to recognise the cosmopolitan nation, he encourages teachers to increase their knowledge and to try to incorporate black experiences in Britain into British history. This accords, to some extent, with Visram's suggestion of the re-defined and widened scope of British history. Grosvenor's suggestion noted above is more ideological than Visram's, and perhaps more suitable under the National Curriculum for 2000, since 'identity' is one of the key issues in the new curriculum. Moreover, history as a school subject has, Grosvenor claims, 'the potential to make sense of issues of identity.'

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Notes

1 The education system in the United Kingdom is not straightforward. In England and Wales education system is more or less identical. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own education systems. For the National Curriculum, there is each version for the four nations within the United Kingdoms; England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Here, I use 'English' and 'England' because I examine the English version of the National Curriculum.

2 In England, the distinction between two terms, 'elementary' and 'primary' have been made clear by the efforts of the people who campaigned for 'secondary education for all' such as R. H. Tawney and Sir Henry Hadow during the inter-war years. Elementary schools were designed only to provide a basic education for the working classes, which did not have access to secondary education except for
the limited number of free places given to much abler children in elementary schools. On the other hand, primary schools were considered as the first stage of education for all children, irrespective of their social class and their future employment, with an organic linkage to secondary schooling for all adolescents who had completed their primary education.


4 The Education (Balfour) Act of 1902 introduced Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to control both elementary schools and secondary schools in their areas, and enabled LEAs to establish state secondary schools. The state, for the first time, took responsibilities to cater children above elementary level.


6 *The Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools* was issued as a Blue Book by the Board of Education in 1905.


10 Elliott, 1980, p. 45


18 Quoted in Lowe, 1988, p. 82.


42 Phillips, 1998, p. 43. The italic is original.
43 Joseph, K. 'Without Prejudice: Education for an Ethnically Mixed Society', Multicultural Teaching,


46 Ibid., p. 5.


50 Sylvester, 1994, p. 21.

51 The Association for the Study of African, Caribbean and Asian History and Culture in Britain (ASACACHIB) has been renamed the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA).


56 Sherwood, 1994, p. 34. The italic is original.


61 For example, see Bracey, P. 'Developing a Multi-cultural Perspective within Key Stage 3 National Curriculum History', Teaching History, 78, 1995, pp. 8-10; Grosvenor, I. 'History and the Perils of Multiculturalism in 1990s Britain', Teaching History, 97, 1999a, pp. 37-40; File, N. 'Surviving the National Heritage Curriculum', Multicultural Teaching, 13, 3, 1995, pp. 23-5 and 40; and Phillips, 1998.


64 Quoted in Cassidy, S., 'Blunkett's Historical Restoration', *The Times Educational Supplement*, July 02 1999.


68 For the discussion about the linkage between history, culture and national identity with the collective 'we', see Phillips, R. 'History Teaching, Cultural Restorationism and National Identity in England and Wales', *Curriculum Studies*, 4, 3, 1996, pp. 387, 390, 392.


72 Grosvenor, 1999b, p. 249.


75 Aldrich, 1984, p. 216.

76 Grosvenor, 1997, p. 91.


79 Ibid., pp. 49-50, 52.

80 Grosvenor, 1999a, p. 39.