

**HIGHER EDUCATION & PERSONAL CHANGE IN
PRISONERS**

ANNE MARIE REUSS

**SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

JULY 1997

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit
has been given where reference has been made to the work of others

ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the paradox of Higher Education in prisons - paradox because the aims, practices, ideals and ideologies of the former are recognisably at odds with those of the latter, whose concern is essentially 'human containment'. Based on a three-year classroom ethnography of men undergoing the University of Leeds Diploma Course in Social Studies, whilst serving sentences in H.M.P. Full Sutton (a maximum security dispersal prison), the thesis contends that those inmates experience the course in a profound manner.

The primary concern is that a course of Higher Education in prison can effect change or transformation in prisoner-students who assimilate the course material in a complex process of learning and social interaction which is 'woven', or synthesised into their life experience. The thesis argues that elements of this process are retained by prisoner-students, that they become embedded in their conscience, and interpreted as *meaningful* experience, having the *potential* to influence or direct post-release behaviour. The learning is therefore a process of empowerment.

The research focuses on *how* the potential for change occurs, *what* the nature of the change is and how to *articulate* the process. It is widely believed that education programmes undertaken whilst in prison may be rehabilitative and so the research seeks clarification of:

- a) how the interactive and integrative learning processes in the prison classroom have the potential to re-invest prisoner-students with a positive sense of self;
- b) the opportunities with which prisoner-students are presented to develop those skills considered of value in a complex and profoundly regulated society.

The study shows that acquiring new knowledge in prison is a social process embedded in the wider context of the individual prisoner's life experiences and personal identity formation. Through examination and evaluation of the learning processes the study reveals that the acquisition of that knowledge is uniquely shaped by the experience of long-term imprisonment for each prisoner and that this level of educational attainment negates the marginalisation and exclusion experienced by some prisoners on release.

Data was gathered through field-work as a participant observer whilst teaching the prisoners. Classroom interactions and conversations were noted and subjected to qualitative analysis to develop and test the theory that there is a linkage between studying at degree level whilst imprisoned, and personal development or change. The findings take the form of classroom narratives, supported by questionnaires and interviews. Additional material was gathered from secondary sources on prison education, penal policy and adult learning.

TABLE of CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS (DIAGRAMS)	7
PREFACE	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	14
CHAPTER ONE	15
RESIGNATION, RESISTANCE & CHANGE	15
LIFE IN H.M.P. FULL SUTTON	15
THE EDUCATION BLOCK AT FULL SUTTON	22
'BEIN' 'ERE'	32
WHY EDUCATION?	39
CHAPTER TWO	45
CLASSROOM CONTEXT & INTERACTIONS	45
THE SOCIAL PROCESS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE	46
ADULT LEARNERS	62
DOING SOCIOLOGY	72
CONCLUSION	92
CHAPTER THREE	96
LEARNING IN A PRISON CLASSROOM	96
THE LEARNING PROCESS THROUGH TIME	97
CONTEXT-DEPENDENT INTERACTION	100
MEMORIES	105
INTEGRATIVE PROCESSES or WEAVING	113

CONCLUSION	124
CHAPTER FOUR	126
IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION & DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LEARNING	126
ISSUES OF IDENTITY FOR THE PRISONER	127
PRE-INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY	130
INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY	140
CONCLUSION	160
CHAPTER FIVE	165
THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE - A THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION	165
THE 'DETOUR via DETACHMENT'	166
MUTUAL IDENTIFICATION - As an outcome of the Learning Process	176
'THE RE-NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITIES'	191
CONCLUSION	202
CHAPTER SIX	208
THE ROLE, PURPOSE & FUNCTION OF PRISON EDUCATION	208
'PUBLIC' PERCEPTIONS OF PRISON EDUCATION	209
EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN FULL SUTTON	214
THE PRISONERS VIEWS	215
THE TEACHER'S VIEWS	230
THE MODELS	240
THE CORRECTIONAL MODEL	241
EDUCATION AS EMPOWERMENT OR CONTRADICTION	248
CONCLUSION	256
CHAPTER SEVEN	262
CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN A MAXIMUM SECURITY DISPERSAL PRISON	262
ACCESS TO THE PRISON - A 'WAY IN' TO THE RESEARCH	264
RESPONDENT INVOLVEMENT	266
RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS	271
METHODOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES	285
'ICE BREAKING'	286

VALIDITY, REALITY OR 'CONTAMINATED BY SYMPATHY' ? RESPONDENT VALIDATION - A BUILDING BLOCK?	292 299
GENERALISEABILITY A FINAL ASSESSMENT	305 305
CHAPTER EIGHT	312
RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE VIEWS ON PRISON EDUCATION	312
APPENDIX ONE	329
STUDENTS ATTENDING THE LEEDS COURSE	329
APPENDIX TWO	331
THE LANGUAGE OF THE PRISONERS	331
APPENDIX THREE	333
'THE COUNTRY'S MOST DANGEROUS MEN' PUBLISHED IN THE GUARDIAN (4/2/97) ENTITLED 'LOCKED INTO LEARNING'	334 334
APPENDIX FOUR	336
'MEN TALKING'	336
BIBLIOGRAPHY	340

TABLE OF CONTENTS (DIAGRAMS)

Fig. 2:1; THE CONTRACT TRIANGLE	48
Fig. 2:2; SIMPLISTIC THEORY OF LEARNING	49
Fig. 2:3; A HEURISTIC MODEL OF THE TEACHING - LEARNING PROCESS	50
Fig. 2:4; TEACHER / STUDENT INTERACTION	53
Fig. 2:5; THE WEAVING THEORY OF LEARNING	59
Fig. 3:1; THE CONTEXT OF THE LEARNING PROCESS	106
Fig. 4:1; SELF, TRANSFORMATION & IMPRISONMENT	128
Fig. 4:2; CONTEXTUAL ELEMENTS OF LEARNING CARRIED FORWARD INTO POST REALEASE PERIOD	151
Fig. 5:1; THE TRANSFERABILITY PROBLEM	188

PREFACE

Everyone is a participant observer, acquiring knowledge about the social world in the course of participation in it. Such participant knowledge on the part of people in a setting is an important resource for the ethnographer. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, 106)

Classroom ethnographers often find themselves attempting to explain that which is intangible, elusive or even obscure because they often *teach* the people who, in other studies, might be loosely described as 'research subjects', or 'respondents'. In a classroom ethnography, these people are perceived as pupils or students first and foremost. In *this* particular classroom ethnography however, they are, in the eyes of most other people, serious criminals serving long sentences in an English maximum security dispersal prison.

'People in a setting' constitute the concern of this thesis which will relate a 'tale from the field' through a qualitative analysis of prison classroom interactions and classroom context. The content of the actual debates, conversations and discussions which took place within the prison classroom as a group of prisoners progressed through their course in Social Studies, form the central pillar to this study and, as such, the recounting of them is germane to the entire project. The observations and conversations provide a good deal of 'common-sense' knowledge on those experiences which each student and each teacher come to recognise and acknowledge as the essential elements of the 'learning process'. However, when it comes to documenting processes of development and dimensions of change triggered by classroom practices, the analysis moves beyond common-sense and becomes an issue of more sensitive concern, particularly within a prison setting.

Chapter One will describe the prison context and will attempt to provide the reader with an account of the daily regime in the prison and give a first impression of what it 'feels' like to be a prisoner serving a long sentence. Relying on first-hand accounts from the men who chose to undertake the Leeds Course (as it became known), the chapter details the motivations which bring prisoners to education and the strategies adopted for survival in a highly regulated environment where individual autonomy and the primacy of the individual run a poor second to matters of security.

Chapter Two analyses the interactions between prisoner-students to illustrate how new knowledge is learned and assimilated into an individual adult student's existing social fund of knowledge. The emphasis here will be on social aspects which characterise the process of acquiring, in this case, a sociological body of knowledge in a prison classroom setting. Of relevance to fully understanding processes of learning in this context, is an appreciation of adult learning and the characteristics of adult learners, for the prisoner-students in H.M.P. Full Sutton are, in effect, mature students who have chosen to 'return-to-learn'. A discussion of the nature of adult learning is therefore included in this section, as is a more detailed analysis of studying sociology in order to assess the impact of the discipline on those who become involved with it as students.

Chapter Three then examines the actual learning situation in a prison classroom, viewing the process in its 'entirety' and suggesting that the individual social processes of learning produce a synthesis of experience and information which students retain and interpret themselves in a meaningful way. This synthesis, I suggest, occurs as a result of the student's capacity to 'weave' together or integrate, new knowledge with existing personal experience and/or common-sense knowledge, producing specific learning outcomes.

Chapter Four analyses these learning outcomes in a prison classroom context underpinned by the contention that the studying of sociology and the complex social reality of actual classroom practice and interactions produce affective outcomes which have a potential effect on the prisoner-student's 'sense of self'. Imprisonment is characterised by feelings of low or negative esteem, and the chapter considers how learning, whilst imprisoned, counteracts some of the negativity as prisoners develop a more positive identity.

Chapter Five examines the outcomes of learning from a more theoretical perspective through suggesting that prisoners potentially acquire a level of foresight, responsibility and empathy as a result of the skills learned on the course, which may shape or influence post-release behaviour. The implications of this highlight profound questions relating to the perceived linkage between educational programmes in prison, rehabilitation and rates of recidivism, not to mention the actual role of education in the prison system.

Chapter Six explores these concerns in detail forming the final part of the classroom ethnography. Here, the rationale behind measuring the effectiveness of prison education programmes is addressed through examining existing models of education in prison in the light of those ideologies more usually found within the realms of criminology. In assessing the validity of rehabilitative ideals, I return to my central theme which is that education in prison, if it is to be researched at all, should be viewed from the perspective of the prisoner-student who *chooses* to attend a particular course for a variety of complex reasons throughout the duration of a sentence. If education in prison 'works' at all, it works in terms of personal development, self-actualisation and in helping a prisoner to retain, or even recapture, a little of the humanity that has for many reasons been 'lost' to themselves or which is most noticeable by its absence in the current penal system.

Chapter Seven describes the experience of conducting research in a maximum security prison, considering methodological issues relevant to ethnography and the bridging of the micro- and the macro- social worlds. Understanding mechanisms, contexts and outcomes becomes essential where different strategies have been adopted in order to conduct research in a sensitive environment. So, for example, considerable detail is provided relating to the nature of the research relationships, adding validity to the total research experience in its depiction of the reality of classroom practice within H.M.P. Full Sutton. It has to be remembered that describing any aspect of prison life is a complex undertaking, incorporating the widely differing perspectives of those who transgress society's norms, those who enforce those norms and those who study and work with the transgressors. Eventually what emerges is a more *realistic* account of conducting prison classroom research.

Chapter Eight concludes that any assessment of the effects of a particular course of study on students who are also prisoners is never going to be simple and straightforward, because it will always run counter to matters of penal policy and operations. Consideration of the ethical factors alone would warrant detailed study in its own right; but most educational practitioners would agree that any course of study in any setting will leave its mark on those involved, and sometimes to the point where the experience actually 'changes' or shapes subsequent behaviour and thinking. However, rarely is the actual context in which these processes occur documented in detail.

As a contribution to the literature on prison education, the research synthesises educational practice, sociological thinking, criminology, penal practice and elements of psychology into a descriptive account of what happens to the individual (male) prisoner as a *person* who has been imprisoned, who is serving a long sentence in a highly

regulated environment and who has chosen to undertake a course of Higher Education at some point within the duration of that sentence.

The fact that the study was carried out in a men's prison naturally raises the question of 'gender blindness'. There is a body of literature relating to the experiences of imprisonment for women which seems to echo many of the concerns and issues raised in my work with male students in H.M.P. Full Sutton (Faith, 1995; Bell & Glaremin, 1995; Mason, 1994; Wilson, 1994; Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Dobash, Dobash, & Noakes, 1995).

It needs to be remembered however, that the classroom in Full Sutton *was* all male with the exception of myself as teacher/researcher and one other female colleague as teacher/course co-ordinator. The prison did of course, contain female officers, female civilian staff and other female teachers, but with the exception of visitors, the men had little or no contact with women.

The gender relationships within the prison and the prison classroom shape the social interaction and so shape the outcomes of the learning process. The language of the classroom is therefore, for the most part, the language of men in an all male environment and may thus reflect wider patterns of stereotypical male behaviour, agency and social interaction. The study in effect contains accounts of 'men talking'. The research discourse therefore uses the male personal pronoun as the norm whilst appealing for an empathic approach on the part of the reader in relation to imprisonment generally.

A glossary is included for the more unfamiliar terms used by prisoners to describe their social reality and the preferred use of the word 'prisoner' to that of 'inmate' is complied with as requested by the men. It is possible that the comments and conversations of the

students may provoke a negative response in the reader. This is almost inevitable when remarks are lifted from their total context. Some of the humour may also be interpreted as callous and without justification, but prisons are not noted for their espousal of that which is politically correct and the 'landscape' which prisoners inhabit daily colours all aspects of their behaviour to the point where humour itself may become a strategy for survival. The fact that some of the prisoner-students on the Leeds Course could still laugh at all - and at themselves - was a constant reminder of the human capacity for adaptability and flexibility. I feel privileged to have shared some of that laughter with those on the course between 1993 and 1997.

Analyses of prison education find themselves at the centre of complex discourses on criminal justice, human rights, government policy and even radical views on empowerment through learning which means that those engaged in teaching prisoners may well find that there is a particular poignancy in teaching them about society, especially through the discipline of Sociology or Social Studies generally. One could take the view that all kinds of education and positive classroom practice is about 'enabling', about facilitating processes of achievement and personal development or fostering self-esteem. In describing what actually 'goes on' in a Sociology classroom and within a prison context at that, several opportunities are presented to identify and describe firstly, a little of the prison 'world' and prisoners' perceptions and experiences of it and secondly, prison classroom practices and an account of them, yields detailed pictures of those processes of development which any student in any discipline may undergo as they relate received wisdom (or not) to their personal life experiences. Within a prison context, mapping out those almost imperceptible changes which teachers 'know' are taking place is a sensitive issue inextricably interwoven with the effects of education on rehabilitation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the help, consideration and trust which was imparted to me by all the men in H.M.P. Full Sutton with whom I had occasion to work as both teacher and researcher. Those serving long sentences frequently find themselves subjected to the scrutiny of researchers engaged in the task of 'improving our understanding' of some aspect of prison life. They are often only too willing to pass on their 'inside' knowledge and experience, but it has to be said that 'being banged up' for a large part of one's life is an experience which can never be fully understood by even the most hardened ethnographer, and I have to admit that it was comforting to know that I could leave each day at 4.30 p.m. My grateful thanks go to those who could not.

Secondly, I have to thank the Education Department at Full Sutton and the staff who tolerated my questioning on matters educational, on prison practice and the prison regime. Their task is frequently underestimated as is their worth. They are all much more than 'just teachers'.

My thanks also go to Professor Stephen Duguid of Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B.C. Canada and to Dr. Richard Kilminster of the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds, U.K. 'for their support at a distance'. Ms. Moira Doolan, Full Sutton Course Co-ordinator and lecturer at Leeds helped in more ways than could possibly be imagined, having worked tirelessly on the Leeds Course in the prison since its inception. Above all thanks to Dr. Ray Pawson at Leeds for his supervision, his interest and enthusiasm for an unusual undertaking in a little known field and for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

A.M.Reuss University of Leeds 1997.

CHAPTER ONE

RESIGNATION, RESISTANCE & CHANGE

LIFE IN H.M.P. FULL SUTTON

Punishing people certainly needs a justification, since it is almost always something which is harmful, painful or unpleasant to the recipient. Imprisonment, for example, causes physical discomfort, psychological pain, indignity and general unhappiness along with a variety of other disadvantages... (Cavadino, M ; Dignan, J.; 1992; 32)

Accounts of life in prison are many and varied. Some are written by prisoners themselves, others by those who work in the prison service, yet more contributions are made to the literature by academic researchers, policy makers and those who contribute to education and training in the penal system, in this instance, in England and Wales. As a result, there are those who would claim to 'know' what prison life and experience amounts to as though they themselves had experienced every aspect of it. In a society where, for the most part, individuals do not dwell on matters of punishment - or the imprisonment - of those who offend, this body of 'expert' knowledge largely remains untapped by all but a few of those practitioners in the field who concern themselves with the actuality of 'life inside'. For the 'ordinary' citizen, leaving it all to the 'experts' is perhaps symptomatic of the development of modernity in so far as 'problems of punishment', and their justification, *ought* to be the prerogative of institutions 'best able to deal with them'. From the point of arrest, matters relating to offending behaviour in (and I use the words with caution) modern, sophisticated, complex, capitalist societies are removed from the hands of citizens who generally seem to display little or no interest in what happens to the offender, thereafter.

Those people who do find themselves working within the current penal system in England and Wales, may therefore discover that they are subsequently perceived by their fellow citizens as 'specialists'. I would contend, however, that there are approximately 59,000 (the number of people currently imprisoned) real 'specialists' serving their respective sentences - those who are *actually* imprisoned; who live, breathe and experience imprisonment over periods of time which may stretch from months to multiple life-sentences. For that reason, this study cannot and does not claim to be the definitive account of prison life in the late twentieth century. Reasons of security (Full Sutton is a maximum security dispersal prison) also preclude the writing of a definitive account of prison life, to the extent that this section of the work will provide only a 'snapshot' of one part of the experience of imprisonment by way of context. That experience relates to prison education for a small but constantly changing group of prisoners within Full Sutton maximum security dispersal prison. It may well be the case that other practitioners in the field of prison education, other members of the prison service and above all, other prisoners, will recognise specific elements of this research and be tempted to make universal claims. Patterns of human social behaviour (or anti-social behaviour) are, however, only what we see 'at the surface', the manifest outcomes of social processes involving complex interdependencies, interactions and connections between individuals who collectively make up the communities in which people live, and so, of course, there are no automatic 'experts'.

The prison environment, regardless of a prison's categorisation, is also a community of individuals. The form and type of that prison community is, naturally, relative to specific nations and their respective penal systems, although one could perhaps argue the case for universality across some dimensions of imprisonment. The removal of the individual

offender, as punishment, from the wider community and from 'the familiar' (by which I mean the physical, social and cultural landscapes which an individual inhabits throughout the normal life-course) serves as a common denominator.

Removal from familiarity, albeit as a form of punishment, impacts upon the individual in a deeply resonant manner. Most people appear to find such an experience disconcerting, disturbing, challenging or even traumatic. There are, of course, great differences in the degree to which each individual reacts and adapts (or not) to what, at the very least, amounts to a profound change in their physical surroundings. In turn, the 'strategies' adopted by those who are imprisoned in order to 'cope' with it, are as diverse as the nature of offences committed and the lengths of sentences meted out.

Understanding prison education, as but one of those strategies, will be one objective of this particular piece of research, examining as it does, the relationship between undertaking a course in Higher Education and personal change. An empathic appreciation of other aspects of imprisonment should also emerge as the study develops. It is, of course, important that the prison itself is described by way of contextualising the study, in much the same way as any researcher conducting work 'in the field' would furnish physical details of communities being researched. Such a process is inevitably not without its attendant problems when conducting research in maximum security environments - for the most obvious of reasons. However, that does not necessarily mean that one cannot appreciate the 'flavour' of the place. Suffice it to say, that the experience, for example, of not being able to easily move from one part of this community to another adds a further dimension to the recounting of classroom practices on the 'Education Block', bringing into sharp focus the compartmentalised social world of the prisoner.

Perhaps the most telling description of this world comes from one who inhabits it twenty-four hours a day. As with all good descriptions, the following is a highly personal account which provides a wider context for my own research as it tells us a little of the prison regime beyond the classroom walls in the Education Block:

'After tea in the evenings the jail becomes a veritable minefield. Screws shouting to each other, doors banging, Brixton Blasters at full volume, blokes who have drunk too much "hooch", who are approaching on a collision course with such endearments as "Aveyergorrafagmate" (Please do you have a cigarette), and the inevitable nutter with a head full of heroin and serious attitude problems. This prevails until 8p.m., when everyone gets locked up and the screws disappear to the local pub to drown their cognitive deficits.

There are the occasional light entertainments ...such as scaldings, stabbings, fights, alarm bells, or someone going berserk and wanting to fight the world and his brother ...but these are sporadic matters rather than daily routine.

Once locked up for the night, decisions have to be made ...what needs doing, and in what order it will be done. Typically this would include letter to the wife, Leeds essay and readings, legal work on court cases pending, listen to the news on the radio, washing, cups of tea from the thermos flask, and work for a woman in Essex who has offered me employment in the running of her company once I am released ... all this has to be done against the usual background of the ubiquitous Ghetto Blasters, blokes hammering on their doors for the attention of the night watchman (who is probably watching TV and cannot hear the cell alarm bell) ...or some poor enlightened soul telling the world a mile away that Jesus still loves him (even though his neighbours don't ...and will probably add to the general bedlam by telling him to go and have an unlawful relationship with his mother ...albeit in far less socially acceptable terminology). One of life's colourful tapestries!!!!

I find that the best philosophy is to attend to my washing and correspondence (which can be dealt with in short bursts without too much concentration) as a first priority, after which I usually lie on my bed, turn the radio on to a news channel, and then doze until around 10.30 p.m. By this time the rest have either surrendered to sleep with exhaustion, or fallen into their hooch bottles and drowned ...at which point I arise and attend to Leeds work and other matters that require serious concentrated thought.

Weekends are much the same as weekdays ...without the benefit of the peaceful interlude in the Education Department. MY haven of refuge at these times is an old greenhouse in the exercise yard, where I grow tomatoes, carnations, and various other things ...or just sit and have a quiet smoke ...far from the maddening crowd.

In addition to the foregoing, time has to be found for changing library books, showers, canteen, cooking the occasional meal, visits, standing in queues for everything ...and running around like a blue arsed fly to remedy the numerous cock-ups that can be taken

for granted on a regular basis with such lazy stupid bastards running the show from dawn to dusk.

...Leeds Studies is a good thing ...well worth the effort. Pity other departments can't function in a manner that would complement such positive pursuits. The fabric of a prison, be it Victorian or modern, is insignificant, it is merely a repository ...a place *where people interact with others*.

At the top of this hierarchy is the Number 1 Governor ...usually a timid little man who shuffles paper for his lords and masters in Whitehall, ...Beneath the Number 1 are the junior grades ...The Hobbits "screws in a suit"

Beneath these hobbits are the screws proper . The Bananas ...yellow, bent and inclined to hang around in bunches. These are the true "governors" of a jail. If they are basically decent, it is a good jail. If they are bastardsbe prepared for the worst.

...Finally there are the prisoners themselves ...fools, misfits, drunks, drug addicts, miscreants ...plus whatever particular offence they may be in for ...penny pinchers at the one extreme, paedophiles at the other.

Mix all these ingredients together in a concrete repository ...and you have a British jail. Somewhere in such an unholy conglomeration of shit, you find a few teachers, swimming against the stream, accommodating the setbacks and infringements that impinge upon their domain, and trying to bring education, social awareness and civility into such a desocialising regime. That they sometimes succeed is a never ending wonder. That they even try in the face of such adversity, is a tribute to the human race and undoubtedly one of the reasons why some prisoners try to follow their good example.

We are grateful for the civilising influence the academic attainment is a bonus' (Ted,1995)

The motivations which prisoners take to education classes within prison are complex, more detailed analyses will be furnished in a later chapter, but the view that undertaking a course - of any kind - within prison can be interpreted as a 'strategy for survival' is widely held by both prisoners and practitioners in the field of prison education. This view may well have to sit alongside more specific opinions and theories concerning the role of education and training for offenders and more generally, the role of the prison itself in society. Any descriptive account of prison educational practices must be assessed against these wider theoretical concerns, but involvement with prison students as both researcher and teacher quickly reinforces the view that the adoption of strategies for survival -

particularly for long-term inmates - is of prime importance. This is because from the moment of sentencing, everything that an individual prisoner has accepted as autonomous life-experience has become a matter for others to judge, comment about and decide upon:

Vince: When you're in that court, you just can't wait to get out (of the court, I mean). All you want to hear is that sentence. You just want to get away. I can't describe the feeling to you, it's so traumatic, you just want to know to get away.

Wayne: It's true, it's horrendous.

Vince: I was expecting thirty; I got fourteen. So, that's it, a bonus. You know that's the next fourteen years, so you have to accept it

Wayne: Once you hear that sentence it's a relief. Imagine life.

Vince: ...but then what?

Those individuals who have been sentenced to imprisonment in a maximum security prison have to recognise at some point, that any degree of autonomy they once had with respect to life-styles, the ability to make choices and 'freedom' of the individual has been removed. From sentence to release, prisoners will undergo experiences which, according to them, will transform their outlooks, their world-views and their respective sense-of-self, in other words their 'I-identity' as understood by Elias in *The Society of Individuals* (1991) which in turn, has to be 'balanced' with the 'we-identities' of strangers already established within the prison community. Between sentence and release, the maximum security prisoner will also have to 'learn' to live in a regime governed by strict controls within which each has to survive. Upon release, the ex-offender may find that there are many other problems of integration to face, for, as the following conversation indicates, learning to 'survive' outside, beyond sentence, can be just as difficult:

- Wayne: ...these places are made to wreck relationships, can't touch, can't get near. When they get out, there's nothing left.
- Vince: No money, no house, try to get a job? You might as well forget it, no family left....
- Wayne: It's hard. You see, just the thought of walking up my drive, up the path. It frightens me to death.
- Tony: You don't have to do anything (in here), think about anything...
- Vince: ...but that doesn't mean it's a holiday in here...
- Wayne: No - I tell people, if you were locked up in the Hilton, it would feel just as bad as it does in here. It's the 'being locked up'...
- Vince: Yes - but this one isn't so bad, sometimes it's twenty-past-eight before they bang us up instead of eight o' clock. Some of the screws are O.K. - they come round saying 'Last orders lads'...
- Wayne: I was in Strangeways, you know, God it was disgusting - slopping out you know...
- Tony: I know I've been banged up all weekend for twenty-three hours...
- Wayne: ...with nothing but a bucket. The stench, can you imagine?
- Vince: At least we have toilets, showers here - but then they could move me anytime.

It is only with comments such as these depicting the actuality of the prisoner's experience uppermost in mind that one can begin to imagine the kind of 'baggage' that these men import to their classroom and to their studies. Undertaking a course in Social Studies (equivalent to the first year of a B.A. degree), within the confines of an environment which provokes such an intensity of negative feelings may seem to many educational practitioners to be a contradiction in terms. Contrast this to most students in Higher Education who embark upon their studies viewing the following three years as a challenge, an opportunity to achieve, or take them in directions as yet unknown. That is not to say that all University students perceive their course in this way. There are those

who view it as a three year 'scive'. However, even in the current troubled educational climate, a degree is perhaps still perceived as a means of 'improving one's life-chances'. In a maximum security prison, should students expect the same?

THE EDUCATION BLOCK AT FULL SUTTON

When teaching and researching within a prison environment, the tendency is to assume that,

1. because you have regular contact with the prisoners, you are aware of 'what it is like' to be imprisoned;
2. every prison is like the one you happen to be in;
3. you are as familiar with the prison regime as those who are imprisoned and any other member of the prison staff who works there full-time.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth; at best, the presumption is often to make yet more assumptions and speculations about those matters of security which are not your immediate concern, so any description of the particular part of the prison in which this study was undertaken merely sketches in what I would call the immediate context. However, common-sense knowledge should alert the reader to the fact that the 'Education Block' is only a small cog in a very large wheel which extends far beyond the immediate physical location of Full Sutton.

The prison was opened in August 1987 for the purpose of containing those offenders considered to be 'high risk'. Full Sutton is therefore, as stated, a maximum security 'dispersal' prison;

'Dispersal' started off in 1968, meaning simply 'spreading around', or 'diluting'. It is an indication of the unhappy history of the dispersal idea that the word now carries negative connotations of trouble, tension and riot. (Stern; 1989; 215).

or, as one student within the prison put it rather more succinctly:

If you get shipped out [transferred elsewhere] and they know you've been here, you're somebody, you survived Full Sutton.

Obviously then, my description of this particular environment will be limited. The prison is 'modern', in so far as it does not resemble the old Victorian prisons which still seem to instil a sense of dread in the minds of those who live in communities around their walls. The prison is situated on the edge of a small rural community in the East Riding of Yorkshire, housing, for the most part, Category 'B' prisoners. The prison education block is separate from the cell blocks and the men are brought down to this part of the prison every morning and afternoon. The Education block is divided into approximately 11 classrooms and two smaller tutorial rooms. These rooms are situated around a central secure area containing the staff-room, and administration area from which the prisoners are prohibited.

Outside the classrooms along the L-shaped corridor there are officers present whilst ever the men are down on education. They are positioned immediately inside the door to the education block and also at the corner of the 'L'. The men generally remain in their respective classes for most sessions, although they are 'free' to move around to avail themselves of basic needs, such as, toilet facilities and a drinking fountain.

The men would arrive on education having been brought through the secure corridors which are scanned by security cameras; these link the education and workshop block with the wings. Arrival on education is at approximately 9.15a.m. a little after those prisoners who had gone to the workshops. After having passed through security portals where each prisoner is subjected to a rub down body search - this search is conducted at every move from the wings to the classroom or back to the wings - each man is counted

into the education department by the officers at the door, and checked in. The reverse of this procedure occurs at the end of every session.

Each man would go to his respective classroom, some hurrying enthusiastically to 'escape' the prison, others chatting to each other, laughing and joking, others sauntering disinterestedly along perhaps unsure of where they were supposed or expected to be. All teachers would be in their classes awaiting the good morning grunts, groans, sighs, and sometimes cheerful 'hello darlin' you alright today?' greeting so characteristic of the place.

The classroom used for the Leeds course was in fact one half of a much larger classroom divided along one side by a folding partition, from floor to ceiling. There was a barred window at the opposite end from the door and the teacher's desk which looked out towards the dog compound. Each classroom was laid out differently with furniture placed according to the requirements of each group. The furniture consisted of modern tables and chairs, filing cabinets, black/white boards, with prominent alarm bells and panic buttons each of which was numbered. The Leeds course students always chose to sit in the same places at each session, a trait common to most if not all students in all educational settings.

Occasionally, men would leave the classroom when teaching finished for a particular session and there was time spare to devote to research matters such as discussing the prison regime or educational experiences in other prisons etc. Newcomers to the group who had had little involvement with the research would sometimes leave the classroom, or use the time as 'association' (i.e. free-time for socialising), or simply 'blank-off' with little or no attempt at participation in discussion. As far as they were concerned, they

were 'down on education' to learn some social studies and the 'service provider' was not satisfying the client. It was also quite obvious that immediate confrontation of the 'truth' of their situation, i.e. being a prisoner in a maximum security dispersal prison, was not something of which they wished to be directly reminded. For some of the prisoners, the classroom was a means of 'escape' from the reality of their situation. Talking about it was the last thing they wanted to do.

Such actions by some of the men, i.e. leaving the classroom, were initially disconcerting as I felt that maybe I had said the wrong thing or touched upon some issue of sensitivity, either in what was being taught in sociology or in relation to imprisonment, its effects and consequences. Anxious to maintain positive relationships - particularly in the first few weeks and months - I would actually ask those who left the classroom if everything was O.K., more often than not because this was the occasion when I felt 'naive'. Some of the men did actually admit that they did not feel like discussing 'the prison' or anything to do with it, sometimes because they were having 'a bad time' or were experiencing difficulties with appeals and nothing 'seemed to be going right'.

There were those who would leave the classroom quite openly, however, and simply go into other rooms to see friends or 'catch up on wing gossip' - although this was frowned upon by the department and the prison, an unavoidable aspect of prison life and of 'being down on education'. This was not necessarily a reflection of anything negative in terms of classroom practice. On one morning each week, the men were also 'canteened' which meant that they would be called out of the classes for some considerable time and have to queue with others to obtain 'wages' and supplies. The supplies were then all brought back into the classroom in numerous plastic bags.

The attendance on educational activities is administered, theoretically, according to English Prison Rules. As Nancy Loucks states in *Prison Rules: A Working Guide*;

To the observer, regulations governing the minutiae of prison life often represent an impenetrable bureaucracy. In order to uncover management policy, one has to unravel layers of rules upon rules. (1993;4).

This study of prison classroom practices has to be seen therefore against the wider network of penal policies. As already indicated, illustrating the context is by no means easy; there will be gaps because penal policy dictates that there must be, but the degree of involvement with prisoner-students at Full Sutton, the classroom interaction and subsequently the relationships which developed amongst group members, are precisely what this study articulates and analyses - these things constitute the 'lived' experience of the prisoners at the time they attended the Leeds course. Providing detailed physical descriptions of the immediate setting runs contrary to matters of penal policy and operations, but a brief account of the educational setting follows in order to contextualise those activities recorded over the period of study.

There are 'two' Education Blocks at Full Sutton, described by prison staff, educators and prisoners as the 'Old' block (which vulnerable prisoners - V.P's. - attend) and the 'New' education block, the latter being the one where this study was conducted. The provision of education within prisons is subject to Prison Rule 29 which states:

- 1) Every prisoner able to profit from the education facilities provided at a prison shall be encouraged to do so.
- 2) Programmes of evening educational classes shall be arranged at every prison and, subject to any directions of the Secretary of State, reasonable facilities shall be afforded to prisoners who wish to do so to improve their education by correspondence courses or private study, or to practise handicrafts, in their spare time.
- 3) Special attention shall be paid to the education of illiterate prisoners, and if necessary they shall be taught within the hours normally allotted to work. (Loucks; 1993;78).

The Full Sutton Education Programme is as follows: there are classes on the 'new' block in art, business studies, CDT, cookery, creative writing, English language and literature, ESB, ethics and morality, film and drama, food technology, foundation course, French, German, history, HIV, IT, the Leeds University course, leatherwork, maths, music, open learning, psychology, science, social skills sociology, Spanish, woodwork, word processing, world affairs, yoga. On the 'old' block, the courses provided include: accountancy, art, business studies, creative writing, English language and literature, ESB, foundation, general studies, history, IT, law, maths, music, psychology, science, social skills, sociology, Spanish, world religions, yoga. The provision of education within the prison, at the time of writing, was the responsibility of Beverley College of Further Education - with the exception of the Leeds University Diploma course.

All courses are timetabled as in traditional educational institutions to run from Monday to Friday on both morning, afternoon and some evening sessions. Some of the teaching staff would also be involved with students in 'Outpost' work (i.e. teaching not undertaken in either of the two blocks) and also within the Special Segregation Unit (S.S.U.) or High Security Unit (H.S.U.) as it came to be known whilst this work was being undertaken. The education department has a full-time Education Officer and Deputy Education Officer, eight full-time staff and approximately twenty-three part-time staff, excluding the Leeds University course. In addition to prison officers and Governors, the staff in the education department at Full Sutton liaise with the Head of Inmate Activities, the Director of Academic Affairs and the Principal of Beverley College.

As a rough estimate, out of a prison population of 550, about 150 would be 'on education' at any one time. Any prisoner wanting to attend any classes would be assessed and interviewed by the Education Officer after a period of time known as 'induction',

after arriving at the prison and being placed initially on 'C' wing. Education would be one of a number of activities or alternatives offered to prisoners in terms of 'inmate activities' and would be built into a daily routine closely resembling the following:

8.05 - 8.30a.m.	breakfast
8.30 - 9.05a.m.	unemployed are 'banged up', or open until call for work, education, or gym.
8.45 - 9.05a.m.	movements to various parts of the prison
9.15 - 11.30a.m.	education classes
11.30 - 12.00p.m.	movements back to wings, dinner, applications, mail.
12.00 - 1.45p.m.	'banged up'
2.00 - 2.15p.m.	movements
2.15 - 4.30p.m.	education classes
4.30 - 5.00p.m.	movements back to wings, tea-time.
5.00 - 5.45p.m.	'banged up'
5.45 - 8.00p.m.	'association' time, unlocked from cells.

Wings B, C, E, and F would attend classes in the 'new' block with wings A and D attending the V.P's block. Those prisoners who attended workshop activities would have a different routine and if any prisoner had a visit of any kind, it would obviously take precedence over education or workshop. Visits took place mainly in the afternoon from about 2.00p.m. until 4.00p.m., although they were occasionally allowed in the morning for long distance visitors on 'accumulated visits'.

The prison routine would, of course, always be subject to curtailment and would vary according to the Governor's discretion, and matters of security would, of course, override everything else. Arriving at the prison to teach only to find that the whole place had been 'shut down' overnight was not an uncommon experience. As far as the prisoners themselves were concerned, experience had shown that the regime activities varied from prison to prison and in certain instances was subject to the whim of the Prison Officers Association and to particular officers on the wings.

The Leeds University Diploma Course on which I taught and within which this research was conducted, was invariably described on education as 'The Leeds Course' to distinguish it from the bulk of courses provided by Beverley College. The course itself would be best described as parallel to the first year B.A. degree in Sociology at Leeds, enabling students within Full Sutton to receive a credit on the Open University Degree Programme or to potentially join the second year of the course at Leeds or certain other Universities.

Teaching the course involved the setting up and planning of a series of approximately six 10 - 12 week modules to run over a twelve month period, loosely timetabled as follows: the Sociology of Modern Britain; International Issues; Intellectual and Political Theory; Introduction to Social Policy; Health Issues; Urbanism and the Modern Individual; The Development of Study Skills; Research Methods. There was considerable flexibility in terms of course content with examination by assessed essays and/or written examination in accordance with University rules. Professor Soothill of Lancaster University acted as external examiner.

'New' students from within the prison were liable to join the class at any time throughout the 'academic' year, usually described in the context of prison education as 'roll-on-roll-off'. This brought one or two teaching management problems which were not insurmountable despite difficulties of assimilation into an existing group. Equally, students were liable to 'leave' without any prior warning or notice, depending on reasons for removal - sometimes from the prison altogether.

Personal choice did not always play a part in such decisions. Students would, prior to the course, be interviewed by the Education Officer and Course Co-ordinator with respect to

their potential levels of ability, commitment and motivation towards what amounted to a fairly intensive course of study. Some students would join the Leeds course after 'progressing' through courses provided by Beverley College staff, others, in some instances, had already obtained degree or other qualifications outside, others would come more or less 'fresh' to education so a wide range of learning abilities was usually in evidence, together with a diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The 'raw-materials' were thus not too dissimilar from the more traditional or standard adult and continuing education settings, other than the fact that they were all male (and all prisoners).

It was quite usual, for example, to have students in the group from Asian, Afro-Caribbean, Middle-Eastern, Irish and white working-class backgrounds. On occasion, there would also be students in the group from a public-school background. Despite the fact that the students' present circumstances of imprisonment might be expected to act as some kind of leveller of social hierarchy, the students themselves appeared to maintain the forms of cultural divisions characteristic of wider society.

Hence, for example, those who had already experienced high levels of educational attainment would tend to dominate debates and discussions of an academic nature simply because they had prior experience and knowledge which enabled them to feel fairly confident in their approaches to degree level study. Others would wait a few weeks before 'joining in' - again, a reasonably typical classroom experience for mature students in more traditional education settings.

The type of life-style and class/cultural background of each student and in particular, any previous occupational status held by students (prior to imprisonment) also coloured

classroom interaction in terms of self-confidence and self-esteem - as in some instances, did the nature of the offence allegedly committed. This 'hierarchy of offences' determined one's status within the prison as a prisoner and often transcended the more familiar social divisions carried over from wider society. However, those students who attended the Leeds course, who successfully completed it, admitted that it too gave them a certain status - *whilst attending* - and a group identity which in itself, complicated the hierarchical divisions already mentioned. As the students often pointed out, 'We frequently help each other out with all sorts of problems, not just those related to the course, when we're doing it. No other activity in the prison seems to do this.'

In short, whilst on the course, the students had an image of themselves which was affected and reinforced by their collective group experiences and by what other prisoners and staff within the prison thought about them. The significance of this group identity is discussed in Chapter Four.

Overall, the cultural diversity characteristic of the group produced remarkably wide-ranging, challenging and stimulating backgrounds for discussions on sociological topics as may be expected, and in itself contributed positively to course content and learning outcomes. Culture clashes would occasionally arise, but the exchange and interchange of past experiences, knowledge, and insider information added a colourful and positive dimension to the course.

A further point of interest in terms of understanding the group dynamic, and worthy of comment, was the relationship of those who were considered to be 'political prisoners', to the other students. These students were often very keen to pursue the course and were invariably successful in their levels of achievement. They were frequently described by

others as 'smart, sharp thinkers' who were well respected and listened to attentively even when there was disagreement on sensitive political issues or 'misunderstandings' relating to the nature of an alleged offence.

Class contact time on the Leeds course amounted to approximately 15 hours per week, three days with one regular tutor (course co-ordinator) and initially one day with myself as tutor/researcher. Occasionally visiting lecturers from the School of Sociology and Social Policy at Leeds would attend.

The actual classes themselves took the form of seminars and discussion groups with the number of students varying from three up to twelve depending on how many were registered for the course at any one time and other factors determined by the prison regime. The documenting of the classroom practices is reserved for Chapter Two and Three of this study and is contextualised against other activities within Full Sutton.

'BEIN' 'ERE'

One very familiar crie-de-coeur from those imprisoned is that "bein' 'ere" is enough, that is your punishment; 'the rest of what happens (in the prison) is not necessary', as the men in Full Sutton were to say on so many occasions. 'All the petty stuff, the getting at you', was equally familiar. I lost count of the number of times I heard these statements from both prisoners and educational practitioners in and around the education block. I do not include such observations for the purposes of engaging sympathy or as direct comments on the penal system; they are recorded because they are an indication of the reality of imprisonment.

Prison can hereafter be described as a society in miniature, a 'society of captives' containing culture, stratification, language, roles, rulers and ruled, even an extreme type

of power differential which manifests itself both overtly and covertly in the daily prison routine. From a prisoner's perspective, the primary socialisation process has to happen and happen very quickly if he is to survive in, what to all intents and purposes, is a strange and alien environment. We are all well aware of the length of time it takes to absorb a new culture, to adopt the appropriate identity, even as a young child we become quite skilled at this most complex of processes. What to do and what not to do in order to simply live our lives with autonomy, privilege, security, liberty and privacy forms the basis of our understanding of accepted codes of behaviour. In an ideal world, all individuals should have had some measure of primary and secondary socialisation to enable them to conform to wider social norms and values, but often prisoners are assumed to have no understanding or experience of these. In prisons other individuals attempt to replicate those early learning processes if not in content, possibly in form.

What to do and what not to do in prison, is something which has to be absorbed very quickly; the adoption of an 'inmate code' for example may well save one from being physically and verbally abused as one struggles to maintain survival and sanity in such a total environment. The prison subculture is, to some extent 'always-already there' (Althusser, 1984), pre-dating the arrival of the new prisoner who subsequently has to either conform to the demands of the new society and make his 'stay' tolerable or reject it. So what exactly constitutes the day-to-day experience of prisoners, what makes up the 'prison world' or social habitus (Elias, 1939) of the prisoner, where 'habitus' can be interpreted as meaning:

... that level of personality characteristics which individuals share in common with fellow members of their social groups. (Mennell, 1989; 30)

In their work *Psychological Survival*, (1972), Cohen and Taylor address this issue in considerable detail as they construct a phenomenology of prison life. Whilst their work remains controversial, their efforts provide a lucid insight into this most closed of all worlds, which still lies at the heart of most societies desirous of social order. Central to their approach is a concern with :

...how life there is given meaning, how one passes time, how friends are made and lost, how one resigns oneself to the environment and how one resists it. (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972; 59)

Those things which one would describe as 'normal' everyday social processes for most people - the passage of time, work, friendship, sustaining self-identity, - could be more than just a little problematic in prison. As Cohen and Taylor point out, problems of sociability, privacy, relationships and the forging of them are but the tip of the iceberg. Transfers, removals, releases, losing outside contacts with significant others, all become major concerns in addition to the survival question and above all physical and mental change stretch the prisoner's sensibilities to a degree perhaps not always experienced by those 'on the outside'.

For long - term prisoners, 'resisting' the prison system or regime may become a way of life (in the widest sense of the word in this context) and the adoption of specific tactics or strategies of resistance has been well documented in Cohen and Taylor's and other's work. They distinguish five 'types' of resistance which I restate here as useful illustrators of the prisoner's social habitus.

Cohen and Taylor state that 'self-protection' is one form of resistance where a prisoner will either attempt to make life more tolerable by passive acceptance of rules or will deliberately challenge everything in response to the degrees of labelling he has

experienced both prior to imprisonment and once inside. This particular process is characterised by acceptance, amusement or rejection directed at the regime and relates specifically to the fact that those imprisoned have an identity *other* than the inmate/criminal/offender one which has supplanted any previous identity, i.e. the 'pre-institutional' sense of self which is constantly being reinforced via visitors from families and friends, correspondence and certain types of activities which the prisoner may undertake whilst inside. Literally 'holding on' to this pre-institutional identity is an important strategy for many prisoners serving long sentences and they will endeavour to do so by whatever means are available within the prison system. For the purposes of this study, there is a great deal of significance in the notion that education has a role to play in either re-establishing 'original' identity or shaping a 'new' one. As Cohen and Taylor indicate:

How does one retain a sense of value and importance in a hostile environment which is loaded with problems and which presents so undignified a set of definitions of self to serve as props. (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972;137)

As this study will show, education in prison is one way of retaining that 'sense of value and importance'.

A second form of resistance involves 'campaigning', in the sense that some prisoners will 'formalise' a response to the prison regime through involvement with prisoners' rights groups. Closely related to this, in my interpretation of matters, is the 'confrontational' approach adopted by those prisoners with a strong ideological position, such as political prisoners or black prisoners who express a solidarity related almost entirely to their particular experiences of imprisonment. For example, black students in the prison were involved in several attempts at drawing attention to their dietary requirements through written complaints to prison authorities. Similar tactics were adopted to ensure that they

had access to particular styles of music which were not available through mainstream prison catalogues. The remaining types of resistance according to Cohen and Taylor involve more extreme tactics in the form of hunger strikes or, of course, outright escape attempts.

With the exception of hunger strikes, I have encountered forms of resistance such as those articulated by Cohen and Taylor with all students on the Leeds course (including an attempted escape). It is important to realise and to acknowledge that the reality of 'life' inside for those with whom I had direct contact, impacted upon each one of the students in ways which ensured that any motivations for attending a course of Higher Education in Social Studies were not simply or necessarily the result of a desire to increase knowledge, or 'achieve' in the educational sense.

One must also acknowledge that the prison is not simply an environment which contains prisoners. Whilst the focus of this study remains a group of men undertaking a Social Studies course, both literally and metaphorically confined to the Education Block at Full Sutton, there must be awareness of those other individuals who form the network of interdependent relationships which permeate the prison on a day-to-day basis. A full assessment of penal policy and practice does not fall within the scope of this study as already indicated, but inevitably, aspects of it may surface. The tensions and conflicts which inhere in the system are encountered daily depending on the frequency of one's own visits and working contact with, for the purposes of this study, students, education staff and prison officers.

'Bein' 'ere' has different connotations for all those individuals who bring their own interpretations and agency to the prison setting. In that sense, the prison undoubtedly

mirrors the structures, the interactions, the configurations and relationships of dependency which structure wider society.

Prison can be viewed as a microcosm of that wider society replete with social divisions, clashes of interests and power concentrated rigorously in the hands of a few. Prisoners have to accommodate the fact that they are, however, both part of wider society and excluded from it at one and the same time.

Most of the observations made in this study concern the men imprisoned; the language used is their language, depicting their surroundings, experiences and their opinions. It is also a means of manipulating and shaping that environment and those who work in it, within the Prison Service, doubtless do exactly the same in order to ensure their own survival, they too adopt tactics and strategies as do all individuals in situations of institutionalised control, particularly where relationships are coloured by a diversity of ideologies surrounding the nature of crime and punishment.

The nature of these interactions and relationships may be unfamiliar to those with little experience or understanding of life inside, but the meanings attached to them by prisoners are complicated by the very fact of their imprisonment, so what may seem like a fairly straightforward conversation between two people becomes a matter of some concern as is instanced by the following observations:

Tony: I'd had this telephone conversation with the girlfriend - you know the screws sit in? We were talking about kids and stuff, like you do, me and the girlfriend. When I came off and went to go out, this screw, he says to me, 'Hang on a minute, can I have a word?' So I says 'Yes' and he says, 'You sound just like all of us talking about kids and that'. I couldn't believe it. What do they think we are? He said, 'You just sound normal'. What's normal? But some of them are O.K....

The same inmate also had this to say, adding a more poignant note to the above remarks:

Tony: You know what gets me, what freaks me out, is that my daughter will be 21/22 when I get out. I might be a grand-dad. I've missed all her growing up and that, it's weird that isn't it? I've got to do 16 years at least before parole, then they decide if you're fit to be returned to society. You know, if you'll fit into normal society. What gets me is, how can you be 'fit' when you've been taken out of it? Things change. You don't know what's going on out there, it changes. No wonder they end up back inside. It's pathetic really.

Conversations with the students on prisons and the prisoners' life-style would naturally reveal a wealth of information about what is, in essence, a 'closed' society, but what has come to be widely recognised as the 'inmate subculture', i.e. the network of bonds created by those imprisoned over time, has become reified to the extent that nothing which occurs in prison can be observed, discussed, debated, or reflected upon without feeling its constraining force. This, I would suggest, is dangerous. It is dangerous because, first and foremost, the tendency is to ignore the *people*. Subcultures, groups, communities, collective organisations et al., are all formed by and with the involvement of people in relationships with each other; as Mennell (1989) points out in his commentary on the work of Elias, people are 'constantly in movement and constantly relating to other people,' both *now* and *in the past*. There is nothing static about human relationships, and this is as true of those confined within a maximum security dispersal prison, as it is of individuals anywhere. The 'inmate subculture' therefore should be simply seen as a term used to describe the interdependencies which prisoners have and which they share with each other.

Secondly, there is a danger in terms of 'social differentiation' within the prison and beyond; the cultural embeddedness of attitudes of discrimination, exclusion, marginalisation and social closure towards prisoners is widespread and only reinforced by the continued usage of phrases such as 'inmate subculture'. It has ensured that those

imprisoned are ultimately castigated and shunned by their adult peers. They are perceived as outsiders in every sense of the word, resulting inevitably in a 'them-and-us' situation again both within the prison and beyond. Further complications are added as prisoners form and re-form themselves into smaller groups of people with like-minded interests and shared life experiences. There is nothing unusual in these patterns of behaviour, but misinterpretation of their development through lack of foresight and a lack of understanding of the fact that people's lives (including prisoners) are shaped by the interdependencies they form, has resulted in negative attitudes - both from those who imprison and those who are imprisoned - towards post-release behaviour. Regardless of why people are imprisoned (for offences involving in particular violence against others, or property or theft), there are those who wish to see the outcome of imprisonment as a desire on the part of offenders, never to re-offend and the whole experience of imprisonment should be judged against the ideals of rehabilitation. The actuality of that experience however, may well point in completely the opposite direction.

WHY EDUCATION?

In the closing section of this introduction to life in Full Sutton, I wish to draw once more on the work of Cohen and Taylor in *Psychological Survival* (1972). Imprisonment is likened to the experiences individuals encounter when confronted with the long and short - term effects of natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes. The shattering of existing social bonds which results from these events is traumatic to say the least, but it is possible to 'rebuild' or 'reforge' such bonds; as many prison writers also acknowledge. Cohen and Taylor argue that such rebuilding processes are not so easily possible after imprisonment, that the massive disruption which occurs - particularly in the 'new'

prisoner's life - is so sudden and overwhelming that dislocation, shock, insensibility, grief and the ability or inability to deal with all these means that prisoners feel a degree of powerlessness and apathy in the face of their disaster that is highly personal, in so far as they are unable to invite friends or relatives to assist directly in the rebuilding process. The isolation is extreme, the familiar social networks have been destroyed and the prisoner has, at some point to face the reality of this situation and assess the best way to address the rebuilding process. I would contend that they also have to assess the *worth* of this process, that it is not simply a matter of adaptation or survival, or even the case that prisoners are unable to change the situation through their own efforts. Attending education in prison is one such effort as we have already indicated. However, the feelings of insecurity, the loss of what one has always assumed to be valid belief systems which inform one's life experiences, together with the forced removal from one's community, are all common enough 'symptoms' of imprisonment over long periods of time.

The loss of autonomy, of privilege, of security in the personal sense, of liberty and privacy were not always immediately evident to me in my work with the students in Full Sutton. Surviving the immediate environment was. However, in the classroom discussions which would take place over the three year period of this study, such concerns would become self-evident as the men asserted their individuality more openly, displaying a talent for integrating their 'old' (pre-institutional) identities with their current (institutional) ones and then, on occasion, displaying a quite marked, but doubtless understandable, degree of alarm at the prospect of integration into a future society from whose tangible and continuous development they had been excluded. Hence the desire to assess the worth of any putative 'constructive rebuilding process' which might take place

inside. The whole process of integrating past, present and future experiences was in itself a kind of technique or strategy for survival in an enforced, total environment.

The men at Full Sutton experienced aspects of their imprisonment in similar ways to accounts which describe prison life 20, 30, 40 or 140 years ago. Coping with problems of privacy, loneliness, intimacy, general sociability, how one spends one's day, the passage of time and, as we shall see later, the effects of these experiences on one's identity mean that personal change is being wrought upon these individuals whether they like it or not and through a form of agency over which they have little control. Personal change is governed by complex motives however, it is not necessarily something 'that just occurs'. We may *choose* to do some specific thing in order to *achieve* or *initiate* some form of change, either in ourselves or in others; on the other hand we may take a course of action because there are no preferable alternatives, but our desires and our interests govern our behaviour in whatever situation we may find ourselves.

The prison environment is no exception, but suffice it to say that the constant forging and breaking of social bonds and contacts with other individuals due to transfers, releases, friends being 'shipped out' overnight and so on, makes for a transient social world typical of the dispersal prison, a world within which the degrees of certainty and uncertainty faced by all individuals throughout their life-course are intensified beyond common understanding. The men undoubtedly seemed to choose therefore, several ways in which to deal with their situation, but generally the concepts of resignation and resistance as suggested by Cohen and Taylor summarise cogently the options open to the prisoner. There are indeed, those who resign themselves to their incarceration and those who resist it at all costs, but the one thing both groups have in common, is that whatever tactic or strategy they adopt in order to survive, their experiences will be about change.

So ultimately, prison life is about survival, about coping, about adopting strategies and techniques in 'a unique environment', and that environment has to be understood, before any claims regarding the relationship between education, change, and rehabilitation can be made. Assessing the *worth* of an 'adopted strategy', be it education or any other inmate activity is a process with which one becomes familiar only after close contact with those imprisoned for long periods of time.

The following conversation is illustrative of what many prisoners think/feel about certain aspects of the current penal system:

David: In here, the guys are street-wise, academically, some of them are very bright, no doubt that's the reason why they have this course here. In a local prison it's vastly different. And don't forget you have different perceptions according to 'normal' crime, those in special units, sex offenders and so on, but always the screws are nothing, they are often obstructionist and incompetent with no ability to communicate, and so the regime is run to fit that particular wing. You're with these screws a lot of the time, it builds up tension.

Dudley: There's even a food problem.

David: You have a captive population - you can charge what you like - top rate. You cannot trust the prison society, there are no guarantees and so you expect nothing and you give nothing. Prison is a 'holding tank'. They don't know what to do with you, no thought is given to the individual prisoner and little or no attempt is made to rehabilitate. You're stuck here, they put you through the system and you're processed. It's being dehumanised. There is nothing human in here.

Anne: What about classes?

David: Yes, they are, [human] but I think there's a danger because you forget you're in prison and you let your guard down (in class) then as soon as you go out that door you're searched straightaway. It's even worse when you're visited, you're strip searched. It's appalling you can't get close.

Dudley: It's *not* degrading - it's your body! Show them you're not intimidated. Me I strip off and walk through naked. I don't even wait till I'm asked. Don't let them do it to you.

David: One point you're a human being, next point you're not.

- Dudley: In prison a lot of your feelings is bottled up
- David: There is nothing tender in prison. How can you have a close conversation, for example? Phone calls are recorded, letters opened.
- Dudley: They don't want to give you nothing.
- David: The public are the same. As far as they're concerned you should be chained to a wall, whipped and fed on bread and water.
- Dudley: They try to break your spirit, see.
- David: The punitive element is the courts, the prison has no clearly defined role for itself, in my opinion, and that is why it fails. Assumptions are made, for example, about education in prison, but it's a way of getting back at the system, you see; prison is isolated, there's no link between it and the outside society. There are no meaningful links between prison and industry. If you do courses here, you could do jobs outside. They could do so much more, if you acquire a skill; the least you should get is an interview, but you've no chance so it's 'life' anyway, even if you don't get life, you might as well have - no job, a tragic thing, you can be recalled at any time on probation, you're still serving your sentence. Even if you look at someone the wrong way in a pub - straight back. Lifers never finish, so therefore these places don't stop you committing crime because what else can you do? You'll do bigger jobs, you'll go more tooled up ... but fraud nets more money and yet carries substantially lower sentences. Millions of pounds equals less years, it's a class-ridden system. Look at tax evasion which costs millions compared with drug offences. Ernest Saunders? Now if anyone in *here* stood up as an afterdinner speaker. I really just can't believe it.

Such trenchant criticisms of the system of imprisonment and its inadequacies was by no means peculiar to these two individuals directly experiencing it, and it is certainly by no means peculiar to those who are imprisoned. Criminologists, policy makers and other practitioners have added their voices to the litany of criticisms and complaints which reverberate throughout the present day penal system in England and Wales. Confronting the raw emotion of it brings theory and practice into sharp relief. The resignation, the resistance and the change can each be visualised, I interpret them as specific 'steps along the way' (in much the same manner as one would understand a set of objectives) towards what some criminologists now describe as the 'requalifying' process; in the sense that the

ex-prisoner has to be re-integrated back into society, i.e. 'qualify' as a citizen. Education in prison undoubtedly has a role to play in this; social studies a more significant role than may at first be apparent. Chapter Two of this study will document that role, and will provide an indication of whether or not those imprisoned feel that Education inside is worth anything at all to them, by virtue of the fact that it brings about change, or in Cohen and Taylor's interpretation contributes to the 'rebuilding process'.

CHAPTER TWO

CLASSROOM CONTEXT & INTERACTIONS

Learning a new body of knowledge in any educational setting is an activity which most people have experienced at some particular point in their lives and it is one which has impacted upon them as individuals in ways as diverse as educational practice itself. To learn something is to acquire (and possibly use) new knowledge, to explore unknown territory and in the process of doing so, acquire new skills from a variety of resources - human, literary and technical. To embark upon a course of learning is also to engage in a form of social participation which generally takes place in institutions designed for the purpose such as schools, colleges, universities, community centres and so on. Common-sense tells us that prisons are hardly designed for the purpose of encouraging all prisoners to attend education classes; many indeed do not possess facilities which in any way recognise the right of the prisoner to learn. However, many prisons do have facilities and those prisons which encourage prisoners to attend classes need to acknowledge from the first instance that prospective adult students are going to bring individual packages of experience and values to the prison classroom.

This Chapter will examine the *social* process of acquiring a new body of sociological knowledge at degree level within prison with the emphasis placed on *social* participation. The first section suggests that knowledge acquisition is not simply a matter of the student passively 'soaking up' new knowledge, but that it is a more interactive, dynamic process. In analysing that process, I explore the theory that students in prison 'weave' their newly acquired knowledge into their existing streams of knowledge as part of a continuous and continuing process of learning.

The Chapter then focuses on the context of adults learning within the prison classroom, because those prisoners who had chosen to attend the course were adults 'returning-to-learn'. The characteristics and group dynamics of adult learning are explored as further significant dimensions of the *social* process of acquiring a new body of knowledge, a process which may have the potential to contribute to personal development.

Finally, the Chapter explores in more detail how the studying of Sociology *per se* as an academic discipline, impacts upon the individual, adult, prisoner-student with an evaluation of 'learner-and-material' interaction. The analyses of classroom conversations as data from the prison classroom throughout the Chapter, suggest that the combination of subject-matter, classroom dynamics and the unique experiences of adults learning form a context within which the 'weaving theory of learning' is embedded as a social process which has a *potentiality* for personal change.

THE SOCIAL PROCESS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE

Most educational practitioners acknowledge that learning involves meeting a set of (clearly) defined objectives or outcomes which are guided by overall statements of aims showing the direction of a particular scheme of work. Those objectives or learning outcomes may be loosely divided into the acquisition of:

- knowledge, i.e. knowing certain things;
- psychomotor skills, i.e. performing certain tasks;
- attitude or affective skills, i.e. exhibiting certain personal qualities.

In a prison educational context where prison operations and penal policy are seldom seen as separate in practice, any detailed research relating to that practice must emphasise the

importance of *how* new knowledge is learned through attending education and *how* the processes experienced in acquiring that new knowledge impact upon the individual in so far as they may encourage new attitudes which may shape individual behaviour.

If, as a teacher, one consults a 'list' of 'Performance Words for Use in Objectives in Teaching', one is likely to find it roughly divided, as above, into the categories of knowledge, psychomotor skills and attitudes. The performance words (whilst they may be extremely useful for lesson planning!) do not in any way immediately suggest that the *process* of acquiring knowledge is a complex, social and continuous process which does not simply begin and end when the student enters or leaves the prison classroom. They also give little indication that the *student* should have a role to play in what ought to be a positive experience grounded in personal choice (Rogers, C.; 1983). Those words which 'fit' the category of knowledge skills for example, include terms such as 'compute', 'define', 'explain', 'identify', 'label', 'name', 'reproduce', 'specify', 'state', 'translate' - and many more. They are in a sense detached from the learner who is often perceived as an 'empty vessel' waiting to be filled with all the knowledge that teacher can supply.

Educational psychology has tended to be the academic field which dominates and informs classroom practice, offering explanations of learning which in the midst of some cross disciplinary sparring, have been interpreted as 'having limitations' (Entwistle; 1987; 2). Some of the critiques describe a somewhat restricted view of learning, but there are theories advanced within educational psychology which concede that the *social* processes experienced through education and learning are as significant for understanding that experience as the more cognitive ones. What exactly does the process of acquiring knowledge in a prison classroom entail?

The range of theories applicable to any classroom learning is diverse, from the 'behaviourist' theories of Skinner (1938) to those which are described as 'experiential' (Rogers; 1969; 1983). Each appears to reflect a degree of teacher-centred or student-centred 'control' in terms of learning a body of knowledge and how that is achieved, and before we look more closely at what occurred in the classroom at Full Sutton it will be useful to introduce the idea of a Learning Contract or Triangle, (see Fig. 2:1) as it is sometimes known, a simple idea used in teacher-training institutions to introduce the context of learning to the novice teacher. As a tool of analysis, the Learning Contract helps to identify the prison classroom interaction and may offer a simple explanation of how knowledge is acquired in that context.

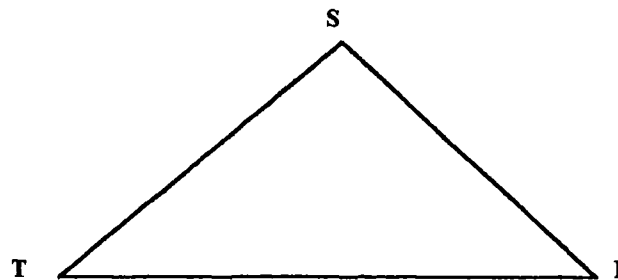
Fig. 2:1; THE CONTRACT TRIANGLE:

KEY:

S - STUDENT

T - TEACHER

I - INSTITUTION



The Learning Contract is an unwritten contract in its broadest sense composed, for the most part, of the expectations which traverse all three sides. For example, the contract begins when a student will enrol on a course on the basis of the institution's information having not yet met the teacher. The student, therefore, has expectations of the institution composed of some or all of the following: that there will be resources available, access to buildings, organisation, communication, heating, etc., etc. In addition, the student will have expectations of the teacher to provide knowledge, to be approachable, supportive, flexible, show ability and competence, etc., etc. Similarly, the teacher will have expectations of the student in terms of motivation, participation, level of competence,

co-operation and so on. Of the institution, she may expect resources to be provided, in the form of students, support, income, a classroom, appraisal, feedback, training, career development, etc. The institution likewise has expectations that the teacher will be professional, committed, able to work as part of a team, possess evaluative skills, be flexible, display appropriate ethical conduct, etc., etc., and of the student, that s/he will attend regularly, be committed, co-operative, motivated, possess previous skills, and/or experience. In a prison context, that these combined expectations are met in any degree at all is going to be of significance to understanding the coherence and cohesion of the learning contract triangle because the institution in question is, of course, primarily concerned with imprisonment and not with education. The 'expectations' of the institution may well be grounded in no more and no less than a desire that 'someone' is keeping the prisoners occupied in the Education Block - an 'expectation' which may well not be congruent with those of prison education staff and prisoner-students.

Keeping the idea of a Learning Contract in mind and focusing upon the expectations of students that the teacher will provide knowledge, it is possible to illustrate very simply one interpretation of what may take place in the classroom. (See Fig. 2:2)

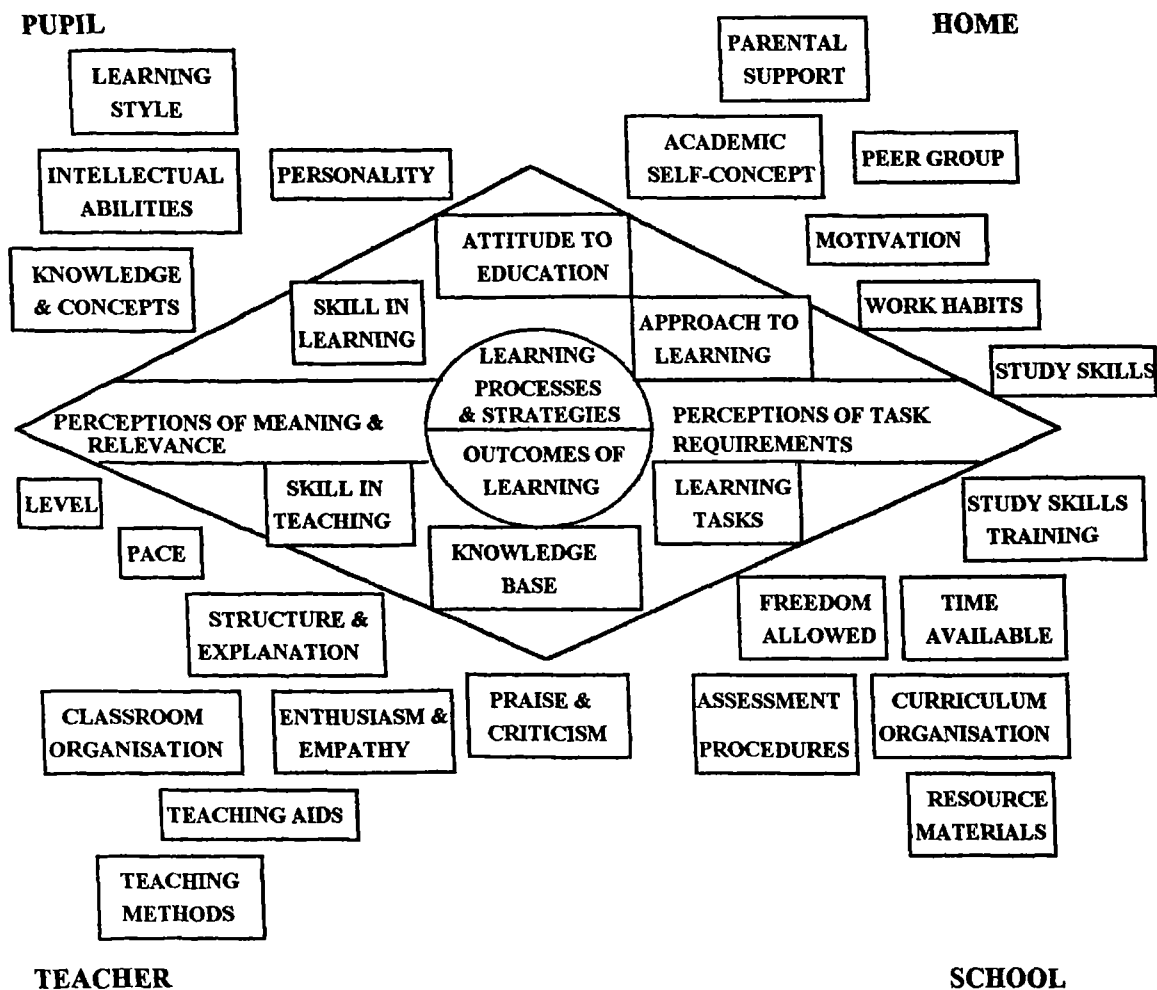
Fig. 2:2; SIMPLISTIC THEORY of LEARNING :

STUDENT --->ATTENDS EDUCATION --->ACQUIRES NEW KNOWLEDGE

This model, otherwise known as the 'bucket theory of learning', where students are simply perceived as 'empty buckets' waiting to be filled with new knowledge, is of course rather too simplistic, for many other factors have a bearing on the outcome of such a process as any competent educational practitioner knows.

If, on the other hand we were to attempt the impossible and offer a model which incorporated *all* aspects of the processes of learning and acquiring knowledge, we could do worse than Entwistle's (1987) heuristic model of the teaching-learning process. (See Fig. 2:3)

Fig. 2:3; A HEURISTIC MODEL of the TEACHING - LEARNING PROCESS
[Derived from Entwistle, 1987, 106]



Such a model is, as Entwistle suggests, (1987;104), not static. For one thing, it suggests that relationships akin to those commented on above in the Learning Contract Triangle, (transmogrified here into a contract diamond), must be acknowledged as of significance and influence in terms of what students learn, where and how. Thus, student/pupil, home background, 'school', and teacher constitute four main influences which would readily, if

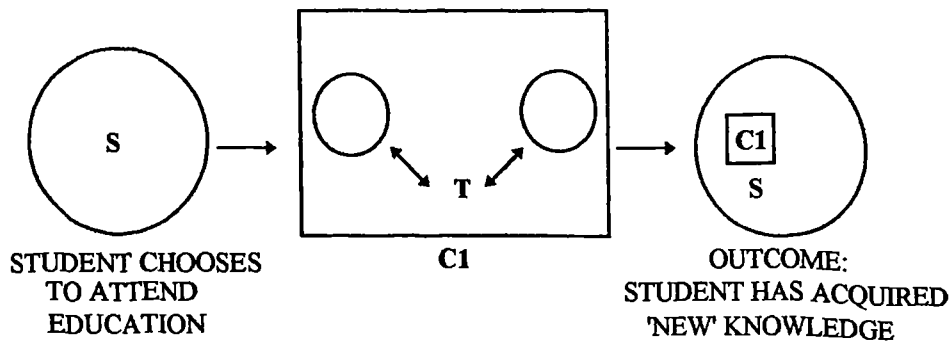
not ideally, translate into the prison classroom context of adult learners, as depicted in the four 'corners' of Entwistle's model. The model also hints at the complexity of the social interactions which *must* take place in the classroom, isolating dimensions of the learning process such as, motivation, intellectual abilities, enthusiasm and so on. His analysis focuses on how that interaction may shape the outcomes of learning, his model providing a useful 'guide', as he suggests, for approaching teaching and learning in a holistic manner. It attempts to take into account the social and psychological dimension of learning but falls short of presenting evidence as to how these dimensions lock together in a dynamic manner. It is, as he admits, a model which does not map the dynamic processes.

The two models represent almost opposite ends of the continuum of learning and knowledge acquisition in their depiction of the experiences which students may encounter in the classroom and yet both are open to further refinement. The validity of conducting a prison classroom ethnography which focuses on the processual nature of learning lies in its potential to illustrate the dynamic social and developmental processes which occur through *time* as students potentially '*weave*' their practical, cultural and social experiences together with newly learned analytical and theoretical discourse on chosen courses. These complex dimensions of the learning processes, the strategies (adopted by teachers and students) and outcomes (for students) which Entwistle has depicted at the centre of his model, such as the student's assessment of the worth, relevance and meaning of a course, are identifiable in this study through detailed analysis of prison classroom interactions.

Observing and documenting classroom practice and interactions with a view to analysing how new knowledge is acquired, and assessing the potential outcomes of that process for

the student means, above all, that the relationship between teacher and student is brought into sharp relief. In a prison classroom, that relationship has, potentially, a strength and significance that both parties may initially fail to recognise. (It also has weaknesses as far as 'Prison Security' is concerned!).

Through offering my own diagrammatic representation of what takes place in the prison classroom, see Fig. 2:4 through to Fig. 5:1, both the simplistic model of learning (see Fig. 2:2) and The Heuristic Model of Entwistle (recall Fig. 2:3), are modified through the addition firstly, of student-teacher interaction which we will call C1, i.e. *part* of the learning *context* and which can be potentially 'transferred' into outcomes. The contribution that this interaction makes to the process of acquiring knowledge in a group of adult learners who, in any other educational setting would be primarily recognised as mature students rather than, for the most part, prisoners in a maximum security dispersal prison, is also worthy of being analysed. Looking at Fig. 2:4, we can see these 'modifications' to the previous models more clearly. This depiction of learning processes is also 'simplistic' but begins to highlight processes and outcomes which may ultimately influence personal behaviour.

Fig. 2:4; TEACHER / STUDENT INTERACTION**KEY:**

- Ⓢ - PRISONER-STUDENTS
- - PRISON CLASSROOM / LEARNING CONTEXT
- T - TEACHER
- C1 - STUDENT TEACHER INTERACTION

The following extract is illustrative of the kind of discussion characteristic of the students on the Leeds Diploma course. It is used here to show, illustrated by Fig. 2:4, how student-teacher interaction in a prison setting is complex because it involves more than simply passing on new knowledge. It is about 'open-ness' or trust between teacher and student for one thing, particularly with regard to what is said as much as it is about learning. The subject under discussion by the men was New Right ideology and the contradiction inherent in what is 'preached' and what is 'practiced' in what was the current Conservative Government policy with regard to family responsibility and child delinquency.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:1

- 1 Rob: I believe it should be partly the State and partly the Family who has responsibility. You see, you can educate the kids at Nursery schools when they're very young.
- Andrew: But that doesn't mean anything, it's gotta be down to the individual. . .
- 5 Rob: You see I've worked with young kids in Belfast, on the estate, they get into joy-riding, stealing electrical goods and so on. Then what happens? They bring the police back to the estate, we don't want that; we, the

community, should deal with it. We try and explain this to the kids, but then it's coming up to Christmas say, and they've no money and they want things for presents and so on. In some ways you can't blame them.

10

Anne: Do you think adults have a moral responsibility - as parents - towards ensuring their kids don't do these things?

15

Andrew: You can't - never mind the New Right and what they say. If you have a kid on the streets in London making five grand a day from selling crack, that, for a kid from an inner city area, is more than he might get in a year, so you can't just take that away from him. What alternative can you give him? What is there? There's got to be something else to replace that, he's not going to give it up that easily. It's about money and survival.

20 Ted: You've got to watch out for the vigilante groups though, as well.

Both Rob and Andrew are disclosing knowledge here which under different circumstances they may not have otherwise done. This does not mean that it is in any sense incriminatory, but their own life experiences are of course, valid in the classroom setting, are of relevance and on a Social Studies course, full of legitimate social comment on strategies for survival in specific environments. The fact that they both feel able to contribute to the discussion freely and purposefully highlights the importance of positive group interaction. The conversation also shows something of those learning processes which were to become apparent through close observation as the students 'moved' from fairly detached, objective comment (line 1), to more subjective involvement with the subject matter (lines 5-10, 13, 14 - 18), through the use of memory and the recalling of personal experiences. The acquisition of new knowledge is no straightforward, simple matter, it is absorbed into the existing spirals of knowledge that a person already possesses and we see the beginnings of 'weaving' common-sense knowledge and sociological knowledge together as it occurs.

This raises important questions about knowledge acquisition as a continuous process where knowledge is not gained in isolation. This process can be seen, moreover, as Elias

indicates in his major work on knowledge, *Involvement and Detachment* (1987), as a *social process*,

... marked by spiral effects, in which the consequences of one stage of the process feed back onto the preconditions in shaping the next phase of development. (Mennell; 1992; 209)

or as Elias himself states, 'Every person, from the word go, enters a pre-existing knowledge stream. He or she may later improve and augment it.' (Elias; 1987; xvii), so one would have to consider that knowledge itself is always in a condition of flux because types of knowledge are gained continuously throughout a person's life through dependency on others. In such an interpretation the individual is not an 'isolated learner'.

Whilst Elias' theory falls undoubtedly within the ambit of sociological macro-analysis, I shall argue that its relevance and accuracy in terms of interpreting what Mennell describes as '...the dynamics of structured processes of change' (1992; 61), on the micro-level, can be observed and applied within the context of prison classroom learning.

The social conditions prevailing within the prison classroom and their documentation are therefore of significance prior to any attempts being made to understand the potential for change in the prison classroom. As stated above, any models which are put forward as depicting the processes which occur in the classroom are always going to be subject to refinement as learning is not a static, fixed experience. On the contrary, learning is as dynamic a process as any facet of human social life. The interaction between teacher and student can be positive or negative - there is nothing remarkable in understanding how important or significant this can be, particularly if the teacher adopts a facilitative approach, but the prison classroom also contains other adult students, enlarging the interactive processes in the learning situation. The students will be learning from each other and with each other, as well as from the teacher and adding to their unique bodies

of knowledge, (i.e. their 'existing knowledge streams') in an interdependent process which is simultaneously individual and shared. They are learning from and with, other people.

One of the first groups of students with whom I worked in Full Sutton show the dynamics of learning and knowledge acquisition taking place. The particular Module being addressed at the time was 'Introduction to Social Policy' with the emphasis on the Family in Modern British society and this very short example shows how student peer group interaction is itself embedded in the kind of unique personal experiences which occasionally do make truth appear stranger than fiction.

In a session on family life and changing couple relationships, the prison classroom discussions revealed as much about the men as it did about the 'male' point of view. The context was the Feminist perspective on 'shared roles' in the home in the light of Wilmott and Young's classic study on *The Symmetrical Family*:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:2

- 1 Martin: I enjoyed being at home, being a house-husband. It was good. I was good at it, going to the supermarket, bringing the kids up, it was no problem whilst the wife worked. I got my first work experience with kids in the playgroups, you know, I loved it.
- 5 Wayne: Well you should have stayed being a house-husband then instead of trying to blow somebody up and you wouldn't have got 20 years!

Martin is 31 years old and has two children aged 6 and 4. Remembering family life and specific aspects of it (lines 1-4) seemed the most natural thing to say in the context of learning, but Wayne's rather more realistic comment (line 6) on Martin's *present* situation, whilst light-hearted, can be interpreted possibly as an example of how occasions arise in prison classroom conversations which demonstrate what I would

describe as a rather skillful and purposeful strategy for 'switching' between realities in order to preserve, or perhaps even salvage, a sense of self within the prison environment. Attending the class, engaging with the subject matter, interacting with other students and recalling specific life experiences are all part of the process which is in turn, inevitably affected by sentence duration, length of time already served, nature of offence and so on. Wayne's quick rejoinder did provoke howls of laughter in this particular classroom incident (without any malice or at Martin's expense).

Unlike mature students 'outside', anything under discussion in the classroom relating to families and households is not spontaneously and immediately transferred across into home-life as soon as class is ended. It is taken away and reflected upon within the total confines of the prison, where correspondence, visits and, of course, memories provide the only reinforcing network for that which takes place in class.

To illustrate the point, the same group of men were strong advocates of the view that if both partners worked within a household, then both should take responsibility for the running of that household although there was 'public' acknowledgement of the fact that for their respective parents this was rarely the case with a clear gender division of labour in the home - which tended to 'be how it was' in those days, 'so they just got on with it'. There was little acknowledgement, however, in the group discussion, of the most obvious fact in their own relationships, i.e. that in their own present circumstances they could do little to contribute actively to what went on in the home. Vince admitted, 'There's little we can do in here of course, but it has changed an awful lot since we were kids,' this particular comment provoking further remarks that many women 'wrongly' assume domestic responsibilities as soon as they arrive home after working, so the

overall feeling was that men 'got a good deal' from a marriage relationship especially where women take on board stereotypical roles.

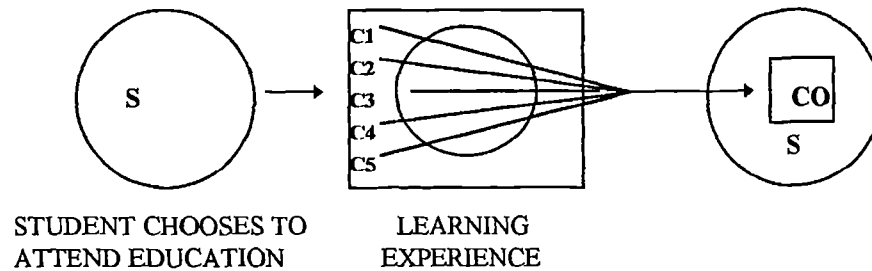
These men, who as far as some observers are concerned, lack citizenship skills, began to discuss their families, households and relationships with a remarkable degree of candour, fully aware of the many social changes which have taken place through time. As with most Social Science students, the subject matter seemed to provide an opportunity for them to articulate personal and meaningful life experience in a manner not previously experienced.

Discussing the changing nature of personal relationships in society often provokes the most profound of classroom conversations, tinged inevitably in the prison context, with humour and sadness given that inmates are often experiencing the traumas of separation from and even complete loss of their close family members. Mutual recognition of these problems and the discussing of such personal experiences as they wish to share, within the learning context, often made for a 'Men's Support Group' by proxy within the sociology group, but this is by no means unique to a prison classroom. Such discussions within a broader sociological framework appeared to begin frequently with fairly detached, objective comments on the subject matter, then develop into more personal observations with certain group members skillfully steering the conversation back 'to objectivity' if the process of turning inwards to reflection became a little too hard to bear.

I would maintain again that a great deal of sophisticated 'weaving' occurs here; weaving, that is, on the part of students who draw together their thought processes relating to the personal, the social and the 'academic'. Looking at Fig. 2:5, the 'Weaving Theory of Learning', we can see more clearly how the learning processes are beginning to

synthesise into potentially more complex outcomes. The context, C1, is also shaped by subject matter, C2, personal life experiences, C3, the prison environment, C4, the experience of imprisonment, C5 and so on.

Fig. 2:5; THE WEAVING THEORY of LEARNING



KEY:



PRISONER STUDENTS



PRISON CLASSROOM / LEARNING CONTEXT

C1 - C5 ASPECTS OF LEARNING CONTEXT / PROCESSES

CO COMPLEX OUTCOMES SYNTHESISED INTO STUDENTS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In a prison environment, this 'weaving' process is even more pronounced because of the situation in which individual students find themselves. Wayne displayed the process as follows:

I've done 2 years and 4 months. You know 'X' came last week and said she couldn't manage on 'Y' pounds per week. So I looked at her and said, 'Get a job, it's not my problem any more.' She said she can't do that, she needs to be at home to look after the kids and will have to start using the money we were saving till I get out. It's awful when you hear yourself saying that kind of thing, I couldn't believe myself but then, you know what happens, this is my life now. I accept that. It's the same for most of the men in here. After a period of time it's no longer a punishment. It's a way of life.

To arrive at this level of 'distancing' from what were, prior to imprisonment, typical family commitments and responsibilities for a man, and yet at the same time contribute to discussions on a wide range of issues concerning the minutiae of day-to-day life experiences, was a significant aspect of the socio-dynamics of the prison classroom. How

these particular processes all weave together is also of considerable significance in terms of personal development and potentiality for change.

The capacity of the human individual to 'synthesise' knowledge and personal experience is, I feel, clearly illustrated through observing these processes at work within the students - particularly when they were debating various aspects of family social life and behaviour. It is precisely this 'consciousness of experience' of each individual, i.e. the relationship of 'an experiencing person (or persons) to a sequence of changes' (Mennell; 1992; 216), which can be investigated through analyses of classroom conversations. This type of social scientific analysis is applicable to all levels of human life; but here in the prison classroom, the ability of students to distil personal experience into sociological knowledge via the acquisition of sociological 'tools' would become far more noticeable as the weeks passed.

The potential for 'change' through learning, as a 'sequence of changes' experienced by students on the course, relates in this situation most specifically to the relationship between acquiring new knowledge and personal life experience. The 'sequence of changes' is located within that relationship and therefore stimulated or triggered by social processes of acquiring new knowledge.

Focusing, therefore, on the subject matter of particular classroom debates will then provide the opportunity to observe the beginnings of, for example, development in cognitive skills, or changing individual 'world-views' taking place. This does not of course imply that every student changed - either his world-view or his behaviour - as a result of attending the course. Equally, not every student 'changed' simply by virtue of the fact that he had taken part in discussions which provided him with an opportunity to

'weave' academic subject matter with practical life experiences - an interpretation which I wish to pursue in later chapters.

The importance of the fact that all individuals acquire and build up a 'social fund' of knowledge throughout their lives, cannot be denied; that it is constantly being revised, added to, subtracted from and so on, reinforces the view that knowledge is indeed always in a state of flux. What a person 'does' or, more importantly, chooses to do with 'new' knowledge lies at the heart of this study. Within the prison classroom, the process of assimilating 'old' and 'new' knowledge i.e. commonsense and sociological knowledge was often clearly evident. On 'staying together' with a partner when 'things go wrong', provides a useful illustration; (see classroom conversation 2:3 below) the context of the discussion again centred on family change. The men's responses were interesting and quite forceful, contemplating the frequency of re-marriage in contemporary British society:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:3

1 Wayne: You've got to work hard at it, marriage isn't easy.

Tony: No, no, you're wrong. Totally.

Wayne: Yes, but you can't just turn your back at every little thing you see in a short skirt.

5 Vince: Er, well, I don't know...(laughs all round).

Wayne: No, but you can't. I don't care what anyone says. You should work at it.

Tony: I totally disagree. If it's not working - Out!

Dudley and Mark both added comments here, agreeing with Tony and the discussion moved on to consider the prospects of long, long term relationships with one other individual, given that most people live longer now than at any other time in history. If an

individual met someone at 17 and the relationship was sustained until both parties were well into their seventies ('like some of us when we get out you mean'), how did the men view such a prospect, indeed had they even thought about it? With the exception of Wayne, the men thought this was an incredibly long time for anyone to remain 'faithful', but perhaps this was due to the fact that they often have to reflect on such matters more deeply than most. Dudley in particular felt that such a commitment was 'too long' whereupon Wayne stated that he thought this was a terrible attitude. Vince simply observed that,

It all depends on whether you were friends or not with your partner.

His use of the past tense was perhaps significant - the others agreed and the discussion ended but shows again how group interaction can intensify as seen in the exchanges between Wayne and Tony (lines 2 and 3 and 6 - 7) as subjective opinion comes to the fore and then dissipates by the time Vince adds a more detached closing remark. The discussion also involved 'weaving' together into new information, the various strands of past, present and potential future experiences, again a characteristic of adult learners whose social interactions in the classroom are worthy of comment in more detail.

ADULT LEARNERS

The average age of the students undertaking the Leeds course throughout the period of this study was thirty plus, H.M.P. Full Sutton not being a Young Offenders Institution. The men on the course, however, were simply those who chose to attend; once enrolled they were and still are, mature students on a degree course engaged in an intensive and continuous process of learning in an otherwise predominantly non-educational setting.

Mature students/ adult learners/ prisoner-students all have one thing in common. To the classroom, they bring a wide range of existing values, beliefs, knowledge and life experience which all have considerable bearing on any theoretical model put forward to describe the learning-teaching process. The *principles* of learning may be exactly the same as those practiced in a primary school classroom, but their application falls within a quite different plane, principally because adults are voluntary learners who *choose* to attend courses and they invariably *intend* to achieve some kind of goal (Rogers, A.; 1986; xvi).

Whilst it does not fall to this study to document all those issues and concerns of relevance to the teaching of adults, there are aspects of the experience - from a teacher's and from a student's perspective - which are of significance to the researcher and teacher in a prison classroom.

In an ideal educationalist's world, we are led to believe that any education which is provided for adults is about the promotion of personal growth, 'the full exploitation of the talents of the individual,' developing a sense of perspective, fostering self-esteem, encouraging responsibility and so on (Rogers, A.; 1986; 7). Programmes of learning for adults, it is suggested, should be built around these characteristics, or so it is generally felt, whilst yet acknowledging that learning itself is something which occurs *throughout* an individual's lifetime. It never stops, it is always 'continuing learning' by virtue of the fact that, as individuals, we constantly meet and have to deal with new experiences on a daily basis. As one prisoner-student said, 'I have so much to learn. I feel that I want to pass it all on to my kids. They should know things that I never knew. It's like finding yourself in one of these places. You realise you know nothing about what prisons are really like'.

In this respect, observations made of the men in the sociology group within Full Sutton would seem to indicate that the very process is, and has to be, *sequential* and *cumulative* (Rogers, A.; 1986; 11). The observations also qualify and reinforce the idea already introduced that understanding the process of acquiring knowledge means recognition of the fact that *continuous* processes are at work across the span of an individual lifetime (Elias; 1992; 47). Anyone who has taught adults will also recognise that, as learners, (who may claim to know 'nothing' or believe that everyone else in the class is much smarter than they are), adults actually do know a great deal (Giddens; 1984). They already have their social fund of knowledge, their 'knowledgeability', in place and so adopt strategies and patterns of learning 'new' knowledge which suit them and which 'fit' existing knowledge structures.

I would suggest that prisoner-students are no different, although their motivation for attending a class may be governed by relatively 'esoteric' factors. The point is, that anyone engaged in the teaching of adults in prison must recognise the importance of the background and social environment from which the student came, not necessarily with a view to designing a programme of 'compensatory' or 'correctional' education, but simply because that background will shape classroom interaction and impact upon learning outcomes in a highly individualistic manner.

A classroom of adult learners, in a prison environment, learning an academic subject, which at its most basic level encourages the questioning of often taken-for-granted assumptions about social behaviour and lifestyles, may seem a volatile combination for student and teacher to confront. Recognising the more positive dimensions of such an explosive cocktail, we might see that here, we have some powerful aids to learning. As Rogers indicates (1986; 35), in the more traditional adult learning situations, the wealth

of knowledge, life-experiences, skills, readiness to question (or not), desire to apply what is learned (not always easy whilst imprisoned), are all present and *were* all undoubtedly present in the classroom at Full Sutton.

The values and practices inherent in adult education underpin prison educational practice too, with the emphasis often on the so-called 'disadvantaged adult', but, as Elsey (1986;12) indicates of mainstream adult education, pragmatism must be valued in a learning context where '... real life situations are made by individual personalities, prevailing and changing political, economic, cultural and social conditions.' Nowhere is this more apparent than in the prison classroom of adult learners.

The specific form of adult education in any institution can be described as reflecting various aspects of social purpose (Elsey; 1986; 14), which can be identified as different models: the 'recreation-leisure' model, the 'work training' model, the 'liberal progressive' model and the 'radical' model. Should the prison classroom context and interactions be seen against the background of these adult education models? Adult learners in prison are perceived as having needs which would undoubtedly correspond with most of the ideas and values surrounding the role and function of adult education.

The type of early educational experiences of the prisoner-students, i.e. their class, ethnic and home backgrounds have all typically affected educational attainment and, in a sense, those prisoners who have chosen education - even if only as a means for passing time - have, in effect, returned to learning, often after a long absence due to '...lack of self-reliance, underestimation of intellectual ability and the fear of failure.' (Elsey; 1986; 127).

As Darren indicated,

'I knew nothing about all this stuff Anne. You see, I couldn't be bothered with school when I was a kid. And all this university stuff, well that's just for snobs isn't it, so I think I'm lucky to get to do it now'.

So, should adult education in prison be seen as a means of altering lifestyles and changing offending behaviour? How easily do the needs, characteristics and motives of adult learners really translate over into the prison setting? Any assessment of the impact of Higher Education on prisoners must take account of the fact, that prisoner-students have to be recognised as adult learners and that what may be true of prison education for those serving long sentences, will not, of course, be true for those on remand in local prisons.

There is also a further consideration. Is the prisoner's educational activity marginal to all other aspects of his life - not only in prison, but beyond the prison walls? More often than not, when asked about their degree of commitment to the Leeds course, the prisoner-students would openly admit that other commitments and/or responsibilities would almost certainly take precedence over the desire to learn, were they still to be 'on the outside'. As one prisoner indicated, attending University as a full-time student would be 'an utter disaster from a financial point of view, given the level of grants *you* all get nowadays'. He did not and could not see himself as a full-time student beyond the prison walls.

To be in a position to use class contact time for an analysis of the actual subject being studied is fortuitous. It is also an extremely useful and insightful method of discovering what students actually feel like when on the receiving end of a body of 'wisdom'. Such a continuous process of evaluation and feed-back is invaluable in monitoring changing perceptions of study over time in a setting where students do not choose their classmates, at least in so far as they rarely attend class 'with a friend'. Outside of the classroom, the men would be from different wings with differing regimes; outside of the

prison, the chances of their paths ever crossing were likely to be remote resulting in an extremely eclectic group dynamic.

Prisoners are generally perceived as having either challenged or deviated from mainstream norms and values to such an extent that any possible transition or integration back into society is going to be problematic. They are therefore often marginalised and excluded beyond the bounds of most people's comprehension. However, many prisoners who choose to study whilst imprisoned, do so in the hope that it will facilitate the reintegrative and/or rehabilitative processes, partly as a result of the processes of personal growth and development which they have undergone as a result of the learning experience. For Andrew it was a question of 'I would like to help black kids in trouble on the streets'; for Trevor it was more a question of 'I want to do something just for me'.

The adult student in a more traditional educational setting, by way of contrast, who has also experienced aspects of personal growth, development and change which a return-to-learn can potentially bring, can either fully embrace the new challenges, statuses and life chances that accompany educational achievement, or s/he can reintegrate into a familiar social network. The case study at Full Sutton shows that these opportunities will never be quite that straightforward for the ex-offender although the individual outcomes of learning may have just as significant an impact as they would for any other adult learner. Ted described his reaction to the comments 'this is the world according to Ted Wynne' written on his first essay as an 'event' which made him 'think'. He said to me, 'Was I really such a bigoted bastard that these university types could tell me there was other ways of looking at things'.

Whichever the preferred analysis of the 'typical' adult learner and the effect that the educational experience produces on the individual, the consensus of opinion as to the outcomes of adult learning still seems to be grounded in the notion that it has become a means of acquiring new status positions in social, economic, cultural and political forms of social life. If that is the case, then for the prisoner-student, education's potential for re-locating him within the existing social structure should not be overlooked, especially when, according to those on the course in Full Sutton, their location is 'somewhere below the underclass'. One day, when the group were discussing class differences in Britain, Pete said, 'Bottom of the pile, that's us'.

The dynamics of adult learning also have to be appreciated in a prison classroom setting where Elsey's (1986) description of what takes place as a 'movement of ideas and activities' can be perceived in the complex forms of communication and interaction which form the foundations of new knowledge and new experience. The classroom dynamic provides the basis for all the new opportunities, challenges, ideas and activities that the adult student will encounter throughout the duration of any course. As such, it will also become the foundation for the process of thinking reflexively as the subject matter and content of a variety of debates and discussions triggers the potential mechanisms of change and personal development.

The context of the following discussion involved a fairly vigorous debate on whether or not the current Welfare provision could be perceived as a form of Social Control or a much needed form of assistance to those living in poverty; I include it here to illustrate something of the importance of the social relationships between specific classroom members who were fairly dominant and yet spent little time communicating with each

other outside of the prison classroom. Such conversations show the learning experience *actually in progress* as depicted in Fig.2:5 above.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:4

- 1 Anne: What kind of society would we have then if there was no welfare provision?
- Ted: It would be anarchy ...
- 5 Andrew: Not necessarily, people would look to their own - well in my area where I come from, they would anyway ...
- Ted: You see, you'd get a small minority with all the money, the rich, tell me then what will they do with the rest of us?
- Andrew: It has to be like that - you have to have that kind of system...
- Anne: You mean it's the nature of capitalism?
- 10 Andrew: Yes... but then you see you wouldn't get the rich coming anywhere near where I lived...
- Ted: You mean driving around in the Rolls Royces, they wouldn't dare...
- Andrew: It would all go...
- Ted: Even the "Rollers"...? You mean...?
- 15 Andrew: "Rollers", watches, the lot - no chance nowadays. They won't come anywhere near us.
- Ted: But how are they gonna be controlled? How can they do that?
- Anne: Well, let's look at a possible future society and the impact of new technology and the control, the uses to which it might be put.
- 20 Andrew: Yes there's even societies now, groups, communities and housing estates where it's all enclosed with a security system, you can't even get in without I.D....
- Ted: What a mess they've created.

At which point several other group members joined in. This type of classroom interaction should strike a familiar chord for anyone involved with students who may not necessarily

agree or who 'compete' for discursive space in the classroom arena. That is not to say that the experience is profoundly negative for the students concerned. In the above extract, Andrew's thorough and intimate knowledge of the norms of his own community was very confidently stated and drawn upon (lines 10, 15) in these exchanges with Ted, and he regularly made it apparent in such conversations that his knowledge stemmed from the status he had held within that community, despite his current removal from it.

This particular conversation then developed into a wide-ranging debate on controlling the unemployed, disaffected mass of people through the use of information technology and virtual reality. The classroom interaction between Andrew and Ted, as adult learners, added a further dimension to the learning process as they both drew upon personal memory (line 5) in order to absorb and assimilate new knowledge, (lines 16 - 19, 23), in this instance, of perceptions of the role of Welfare and Social Control within local communities.

Evidence such as that above shows that for the adult learner in prison, to develop existing knowledge, acquire new knowledge, new skills and potentially acquire new attitudes and opinions, is no mean achievement. The generation of all these learning outcomes only occurs as a result of the combination of social processes at work within the classroom. The characteristics of adult learners in prison, their individual differences, and their approaches to learning and teaching, have all to be taken into account in any assessment or evaluation of prison classroom practice. Even then, prison classroom research can only be described at best as a 'snapshot' of what took place on one occasion.

Teaching adults in prison means acknowledging the validity of the student's own life experiences. According to Rogers, the social dimension of the entire learning process can be best described as nothing short of 'inspirational':

Learning ...consists of ... , the catching of enthusiasm. It comes, as we have seen, from encounter, interaction - either person-to-person interaction or learner-and-material interaction. Some people have seen this engagement in terms of struggle; a learner struggles to 'master' a new skill, subject, a tool or concept, and to use the new material. But it is perhaps better to see this interaction as a 'spark' between two poles, which fires the imagination, illuminates new fields, motivates the learner, gives power and throws light on new ways of looking at reality. (Rogers, A.; 1986; 139)

The following short discussion on labelling theory illustrates the 'spark' as described by Rogers:

Lawrence: Yes it's right is that (Becker's labelling theory) but it's not all bad is it? Labelling can be as much of an accolade as something derogatory can't it?

Anne: Yes we do it in all sorts of ways, it can be both positive and negative in its effects.

Mostin: It's like that with the clothes thing too isn't it? People attach so much importance to what they wear because of the image thing. It has to be just right...

Lawrence: And if you wear the right clothes, you know, Armani, Versace, and so on, you're likely to be seen in the right places buying them and then in the right places socially, so the whole thing can be quite positive. But, by the same token you can be labelled crook.

Anne: The other extreme, as it were. But people adapt to these labels very quickly...

Mostin: It sickens me a bit, the master label thing. It doesn't matter what you do to shake it off. It will never go away will it?

In this account of adult learning within the context of a prison, so far, we have explored the importance of interpreting the process of acquiring new knowledge as 'social', where the student cannot, in any sense, be perceived as an 'empty vessel'. The 'person-to-person' interaction has been evidenced through some analyses of data from the prison

classroom, but as Rogers indicates above 'the learner-and-material' interaction is as important and it is to an evaluation of this that we now turn, adding yet another aspect of learning to the models depicted so far.

DOING SOCIOLOGY

In this section I wish to examine more closely the view that what counts as sociological knowledge and what counts as common-sense knowledge, or 'personal' knowledge have a relationship which is nowhere as highly visible as it is in the prison classroom. Both student and tutor develop an awareness of this, and within the discipline of sociology, practitioners are frequently concerned with the questions of how people react to it, how do they engage with the discipline and what impact, if any, does it have on their life-experiences?

Sociology is, on occasion, described as a discipline which, if nothing else, has the potential to raise an individual's consciousness, but the 'battle' between common-sense and specialist knowledge can be traumatic, self-defeating and not without its complications and consequences. This is most apparent when students who have completed a course state spontaneously and unequivocally, 'This has really changed me'. That fact alone deserves consideration when those acquiring new sociological knowledge are prisoners in a maximum security dispersal prison.

Students of the discipline, whether imprisoned or not, often admit, for example, that their involvement with it has encouraged their tolerance towards others or assisted their understanding of and sensitivity to dimensions of inequality in a way not previously experienced. A further very common theme of student evaluation of a sociology course is to remark that their newly acquired knowledge helps them 'to see the system for what

it is' which may well lead the course tutor to seriously question issues of prisoner empowerment and politicisation through education and learning. The actuality of teaching sociology and understanding how it impacts upon the student is interpreted accurately by Berger:

The fascination of sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives. This also constitutes a transformation of consciousness. Moreover, this transformation is more relevant existentially than that of many other intellectual disciplines, because it is more difficult to segregate in some special compartment of the mind. (Berger, 1963; 33)

It seems appropriate to recognise that the transformation of consciousness which sociology potentially brings about is of considerable significance when the discipline is being taught in the prison environment. The nature of the subject therefore needs exploring and confronting on a conceptual and substantive level.

So, sociology is what? An academic discipline? A discourse? A set of differing perspectives about what people do, what they have done and possibly will continue to do in the course of their daily lives? Ask any student of the discipline what exactly sociologists 'do' and the reply is unlikely to resemble anything like the view of one theorist that a (potential) sociologist is '...one professionally concerned with edifying at large.' (Berger, 1963; 12). If all offenders who choose to study sociology never re-offend because they subsequently replace that type of behaviour with edifying activities for individuals and the community, then the temptation for prison policy makers may well be to remark 'we should be so lucky', sending sociology tutors into every penal establishment in the country. Is it possible therefore to assess the outcomes of studying sociology for the prison student in terms of indicating *how* the discipline may play a role in effecting change or in contributing to personal development as a worthwhile

undertaking and as a social process once the nature of the discipline itself is understood?

I believe that it is.

A sociology teacher may therefore explain to the students that they are to study societies, analyse, interpret, explain, understand and sometimes predict human social behaviour. Involvement in such a complex learning contract means that any small print has to be quite clearly understood. New students are told that they will hopefully learn how to hypothesise, to examine facts, discover new ones, make deductions, present conclusions, evaluations, new ideas and new theories about people; above all, throughout this learning process, the students will inevitably have to 'turn inward' finding that they have developed a 'talent' for reflexivity which rapidly 'defamiliarises the familiar' (Bauman; 1990; 15).

Most sociology classroom practice begins (like any other), with both tutor and students establishing common ground, discovering what comprises the parameters of the discipline and how the learning of this particular body of knowledge is to be tackled successfully. What constitutes 'good' sociology however and 'good' sociological practice is a question with which practitioners can all too easily become preoccupied.

What is it to learn to think sociologically, to look at the world and at one's own society from a sociological viewpoint? Students seem to find the task a daunting and challenging one, especially when they start to appreciate that this discipline potentially unifies political, social and economic discourses with ethical and environmental concerns. Sociology *can* be characterised and has been, as providing a passport to freedom, opening up channels of self - awareness and tolerance, (Bauman; 1990), but to enter a

classroom in a maximum security prison and offer students a 'passport to freedom' is hardly likely to do much for the morale and motivation of one's students.

The issues for both prisoner-students and their teachers are much more sophisticated and complex as they raise questions about the theoretical understanding of sociology and its practical implications in the shape of outcomes for those who have been studying the discipline. Such analyses amount to appreciating and understanding what one can only describe, albeit clumsily, as the 'sociology of sociology' or the 'sociology of the use of sociology'. As Bauman argues, for example, human life experience is a continuous process of learning and unlearning, restructuring behaviour and hence having to acquire new skills and new knowledge throughout one's life (1990; 34). For those who are potentially 'restructuring their behaviour' whilst in prison, through acquiring a new body of academic knowledge, the task is probably not going to be easy. 'Unpacking the social', through studying sociology, also undoubtedly contributes to that learning / unlearning process.

To be able to stand back and *reflect* on sociological and common-sense knowledge is no easy task for the majority of people and yet the ability to do this can tell the individual a great deal about matters of freedom and interdependence. Learning to *think* sociologically could have a definite role in this process. It may be the case that there are many aspects of human life which could perhaps benefit from the kind of analytical scrutiny that sociology has to offer in Bauman's interpretation of 'what sociology does', for example, highlighting issues of responsibility, morality, communication, interaction, power, inequality, social order, and so on. These can all be identified as 'sociological territory' where the discipline may be best described as a kind of commentary or 'a series of explanatory footnotes to our daily experience' (Bauman; 1990; 214), and those in the

classroom within the prison were, in effect, analysing those explanatory footnotes everyday whilst not quite participating in the more usual round of day-to-day experiences which most people have.

At length, Bauman makes the following contribution to our understanding of what the discipline is about:

Sociology is a refinement on that knowledge we possess and employ in our daily life in as much as it brings into the open some finer distinctions and some not immediately evident connections which an unaided eye would fail to locate. Sociology charts more details on our 'world map'; it also extends the map beyond the horizon of our own daily experience, so that we can see how the territories we inhabit fit into the world we have had no chance to explore ourselves... It has been said that the best service sociology may offer is to 'prod sluggish imagination' - by showing apparently familiar things from unexpected angles and thus undermining all routine and self confidence. (1990; 215).

For educational practitioners in a prison environment then, these concerns about 'what sociology is' become highly charged and sensitive. The discipline of sociology can be described as one of great complexity, profound in its attempts to understand society and thought-provoking in its conclusions and insights about social life. It has also been described as a scientific discipline whose methodology is as rigorous as any of the so called hard sciences (Berger; 1963; 24). The humanistic approach will also argue that the sociologist:

...will occupy himself with matters that others regard as too sacred or too distasteful for dispassionate investigation... He will also concern himself with matters that others may find much too boring. (Berger; 1963; 30)

Understanding the 'doing' of sociology means attempting to assess the purposes of the discipline, tracing its history and development and the uses to which sociological findings have been put. Students who are new to the discipline - and this is perhaps more likely to be the case when the course has been chosen from what is offered as part of a programme of prison education - may not see their course in sociology as an invitation to

uncover the layers of meaning which constitute social reality to the extent that the exploration becomes what Berger describes as 'an obsessive passion' for some.

Most writers however, engaged with the task of identifying what sociology is, what it does, what its effects are, and the uses to which it has been put, will agree that the discipline, if nothing else, develops a fuller awareness of the human social world and there were students on the Leeds course who believed this to have been the case. Defining the field leads to an appreciation of the scope of the discipline whether it be the ability to foresee future social developments, provide objective information, solve social problems, or simply indulge in intellectual liberation. The teaching of such a discipline within a prison thus raised questions which demand some degree of investigation in relation to outcomes, particularly if one accepts that the studying of sociology will affect students in the following manner:

...[they] will by this contact have become a little less stolid in their prejudices, a little more careful in their commitments and more sceptical about the commitments of others - and perhaps a little more compassionate in their journeys through society. (Berger; 1963; 198)

The expectations of what sociology offered any student can range from the mistaken assumption that 'it's about socialism or social work' to the slightly more demanding 'I thought it would answer lots of questions that I had' and so it thus falls to tutors to spend some time establishing exactly what the chosen course of study in reality entails.

As one student in Full Sutton stated on being asked directly what he gained from the course:

Confidence, awareness, deeper perception, greater flexibility, and enhanced ability in those areas where I felt I was already competent and qualified.

When new students would join an existing group of four or five 'old hands', needing introductory sessions on the nature of the discipline, older students would discuss their experiences of studying sociology in a positive and supportive manner, (although leg-pulling definitely accompanied their more constructive comments- usually along the lines of 'it will frazzle your brain more than the drugs!'). Such was the actuality of classroom practice.

Group discussions of this nature had a serious and thoughtful tone however, as veteran class members helped new ones to adjust to the rigours of fairly intensive academic learning. It was often a question of 'if I can do it so can you' or 'don't be put off by us lot' and, with one or two exceptions, new group members were quickly absorbed into the social dynamics of acquiring a new body of knowledge.

The following conversation (see classroom conversation 2:5) gives some idea of the kind of 'first encounter with sociology' that a new student would typically experience on the course. It shows how a 'baptism by fire' in the classroom need not always be a negative experience, and also illustrates how students engage with the discipline after a period of time. The discussion centred on the potential outcomes of deconstructing society, a topic which often came in for close scrutiny in the more theoretical debates held in class.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:5

- 1 Vince: If you really thought about that, (deconstructing society) you'd go mad!
- Anne: Maybe it's the uncertainty...
- David: I'm sure it is.
- 5 Anne: ...not everyone wants to change society or 'deconstruct' it, people want change, but are reluctant to see that they can be the instruments of it.
- Andrew: Yes but they will always have one foot in the past. That's reality. It will always be like that, it couldn't be any other way.

- Anne: Yes, I think you're right. New societies and communities will always be based on the old, perhaps complete with conflicts and power differentials.
- 10 Vince: Well, it's about searching for Utopia...
- Anne: Do you think we all do that?
- Vince: We all have own individual Utopia. People search for it for themselves. I don't think there's anything wrong with having aspirations but the difficulty comes with the search for a collective Utopia.
- 15 Anne: ...the conflict between the individual and the collective Utopia. How would you bridge the gap?
- Vince: Well, it's about ideologies, about settling differences, achieving consensus I think.
- Anne: Politics?
- 20 Vince: It's a kind of cement which binds...
- David: Pragmatism; because Utopia actually means nothing. There's nothing to achieve.

Andrew (at line 6) was very new to the group at this time whereas Vince and David were accustomed to 'theoretical discussions' and were familiar with the terms and concepts used in sociological discourse which new students often find disconcerting. Andrew had listened to the debate with considerable interest and confidently asserted his views (lines 6,7,) without experiencing any obvious degree of embarrassment. Vince and David, because they were familiar with each other's political viewpoints and had debated a considerable amount of sociological subject matter on previous occasions had developed a kind of short-hand language with each other, not to deliberately exclude, but because that was the nature of their classroom interaction. Their 'secret code' was recognised and acknowledged by others and by myself as class tutor (as at lines 15, 19, 20-22), just as it would be in any other teaching situation where the students were at ease with each other and interested in their subject.

The role of the tutor in this group interaction is also worth noting, supportive of the view of a new student (line 8) and simultaneously accepting and encouraging the level of debate of older students, even down to the adoption of their 'short-hand language' (line 18).

Recalling Fig.2:4, depicting the teacher / student dimension of learning, and analysing a classroom conversation in this way, points out the finer details of the social processes at work which can be interpreted on many levels such as, group dynamic, teaching methods and practices, how new students acquire 'new' knowledge or assimilate it into existing knowledge streams (lines 6,7), the way in which individuals use the language of sociology to interact and so on. In relation to the 'doing' of sociology, such classroom interchanges illustrate the interplay between theory and practice, or how sociological and common-sense knowledge bind together as a dimension of learning.

Mature students, whether imprisoned or not, appear to experience the 'learner-material' interaction with the discipline of sociology in a manner which would suggest that they have to reconcile their sociologically received knowledge with subjective experience. If we accept that the learning of sociology encourages people to question their own standpoint on, for example, issues of conformity to social norms; that sociological thinking is developed through the acquisition of critical reasoning skills and reflexive thinking processes, then assessments of the potential effects and outcomes of such study on prisoners within a prison classroom context must take into account the implications of the experience in terms of shaping their *future* individual behaviour.

It is also possible to interpret the studying of sociology whilst imprisoned as a form of individual empowerment which may negate the social exclusion and marginalisation

which many ex-offenders encounter beyond release. The central question remains, 'What does sociology have to offer the prisoner-student?'

Such a question can only be answered by articulating those concerns about the status of the discipline which have preoccupied theorists throughout its history. As Bauman indicates, 'The more knowledge we have, the more things we see - the greater number of different things we discern in the world' (1990; 227), and similarly we learn to discriminate more, use a wider and richer vocabulary and potentially increase our personal freedom through understanding difference and intolerance.

If we look at a further example of a classroom conversation (see classroom conversation 2:6 below), in the prison classroom at Full Sutton, we can see yet again how students engage with sociology in such a way as to 'weave' together the 'academic' and the 'personal' experiences. New students again seem to normalise their learning experiences in this way showing how 'learner-material' interaction forms a significant part of the social process of learning (lines 1-6, 9,10,27-31,36-41). It is within these processes that the potential for personal change is embedded.

The discussion here focused upon changing forms of the Family, changing household structures and relationships and the emergence of the division of labour within the home.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:6

- 1 Ted: If people grew their own vegetables and stuff like they did in pre-industrial families, they'd save a fortune out of the hundred quid they'd get on benefit, they'd have plenty to live on then...
- Matt: Yeah but if you live in a bedsit or a flat...
- 5 Ted: What about allotments?
- Matt: There aren't many left are there?

- Anne: Well I know of quite a few in and around Leeds and you see plenty of people working on them...
- Matt: Really? I didn't know they still existed.
- 10 Anne: Oh yes, at least until they all get bulldozed, but lifestyles are so different now. You can get everything at the supermarket; people depend on others to supply everything; I wonder how many people eat rabbit nowadays or would know how to skin and prepare one?
- 15 Ted: There's people in here would know ...(to Matt) I bet you would ... a few days out in the open . . .
- Matt: Oh yeah, of course ... on the Moor; you manage, you just do it, you have to.
- Anne: On the run ...?
- Matt: Oh yes ...
- 20 Ted: You see people out there have no idea ...
- Matt: Or pheasant? I used to work in a restaurant - you know pheasant, it's got to be rotten, really high before it's eaten then it's perfect. You know what you said about the girl and the chickens earlier? We had this new girl and she couldn't believe that's how you prepared and served pheasant. She
25 thought we were all mad, that we'd poison all the customers or something. She'd no idea ...
- Anne: Well this is the point; people take so much for granted now, everything is done for them. I don't think people have the skills they once had in terms of simple survival, especially when it comes to food. Think about these
30 kinds of changes throughout family life and about how pre-industrial families and households lived compared with today.
- Ted: When you were reminiscing, do you remember when you could go into a shop and there'd be great big sides of bacon hung up and you could ask for it sliced? I bet you don't ever see that any more ...
- 35 Anne: ...or going into a local Co-op and buying flour or anything like that, loose, weighed with a scoop ...
- Matt: You still get that sometimes; I knew a commune in Wales, they did stuff like that and there were lots of shops where you could get it like that round about.
- 40 Pete: Yeah, I've seen them too! Trouble is they don't always use the scoop, it's straight in with the hands. Puts you off a bit, eh?

Pulling the subject matter round to the students' life experiences (lines 12-19,21-26,32-39) seems undoubtedly to encourage processes of reflection. The teacher is obviously acting as a kind of catalyst, (lines 7, 10, 29, 35) a fact which is more noticeable when the group consists of 'new' students, as most of these were at the time of this conversation, who would involve the teacher more directly in their interactions than 'older' students who tended to converse more with each other, as seen in the previous example. The constant feeding out of the sociological 'line', (e.g. lines 10, 28, 30, 31) waiting for the 'catch' as students realised that their everyday observations were as valid in interpreting human behaviour as any sociological view, was a significant feature of classroom practice. The teacher has to 'weave' sociological and common-sense knowledge and personal experience as much as the student, and in this example the 'weaving' is occurring in tandem.

Conversations, debates and discussions such as these would often be fairly spontaneous affairs but, having said that, they were invariably triggered and shaped by subject content, i.e. by the 'doing' of sociology. Presenting sociological material thus seems to provide a framework for the development of analytical skills as students acquire the 'tools' for assessing, understanding and evaluating social behaviour through learning to stand back, as it were, and look critically at the society of individuals of which they themselves are still a part (despite being in prison).

Sometimes, the subject-matter was of little interest or 'too hard' or 'boring', and so the reflexive mechanisms did not come into play. Most teachers would be familiar with this type of classroom scenario, when even the most well prepared lesson falls flat and nothing seems to have been achieved whatsoever.

These occurrences would impact upon the research relationship in the sense that, if the students did not 'like' what was being taught, nor the manner in which it was being taught, their disinterestedness or apathy would affect my ability to collect data. There would be little or nothing to 'observe' on learning processes, but plenty of material on the daily regime of events which was commonplace in a prison.

To give a more specific example, the module 'Intellectual and Political Theory' was generally seen as the 'least favourite' topic on the Leeds course. Each year, students would express this in several ways by saying outright that 'It's too hard is this Anne'; 'It does my head in, but I know we have to do it'; 'I can't stand this bit'; 'It's different this, isn't it?'. This pattern was repeated over the years despite attempts to modify course content and adopt various teaching methods and strategies to avoid the apparent student 'distaste' for the topic, although a handful of men did actually enjoy the more philosophical aspects of the debates.

Finally, I asked why it was so problematic (a form of informal course evaluation) and the responses ranged from 'It needs too much concentration for in here' to 'It's not like real life - the other stuff we do is about people'. As a teacher, this was dealt with in the usual course of teaching, through explanation of theory and practice in everyday life, which usually sufficed, but the topic never quite produced the characteristic spontaneity of discussions and classroom conversations on the family, for example, consumerism, inequality, or youth culture, all subjects with which the students identified easily.

I felt that the different responses of the men to the different modules taught was 'revealing' in terms of 'Doing Sociology'. There are elements of most academic disciplines which fail to 'stimulate' the interests of students and, although it meant that

data was lacking on these occasions, they add to the reality of prison classroom practice. In short, if the men did not enjoy the topic and there was no 'weaving' taking place then that *was* classroom interaction on that particular day.

In contrast the theoretical framework of 'The Family and New Right Social Policies' again provides an opportunity to observe the way in which sophisticated social processes of self-reflection and weaving of theory, experience and practice occur. On one particular occasion, Wayne, David, Mark, Dudley and Vince were 'down' and the subject matter of this module was provoking considerable political irritation between Vince and David on the lack of strategy of the Left in response to the Right wing policy of the last fifteen years of Conservative government. Wayne joined the debate as follows:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:7

1 Wayne: This political stuff does my head in. I don't really understand it.

Anne: Well, put it like this, you just said that you don't think Marty (Wayne's son, aged 17), should be wanting to set up in a flat with his girlfriend because they're too young.

5 Wayne: Well he is, he's losing out on having fun and his childhood.

Anne: Well, the New Right may say the same; let me ask you, do you think it is *wrong* for young people to do that?

Wayne: Er, well now, that's a very difficult question to answer...

David and Vince responded with howls of laughter and the others grinned, including Wayne, as he realised how closely his reply paralleled the response of many politicians under rigorous cross-examination by the media.

Vince: ...and you just said you can't handle all this politics! You should go into it
10 Wayne you'd be perfect; so diplomatic.

Wayne acknowledged the humour and their 'compliment' which was given without any trace of malice:

- Wayne: Ah, but it's all this abstract stuff. I can't cope with it, but as for our Marty, well, I got married at 19...
- Vince: But is that so different? You're talking 2 years, that's all.
- Wayne: Yes, but I mean, he should be out there having a good time. Now, our
15 Chrissy who's 16, he's O.K., he's having fun, making friends, out and about with the little girls. They can use the house and the cars. I wish I'd had that opportunity without the problems. You know, I didn't have my childhood until I was 27.
- Anne: But do you ever think you are imposing your ideas or your morality on
20 your children? Saying what they *should* be doing?
- Wayne: Oh no, it's different as a parent. You don't want them to have all the responsibilities and worries. They shouldn't have that at 17.
- Anne: Well, suppose you say that the New Right is imposing a morality in terms of family life on everyone.
- 25 D & V: Agreed.
- Anne: Then, as you can see, how does that square with the fact that each family is going to be different, each parent will deal differently with children. For example, Dudley's family may well have a totally different approach due to their cultural background.
- 30 Dudley: Yeah man, they are *all* different. They can't tell us how to live our lives.
- David: I think you have to look at why there is this feeling though that families are fragmenting; talk of illegitimacy, talk of...
- Dudley: There ain't no illegitimacy man! What kinda talk is that? It's an awful word!
- 35 David: O.K., but...
- Dudley: You see, me and Joanne, we ain't married, we chose to have Jas., we lay together and there you are. What's *wrong* with that? It ain't no wrong.
- David: O.K., but whichever way you look, there is unease amongst society that it is breaking down; look at juvenile delinquency, juvenile drug abuse,

40 increasing divorce, what does it tell people? It frightens them, *that's* why the New Right works. It's all got to be coming from somewhere.

Vince: Exactly, and there's nothing to counter what they say.

Documenting conversations such as these illustrates the learning process *actually* taking place as 'new' knowledge, 'new' ways of thinking are absorbed into a person's consciousness through dialogue and interaction with other people (lines 11, 13-18). If we analyse the group dynamic in this particular conversation, we can see how the focus shifts from the relationship between Wayne and Vince to that between David and Dudley with the actual subject matter itself 'triggering' contentious debate, heightened by the fact that the students were completely immersed in the discussion and relating it to their own specific life experiences (lines 11, 13, 36, 37). Vince and David however, chose to retain more of an air of detachment or objectivity with regard to their 'learner and material' interaction (lines 13, 25, 31, 38, 42) but the process of 'weaving' material and memory together seems much in evidence in this conversation. In effect, the prisoner-students here display, by virtue of their immediate circumstances, the capacity to be both simultaneously 'involved' with one society (the prison) and yet 'detached' from it (in order to sustain a sense-of-self) and also 'involved' with wider society (as a result of their reflections of past experiences) and 'detached' from it (as a result of their subsequent imprisonment). It is possible then to refer back to Entwistle's heuristic model (Fig. 2:3) and layer these specific processes (depicted in Figs. 2:4, 2:5) onto his model of learning to illustrate the social and dynamic group processes at work. These processes of 'weaving' can be 'added' to in order to depict the cumulative progress of acquiring new knowledge where classroom interactions and the subject-matter itself have a crucial role to play.

The students' abilities to build bridges between the two extremes of experience (involvement and detachment) was often nothing short of enlightening but observing the manner in which this process occurs is a long-term undertaking. Students new to the studying of sociology for example, would obviously not display the same degree or intensity of 'weaving' which older members, i.e. those who had attended about a third of the course modules, appeared to show. However, there was still some evidence to indicate that such processes were occurring, albeit to a lesser degree, as the nature of the discipline demands and encourages questioning and the development of evaluative skills and techniques.

Looking at the familiar from an unfamiliar angle can often prove an irresistible undertaking even for the most cynical and hardened of Social Science students. The role of the teacher in initiating the 'weaving process' also cannot be denied or ignored, hence the emphasis on *interaction* in the classroom and the fact that the learning is - at least - a two-way process, (recalling classroom conversation 2:7 above), at most, a process of knowledge acquisition involving whole groups of people who collectively build on their existing knowledge and practical experience in order to synthesise the old with the new.

Group dynamics, interactions, student-teacher relationships, meeting essay deadlines, examinations and their preparation, planning modules, one-to-one interviews; all have to be contextualised within the prison environment. Whilst prison classroom practice could be interpreted as fairly autonomous, the presence of prison officers in the corridor immediately outside, together with the fact that the prison dog kennel was simply a few yards away from the classroom window with its complement of handlers, dogs and half-hourly change-over dog patrols, meant that the wider prison context could never be

entirely forgotten. All added to what one is tempted to describe as a somewhat surreal atmosphere; but it was *very* real.

For the most part however, the men attended their classes daily unless visits took priority or wings were shut down and new students continued to join the course at regular intervals exploring the nature of the discipline as a topic in itself. These discussions indicate something of the men's perceptions of what they were involved in and are therefore of relevance in providing insights into the more esoteric reasons for attending education in prison. They also provide more understanding of how students perceive the 'doing' of sociology; for some it was 'enlightening', but for others, they would join the class and leave after a couple of weeks saying 'it's not for me miss, I'd be happier in the kitchens, I'm going to ask if I can get a job there or wing-cleaning':

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 2:8

- 1 Vince: ...some people...would accuse sociologists of dictating, just like they do, but it's not like that, it makes you think. It sounds as if you are - you know, saying you should do this or that, but then you realise it's not like that at all. It forces you to look at how it is and make your mind up - to question and look at the information.
- 5
- Dudley: It makes you understand things more. When you're out there, you're too busy. Different cultures have different understandings, so it's hard work. I'm still at the learning stage.
- Wayne: It's so difficult. I don't think I'm that bright. At just fifty years of age, how did I cope without knowing about society? There's a foundation here for going out and progressing...
- 10
- Dudley: But in here they just think you're thick.
- Vince: It's a broadening subject which should be compulsory for all kids. They should all have to learn it.
- 15 Wayne: It's certainly opened my mind. I think it's incredible.

In a later group, Ted would also make a similar observation that studying sociology was like being given a key which unlocked so much knowledge that you had to question your own lifetime's wisdom about all you had ever held dear.

As indicated earlier in this section, learning does not occur, in the main, in isolation - although that is not to deny that one *can* learn alone. Understanding the *social* process of acquiring knowledge within a penal environment is coloured by specific events which could only occur in that environment, for example, trouble on the wings, tensions between governors, officers and prisoners, the introduction of new rules or changes being made to existing ones, classmates being shipped out and so on. All would form additional 'baggage' which students brought to the classroom and it is therefore essential to grasp their significance when appreciating how a student would internalise new knowledge and assimilate it with so-called 'common-sense'. A most obvious example of this was given when teaching the subject of Ethnicity and Inequality in modern British society to the students. Purely by coincidence, a prison officer opened the classroom door addressing a Black student:

Are you Floyd?

No I ain't? Who do you think you're talking to?

You look like a Floyd...

Upon which the officer departed and I was told:

You see what we get? I'm going to have him for that, he's out of order, he wouldn't have said that to a white man...

Whereupon the student departed in fury. The sociological material had, in this rather sad incident, simply reinforced life-experience more directly than any research could ever hope to show, providing 'ammunition' rather than any academic 'tools'. The outcome of

such incidents from other students witnessing this type of exchange led to the wry observation that:

They ought to be in this classroom, not us, then they might learn something...

Yes, like manners for instance...

The fact that studying sociology may be described as an invitation to 'see through' and 'look behind' social structures (Berger, 1963), may provide critics of prison education with a reasonably sound excuse for not offering such programmes at all to those who, in the eyes of some, are simply gaining further justification and legitimation for transgressing social norms. However, there seems little to criticise in encouraging the development of critical questioning techniques and in acquiring the ability to empathise with others - both skills which accrue to the studying of sociology over a period of time.

Additional questions to consider would be to ask whether studying sociology is 'disruptive' in terms of its influence on students or as Bauman prefers to describe it, a 'power' in its own right making an oppressive world less so and more flexible? The different modules offered on the Leeds course would provide quite different processes of 'weaving' triggered by quite different types of social interaction as shown in the conversations analysed so far.

The unmasking, debunking, even revelational qualities of sociological study have been fairly well documented and it would seem to be the case that those who encounter the subject have opinions on how it has 'changed' their world views. This may range, at the experiential level, from having to confront long held beliefs and questioning their validity, to the potential acquisition of a more detached perspective on social life and behaviour. This detachment however, is balanced in positive sociological practice through also

acquiring a level of consciousness-raising on any number of complex social, political and cultural issues.

To state outright that sociology transforms an individual student seems an odd claim and one which is difficult to substantiate, *but*, as I have suggested, interpreting the interactive processes observed in the sociology classroom leads one to conclude that the legacy of the discipline is to be found in its capacity to add significant dimensions to processes of personal development; to synthesise common-sense knowledge with academic analysis; to raise tolerance and enhance understanding of social processes and institutions and to encourage reflexive thinking. For students who come to the discipline whilst imprisoned, their involvement in the social process of acquiring such a new body of knowledge is both a challenging and significant achievement in itself.

CONCLUSION

In assessing and analysing the social process of acquiring knowledge in a particular prison classroom context, many aspects of educational practice have to be taken into account. Primarily, there must be acknowledgement and recognition of the particular characteristics of adult learners and the teaching and learning methods appropriate to their needs in a prison environment as has been shown in this Chapter. The experience is most definitely quite separate and distinct from standard educational practice, and yet the degree of differentiation is subtle. Hence the diagrammatic representations given which show the processes as a combined but gradual, cumulative process in its entirety which can be interpreted at this stage as social. More significantly, the question of what is taught and why within the prison context can be perceived as problematic for practitioners for many reasons.

The observations of actual classroom practice together with analyses of classroom conversations *must* be interpreted here against the more theoretical assessments of the impact of studying sociology at degree level. Any research which looks at learning processes has to assess how students experience that particular learning situation, although interpretations of the individual experience are sometimes difficult to analyse and appear rather vague. Student approaches to learning (whether imprisoned or not) so often will depend upon individual intentions and may vary from 'deep' to 'surface' approaches (Entwistle; 1987) or as I would prefer to describe it, from 'total weaving' to 'casual detachment'. There are also the various strategies to consider which student and teacher adopt for survival in their complex interactions in a prison classroom. In any explanation of how knowledge is acquired or learned it is necessary to consider student motivation, intention, approach and actual learning processes.

In short, it will become, in prison as elsewhere, a question of 'What's in it for me?', 'What's it worth?', and 'What's the pay-off?'. As Entwistle suggests lucidly, there are 'dominant motives' which form the basis of the learning contract. These can include vocational, academic, personal and social motives depending upon what the students want from the course (Entwistle; 1987; 70). There is no reason to assume that students in prison are any different other than to add the survival strategy of 'helping to pass the time and keep sane' as being of primary concern. Even so, these motives are always going to be open to renegotiation, affected as they are by the continuously changing dynamic of the particular course. Ultimately, any social process of learning therefore runs parallel to issues of personal development and reinforcement (or even re-establishment, in prison) of self-concept and identity, a theme which will be explored in Chapter Four.

A final look back at Entwistle's heuristic model of learning (recall Fig. 2:3) should remind practitioners in a prison classroom that it is possible to offer a view of classroom practice through analysing and interpreting student conversations, debates and discussions, which clearly shows that individual students are themselves *conscious* of the processes involved in learning to the extent that we can agree that:

...every individual views the opportunities provided by the education system in different ways, and so the teachers and students involved all have differing perceptions of education and the learning process. And the way anybody behaves is a product not just of the situation, but of that person's *perception* of the situation. In turn, the perception depends on previous experience and on the personal characteristics of the individual. (Entwistle; 1987; 103).

In the prison classroom, such perceptions will be all the more acute adding yet a further dimension to the analysis of factors which influence the 'complex social reality' of learning. For Entwistle's model to register as complete, it must be, as he himself suggests, furnished with accurate descriptions of that reality and the interactions which take place, i.e. there must be accounts of the actuality of the situation. The classroom ethnography provides such an opportunity.

If, furthermore, we take the learning process and synthesise it with the acquisition-of-knowledge process, i.e. how people (in this case prisoner-students) arrive at a 'condition of knowing' (the subject matter) from a 'condition of not-knowing', we can see that it is quite possible to construct knowledge itself, forget it, discard or replace it. This highlights Elias' description of the 'directional character' of knowledge (1987; xxi) and in order to appreciate the impact of learning and the outcome of classroom practice on the prisoner-student learning sociology, one would surely need to possess some empathic understanding of the 'condition of not-knowing' (here) the sociological discourse? How

that discourse is learned and assimilated into existing knowledge streams forms the basis of the following chapter on the learning process in a prison classroom.

CHAPTER THREE

LEARNING IN A PRISON CLASSROOM

Having examined how the acquisition of a body of knowledge can be interpreted and understood as a *social* process, where prisoner-students are seen as adult learners engaging with the discipline of sociology in a unique way, this section will focus on the actual *learning* process as it occurs through time within the prison classroom. This establishes the theme of the Chapter which then considers how students collectively shape the context of learning in the prison classroom. A more detailed appraisal of the role of memories in the learning process follows in order to understand how the individual prisoner-student synthesises his experiences through time and through processing information that is meaningful to him via classroom interaction.

Finally, a close analysis of classroom conversations presents evidence of what is to be understood as a process model of learning where the thought processes of the individual prisoner-student can be identified as smaller sets of integrative processes which are shaped by context-dependent interaction. In short, the central claim is that learning is as much a social process involving different cognitive activities as knowledge acquisition and needs to be understood as such. The processual nature of learning is evidenced through emphasising those aspects of classroom conversations which illustrate the capacity of prisoner-students to weave together subject matter, personal life experience (through drawing on memories) and new knowledge gained from classroom experiences into a synthesis of learning outcomes. These outcomes are also formed *socially* and I suggest they have the potential to contribute to personal change and development.

THE LEARNING PROCESS THROUGH TIME

Prisoners have to live in an environment not of their choosing. They have to create and re-create a social reality which, as far as some prisoners are concerned, is not their social reality at all. It thus becomes 'reality' only in so far as they will equip themselves with the necessary means and strategies to survive in it. They are at one and the same time distanced from their day-to-day experiences within prison and yet actively engaged in creating and perpetuating the prison culture. Attending education in prison is therefore in some instances, a lifeline, a time-marker or even, for certain individuals, a means of preserving one's sanity. Each prisoner will use that 'lifeline' as befits his circumstances and situation, but each will undoubtedly acknowledge at some point that the experience gives rise to processes of personal change and development. In observing those processes it is possible to see that course content 'triggers' further processes of reflection through the combined human resources of memory, social interaction and personal experience.

Prisoners also admit to having more of an opportunity than most people to 'stand outside' what they often describe as 'the real world', where 'looking back' to a pre-institutional life becomes a regular feature of attempting to rationalise that world and all that it encompasses. This is simply because they spend many hours locked up 'with time on their hands and too much of it'. It would be quite wrong to assume, however, that every prisoner will immediately embark upon processes of self-reflection and self-analysis simply due to the fact of his incarceration, but any intensive, academic course of study which encourages the development of analytical skills enabling students to assess and critically evaluate the personal, the social, the practical and the empirical world, undertaken *whilst* imprisoned, may well crystallise that particular feature of the

experience of imprisonment. In other words, the prisoner-student has the potential capacity and the time, due to the experience of incarceration, to *mediate* his learning experiences through processes of reflexive thinking.

From a more theoretical perspective, observing the human capacity for synthesising past, present and future experiences as sequences (or continua) of changes (Elias; 1992; 75) condensed into one moment of time (i.e. now), provides a useful framework. This framework helps to understand those mechanisms which underpin the processes leading - potentially - to change and personal development, which may have their roots in classroom practice. In short, if we were to describe the classroom context for the students on the Leeds course at Full Sutton as the 'present social conditions' within which each individual prisoner-student acquires new knowledge and new experiences, then those social conditions represent an 'instant' of a much longer continuous process (Elias; 1987; xvi) where past and present must be understood to be co-existent.

All that an individual has previously known or previously experienced is brought into that 'present instant' - here the learning situation in a prison classroom - and such a process may be evidenced on the micro-level through further analysis of classroom debates and conversations. These in turn, give meaning to the 'new' experience of undertaking a particular course of study and thus become absorbed or assimilated into an individual's 'social-fund' of knowledge as we have suggested earlier.

Being aware of how these long-term social learning processes become meaningful experiences for students is crucial to understanding and interpreting the outcomes of the learning process within a prison context. It is precisely *how* that process takes place which is to be explored here, with particular emphasis on the role and function of

memories and their use by students in a learning situation. As Elias observes (1992; 74), the recognition that people have a capacity to visualise together, '... what does not happen together in actual fact' is an extremely significant aspect of human behaviour which should be taken into account in any analyses of this nature. In other words the student's memories of particular circumstances, events, and situations in their lives when 'assimilated' with sociological knowledge i.e. when the two are visualised together, contribute to classroom learning in a significant way.

Translating these processes into daily classroom practice we can see that what takes place can be thus described:

- i) the individual (student) recognises past experience - as data stored in the memory;
- ii) any 'data' of relevance is drawn into 'now' (the actual classroom context);
- iii) this data is assimilated and integrated with past knowledge-experience;
- iv) the whole producing a synthesis which may be drawn on in the future.

Of equal significance too, is the fact that this capacity to synthesise can be discounted by failing to recognise and understand how individuals structure and integrate their life through time. This process *sui generis* suggests that development rather than change is the key issue - not simply in terms of personal development through education, or even personal change through education. A much more subtle *set* of processes is occurring, when people learn, triggered by what can be described as 'context-dependent interaction'; the documenting and recording of these processes is one approach to understanding the many dimensions of prison education programmes and the subsequent evaluation of them.

Observing and noting these classroom practices over a period of time, it is possible to 'see' change occurring, in a crude sense. Many teachers comment on these putative changes in 'their' students, and not only in prison education staffrooms, where a good

deal of staffroom conversation centres on how this or that student has 'come round', 'really altered his outlook', 'completely changed his attitude' and so on. However, these pearls of staffroom wisdom are open to misinterpretation. Do they involve the making of bold assumptions and general claims about pedagogy at the expense of ignoring the processes and outcomes of adults learning? Governing these outcomes too, are the individual prisoner-student's own choices to take whatever path is felt to be appropriate for him in circumstances where 'choice' has become a bargaining commodity beyond most people's common experience.

Teachers in prison undoubtedly discuss student 'progress' however, in much the same manner as they would in more traditional educational settings. The complexities arise when that 'progress' is carried across into assessments of 'improved' behaviour within the penal system. Again, in a crude sense, can we claim that a 'good' H.E. student in prison automatically makes a 'good' citizen? *My* assessment of a good student - as his teacher - may be vastly at odds with the prison authority's assessment of whether or not an offender will subsequently '... lead [a] law abiding and useful life in custody and after release.' (Prison Service Statement of Purpose). Classroom debates and discussions on a wide variety of sociological topics *may* assist a student in writing essays or passing examinations, but assessing whether or not the gap between academic discourse and the reality of everyday life for the convicted offender has been bridged, is a matter for evaluating the outcomes of classroom practice in some detail.

CONTEXT-DEPENDENT INTERACTION

Individual students engaged in collective social interaction within the prison classroom however, are unlikely to enthuse or even think about the possible long-term outcomes of

their learning experiences. In an 'immediate' sense they are far too occupied and engaged in shaping the context of the learning. Nevertheless that they surely *process* through their course as opposed to *progress* is of crucial significance to anyone interested in learning outcomes; that these outcomes may be unplanned or unintended is an aspect of any kind of social interaction familiar to all who do social research in the classroom. It is therefore important to view those outcomes as an integral part of the learning process together with identifying the processes of personal development which can potentially occur through the social dimension of learning. *Collectively* these 'smaller' sets of processes and outcomes are rooted quite firmly in classroom practices (recall Fig. 2:5).

These 'smaller' sets of processes and outcomes form the constituent parts of the context-dependent interaction referred to earlier. The sophistication and complexity of that interaction within the learning process can impact more generally upon our understanding if we examine more closely a classroom discussion (grounded in an analysis of Rousseau's Discourse on the Origins of Inequality) which followed from a question relating to the perceived necessity for rules and regulations to ensure social cohesion within the community. It is recounted at length to illustrate several issues of direct relevance to understanding and interpreting context-dependent interaction:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:1

- 1 Ossie: We didn't have them [rules] in the commune in Australia, we didn't need them.
- Dudley: You mean you just . . .
- Ossie: There was no need, we never even talked about it.
- 5 Dudley: You have to conform, you must always conform... in here ... I don't, I question. I don't follow the straight path. You see, I don't go with all this long-term planning, if I want to go on holiday I make my mind up and just go. If you need money - same thing - go get it . . .

10 Anne: Do you think you will always get situations where some people 'follow rules' and others don't?

All: Yes . . .

Tony: It's about choice isn't it? You make choices not to follow rules ... (especially in here).

15 Anne: Then presumably you have to face up to the consequences - from the rest of society or the community - you yourselves really have first hand experience of this ...

All: Oh yes.

Dudley: I won't follow no rules, I question, you have to question.

An analysis of this conversation helps to identify several aspects of the learning process as observed. The subject-matter, here 'Rules and Regulations', encourages Ossie to engage memory (of his experiences in Australia) - line 1. Dudley, at line 5, takes up the theme of rules and regulations in wider society but engages with the subject-matter in a different way altogether, making a direct comment on how he perceives a world thus regulated. By line 6, he has assimilated the subject-matter in a way which 'fits' his existing knowledge structures turning it back out as a direct observation on his own behaviour. My contribution to the discussion at line 9 generalises the subject matter again, through feeding out the sociological line (recall classroom conversation 2:6). Tony at line 12 also generalises, then comments on what he perceives to be the shared or common experience of the class members as regards prison routine and by line 14, I am attempting to bridge general and particular experience which they collectively acknowledge as being the case. Dudley however, asserts his particular position, seeking justification for his views by ensuring that his student peers appreciate that 'you have to question' (line 18) as opposed to 'you have to follow rules and conform'.

The initial attempt to identify the 'component parts' of the complete learning process therefore isolates memory as a key player in learning through context-dependent interaction, together with the individual's capacity to assimilate - or as we have suggested - *synthesise* information in a meaningful way. Further analysis of the continuation of the same discussion yields evidence of how complex the learning process becomes. The men had begun to discuss issues raised concerning the fact that generally people are no longer capable of fully understanding human social behaviour because there are too many 'experts' to tell them what they should and should not do. Ossie spoke about the marked contrast between Western knowledge and that of the Aborigines:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:1 (continued)

Ossie: They're in tune, we're not. One guy in the commune used to go out in the
20 dark and catch things, he was from Sydney but he knew instinctively how to do it ...

Anne: We have lost so many of our traditional skills...

Wayne: Natural ones...

Dudley: Writing it all down in books gets you nowhere man - one guy says one
25 thing, it leads to another question, then says another thing, then another question. Where you goin'?

Anne: All we know, or nearly all, is in books . . .

Dudley: You can't know anything without it being written down, but then you know nothing ...

30 Ossie: You should see Ayer's Rock, it's absolutely incredible, masses and masses of paintings.

Anne: Yes, my brother has been. He also noticed how the Aborigines were treated in the big cities . . .

Ossie: It's sick...

35 Dudley: What is this thing called inequality anyway? Who says somebody is better than...

- Wayne: Yes but Dud, people are only comfortable doing what they can. You give them something else to do and they can't handle it.
- Anne: Yes, but on what grounds? How do you decide or judge whether
40 someone is 'good' at something or not? Can you see the difficulty?
- Dudley: No-one should judge, what right has some . . .
- Wayne: You have to . . .
- Tony: It's all gonna be down to the individual anyway, isn't it?

(To give a more precise depiction of the context of a classroom conversation in a prison environment, precisely at that moment, a Prison Officer entered and announced that Wayne was 'to go see the psychiatrist'; this broke the intensity of the discussion which is not easy to convey as a documented conversation, but suffice it to say that the incident caused the students some considerable amusement at the expense of the officer who represented authority, the personification of obedience to rules and whose behaviour for the men, epitomised all the negative aspects of conformity which they had just been discussing. They could see the irony, he could not.)

It is quite possible to see how, at line 19, Ossie's memories of life in Australia have been triggered in the process of learning. The students begin to exchange views and experiences - lines 23 - 28, they are absorbing new knowledge about cultural differences and reflecting on wider social issues as at line 35, 37, 38 and also offering their individual observations on 'man' in 'his' environment.

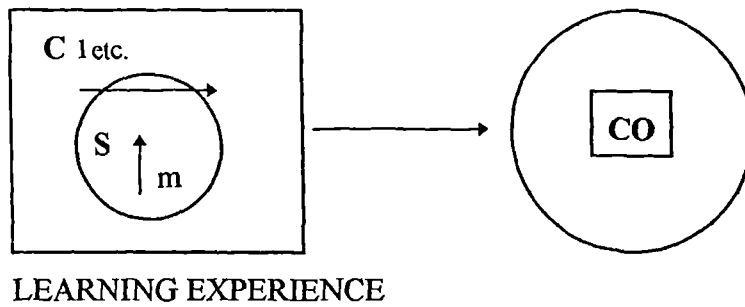
In itself, their ability to converse on these different levels is reminiscent of Garfinkel's work on conversational analysis in Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel; 1967). Garfinkel focuses on the *mechanics of meaning* rather than on the meaning people *impute* to conversations that matter as I have suggested. Lines 27-36 for example (classroom conversation 3:1 above) seem to show different conversations occurring simultaneously -

such as discussing issues of inequality, the transmission of knowledge between generations, change in society and issues of social control. My interpretation suggests that what is important in terms of the meaningfulness of the conversation is the context-dependent interaction in which the learning is embedded. The actual subject matter, the memories and the assimilation of new knowledge by the students forms a context within which learning is advanced. The role which memories play in contributing to the learning process is of considerable significance for anyone attempting to analyse and identify the elements of importance to that process as a whole.

MEMORIES

Tracing the learning mechanisms which have been triggered throughout any discussion brings into focus the *actual* classroom practice itself which, in its totality, constitutes the dynamic for potential change and personal development. The context of the learning process is embedded in the subject-matter, individual experience and the immediate environment, it is therefore dependent on all these factors as is depicted in Fig. 3:1 below representing a further stage in learning. Drawing on memories, the prisoner-student personalises the learning context through identifying with the subject-matter, thus making it meaningful:

**Fig. 3:1; THE CONTEXT OF THE LEARNING PROCESS
(Emphasising the Role of Memories)**



KEY:

- - PRISON CLASSROOM / LEARNING CONTEXT
- Ⓢ - PRISONER STUDENTS
- C 1 - ACTUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICE (recall fig 2:5)
- ↑m - MEMORIES
- CO - COMPLEX OUTCOMES (recall fig 2:5)

Fig. 3.1 depicts the complex processes at work within the classroom where the emphasis shifts to 'student-input', i.e. memory, exchanging of views, ideas (as suggested above) and so on. Such 'triggers' are characteristic of the way in which knowledge and experience weave together to produce new *meaningful* experiences which have the *potential* to be retained by the students because they are meaningful. This is depicted as 'complex outcomes' in the above diagram. It is the *potentiality* of the experience for shaping and influencing *future* behaviour which is of significance in interpreting and ultimately evaluating the outcomes of prison education programmes.

Memory is recognised as 'the place where information is kept', its function, by definition, being simply to remember. Psychological perspectives point out that memory has a crucial role in our functioning, that we need it because it guides our actions, records our accomplishments and is capable of a variety of operations :

At one extreme, it holds a highly detailed record of sensory images long enough to permit the identification and classification of sights, sounds, odours, tastes, and feelings. At the other extreme, memory records our experiences for use throughout our lifetime. (Lindsay, P.; Norman, S.; 1977; 303).

It is the latter extreme that undoubtedly has a bearing on any analysis of what takes place in the prison classroom. The fact that memory is used 'in thought, in language and in decision-making' indicates quite clearly the central role it must play throughout the learning process. Its qualities and characteristics and the capacity to use it as an aid in the learning process should not be overlooked because memory helps to synthesise the newly acquired knowledge being the 'key ingredient' of what might be described as an 'information-processing system', (i.e. the student). Now, without losing sight of the fact that students (in prison or elsewhere) are not machines which mechanically process data and information willy-nilly, there is a degree of validity in this interpretation. If we consider the function of memory within each individual student as something which triggers input-output mechanisms which control the retention or rejection of information we can begin to grasp precisely how learning would occur in stages. Stated mechanically, the student would search through existing information in the memory, make comparisons between 'old' and 'new' memory units, decide on 'what to keep' and set in motion chains of reasoning. A cautionary word however, from the psychologists themselves:

There is never a fixed rule about what information must be stored within memory and what actions are performed by the processor. (Lindsay, S.; Norman, P.; 1977; 595)

Focusing on a more sociological evaluation the process would be described somewhat differently to include, for example, issues of individual interpretations of meaningful social action as follows. The 'old' memory units which prisoner-students may 'use' or draw on in the course of their learning would be described from a sociological perspective as the 'collective memories of everyday life experience' (Bauman; 1982)

According to Bauman, people make sense of the 'chaos' of life through memory as 'history-in-action' (1982; 1). The things which people remember and the manner in which they remember, help them to cope with 'change', to legitimate or refute it, or '...try to force it [the change] into the familiar patterns; most often, they will attempt to do both things at the same time.' (1982; 3).

In the course of their learning, I would suggest that the men on the Leeds course in Full Sutton 'made sense' of the discipline of sociology, i.e. of the 'new' knowledge it brought and the potentiality for change, by assimilating it into memory through drawing on 'old' memories to 'normalise' the 'new'. This is evidenced as below in classroom conversation 3:2.

Bauman believes that people prefer to act or behave in ways which they find 'less unnerving', according to 'tried and tested' ways which do not threaten or challenge their familiarity. They act as they did in the past because 'new ways' appear to invalidate the old traditional patterns of behaviour. My suggestion is that people approach new ways of thinking (through learning) in a similar way, hence the frequent use of memory in the classroom. This 'constant recapitulation of tradition' (Bauman; 1982; 3) means that anything new 'derives its meaning from tradition', so it seems plausible to suppose that students in a classroom would make sense of newly learned academic material by personalising it in accordance with their own memories of social behaviour - their own and other people's.

The following conversation on satisfying consumer 'need' in the course of learning how to theorise consumption, illustrates the uses to which memories can be put in a learning situation as 'old' and 'new' are synthesised. The conversation was triggered,

coincidentally, by Bauman's analysis of how new technologies have created needs for new products, needs which people do not always realise they have until, by virtue of advertising and the role of the media, they can no longer resist the temptation to buy (1990; 205).

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:2

1 Mostin: You've just made me remember something, something that happened when I worked in the shop. It's just what you were saying you know, about people getting the latest gadgets ...

Lawrence: Go on ...

5 Mostin: Do you remember the Delia Smith programmes, the recipe, cooking thing?

Anne: Yes the one's everyone talks about?

Lawrence: No I don't think I ever saw any ...

10 Mostin: Well, she'd done this thing the night before, you know, made a pie or something and she used this gadget thing - a rolling lattice-top pastry cutter, I mean - what a name for a start! ...

Anne: Oh, I know, instead of cutting strips and placing them over ...

Mostin: Yes ...it does it all in one go, you know, when you roll it out.

Lawrence: Sounds brilliant, ...go on, what happened?

15 Mostin: Well, the next day, we must have had about sixty people in the shop asking for these damn things, till in the end I was saying, 'I know what you've come for, a rolling lattice-top pastry cutter,' before they asked. It was amazing. Of course we had none in stock - no-one had ever heard of them but do you know, a few weeks later someone had cottoned on, there were hundreds of the things. The market was there people couldn't live
20 without them and we kept selling out. So it's just like he says. You see it all the time don't you?

Lawrence: I think we should run out and buy one don't you?

Mostin synthesises the 'theoretical / new' knowledge with his own 'common sense / old' knowledge drawn out of historical memory (lines 1, 2, 3, 5). He makes sense of the new through seeking group reassurance (lines 5, 9, 10) and 'legitimises' theory through combining humour (lines 11, 16) which Lawrence supports (lines 14, 23) and his unique practical experience of the patterned social behaviour of other people. Bauman's theorising of consumption and Mostin's remembered history combine to make sense of human action - for Mostin.

However, any data, information or new knowledge assimilated by a student is only 'stored' according to the manner in which that student interprets it or gives it meaning - and of course, people, whether imprisoned or not, also have a capacity to *forget*.

Focusing again on the processual nature of learning, in that it occurs through time and is an interactive process deeply coloured by context (in this case within prison), the distinction between the roles of short and long-term memory are of some importance. Short-term memory is primarily used for two functions, 'recognition' and 'categorisation' for, by definition, very short periods of time, but long-term memory performs a different function, one which I believe is of direct relevance to issues raised in this study. If we assume that long-term memory is where we keep permanent records of our experiences and maintain them, if it has an unlimited capacity, organises information during 'storage', uses 'search operations' to retrieve information and also plays a role in controlling via selection, the information stored and retrieved (Lindsay, S.; Norman, P.; 1977; 306), then for a prisoner-student serving a long sentence, the use of memory and reliance on it as an aid to learning is going to be profound.

Again drawing on classroom data to reinforce the point, whilst discussing Bourdieu's theory on consumption and distinction or difference through the combined acquisition of economic and intellectual/cultural capital, Lawrence had made a reference to his 'preferred' life-style, 'I must admit there are times when it has been nice to have been rich'. Drawing several times on his memories of this particular stage of his life, he would often 'respond' to sociological subject-matter by prefacing his remarks thus: 'That's very true, isn't it? I remember when ...'.

On this particular occasion, he had recounted an incident which became dubbed as 'The wine-taster and the opera singer' by himself and Mostin, both of whom had formed a kind of 'student friendship' which seemed to extend beyond the classroom. Lawrence was about twenty-five years older than Mostin and had served time before, whereas Mostin was inside for the first time serving a relatively short sentence. After discussing the accuracy of Bourdieu's analysis, Mostin and myself recalled Lawrence's account of what he described as 'a delightful evening many years ago spent in the company of two young ladies' - one of whom was a wine-taster and the other, an opera-singer named Katia. Lawrence remembered the story, in which he had been at a loss to 'communicate' with Katia because he knew nothing about opera. With some amusement he declared 'I lacked intellectual capital, didn't I? I was O.K. on the wine though, so it didn't spoil the evening!', whereupon Mostin suggested that the theory was absolutely right, if you had money, class, status, *and* intellect 'you've got it made'. 'Yes, but it's not that straightforward,' reiterated Lawrence, 'you can have all these things, and still get it wrong, and the important thing is, that other people know straightaway, don't they? They recognise you for what you are. If you play the role, then you have to do it right. I

admit that I love doing it, but you know I sometimes think I've done so many that I don't know which is the real me.'

The 'learning' taking place here is occurring on different levels as subject-matter triggers memories, triggers classroom interaction, triggers assimilation, triggers reflection. This combination of processes which, in turn become located in memory, show that anything 'new' that has been learned whilst inside, is going to be subjected to those unique and individual processes of selection, retention, rejection or later 'use' (possibly beyond release) according to individual *choice*.

The importance of using memories lies in understanding the potentiality of the process of using them and in terms of their effect on learning outcomes. For example, just because a triple rapist attends a lecture on changing relationships between men and women in the last thirty years, does not necessarily mean that he will not re-offend, *but*, he might *stop* and *think* because he *remembered* some aspect of a discussion. Similarly, if a prisoner-student has been convicted and sentenced for a racially motivated attack against another person, and has studied the topic of 'race and ethnicity' as part of a chosen course, it does not necessarily mean that attitudes will change entirely over the duration of one course.

However, the *memories* of what was studied and how, when combined with *memories* of the offence, if the individual chooses to remember it, may bring about some degree of change. For this reason, understanding the role of long-term memory in learning and beyond the learning process is therefore crucial. In addition to the cognitive skills acquired through the learning process we must, in a prison classroom, be fully aware of the impact of the learning itself on attitude change - via acquisition of affective skills.

Referring once more to a psychological overview, I would emphasise the fact therefore that:

...memory is more than a mere warehouse of information from which one simply looks up the answer to questions. (Lindsay, S.; Norman, P.; 1977; 337).

It is *used*, regulates and has the potential to shape individual behaviour in a uniquely profound and complex manner, if, when combined with newly learned material it produces a meaningful synthesis of knowledge and experience. As Bauman states, (1990; 3) considerations and interpretations of the function of historical memory would seem to suggest that 'constant negotiation' between the 'old' and the 'new' lie behind human action. In a learning context however, where students process through different stages of knowledge acquisition, there are other forms of cognitive activity which, along with the use of memories can also be identified. They emerge in combination through classroom interaction and are dependent upon it and it is to an assessment of these forms of activity or processes that I now turn.

INTEGRATIVE PROCESSES or WEAVING

The sets of processes in question are worthy of more scrutiny on an individual basis and from a perspective which would undoubtedly embrace both the sociological and the psychological dimensions of learning. I have identified them as 'assimilation', 'connectivity', and 'reflection' which further help in 'personalising' the learning for the individual prisoner-student. For psychologists, the process of acquiring knowledge in a learning situation may well also involve an appreciation of the fact that such processes cannot be fully understood without there being an awareness of the relationships between environmental situations, human action and the resulting outcomes (Lindsay, P.; Norman, S.; 1977; 499). Thus, the sociological and psychological dimensions of

interpreting any aspect of classroom interaction within a prison are open to empirical scrutiny:

There is little formal distinction between learning and memory. Studies of learning tend to emphasise primarily the acquisition of knowledge. Studies of memory tend to emphasise the retention and use of that knowledge. Clearly, the two are so interrelated that the study of one must necessarily be a study of the other. (Lindsay, P.; Norman, S.; 1977; 499)

However, there is much to be gained from focusing on aspects of the more complex relationship which can be observed between subject matter and acquiring 'new' knowledge, and how the use of memory, together with the integrative processes of learning such as 'assimilation', 'connectivity' and 'reflection', produce the synthesis at the heart of the whole process of learning. These particular 'mechanisms' - for in a sense that is precisely what they all are in so far as they 'operate' as contributors within the 'weaving' process described in Chapter Two - again illustrate the fact that knowledge acquisition and transmission do not occur in isolation.

They are 'integrative processes' which show that there is a dependency on other people for 'input' of 'new knowledge' which is assimilated and/or integrated with an existing 'social-fund' of knowledge (Elias; 1987), which other people (here the student) already possess. Teachers in a prison classroom cannot predict the outcomes or impact which their 'input' can have on the student, but it may well be possible to examine:

...the effectiveness of all prison education programs that have as their objective the engagement of students in some combination of individual maturation, citizenship and critical thinking. (Duguid; 1995)

The mechanisms have to be understood in terms of their function with the student's use of memories as detailed above. A further analysis of a classroom conversation is helpful in identifying the various mechanisms at work. The dialogue here raises issues pertaining

to youth culture which arose from a discussion about changing relationships between parents and children.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:3

1 Matt: They [children] have to compete don't they in a way that we never did?

Ted: A lot of it's about respect and control isn't it? Parents don't get respect 'cos respect has to be deserved. No respect, no control and there's no respect because there's no social justice. What can you expect?

Matt then made observations on the differences between growing-up in the 1970's compared with growing-up through the 1960's:

5 Matt: It's the pace that's different, it's so fast, you were dropped on your feet running. I think it's still like that today.

Allan: Yes, it was different, mainly because you tripping out of your head all the time or so stoned that it didn't matter!

Ted: Yes, that's the big difference...

10 Matt: Well, you still get the raves though...

Anne: ...a faster life-style or faster music, compared with psychedelia, hippies, flower-power, protest movements...

Allan: Yes, but it was only a minority really who got into the drug scene.

Ted: The kids today, they're different, malicious and cruel...

15 Matt: Like, we're frightened of them...

Anne: You mean in the sense we discussed last week?

Matt: That's right, and I don't blame them, they've got nothing...

Allan: No money, no jobs...

20 Ted: You see, we had all these things, but you should have seen the bikes at the 'Ace' cafe on the North Circular Road, there used to be over 400 parked outside and because we'd seen Brando and James Dean...

Allan: Leather jackets and jeans, you could document changes in youth culture just studying them .

Ted: They used to line up the bikes and race the trucks coming round the
25 roundabout and if you lost it and slid under a truck that was the James
Dean way to die. If it was good enough for him, it was good enough for
you.

Allan: The joy-riding today, it's different. It's get what you can and take it . . .

Ted: Yes, but I don't know if you remember, when you heard the music... it
30 was rebellion, it was fun ... but you knew when to stop.

Matt: Nowadays it's more violent, like slashing your own wrists, you damage
yourself for attention, this is how it is with kids now. Little girls clothes [a
comment on the fashion of the late 1990's about which there had been
considerable media criticism] and slashed wrists - that really worries me
35 does that.

The discussion itself then moved on to a deeper analysis of distinct youth culture groups in society and a consideration of the uncertainties facing young people and the strategies adopted by them to survive in modern consumer society, but if we look back to line 1, we can see again that Matt is 'making connections' between past and present. I would describe these instances of classroom interaction where students 'connect' not only with each other and their teacher but where they also make connections between personal experience and with the subject matter, as illustrative of the capacity for synthesis. In addition the function of memory has been engaged or stimulated by subject matter. Through seeking reassurance from student peers and through questioning, lines 2, 3, 4, show a degree of reflection on issues raised. Of equal importance and worth noting, is how a student relies on memories as at line 7 to make a general, if lighthearted comment about past experience with which his peers can identify and yet by line 13, the reality of that experience is 'drawn out' of memory which then leads to more direct observation on the behaviour of young people today.

The remainder of the discussion shows how the student will make comparisons with 'what he knows' about types of behaviour through weaving together direct personal

experience, common-sense knowledge and social comment into a synthesis of knowledge about youth culture in Britain from the 1950s to the 1990s. The assimilation of new knowledge into the existing social fund of knowledge takes place as individual students identify with what is being said; lines 19-30 are good examples of the interaction which underpins this part of the process. The meaningful interpretations which the student brings to the learning process are simultaneously constitutive of it (recall Fig. 3:1). On many occasions in the classroom discussions, this particular pattern of 'weaving' could be discerned, where the assimilation of new knowledge when combined with old, remembered experiences enabled students to 'connect up' the material learned thus producing a more objective appraisal of those issues under consideration.

Further evidence to support this claim can be seen in the following conversation (3:4 below), which arose when the students were also studying youth culture in sociology. This topic which due to its very nature both interested and engaged their attention, created an 'intellectual context' within which the sets of integrative processes and memory were triggered by subject matter, allowing the first student to 'reminisce' (Ted at line 1 - 11) and others to comment more 'objectively' on patterns of social behaviour (lines 12 - 17).

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:4

- 1 Ted: You know what you're saying is making me think back to how it was and I'm just trying to put that altogether with what I remember as you're talking. When I was a kid, I used to be as happy as a pig in shit when I was tinkering around with bikes - four-stroke, mind, not two, (they was only for poofers you understand, present company excepted). Gettin' all greasy and dirty; but then the Teds came along and you couldn't 'ave dirt under your finger nails; it wasn't allowed, not at all, so you changed, I know 'cos I was one of them. Then when I was older, I went back to this pub where we all hung out; I had a brief-case and a pin-stripe suit, and when I went in, all the faces were the same, I recognised them all, but I didn't fit anymore. It was awful.
- 5
- 10

Andrew joined in at this point at length, perhaps more than a little anxious to assert the black perspective, to discuss the relationship between 'black' youth culture and 'black' music - notably 'rap', 'reggae' and 'dub' as distinctive musical styles. He argued that 'rap' music is taken up by young black people because they identify with it, as he himself had, and with all that is being 'said'/'sung' because it is about the 'sufferation' of blacks which he described as 'having no bread, no money and too much violence'. Allan then interrupted to state that he thought this was in response to T.V. programmes which regularly featured 'youth' as disaffected and alienated, producing 'excuses' for young blacks to be violent in a way in which people did not recognise as real:

Allan: If it's O.K. on the 'A' Team, then we can go out and do it. What they forget (the young kids), is the screen that is between them and the violence.

15 Andrew: No, the young black kids find an identity within the music. They respond collectively to something which documents their life experiences - that's reality, not fantasy.

The 'weaving' together of life experiences with subject matter and projecting the combination of these processes into objective sociological knowledge is a complex task which is constantly occurring as 'classroom practice' in these circumstances. The wider prison environment may not be the student's ideal learning environment, but when 'connections' start to be made, the potential for a prisoner-student to assess his relationship to society is heightened.

This process in turn can result in a set of outcomes needing careful delineation within the prison context. Duguid (1986) encapsulates the implications and significance of such a process in his assessment of 'What works in prison education' when he states:

We must ensure that the individual prisoner has the proper intellectual tools and knowledge to arrive at a reasonable (for him) view of society and of his relationship to that society. This means challenging opinions, attitudes and beliefs which he or she may

hold from habit, hearsay, or ignorance rather than through the exercise of reason. As well, we must provide a context for that critique of society and in doing so demonstrate that while a critical perspective can be justified and is in fact a long-standing tradition in our culture, it need not necessarily express itself in rebellion, asocial, or anti-social action. The context consists of the curriculum, the pedagogy, and the *environment* in which that curriculum is delivered. (My emphasis). (Duguid; 1986)

Returning to the classroom on another occasion, it is possible to see how even shorter fragments of conversation employ the integrative weaving processes described above.

Whilst they may not provide a fully detailed picture of the kind of interactions which provide the context, they indicate the 'meaningfulness' of the situation for the individual student. Dudley's contributions to a conversation on the relationship between elderly people, the family and the State, for example, show how his own cultural background (Afro-Caribbean) would weave through the conversation and discussions focusing here on the difficulties and problems faced by older people in contemporary society,

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:5

1 Dudley: Why all this talk of 'problem'? It ain't no problem. You see me, my
family? We look after them. It's their turn, innit? I even phone the others
up, the brothers and sisters to make sure they is doin' the lookin' after.
And me, I'm just the youngest, but I gets them organised 'cos what else
5 can I do in 'ere?

Martin: It's the same with the Irish. It's your responsibility you know.

David: It all involves a tremendous amount of long-term planning. People don't
think like that; who's going to think that far ahead anyway?

10 Anne: I agree, we don't live our lives with that degree of long-term awareness
for what the future may hold, but perhaps in some cases that's no bad
thing.

David: There are approximately 20 million over 50's, that's one-third of the
electorate. They'll have to listen to them sooner or later.

This particular short extract also provides some evidence of the way in which the tendency for students to 'personalise' the learning through taking the role of the other

(lines 4, 6) has a bearing on what takes place in the classroom. The conversation turned to talk of 'demographic time-bombs' with huge numbers of elderly people living in a society ill-equipped to deal with the consequences and implications of such a change in social structure (line 10). The men began to consider issues such as the inadequacy of State Pensions, and David, a newcomer to the group at this time, indicated his knowledge of Personal Pension Plans, gained via his employment experiences. The others listened with interest to his comments on State provision for the elderly and to his observations on the manner in which many individuals are 'conned' into believing their future as pensioners is secure financially - as long as they do not live much beyond 70 years of age. As he pointed out, the money accumulated via pension funds will not last forever (lines 7, 8). What looks good on paper, in practice amounts to no more than a myth - the group discussion had centred on the fact that this situation reflected, for them, the nature of a social structure riddled with inequality and discrimination from the moment of birth through to old age and death.

In the context of the discussion above, one would have to add that it was more than obvious that there was concern *for others* here, (lines 2 - 6) illustrating how a degree of thoughtfulness and reflection on social conditions are integrated into the learning process. This raises issues over the so-called 'moral development' of the prisoner. Further discussions relating to ageism also revealed sympathy and consideration on the part of the students - for example, in the above classroom discussion, Vince also remarked that the elderly need a platform from which to voice their concerns, or someone to help them achieve status.

It is perhaps worth reiterating Duguid's point here about providing, in the prison classroom, a context for a critique of society which will enable prisoner-students to

challenge with a degree of reason, those contentious beliefs and stereotypical attitudes which frequently underpin courses of action. Picking up the theme of a classroom discussion relating again to family life and changing relationships, the following conversation illustrates the combination of integrative processes which have a bearing on learning and a potential effect on the student as he identifies with the issues under consideration, 'personalising' the learning experience and thus making it unique for him. A conversation had arisen centred on the question 'what is married life all about anyway?' I had given an illustration from a young Access student who had raised a question about how significant marriage was in contemporary society in a class I was teaching - outside prison - at this time:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:6

1 Andrew: What is it about growing old and getting married? It does things to
 people. I have two friends and my sister who have all got engaged in the
 last six months. They've changed so much, they settle into these
 stereotypes, the home becomes all important, it's all that matters, they
 5 kind of get sucked into it all. I can't believe what it does to them -
 conformity, it's kind of sick. If that's all there is to life, it's not for me!

Having recounted this in the prison classroom as we were addressing similar issues,
 Dudley's response was:

Dudley: That's exactly what I mean, man, I ain't gonna go bustin' myself out for
 nobody. I won't get no mortgage, I'll pay cash - in debt all your life? No
 way! But this is why I make mistakes. I ain't gonna join that game, but
 10 life's about makin' mistakes and sometimes you get into trouble. I do it my
 way.

Here, two students from widely differing backgrounds, one serving a long prison sentence and one about to embark upon a University career, weave sociological material directly through their own experience and perceptions of human behaviour into a form of resistance or rebellion against the mainstream norms of social life. They absorb

comments into their consciousness and react almost immediately by passing judgement on others and justifying their own refusals to conform. In the prison classroom, this type of verbal response was common as students gave their own subjective opinions on the more general sociological analyses of human behaviour. What is illustrated here again, is the process of reflection (at line 7), although the insight is glossed over fairly rapidly, perhaps because, for Dudley, the reality of his present situation of imprisonment, did not accord with his personal philosophy.

As a final illustration of integrative processes at work in the prison classroom, Dudley's remarks (as above), led to a small but fairly significant deviation from the main focus of the discussion at this point as the group considered the structure of a possible future society where no-one would *have* to spend a lifetime 'working' in the sense that is generally understood. The role of the computer and acquisition of computer skills (or not) may well herald a type of 'revolution' within the workforce on a scale which will affect every dimension of social life. The men discussed the implications of this for the elderly in society who, as far as they were concerned, would only experience further degrees of marginalisation through their lack of access to the new technologies:

'At least we get to learn it in here', was one wry observation, implying that, despite their situation of imprisonment, access to new technologies was more readily available to prisoners than it would ever be to the elderly. The debate which followed centred on the inability of computer 'operatives' to engage in any meaningful interaction with other human beings. David remarked:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 3:7

1 David: I've seen them, at work, do you know, it's incredible. They sit there
working at the computer, they might be brilliant at it, then they'll say or
shout to someone in the office, 'Oi, you, what the fucking hell have you
done here, come here and fucking sort this lot out,' - I mean, what kind of
5 way is that to go on?

Vince: Oh yes, I've seen that too. They've no idea...

Anne: I suppose it gives a whole new dimension to man becoming an appendage
of the machine...

10 Dudley: Yeah man, but if that's the way society is going, you ain't gonna stop it.
The kids are into the computers in a big way - is it all a bad news
situation? Maybe we just gotta accept it...

David: Well, maybe, but that's no excuse - they don't know how to relate to each
other. With the machine, they're fine.

Subject-matter sets off a chain of reasoning as connections are made through conversation and interaction (line 1). Direct observations and reflections are made by the students on human behaviour (lines 6, 9, 10) whilst discussing the impact of something which they believed would have a profound impact on people's lives (lines 12, 13). The synthesis at the heart of the learning process is also the ultimate outcome of what happens on any one day in the classroom. It is the sum total of the combined functions of memories and the integrative processes, i.e. assimilation, connectivity and reflection, which students use in a learning situation and through which they personalise the learning, and it is that synthesis which - as one experience of imprisonment - may well be carried over into the prisoner's life beyond release.

CONCLUSION

The learning situation in a prison classroom can thus be viewed also as a social process shaped by context-dependent interaction and that very process *because* it is *social*, may well have an impact upon prisoner-students' long-term understanding of the chains of interdependency which exist beyond the confines of the prison walls in wider social life. For any students attending an intensive course of study which constantly presents them with such a world-view, their own particular acknowledgement and recognition of that view, i.e. what they have learned, can be perceived as specific outcomes of that learning process. The newly assimilated world-views therefore become particularly significant for some students learning them within a prison context. It is that significance which forms the meaningful interpretations of the learning process which have the potential for change in the individual prisoner-student, but this claim has to be cautiously made.

If we accept that through the functions of memory and integrative processes which the student employs as part of the learning process, some degree of restructuring or modifying in terms of thinking comes into play, then, we must also accept that a degree of 'fine tuning' or adjustment of our existing knowledge (Lindsay, P.; Norman, S.; 1977; 535) also occurs. Given that our behaviour is shaped and moulded by what we know, then the stages of learning in no small way, coupled with what has actually been learned, become part of who and what we are. In essence, the student who completes the Leeds course (or any other course for that matter), is not the 'same' as the one who started it. The learning becomes absorbed into 'self'.

So, what has changed? The question is so constrained by ethical dilemmas in a prison context, that I would contend it is the 'wrong' question to ask. A long-term prisoner has,

all things being considered, a choice in what he does in prison; if he chooses to attend a course in Social Studies at degree level then he will have to, at some stage, acknowledge the consequences of doing so just as any other University student does. The level of commitment is high, the effect on the individual student can be profound in terms of personal development or maturation and there are plenty of students who 'drop out'. Chapter Four will explore these concerns through examining the outcomes of the learning process for the individual prisoner-student particularly in relation to issues of identity and identity transformation.

CHAPTER FOUR

IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION & DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LEARNING

This chapter will examine the potential outcomes of learning sociology at degree level in the prison classroom by assessing the effect that the experience may have on the prisoner-student in terms of his 'sense of self', and particularly in terms of his awareness of self in relation to others. The growing lack of self-esteem which long-term prisoners have to confront throughout their sentences is of considerable significance when analysed in terms of 'identity transformation' and personal development, and although it is neither accurate nor appropriate to claim that studying sociology at degree level *causes* such a transformation, the studying itself does have an impact on the prisoner.

Firstly, the Chapter explores 'identity' from the perspective of the prisoner-student. Does he reconcile what I will term the 'pre-institutional identity' with his 'institutional identity', and if so, how? Using data from the classroom, evidence is provided which shows that the men on the Leeds course in Full Sutton were anxious to preserve a positive sense of self and that their involvement with the course could be interpreted as a strategy adopted to counter the negative effects which imprisonment had on them as individuals.

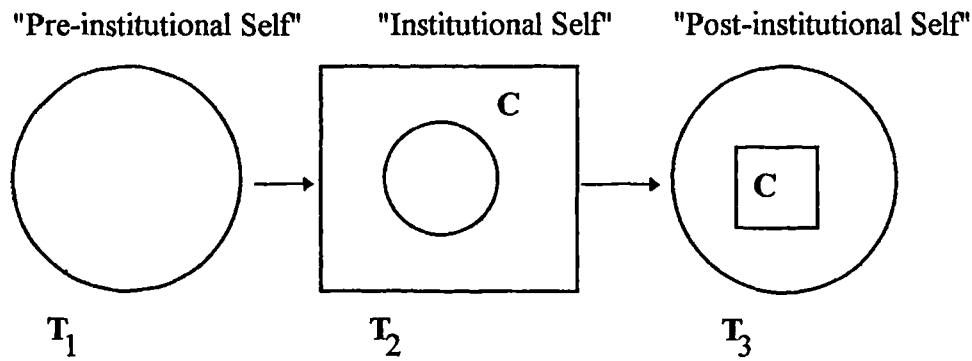
Subsidiary claims within the Chapter suggest that positive educational achievement can result in prisoners carrying elements of what has been learned forward into the post-release period because the impact of the learning stands in opposition to the more negative effects which imprisonment has on the individual. The Chapter concludes that a

prisoner's sense of identity is potentially affected both by the experience of imprisonment and the experience of learning whilst imprisoned, that it is ultimately shaped and affected by those experiences which are synthesised through time.

ISSUES OF IDENTITY FOR THE PRISONER

How *does* the prisoner see himself? It is important to focus upon how prisoners perceive themselves in terms of personal identity in order to fully comprehend the dimensions of the learning process and its outcomes. The sense of personal identity which prisoners have, retain and carry beyond the period of imprisonment, may undergo several transformations whilst imprisoned and some of those transformations may be shaped by the kind of classroom experiences previously discussed, as well as the more obvious and immediate effects that imprisonment would have on the individual.

Looking at Fig. 4:1, we can see the significance of this process *over a period of time* where T1 represents the pre-imprisonment period, T2 the actual imprisonment and T3, the post-release period.

Fig. 4:1 SELF, TRANSFORMATION AND IMPRISONMENT**Key:**

○ - PRISONER STUDENT

□ - LEARNING CONTEXT WITHIN THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT

T_1 - TIME PRIOR TO IMPRISONMENT

T_2 - IMPRISONMENT

T_3 - POST RELEASE PERIOD

The offender arrives at the prison with, crudely speaking, his identity embedded in previous life experiences. The new experiences which occur whilst imprisoned - which may include learning and classroom interactions - form the new context C, (which breaks down into C1, C2, C3, etc. recall Figs. 2:4, 2:5) at T_2 and these experiences impact upon personal identity in some cases creating a 'new' identity embedded in a new context. In this sense, learning may have a powerful effect on individual students in the prison classroom, an effect which is carried into T_3 and the sense of self which an ex-prisoner carries into this time period is of profound significance in terms of post-release behaviour.

Identity is loosely described, in dictionary form, as 'Who or what a person/thing is' and any analysis of the relationship between undertaking a Higher Education course and personal development is immersed in two fundamental concerns. Firstly, an appropriate

conceptual model of identity is needed and secondly, the relationship between that concept of identity, personal experience and personal development needs examining.

Time spent reflecting on the nature of one's identity is an intellectual activity usually pursued by those who have chosen for example, to embark upon a career in psychoanalysis. For prisoners it is an option for 'passing time' in situations where long periods are spent alone through the enforcement of others. The men in Full Sutton told me that they 'use' their time often as a means for reflecting upon identity in the sense of 'who they are', but is identity simply a question of how individuals see themselves, is it related to one's sense of national or cultural belonging or individual lifestyle, image, or even the way in which one is perceived by others? These are all matters for analysis and interpretation on many theoretical levels.

Some of the complexities can be resolved, however, if we consider that identity is formed as a continuous social process which cannot and does not occur in isolation from other people. Prisoners are by no means exempted from this process either before imprisonment or during it, and certainly not beyond release. The problem, if articulated as such, arises because anyone who is deemed to have transgressed against society's formal or informal codes of behaviour, is labelled as deviant and the issue of their identity becomes an ever-present and constant reminder of how we each have the ability and power to judge others solely on the basis of a 'label'.

Any examination of identity within a prison context, *per se*, will be inter-disciplinary and characterised by a diversity of epistemologies - social, psychological, cultural and so on - but the questions underpinning this analysis can be formulated as follows:

- i) How did the prisoner see himself prior to imprisonment?
- ii) Has that perception of self changed whilst imprisoned?

iii) What role, if any, has the experience of prison Higher Education played in qualifying, reinforcing or 'changing' that sense of self?

I will examine each of these under the following headings:

- i) Pre-institutional Identity
- ii) Institutional Identity

PRE-INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY

As stated above, a prisoner's identity is embedded in all his previous life experiences and, unless he has experienced imprisonment previously, a prisoner will not perhaps immediately perceive himself as 'a prisoner' even though he may acknowledge that others see him as 'an offender' simply by virtue of the fact that he has been sentenced through the courts. That 'pre-institutional' identity cannot be easily discarded and has to be reconciled with the 'new' identity imposed by the prison, a place described in a classic passage from Goffman as:

A total institution... a place of residence and work where a large number of like-minded individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. (Goffman; 1961; xiii)

The experience of imprisonment then, may be interpreted at best as a change or transformation in one's reality (Berger, P.; Luckmann, T.; 1984; 176), a 'switch of worlds' which will undoubtedly have an effect on how the person concerned sees himself. Many people embrace change or transformation in their lives; equally there are many who wholeheartedly repudiate it. Prisoners, in a sense, find themselves removed from a world of familiarity to an unfamiliar one for which they rarely express a preference. They find themselves locked 'between realities' in that they inhabit a physical environment characterised by the most rigid forms of control and restraint, but where, perhaps

mentally they occupy a quite different world enabling them to retain a degree of autonomy and personal identity.

Their experiences of time and space are complicated by the issues of survival in an environment not of their choosing, and one which they may well have to occupy for life. The worlds of home, family, work, leisure and incarceration are conflated on the one hand, but, for many prisoners they are kept quite separate and distinct. The question of what happens to an individual's sense of personal identity in these circumstances is therefore going to be of considerable significance in evaluating the outcomes of learning within the prison classroom.

It could be argued that the sense of pre-institutional identity which a prisoner has is no more and no less than all that he believes himself to be before being sentenced and convicted. Prisoners have life-chances, status, images and life-styles which are unique to them and in which their identity is closely embedded prior to any alleged offence being recognised, acknowledged and punished by their social peers. This identity is not simply lost or cast-off as soon as an alleged offender enters prison, but that is not to say that certain individuals deny it or temporarily put it aside as a strategy for survival. This in a closed institution where, for some, a 'new' identity has to be forged *in order* to survive the term of imprisonment.

In effect, what has happened at the point of entry to prison, or in some cases at the point of arrest, is that an individual has been placed into a world of strangers, and relatively hostile ones at that. In short, the 'established' community have determined that the individual offender is to be recognised only as an 'outsider' (Elias, N.; Scotson, J.; 1965).

Entering a prison and facing the prospect of a long sentence constitutes a culture shock of some magnitude in terms of personal experience, especially if the sentence is a first sentence. Ethnic, linguistic, religious and national identities are all brought into the long-term prison which is frequently organised as though prisoners were simply one homogeneous mass, despite attempts by some practitioners within the penal system to acknowledge and respect the heterogeneity of the prison population. Removal from familiarity in the outside world also means that prisoners have little or no access to the modern social environment in which image, life-style, status-consciousness and self-assurance can be 'bought' and/or 'exchanged' in the market-place with relative ease (Bauman 1990; Giddens; 1990; 1991; Hall 1992; Harvey; 1989; Lash, 1990). To some extent echoes of these practices can be discerned within the prison as individuals try to create or re-create a familiar landscape within which to locate themselves, but the negation of individuality and hence identity, is built into the prison regime. A name becomes a number, personal possessions are limited by the amount of personal property which a prisoner is allowed to retain whilst imprisoned, (known as volumetric control - this amounts to what can be contained in two boxes of a specified size), and, with the exception of association time on the wings or at visits, the business of everyday life is conducted and reflected upon within the confines of a cell, a workshop, the education block, the gym, the Chapel or the exercise yard.

The complex debates surrounding the nature and purpose of punishment may well address the issue that those who offend have relinquished any rights whatsoever to be treated and acknowledged as individuals, that identity is only something to be gleaned from mugshots, but because the formation of identity is a continuous social process, an individual arriving at prison cannot discount what has gone before and neither should

those around him. The transition into the world of the total institution may be less traumatic if the individual is a hardened recidivist, but the impact can still be profound in relation to matters of self-esteem adding yet a further dimension to the identity profile:

It is characteristic of inmates that they come to the institution with a 'presenting culture' ...derived from a 'home-world' - a way of life and a round of activities taken for granted until the point of admission to the institution.... Whatever the stability of the recruit's personal organisation, it was part of a wider framework lodged in his civil environment - a round of experience that confirmed a tolerable conception of self.. (Goffman; 1961; 13)

The tolerable conception of self which is brought to the prison gate may very rapidly deteriorate into an intolerable one - the ultimate and tragic outcome of this is to become suicidal whilst imprisoned, (Dooley; 1991; Liebling; 1991) as is frequently recognised by those imprisoned and those who imprison. The processes of displacement, dislocation, de-centring, fragmenting and disembedding of identity (Giddens; 1991; Hall; 1992) all gain heightened significance when a student comes down to the class and says 'You know, poor Jim topped himself last night. I can't believe it, he was one of the O.K. ones. I saw him just before we were banged up as usual with the cocoa. They said it was a heart attack, but you could see the wire, do they think we're all stupid? He seemed O.K. but what have they done to make him do that?' In a prison environment to be one of the 'O.K.' ones means that you appear to be able to survive all the negativity of the place, that you have, according to the men, accepted your sentence, accepted the discipline, control and regime of the prison and confronted the possible long-term effects and consequences of these on your sense of self in order to retain a relatively high sense of esteem. In Jim's case any strategy for survival quite sadly failed.

The micro-reality of the prison environment is permeated with issues of identity, identity crises, loss of identity and the adoption of multiple identities as a potential strategy for

survival through the simultaneous balancing of layers of different identities and reflections on them. Prisoners are of course, not unique in their capacity to do this, but find the necessity to do so more immediate than most in order to combat the removal from familiarity. However, as a strategy, it is not always successful.

The weaving together, then, of present experiences with memories of past ones and speculation on the future, as witnessed in classroom interaction and conversation, can be interpreted furthermore as evidence that pre-institutional identity cannot be discarded and that it is this, coupled with the capacity for reflexive thinking which helps to synthesise new experiences into meaningful practice. The fact that future behaviour patterns of ex-offenders are judged often solely on the merits of previous offending behaviour and not in relation to any personal development which has occurred in the more positive sense in the period of imprisonment is of some concern.

There are those offenders who balance their notions of self as an offender against their concern for others such as close family members or the elderly (recall classroom conversation 3:7). Most people beyond the prison are surprised to learn that prisoners do, in actual fact, display consideration, thoughtfulness and sympathy towards anyone. The inbuilt prejudices of those in wider society lead to a confusion for policy makers and practitioners which renders it difficult to assess the outcomes of learning in terms of prisoners gaining self-esteem in the eyes of others. The following comments from a student arose during an analysis of New Right housing policy and the impact of the Government's right-to-buy campaign. They again show the 'weaving' process at work, but illustrate how the student personalises issues with reference to his partner about whom he cared a great deal:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 4:1

1 I could've had at least two homes if it hadn't been for women! I had the cash you
 know from... no problem, but they wouldn't have it. This was before I met [his
 partner]. She now rents a private house - if she gets any rass [trouble] she tells
 the landlord about me. I'd sort him out. I once went to rent a semi - it was lovely,
 5 you know, pond in the garden, I went to pay a deposit then shit, they come back
 at me, 'cos I'm, you know, Black - soon as they saw me, it was O.K. over the
 phone, and say someone else want it. I ask for money back. I ain't takin' that shit.
 It's a good idea though to have property - it's collateral, you can rent it, it pays
 your mortgage. You see my parents, they want to go back to Jamaica, they don't
 10 know what they're doin', they want to sell the house, 'cos I ain't there. I would've
 bought it from them, then it's theirs. They'll get ripped off. Never mind, I can buy
 it when I get out.

The previous life experiences of this particular student were irrevocably bound with his ethnicity and culture (lines 5-7) and his interactions with others based on prejudice. The context of the discussion had led him to reflect back on a specific event (line 4) and project his experience forward to speculate on post-release events (line 10-12), and the manner in which he will potentially deal with anticipated injustice towards close family members. All of this was, in turn, grounded in this student's very strong sense of personal identity thus adding a further context to his experiences at T2 (recall Fig. 4:1), where the cultural identity of Black prisoners reveals itself as a powerful mechanism for personal reflection within prison (Chigwada; 1991), often due to their disproportionate representation and criminalisation of the Black community.

Debates on social and cultural divisions within the context of the course would frequently reveal the importance of retaining a strong and coherent sense of personal identity within the prison environment. Students would, however, comment on the isolation they felt at 'losing' everyone once they entered a prison and having to build or re-build new relationships inside which would - as one student suggested - replace the 'mirrors' that help to reflect who we are throughout our lives.

The loss of control over the course of one's life (Sapsford, 1983, 26) which prisoners do experience is further complicated by their loss of control which they experience within the lives of significant others. Not necessarily in a restrictive or negative sense but as a result of the lack of day-to-day contacts which form the social networks of interdependency so characteristic of human life. Personal, social, cultural and emotional frameworks, themselves acting as controls on behaviour, are brought to the prison and, in turn they provide further frameworks within which a central identity has been constructed.

That central identity can be retained, and for the most part and against all odds, prisoners seem to develop a capacity for sustaining that sense of self whilst imprisoned. However, trivial events or situations which occur whilst in prison, in addition to the more serious occurrences of violence, rioting, disturbances and so on, can undermine seriously a prisoners sense of identity, particularly if close family members or friends have become distanced.

One student described how his son and daughter were brought up as Rastafarian. The following comments reveal how his own sense of identity was grounded in a continuous sense of self which had developed over a long period of time in association with others (line 4). The conversation had arisen in the context of a discussion relating to the importance of changing images, lifestyles and identities throughout the twentieth century for young people.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 4:2

- 1 Bunny: You gotta come to terms with the fact that they can choose. I remember, my son he came to visit here, he had his locks cut - oh man - but what can you do? They gotta right to choose, but it was awful. Then, you see, my daughter, she done the same. But it's no problem. But it's the belief and

5 the culture. Then you get the 'folly-dread' who are not real Rasta they just do it for the style. You see it in here. Fashionable.

Dudley: Yeah, not like you, they pretend. They just have the look, not the culture.

Bunny: That's it, man, you got it.

The conversation also shows again how the subject matter in this instance, youth culture in modern British society, had triggered a process of reflection on the student's own lifestyle and current circumstances (line 5, 8) and he continued to describe how as a parent, he believed that he was obliged to guide his children whilst they were young in the Rastafarian way of life. As his children had grown to adolescence, this was no longer possible particularly as a result of his imprisonment and he felt that he no longer had any parental control in terms of reinforcing specific cultural practices or beliefs.

A further conversation pertaining to the issue of gender inequality and cultural difference again shows how a prisoner's sense of cultural identity can be brought into a prison environment, retained and perhaps reinforced through the learning process as below. Duke was Nigerian, but anxious that we recognised he was from the Ibo people and not Yoruba. He had lived in Britain for a long time and was married (to one wife) with three children. English was his second language.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 4:3

1 Anne: ...however, you may find that any analyses of class differences in British society are further compounded by issues of gender ...

Duke: How do you mean?

5 Anne: Well, it is often felt that women still do not have the same status, for example, as men. Their position in this particular scale (the Registrar General's Classification) is felt to be largely ignored by some theorists because...

Duke: I tell you something? My grandfather had five wives and ...

Lawrence: What? Five? I had it all on managing one!

- 10 Duke: Yes! Well, some can have up to thirty...
- Lawrence: You're joking? Good God - I'd go mad...
- Anne: You'd find it hard to keep up with the supplying of Chanel and Dior dresses (a reference to an earlier conversation)...
- Lawrence: Absolutely ...imagine the expense!!
- 15 Duke: Ah well, you see, in Nigeria, the women are useful, you need many wives to work for you on the farm. It's cheaper that way...
- Lawrence: I couldn't agree more - but thirty? how do you manage them? How do you keep the peace?
- 20 Duke: They are needed to work, they each have their own job, you see, some work on the land, some cook, some clean, some sweep...
- Lawrence: No, I can't see it! Sweeping? My ex-wife? She'd go barmy, and if I so much as looked at another woman, let alone had twenty-nine more wives!!
- 25 Anne: There's the cultural difference for you Lawrence. It's a way of life there. I agree it might not work here...
- Lawrence: You're not kidding! I can't even begin to comprehend that!
- Duke: No, you see they all take it in turns... (to work at different jobs...)
- Lawrence: What? A different one each night...? Well, I can't argue with that I suppose...
- 30 Duke: No, no - well yes actually, the choice is for the master...
- Anne: He chooses?
- Duke: Yes, it's accepted, but the women are very powerful. It is not how it is here. I think they are ...they have more power, because they have to watch for their sons... to take over...
- 35 Lawrence: This is quite amazing, it's all new to me.
- Anne: But this has gone on for hundreds, if not thousands of years in Africa...
- Duke: Oh yes, the number one wife is most powerful.
- Anne: What about daughters then?

Duke: They not so important - only for getting married. They go to other farms
40 and work...

Lawrence: Tonight No. 2! Come in No. 3... No jealousy?

Duke: No, that is how it is there, there is no need. They are provided for and
have food and shelter. These are more important ...any jealousy is for the
45 sons to be favourite. Each has her own home for her and the children stay
with her unless master wants to see them. He has big house in centre...

Lawrence: I'll go for that...

Despite having lived in Britain, Duke's sense of identity was firmly embedded in his cultural past. As in previous examples of classroom conversations, he is drawing on memories to weave together new knowledge and old experiences, but his sense of self in terms of status as a man was apparent in the light-hearted interchanges with Lawrence and universal humour expressed at the expense of what it was to be 'female' in different cultures. Both men derived a great deal of enjoyment from these interchanges of cultural practices and beliefs, as I did also. The conversation extended beyond what is recounted above as Lawrence further questioned Duke on the practicalities of such relationships between men and women quite seriously. Duke was able to draw on his personal experiences of visiting his grandfather as a child and on the status afforded to him because of the number of wives he had, constantly reiterating the point about women having power over each other and manipulating inheritances to their advantage, through the male line. He finally added that his own status was assured in quite a different way by virtue of the fact that his own father held a position of importance in education in Nigeria, had a car and that his brother had been to University. 'Now, I do same, this is what is important.' He was in the first year of a fifteen year sentence.

If then, it is possible to claim that prisoners retain a strong sense of identity which is embedded in their pre-institutional life experiences, then it is simply not adequate to

claim that they 'change' in the sense of completely rejecting their past lives. Their experiences of imprisonment may well prove to have coloured their respective world views and thus accrue to matters of personal development, but how that actually occurs is a complex issue which can be subjected to numerous interpretations.

For prisoners facing a long sentence, losing sight of the social, physical and cultural landscapes in which their identity has become embedded can be a demoralising process. Some prisoners, however, seek 'replacement' identities or 'temporary substitutes' against which to locate themselves, others experience the loss of familiarity so acutely, that, indeed, a new identity shaped by 'prisoner-status' emerges, transcending all that went before. Identity and the effects of the prison as an institution on behaviour patterns, at that point, have become inseparable.

INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY

As we have seen in preceding chapters, prisoners do adopt a number of strategies to survive their period of imprisonment, retain a coherent sense of self and a degree of autonomy to cope with what is frequently described as a potential period of personal deterioration (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972; 86). We have also considered that a powerful motivator for attending educational courses whilst imprisoned is that it is perceived as 'something to do' in a situation where 'time' has become associated with 'doing time' and therefore a punishment.

As Cohen and Taylor indicate, 'doing time' means that an individual '...is continually and inevitably plunged into considerations about the meaning of time.' (1972; 90). Time has become prison time, a controller which ensures that those temporal concerns which are present in normal everyday life for most people - financial, domestic and social matters -

are no longer present in the lives of prisoners who then have to order and structure their life in terms of a prison regime. In addition, the sheer amount of time spent alone, which varies according to one's behaviour whilst imprisoned, encourages the capacity for self-reflection or even self-analysis, in what, for some prisoners, is best captured by Cohen and Taylor's description of imprisonment as a meaningless world consisting of '...temporally undifferentiated days.'(1972; 93).

In terms of what happens to one's sense of personal identity, imprisonment can be characterised as a period when any activity undertaken becomes essential to retaining that sense of identity *or*, as stated above, crucial to the creation of a new, albeit temporary, one. In this sense, the personal identity of a prisoner could be said to be developing continuously and the fact that certain prisoners may choose to 'do' education in order to pass the time marks off that particular experience as a 'time-marker' which may later be interpreted as a period of personal achievement.

In Cohen and Taylor's approach, the creation of these 'time-markers' amounts to the creation of a 'subjective clock' which protects the individual prisoner from a certain degree of deterioration. The group interaction characteristic of particular prison activities in itself, becomes a kind of substitute for the subjective time-markers which form the reality of everyday social life, thus shaping the prisoner's sense of 'who he is'.

Writing on the scope and diversity of Higher Education courses taking place within prisons, Lawrence points out that:

As important as knowledge is in this context, the *milieu* [my emphasis] surrounding the educational experience is of almost equal importance. (Williford; 1994; 43)

Educational attendance in prison is, of course, only one aspect of prison life, and that experience has to be contextualised not only within the immediate prison environment,

but within the meaningful life experiences of the individual prisoner-student. However, the so-called 'sense of fraternity' or 'campus - camaraderie' which has been demonstrated in studies of prisoner-students undertaking Higher Education courses in the USA (Williford; 1994) is also typical of the experience of the students on the Leeds course within Full Sutton.

If, for example, anyone from the class had spent time in 'Seg.' (on segregation in a separate part of the prison away from normal association and regime), attempts were frequently made by men in the class to see if the person concerned was alright, or indeed if he was still in the prison. On one occasion, Rob rejoined the group after fourteen weeks in Seg. where there is little or no access to media and little or no access for contact with others. Lawrence and Ted greeted him cheerily, but with some concern in their knowledge that time spent in Seg. can have a most demoralising and dispiriting effect on prisoners. They shook hands and welcomed him 'back', with the remarks, 'Do you need anything? Can I get you anything?' The concern was very genuine, that Rob would be O.K. after so long away and he held onto their hands a moment longer than one would ordinarily do, saying that he was quite alright given the circumstances. Such instances indicate the type of solidarity and support for each other that prisoners find and share in their common identity as prisoners. The 'collective prisoner identity', such as it does exist, manifests itself mainly through fraternity and in opposition to authority.

Similarly, on another occasion, one morning whilst in class, there had been continual disturbance in the form of about three-quarters of an hour of verbal abuse shouted at 'the system' from an outside compound in the Seg. area of the prison. The bawling and screaming could be clearly heard by everyone on education. A prisoner was protesting loud and long at his treatment within the dispersal system and the incident unsettled the

men in class who claimed they had not quite experienced this kind of protest at Full Sutton before. Dudley declared that the person concerned had been 'stirrin' up all manner of racist shit' on the wings and had a history of anarchic prison behaviour, although he did not express it quite like that, and a reputation for attempting to 'stir' prisoners from their apparent apathy, 'When we don't need the rass'. Vince said, 'Why don't they do something? Why don't they take him away? I can't work like this'. Then rather unexpectedly, a Middle-Eastern student, Rosan, who had completed the course a few weeks before, came into the classroom. He was well liked and respected as an older member of the prison community, serving thirty-five years of which he had done about eleven. 'I come to give you all message from chief [the Education Officer]', he said, waving his hands theatrically and with a flourish, 'for I too am not able to concentrate on my studies [he was studying for the O.U.]. It's all will power, if you have the will power you will ignore the disturbances, she said.' He then shook my hand, made demonstrative gestures towards the window, pointed at the side of his head, laughed and then disappeared, having greatly relieved the tension that was rapidly mounting in the classroom whilst the segregated prisoner ranted and screamed for all the world (not) to hear. Again the collective institutional identity manifests itself through support and the creation of as much of a 'positive milieu' as is possible under the circumstances.

The extent to which this can be described as affecting an individual's sense of identity whilst imprisoned is, I believe, significant in assessing the potential positive outcomes of the learning process in prison education. As Lawrence also indicates, it is an important 'by-product' of a prison education programme:

This is especially true when one considers the atmosphere of mistrust and outright paranoia that permeates all prisons. To engender a positive milieu such as that within a prison program of any type is indeed a remarkable achievement. (Williford; 1994; 44)

The individual, once imprisoned is, in short, marred by feelings of low self-esteem which can only be overturned through participation in those activities which can be marked by positive achievement in some capacity or another. Thus the benefits of such programmes, whether Higher Education courses or otherwise, impact upon prisoners' perceptions of self and identity as they become part of the 're-building' or 're-qualifying' process for those removed from the legitimate order which counter-balances the low self-esteem. The re-building process may refer to the acquisition of a more positive sense of self, whilst re-qualifying can refer to those instances where prisoner students intend to use their newly acquired academic knowledge / skills to help in their reintegration into society. Imprisonment is, after all, no more and no less than:

...a 'shaming' that annihilates the individual's relationship with the social world and reduces his or her identity to nothing more than the meaning of an act of deviance. (Jones and d'Errico; 1994; 2).

It thus becomes possible to argue the case that prison Higher Education, has the potential to restore that relationship with the social world that prisoners have seemingly lost. The 'shame' and/or humiliation to which Jones and d'Errico refer, is thereby lessened and in so doing, something more positive with regard to the negative perceptions of their own identity which many prisoners acquire in prison, is restored. Furthermore, contributions are made towards developing a more positive identity. If, in addition, the prisoner has chosen to pursue his studies within the domain of social science, then his view of the social world and knowledge of relationships within it, will be heightened by the particular learning processes documented earlier in this study. The so-called 'loss of identity equipment' (Goffman; 1968), 'civil death' or even 'curtailment of self' characteristically experienced by prisoners is therefore modified.

The presentation of self, the identity or even the stereotypical image of the prisoner which most people carry is not fixed. The manner in which I, as a tutor or researcher, perceive a prisoner-student is determined by the situation in which we both interact and it is shaped by that interaction. A prison officer, on the other hand, will not, for the most part, perceive the prisoner as a student. The group would often be sensitive to these differences of perception, acknowledging that they were behaving differently whilst in class compared to 'wing behaviour' for no other reason than the class itself did not represent or symbolise the prison authority to which they were all subjected. 'In here we can be ourselves' was a very common assessment of their classroom experiences, 'we're not just a number'.

Goffman's analysis of life in a total institution, written in 1957, describes the indignities of life in an environment where most daily activities '...are incompatible with [the inmates'] conception of self.' (1968; 31). The negation of self, he argues, becomes such a feature of institutionalised life that the individual prisoner may take on a kind of 'disidentifying role' in the face of so much alienation. In other words, a boundary emerges between one's 'being' and one's 'self'.

What then becomes important for prisoners is to attempt to sustain the idea that they are indeed, still 'someone-to-be-considered'. Education in prison, can become a means to that end, providing a sense of purpose, of worth, where in the classroom, self-determination and autonomy may be restored. As Tim explained, 'I'm doing the course so that I can keep a link, you know, retain some kind of contact with the outside world. You have to or you'd go mad'.

Retaining a sense of identity in prison has become, by this stage, so closely interwoven with issues of self-esteem, personal confidence, self-worth, the subjective interpretations of others, presentation of self and so on, that the conceptual distinctions between self and identity are blurred. In reality, the focus must shift towards acknowledging that imprisonment does affect all these things and that each of them has a part to play in the continual process of identity formation that occurs throughout life. Whatever happens to an individual person who enters a penal establishment, those experiences will be 'new' and in many cases totally unfamiliar. In this respect they will impact upon that person's sense of self profoundly and impact just as profoundly upon the perceptions of others towards him.

That 'new' experience has been almost universally described by practitioners as one characterised by an overwhelming sense of personal failure - if not in relation to the nature of the alleged offence, in relation to the effects on one's family, peers, friends etc. The sense of failure, it is argued, is persistently reinforced by attitudes from those in positions of authority, power, and/or control within the prison, so any success or achievement in any area counters the more negative aspects of being labelled as some kind of social outcast.

As Goffman also indicates, the sense of having been exiled from living can produce a demoralising effect on prisoners who have adopted those strategies for survival which they feel are appropriate for them. In answer to the question 'Do you feel that you have changed as a result of doing the course, and if so in what respect?', one student replied as follows:

In a prison context, attending a course like this also involves 'pain'. To open up one's emotions, accept knowledge, interact with others, get to grips with some of the 'heavier' aspects of society can be an extremely painful alternative to 'switching off' and 'switching

on' again when it (the sentence) is all over. This 'switch off' is the key survival strategy beyond the study group, where life is invariably dealt with at an artificial/superficial level. [Goffman's dis-identifying role?]. To 'switch on' when surrounded by so many negative influences in the broader scenario [of the prison], whilst examining volatile topics in the Leeds University scenario, can frequently involve delicate balancing acts - and painful reminders of the environment for those who are wrong-footed! (Ted, 1996).

In a similar manner a life prisoner who made a highly positive yet very brief impact on the group, explained his departure in a letter as follows:

After deep and careful consideration I have decided that due to the nature of my sentence and the restrictions that it places on me mentally in order to survive imprisonment, the topics involved in studying sociology evoke within me emotions and desires which are not conducive to my mental well-being.

The more I learn of life outside i.e. family, recreation, personal autonomy, peoples rights, freedom, the respect that people afforded creates within me or should I say brings to the fore within me a deep desire for such things especially a heartfelt desire to be a free person in such society.

With at least ten years to serve of my sentence left... I have to suppress such thoughts and desires in order to stave off depression in order to survive in the prison environment. With a recommended natural life sentence hanging over me I cannot afford to be contemplating the joys of freedom... (Anon., 1994)

It would seem that the prisoner *has* to develop an understanding of his own identity which embraces the notion that he has acquired the master label of criminal once imprisoned and all that is socially and culturally associated with it, in the eyes of his classroom peers and in the eyes of the prison authorities. However, if one aligns this with all that is associated socially and culturally with undertaking a degree course, then understanding the complexities of the prisoner's perceptions of self becomes clearer. Role-conflict and the issues of role-set as articulated by Merton (1957), are commonplace within the prison setting. To illustrate the point crudely, the outcome of prisoners attending education classes for some members of the prison staff, is simply that the prisoners are being kept occupied and they do not have to be responsible for them; for

the prisoners undertaking a degree course, the outcome, even if touched by caprice, may be an increase in self-esteem and status both within prison and outside - or not.

The linkage between doing degree level work and 'feeling good about yourself' whilst imprisoned is recognised, if not always appreciated, at international levels of penal policy and practice. The outcomes which can be associated with the idea that identity is profoundly affected as a result of involvement with Higher Education programmes in prison can be discerned in comments from prisoners themselves which indicate the potential scope of identity transformation which can occur through learning and its importance in fostering a more positive perception of self:

Critics of my education (as well as other inmate-students) have claimed my degrees are worthless, alleging that by the time I am released, I will have forgotten the knowledge and skills learned. ...The value of education well exceeds what I have learned about a particular subject; it is about opening the mind, invigorating the spirit, and extending the vistas of human possibility.

Upon reflection, there is virtually no comparison between the lost, frightened teenager who entered the back gate of the Reformatory a dozen years ago and the focused, confident man who now resides in this institution. ...I now see myself as a man who recognises his own self-worth and potential to be a positively contributing member of his community ... (Taylor; 1994; 133).

Such outcomes from educational practice will undoubtedly shape the prisoner-student's (prison) institutional identity which is 'layered' upon his own distinctive background and ideas (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972; 147). In this sense the context of learning is deeply embedded in 'who' a prisoner is and any classroom interaction has to be contextualised with reference to a plurality of identities because the so-called 'new' institutional identity does not replace or negate that which was always-already there:

It is not just the history of the wing that is important to the inmate culture; we must also take account of the history of the men who make up its population. (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972; 148)

The students themselves would regularly provide insights into these mechanisms at work throughout the learning process as seen in the following conversation where education itself was being discussed as a form of intellectual capital:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 4:4

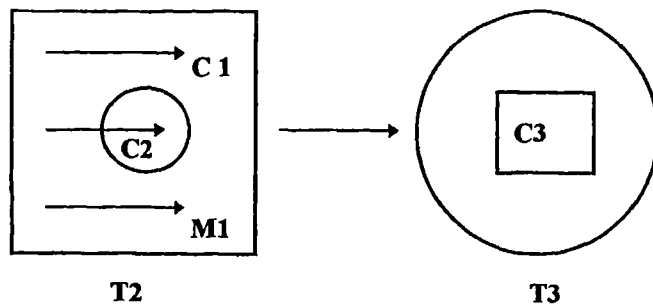
- 1 Ted: Look at in here; you might come down to education, to this class and find the teacher's talking crap all the time; you leave 'cos you can't handle it, so you've lost out on something...
- Andrew: No, it's not like that - you choose. It's about self-fulfilment. You don't know if the teacher's going to be crap until you've been on the course, you don't know that beforehand...
- 5
- Ted: ...but how many of us in here would choose to go on, say, the Anger Management course? That's like Sociology and the guy's a prat, so nobody goes...
- 10 Andrew: That's totally different, it's part of the system. If you want a Cat. C, you go on his course, if you want fulfilment for yourself, you come here.

As well as the customary learner-material interaction taking place here, in which students had been looking at the theories of Bourdieu on the importance of the acquisition of 'cultural capital' in the twentieth century, (Bourdieu, 1977), further contextual elements can be added to the total process such as the organisation of prison education (lines 1-6); attitudes towards teaching staff (lines 2, 8); attitudes towards the prison regime (lines 4, 8, 10); student interaction in the classroom (two fairly dominant group members with very strong opinions); motivation for attending courses (line 4/5) and the individual student's sense of personal esteem and achievement within the prison environment (lines 2, 10, 11). Following through this process in diagrammatic terms, one sees at T2, (see Fig. 4:2) that the prisoner-student's perception of self is, in the classroom, deeply coloured by the immediate context of the institution (C1) but simultaneously affected by any sense of achievement which results from subjectively interpreted positive interaction

on the part of the student: (C2). The mechanisms (M1) which trigger these processes occur within classroom conversations, as above at lines 1, 4, 10, 11, - the integrative processes of 'reflection', 'connectivity' and 'assimilation' (recall Chapter Three), - and are carried forward as C3 into the post-release period as (T3).

The important point to note about the diagram is the fact that aspects of the *complete* learning context have been assimilated by the prisoner-student and as such are likely to become part of the store of memories which in turn, have the potential to become part of the 'personalising' of the learning which is then advanced into learning outcomes. As we have seen earlier this has the potential in itself to be retained and used by individuals as they 'go about the business of everyday life' (Bauman; 1990; 195). Prisoners do go about the business of everyday life whilst in prison and after release, so their retention of anything learned and assimilated from something they have undertaken whilst confined is significant for any interpretation of post-release behaviour.

Fig. 4:2 CONTEXTUAL ELEMENTS OF LEARNING CARRIED FORWARD INTO POST RELEASE PERIOD



KEY:

○ - PRISONER - STUDENT

□ - PRISON ENVIRONMENT

C1 - WHERE CONTEXT INVOLVES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR LONG PERIODS
- OF REFLECTION

C2 - STUDENT INVOLVEMENT WITH SUBJECT MATTER (SOCIOLOGY)

C3 - LEARNING CONTEXT ASSIMILATED INTO HISTORICAL MEMORY
AND EXPERIENCE

M1 - MECHANISMS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL PROCESS OF LEARNING

T2 - IMPRISONMENT

T3 - POST-RELEASE PERIOD

There is a view, however, (attributable to Cohen and Taylor), which indicates that prisoners will capitalise upon whatever chances come along to enhance their personal status whilst imprisoned because the degree of status one can cultivate there has to be maintained steadfastly in order to preserve identity throughout imprisonment. If it is the case that education contributes to that process of self-preservation through reinforcement of status, justification of particular actions or even through giving validity to existence and to personal beliefs, then the more negative impact of imprisonment in terms of 'loss of identity equipment' may well be lessened.

The personal ideologies and commitment to certain ideals which 'protect' the individual, as suggested by Cohen and Taylor, do assist in coping with the psychological impact of prison and particularly through commitment to an intense level of study at the level of Higher Education whilst imprisoned. Those personal ideologies and ideals may be further

reinforced on the course and more deeply embedded in existing identity, thus giving individual prisoner-action meaning, context and validity.

Thus far then, the sense of self and personal identity brought to the prison classroom by each student informs and shapes each classroom interaction. In turn, each of those classroom interactions informs and shapes further, or contributes towards, a developing identity. If Cohen and Taylor were right to suggest that imprisonment endangered egos to the extent that prisoners would adapt to the prison environment as they saw fit, in order to preserve crumbling egos and ideologies or to prevent personal deterioration, then the role of education would have to be described as one of rebuilding through its contribution to processes of reflexive thinking and self-examination. These processes, as we have indicated elsewhere, are shaped by the actual learning process and influenced strongly by educational content.

The views of students as expressed in classroom discussions would provide instances of how the discussion itself, when stimulated by content, would disperse through from wider concerns through to processes of self-reflection which related to matters of personal identity and an understanding of 'self'. When directly asked in more formal group interviewing 'What happens to your sense of self when imprisoned?', however, spontaneous responses were as follows:

Ram: You're stripped of it.

Anne: But what exactly are you stripped of?

Gary: I can see what you're getting at ...

David: You're not treated as human by the screws, so you don't treat them as human.

Anne: So you negate or deny your identity, both yourselves and the officers?

Ram: You've hit the nail on the head there ...

David: I'm not sure. You don't 'lose' your identity. You're just a shell. You build this facade and there are so many of those in here. There's no 'love' in here, no love at all. You can't relate ...

Garfield: I just had a visit and when they went, I got a hug. You know it made me feel so good, great it was, and I said to the screws, 'What you fuckin' lookin' at? You want one an' all?'

Similarly, in answer to the direct question 'How do you see yourself in terms of identity?', the following responses provided further evidence to support the view that personal beliefs and ideologies are closely interwoven with the individual's perception of self:

Ram: I'm a human being.

David: English.

Gary: European.

Garfield: Anti-British, ain't I?

Dudley: Jamaican.

Martin: Irish.

(Garfield to David: What is there to be proud of, being English? It's a pile of fuckin' shit. How can you say that?).

Martin: I'm afraid I'd have to agree, there

David: No. You've got it all wrong. That's what I am, it's nothing to do with politics in that sense ...

The subsequent debate which took place was one of the most heated in the course of the research. It developed from the group picking up on Garfield's aside to David. Both Martin and Garfield politicised the issue of identity which, as far as David was concerned, related only to the fact that he was English by birth. They did not agree, arguing that identity was much more than this. David did not, or would not, develop his views further much to their frustration stating that it was perfectly easy to see what he

meant, but they wanted more. By this time, Gary and Dudley had started to laugh, partly because the debate was so intense, though not aggressive, and partly because I was simply watching proceedings with not a little degree of amusement and interest as something of an outsider. Then David simply asked me, because he realised what had amused Gary and Dudley, what my views were on the subject and the group listened as I explained that I tended to sympathise with Ram's view that we were all human beings belonging to one human race. This led to further debate and discussion highlighting the sensitivity of the concept of identity when people are confronted with the reality of trying to comprehend the plurality of lifestyles and cultures within an environment where each had been designated 'criminal'.

Further questioning on this particular issue was triggered in the course of debates as to the fragmenting of individual identity throughout Modernity on a wider social and cultural level. The students were discussing what constitutes identity in the modern world and the conversation was triggered by post-modern theories relating to the issues of having identities on sale in the market place (Hall; 1992). Vince's reference at line 1, below, to 'the transforming thing' related to the availability of multiple identities which people could choose and hence transform their lifestyle and their individuality as desired. The men's comments further revealed something of their understanding of self:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 4:5

- 1 Vince: It's accurate, the transforming thing. You have many identities, but you show different ones to different people I think.
- Anne: You mean you never really show your 'true' self?
- Vince: Yes, whatever that might mean. Perhaps only in close relationships.
- 5 Gary: Well, that's where you feel most at ease, most able to do that.

Vince: ...but even then you sometimes keep or hold part of yourself back, but I don't know what 'it' is really...

Gary: You are how you are, and that *is* your identity.

The pre-prison experiences of those convicted and their adaptations (or not) to prison life in terms of retaining a positive sense of self, whether through education or otherwise, means that the range of identities brought into prison and the range of identities taken out may have been profoundly shaped by those experiences. The complex identity formation and development which has occurred in prison will therefore shape and potentially direct behaviour beyond that institutional experience, just as pre-prison experiences have shaped and directed what occurs once imprisoned.

The prisoner-students on the Leeds course are very much part of a community of individuals comprising themselves, the prison authorities and staff and others who work daily within the total prison environment. The cultural continuity of the prison - or even discontinuity, in the light of certain events - is part of what can be described as the 'historical situation' of each prisoner who spends time on a particular wing of a particular prison with its unique regime, including education. Any events on the wing, for example, shape individual prisoner action and matters of solidarity or social cohesion amongst prisoners depend upon what little close interaction is allowed between them by the prison authorities. Elsewhere in the prison, apart from at times of 'association' or in other classes or activities, there appears to be little or no opportunity for strong social cohesion in an institution characterised by divide-and-rule policies for matters of security.

The fact that a strong *group* identity can be built within a classroom, despite movements, shipping-outs, transfers and so on, in addition to the reinforcing and sustaining of personal identity, is of significance in any commentary on outcomes of learning and its

potential impact on identity. Living in an environment where the consequences of one's more challenging actions can provide 'escape' from everyone in Seg., also means there is ample opportunity provided for those who choose, to embark upon processes of self-reflection and self-analysis.

The impact that this may have upon the individual prisoner in relation to a course of learning becoming embedded in the student's consciousness and historical memory to the extent that things learned may direct or influence post-release behaviour can be depicted again through recalling Fig. 4:2, only here the focus is on the context at C1. The point to note here is that the context of imprisonment involves the opportunity for the prisoner to spend long periods either alone or in isolation and can thus afford to reflect upon what may have been learned.

If we refer back to earlier sections of this study on adult learning we can reinforce the claim that adult students are in actual fact engaged in some kind of 'status passage' or movement from one status position to another via their learning (Elsley; 1986; 141). This does not mean, of course, that those who have allegedly offended immediately gain status in wider society as a result of studying in prison, but what it does mean, is that the potential exists, through that learning experience to 're-evaluate self, form new relationships and re-evaluate behaviour' (Elsley; 1986; 142). If, as Fig. 4:2 suggests, prisoners-as-students are placed in situations and circumstances which offer (even if not by choice) ample opportunity for self-reflection (C1), then Elsey's elaboration of the impact of study on adult learners in terms of future, potential change and development seems accurate in the context of this study.

Furthermore, the outcome of learning can therefore be said to involve what Elsey describes succinctly as 'dislocating effects vs. dovetailing effects' where the adult (prisoner) student somehow manages to combine the pre-learning adult identity which is perhaps fairly stable or 'complete', with a notion of self '...endlessly prone to inner directed change.' Here we have two quite distinct views on personal development, change and the adult learner which I believe have significance for recognising potential outcomes for prisoner-students who have undertaken an intensive course of study.

These views need to be assessed through questioning as follows. Is it true to state that the adult personality is, first and foremost, stabilised with any form of change brought about through education only serving to enhance the existing stability of self? Secondly, can we claim that pursuing an education course (of any description) renders the students either deviant or exceptional, simply because they have chosen to do it on the grounds that most adults do not 'normally' engage in such activities as education (especially given that a great number of adults actually do)? Thirdly, can we accept that, as a result of learning, the adult (prisoner) student has an opportunity to reflect on 'What you might become' as well as 'What you might have been' and particularly in a society characterised by pluralism with regard to individual identity?

If the impact of learning on any adult student, whether imprisoned or not, results in any of these outcomes, then the potential for shaping and moulding to 'fit' into the existing patterns of conformity and consensus may well rest with prison education programmes. On the other hand, the individual prisoner-student may simply become more 'inner-directed' with a capacity to adapt or modify personal roles and behaviour. In short, the adult (prisoner) student is achieving some kind of empowerment through learning which is embedded in personal identity.

The following classroom conversation highlights the complexity of expressing how issues of identity and sense of self within the prison environment in turn become embedded in the context of learning. The subject-matter appears to 'invite' the students to reflect back on their own lifestyle choices and on the kind of image that they wished to present to others. The actual framework of this discussion was provided through an analysis of patterns of consumption and its conceptualisation in modern society by Barthes, Bourdieu and Baudrillard.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 4:6

- 1 Andrew: If you buy a BMW it doesn't necessarily convey status because there are different kinds, for example, different exhaust pipes - series three, five and seven. It's the same with Mercs.
- 5 Ted: You're talking about 'Blackman's wheels' here aren't you? But for Baudrillard it's all to do with how you feel. You might feel good if you get in a BMW. You say you like cars? (to Andrew). It must therefore change you....
- Andrew: No, it doesn't. Look I'm still me at the end of the day...
- Allan: Yes, but other people...
- 10 Andrew: No, I am still the same individual.
- Frankie: But if you buy a big house in a posh area, then you're different.
- Andrew: ...(to Allan) but that's only other people, you're still the same. Just because you buy an expensive house or car doesn't mean you'll change. Why doesn't this guy (Baudrillard) come up with something new? 'I shop therefore I am' - that's a load of bollocks.
- 15 Felix: He's not saying anything - he's just stating the obvious... 'We become that which what we buy makes us'?
- Allan: You could turn it round - what you buy makes you what you are!
- Andrew: Yes, but I like cars a lot, I like to drive, say what we were saying earlier about the BMW - it doesn't change me, I'm me, I just get in one and drive it around...
- 20 Ted: Yes, but you mean to tell me you don't feel different?

Andrew: That's not the issue...

Ted: Yes, but do you feel different?

25 Andrew: I'm still the same person - O.K. it might make me feel good...

Allan: And what about everyone else then? How do they see you? That's the symbolic meaning...

Andrew: No, that's all wrong, bullshit.

30 Anne: You mean you believe it only changes you for the instant? The instant that you're driving the car, because surely, that's exactly what...

Andrew: Exactly, then you're still the same person the rest of the time.

(This debate continued at great length, becoming extremely lively and heated in relation to the symbolic meaning of items 'consumed').

Andrew at lines 1, 8, 10, 12-15, 19, 20, 23, 28, displays a kind of resistance to the material probably because it was near the mark in terms of describing a particular pattern of human behaviour and was anxious to make it appear as though the theoretical generalisations made about status, image and ownership of specific goods, did not apply to him. The other students were equally anxious to point out that there was more than a grain of truth in what was being said, attempting to draw Andrew into some kind of acknowledgement of the fact that it is perfectly acceptable to behave in such a manner because everyone does it.

All the learning processes described in earlier sections of this study are present as students engage in intense interaction, drawing on memory, life experience and sense of self together with common-sense knowledge (lines 4, 18, 19, 22, 31) to synthesise the subject matter into the total process of learning. The discussion itself actually continued over into the following week in this particular case, such was the interest in considering

seriously the relevance of these theories to the individual and to themselves. When Allan remarked 'Look at what you've started !' the following week, whilst the class were still discussing these issues the implication was that he, along with his student peers had become so involved with the studying of this particular topic (theorising consumption) that they were able to 'detach' themselves from their immediate circumstances of imprisonment.

There has to be recognition of the fact that this kind of discussion impacts upon individual students to the extent that they do not 'forget' that particular learning experience in a hurry. It becomes absorbed into individual consciousness; in other words it becomes part of 'who they are'. There is potential to shape future behaviour here because identity itself has been placed under the analytical microscope and not simply identity in general, but one's own identity is being questioned both by one's peers and ultimately by oneself through processes of evaluation and reflexivity. The role of education in prison is in turn brought into question, if this is the case, because what happens in the classroom may well affect what happens on release.

CONCLUSION

Any analysis of a prisoner's sense of personal identity therefore, far from being a speculative process which hinges on the questions 'Who will I be?' / 'What will I be?' / 'What will I do when I get out?' must itself be embedded in the notion that self-perception and post-release behaviour are rooted in the immediate preceding institutional experiences and all that they entail. Past, present and future life experiences are synthesised through time, forming the substance of individual personality, identity and

potential behaviour patterns. T1 becomes T2 becomes T3 (recall Fig. 4:1 above), a continuum of existence and experience which actually shapes and informs behaviour.

One dimension of such an analysis is to observe *that what was learned on the course in prison may impact upon the prisoner-student in such a way as to prevent re-offending behaviour.* More negatively, one could say that the experience of imprisonment itself transcends anything learned on a course which may prevent re-offending as it simply serves to sharpen criminal tendencies due to being in constant contact and interaction with other alleged offenders. Equally, any course which involves students in critical analyses of human social behaviour may in turn provide some kind of justification or even legitimisation of the original offending behaviour.

Thus the role played by education in (re)-qualifying, reinforcing or 'changing' the sense of personal identity that prisoners acquire *as a result* of all that they experience whilst imprisoned, not to mention all that has gone before, is a significant one. The powerlessness of prisoners may be considered extreme in that they are individuals with apparently very few rights - ranging from having no political status to having little or no right of access to civilian health care - and so within the confines and constraints of the total institution ' ... the prisoner struggles to retain the freedom of intellect and the entitlement to human dignity.' (Scruton, P.; Sim, J.; Skidmore, P.; 1991; 4).

It is possible to argue, on a fairly simplistic level, that the 'post-institutional self' is a combination of the old 'pre-institutional self' and the new 'institutional' self which emerges throughout the duration of imprisonment and which may even transcend the old. In this case, a prisoner's 'new' identity, shaped by his prison experiences, may well also transcend his 'old' image of himself as an offender. The newly constructed identity has

emerged through complex human agency and interactions within the prison environment and the question most frequently asked of prisoners on release is 'Are you the same person?' As Robert T., one of the students, pointed out in a group discussion on these issues:

The nearer you get to the end of your sentence, the harder it is. All the people you know, your family and friends, think you're just going to be exactly the same - you know, make the same stupid mistakes, but you can't do that. You've changed and they don't realise. They even expect you to be the same, to do the same dumb things. It's really hard thinking about all that.

Goffman's work in *Asylums* (1957), raises the question of whether 'time spent', i.e. across the duration of a long sentence, can ever be seen to have been profitable in the sense that any 'gains' or 'profitable investment' made (e.g. achievements in education) inside, can easily be transferred over to life outside. Any 'changes' which have occurred, as Robert states above, may often be interpreted as unexpected according to Goffman. These 'changes' are brought about through 'stripping and re-organising' processes which prisoners adopt in order to survive punishments and sanctions and which are part of the ever-present inmate culture. In Goffman's analysis, rehabilitation amounts to 'resetting... self-regulatory mechanisms' which will counter-balance the cool reception and stigma that the ex-offender will experience on release. Even if a prisoner has worked hard to sustain a positive sense of self whilst imprisoned, there is no guarantee that either significant or generalised others both inside and outside of the prison will contribute to that perception.

The issue of personal identity as developing or changing as an outcome of learning in the prison classroom, thus becomes much more than simply attempting to answer the question 'How does the prisoner, and others, see himself?' - as posed at the beginning of this section. To summarise the claims here and which follow in Chapter Five that issues

of identity impinge on issues of 'What changes?', it is important to acknowledge that identity is embedded in those things which individuals 'possess' either simultaneously or at different moments in their lives, namely, ethnicity, language, beliefs, nationality, culture, gender and so on. For the prisoner, these frameworks may become fragmented upon imprisonment thus dislocating or disembedding identity to varying degrees for each individual.

It is possible to observe, I would contend, that those prisoners involved with Higher Education in a prison setting can 're-locate' their identity into new social structures through absorbing and assimilating new ideas, new skills and new knowledge into their existing understanding of social life. The resulting synthesis has the potential to influence post-release behaviour as students develop the ability or capacity to draw together what has happened in earlier life experiences with present events in order to anticipate future states of affairs. This has come about as a result of the 'weaving' together of newly acquired knowledge learned on the course with existing knowledge and personal memories. This process is '....activated and patterned through experience' and through the accumulation of knowledge and use of symbols such as language etc. which have meaning for individuals (Mennell; 1992; 211) and, in the context of this study, which can be observed in the classroom.

The experiences of each student in the prison classroom are indicative of that synthesis in that they can be conceived of as strategies for survival in terms of preserving yet simultaneously developing identity. The outcomes or consequences of those strategies are often unintended because individual prisoner-students do not have the kind of complete knowledge necessary for awareness of every complex interaction or social figuration in which they are involved. Nor does anyone else.

Attendance on a prison education programme is therefore a developmental and sequential process with a unique and dynamic character which must be understood as a personal experience for each student. It contains the potential for self-actualisation and contributes to identity-formation through time being served on a sentence and it is through that personal growth and development that the acquisition of foresight and mutual identification occurs. It is to a brief analysis of this that I now turn as a further outcome of learning in the prison classroom, an outcome which draws together most of the claims made in this study regarding the impact of Higher Education on the prisoner-student.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE - A THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION

The first section of this chapter will consider a more theoretical approach towards identifying how processes of change and development may be triggered within the learning context. Both learning process and learning outcome are interpreted as being embedded in the manner in which each prisoner mediates the experience of learning within the prison context. This has the potential to increase what Elias (1994; 452) describes as 'personal foresight', in other words, the individual (prisoner) *may* acquire a degree of responsibility in terms of appreciating the long-term consequences - either intended or unintended - of his actions. Such a perspective will emphasise how those skills acquired through academic learning have a degree of practical application, which, whilst it may not be immediately apparent for those imprisoned, may have some bearing on post-release behaviour in much the same way as transformations in perceptions of identity.

An undercurrent of this chapter is, therefore, a critique of the many claims made in the prison literature, that to 'change' someone through education suggests that the individual concerned was somehow incompetent, inadequate, lacked certain qualities of 'citizenship' and consequently needed 'improving' because he was in some way 'deficient'. In short, complex moral issues are touched upon which are inextricably linked with prison education and the individual offender.

Secondly, the chapter examines the utility of Elias's concept of 'mutual identification' as a means of identifying more precisely how prisoner-students develop empathy or sympathy towards others, through learning, which, as a more positive human trait, should not be overlooked in assessments of learning outcomes in a prison environment. The degree of importance we attach to how others interpret our consideration for others is not lost on those who are imprisoned. If we 'show' others that, as individuals, we are capable of this consideration then we are exhibiting as it were, 'in public', that we have the capacity to share what might be their misfortune. We are, in fact, capable of what Elias describes as 'inter-human identification' or 'mutual identification' (Mennell; 1992; 59). Again, there are implicit claims here with regard to identity transformation and positive perceptions of self.

Finally the chapter provides a commentary on a specific programme of education in an American prison. The commentary supports empirically the theoretical interpretation that prisoners do experience potential increases in 'personal foresight' and 'mutual identification' as they 'renegotiate identities' through their involvement and experiences with specific programmes. Issues raised serve as a reminder that such notions are not as clear cut or straight-forward as practitioners would wish them to be with regard to the prisoner. This reinforces claims in my own study that what an individual prisoner does with new knowledge is his concern and ultimately his choice.

THE 'DETOUR via DETACHMENT'

What emerges from conversations and interviews with prisoners about their thinking, change and development, is that gaining knowledge (sociologically) is akin to learning to take what Elias describes as a 'detour via detachment' (Elias; 1987; 6). It is possible,

argues Elias, that people learn to balance their involvement and detachment in relation to the growth of human knowledge as their society becomes more sophisticated, complex, characterised by interdependencies and networks - in short, more 'modern'. Elias demonstrates how the polarity of an individual's subjectivity and objectivity - preferably described as involvement and detachment in terms of their relationships to and knowledge of the external world - can be interpreted as located along a continuum through time (Mennell; 1992; 160).

Adult behaviour, he observes, is shaped by common-sense knowledge that individuals possess and this lies between the two extremes of involvement and detachment. Sometimes, behaviour can be seen to go 'too far in either direction, (where) social life becomes impossible' (Mennell; 1992; 161) and so conflicts and clashes arise because the balance between a person's involvement and detachment fails to keep impulsive behaviour or thinking in check. 'Ordered group life', which, Elias argues is dependent on maintaining this balance, therefore becomes impossible. The question raised with regards to offending behaviour and 'change' in the light of this theoretical approach, is a fairly straightforward one: are prisoners, as people in modern complex societies not sufficiently 'detached', in so far as they are 'unable' to keep themselves 'in check' and therefore need apprising of their 'defects' i.e. is it the case that those who offend are seen as, to coin a tabloid phrase, 'nutters'? Does their 'balance' need restoring and if so, what is the most appropriate manner in which to do this?

This is not to say, however, that such a balance is universally maintained by all social groups and all individuals in all situations. An individual's level of involvement and detachment with respect to any situation that is experienced is affected by whatever standards have evolved in their particular society. The balance of involvement and

detachment is not determined by the distance between, for example, the psychological and the social or the subjective and the objective, but rather is located within the modes of thinking and speaking which characterise what any society understands by 'the social' and 'the natural'. (Elias; 1987).

People's 'emotions, affects and drives' - particularly in modern industrial society - become submerged as they learn 'the highly developed public standards' characteristic of such societies. I believe it is possible to explore the outcomes of social science learning in a prison context against this theoretical background, the implication being that it is not at all desirable in modern society for certain adults to behave in ways which indicate that their 'emotions, affects and drives' colour their behaviour to such a degree of involvement that there appears to have been no indication of self-control or restraint. They are therefore 'expected' to learn self-control or restraint, either anew or otherwise, by whatever means are offered within existing penal systems. In practice, of course, and not least because of the diversity of regimes which exist within those penal systems, ignorance of the importance of maintaining a 'balance' between involvement and detachment is always going to result in a situation where people believe that 'nothing works'. It is believed therefore, that offering a course of learning which encourages tolerance of 'the other', raises self-awareness, develops sophisticated cognitive skills as well as a comprehensive understanding of the social system of which one is a part, adjusts the balance in a positive direction according to the correctional model of prison education (Ross, R.; Fabiano, E.; 1985).

If an individual achieves a balance along the continuum of involvement and detachment, then what emerges can be described, in the appropriate situation and circumstances, as the ability or capacity of people to engage in 'detour behaviour' (Mennell; 1992; 163) or

the 'detour via detachment' (Elias; 1987; 106). The growth of science (in its widest sense) which characterises modern societies is the greatest indicator of this development in, not only self-control, but control on a much wider scale over social, physical and biological forces (Mennell; 1992; 163). It would be useful and helpful, I believe, to apply the theory of detour behaviour to current penal policy and processes on the grounds that standards of self-control which people learn through socialisation and which are perceived as socially acceptable by the majority of people in society, are said to be 'lacking' in those who offend, i.e. who do not conform. Therefore, prison education programmes which adopt a correctional model are encouraged in order to 'restore and reinstate' such standards.

Elias, of course, does not make his claims with specific reference to individual offending behaviour and issues of personal development via education, but his work does offer an insight into how the interplay of micro and macro theory can provide explanations of individual human experiences. The processes of learning and accumulating a new body of knowledge, for example, have to be understood in the light of much wider social practices and realities. They are also affected and influenced by cultural and political practices and ideologies which prevail at any one moment in a society's development. Studying sociology in the prison classroom, for example, may result in many outcomes for those engaged with the discipline, but recalling Chapter Two, it can be seen that it encourages people to think via detachment or even to adopt 'detour behaviour'. An example from the classroom provides evidence where students were discussing the context of Enlightenment Thinking in Europe:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 5:1

- 1 Anne: Descartes thought that our bodies were operated by wires and pulleys with the joints connected mechanically before the philosophes started ...
- Wayne: (laughs) Well he wasn't wrong then was he?
- Anne: No, not quite ...
- 5 Rosan: There was sixth century doctor in [town in the Middle East] knew all this, his name [lost] still known in my country, his hospital still standing even today.
- Anne: Long before Descartes or anyone else seriously thought about medicine or bodies. There is a tendency to ignore ancient knowledge, ideas and philosophies.
- 10
- Rosan: Yes, now we lost it all and have to learn Western thinking.
- Anne: Yes, it's rather sad that ancient knowledge has been 'forgotten'. Maybe the world would be a better place if we remembered some of it.
- Rosan: Ah yes ...
- 15 Ronnie: You mean like the pyramids in Egypt?
- Wayne: Yes, that's right, look at them. No modern technology there, you couldn't put a feeler gauge between the blocks. They were so precise, and look at Ur, when they dug it up they found classrooms with complicated equations still on boards, hundreds of cuneiform tablets - why don't they tell us all this knowledge?
- 20
- Anne: Well, it's a form of control according to some ...
- Wayne: It's the same with the Dead Sea Scrolls ...
- Rosan: There is Mosque in Damascus for seating six thousand. Six thousand people and no microphone. Speaker is positioned in such way that all can hear, is incredible, so old, so simple, but works. Is design of building, is specially made, is very clever.
- 25
- Wayne: I think they were all good at maths!
- Anne: While we were still living in caves ...
- Rosan: (laughs) Algebra especially ...

Rosan shows considerable 'involvement' with his cultural heritage at lines 5, 23 and expresses 'sadness' and emotion at the changes in thinking and development which have taken place with respect to knowledge (line 11, 14) in the history of Western thought. He has however, sufficient 'detachment' to appreciate the comments of the others, lines 3, 24, 29 and also has 'detachment' enough to appreciate the humour which was implicit in his remark about algebra, received with groans from the men and 'You Arabs have so much to answer for!' Rosan later told me that such conversation had reminded him of his Muslim cultural roots and his 'noble ancestry' from which he had been made to feel 'detached' on a more personal level whilst in prison. For him the course helped to 'balance' the cultural dimensions of his life which were closely bound up with the nature of his offence.

Learning to think in such a manner may then be interpreted as follows:

Detour behaviour ... is an essential element in what we call 'rationality', meaning the guiding of action by means of a symbolic representation of the connection between present means and future ends. (Mennell; 1992; 164)

In other words, if people have strongly felt needs which must be satisfied (and offenders are by no means unique in displaying this most human of characteristics), then society or community must look to how that is achieved. Elias' argument suggests that, throughout modernity, the tendency has evolved to achieve satisfaction of needs by metaphorically 'taking a longer route'. In short, they might, crudely speaking, 'think twice' before choosing a particular course of action. Acquiring the necessary skills to do this is a process which takes time and involves sophisticated and complex thinking. Now this is not to suggest by any means that offenders, overall, lack the ability to think rationally - although criminological analyses have in the past suggested otherwise (Muncie, J.; McLaughlin, E.; Langan, M.; 1996) - but rather to suggest that the sophisticated thinking

skills required to cope with the complexities of modern life can be further developed or even more finely 'tuned' for those undertaking particular courses of study.

Generally described as 'cognitive skills' courses, or 'reasoning and rehabilitation' courses, 'anger management courses' or 'armed robbers courses' (a specific course which encourages armed robbers to address their 'offending behaviour' and known as such informally by all within the prison), their very existence would seem to suggest that if offenders 'learn this' or 'learn to think like this', they may not re-offend and will therefore have changed. However, if we develop Elias's approach, the matter is acknowledged as being not quite so straightforward. Mennell's rendition of Elias's ideas summarises the actuality for most people who, for a variety of reasons, do not always behave in accordance with any measure of involvement and detachment:

Sometimes the experience of imminent danger is so overwhelming that most people ...are quite unable to control their fear and attain the measure of detachment necessary to see and seize any chances of control the situation may still offer. Sometimes the process has gone so far that such chances no longer exist ...Sometimes too, a cool head may not be best suited to survival in a dangerous situation... Elias points out that to take a risk may be more realistic than a high measure of caution, to wade into battle with temper hot and courage high may be better suited to survival than sustained self-control and reflection...Finally, there are, needless to say, many instances where people hit upon a way of escaping from a critical situation more by accident than design. (Mennell; 1992; 164 commenting on Elias; 1983; 47)

If people learn to stand back in a less emotional, detached way from the processes in which they find themselves, which Elias describes in his metaphorical account of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Fishermen in the Maelstrom' (1987; 45), they can produce levels of self-control and levels of 'process-control' which result in a form of 'escape' or 'survival' when confronted by a difficult situation. The story recounts how three brothers in a boat are caught in a whirlpool. One drowns, one clings to the boat unable to do anything through fear, whilst the third, although fearful, distances himself from the

situation sufficiently to notice that cylindrical objects are not being sucked into the whirlpool as quickly. He leaps into a barrel urging his brother to do the same but he is so terrified that he remains where he is and subsequently drowns, whilst the brother in the barrel is saved because the whirlpool eventually dissipates. Elias's point is that by distancing oneself from the situation and forming an 'overview' picture of all the circumstances in a given situation, a person can see the relationships which together form a complete process or sequence of events.

The control which individuals can potentially exhibit over both self and the processes occurring around them are interdependent and complementary. The observations made in the prison classroom where the acquisition of 'detachment' is encouraged through studying social processes, structures and institutions, suggest that this form of self-control is potentially developed for some of the prisoner-students who attended the Leeds course, some more so than others. The following incident shows how 'involvement' and 'detachment' can be observed 'operating' at different levels of classroom interaction.

One student joined the group and made it clear from the outset that he had no intention of 'working' on the course. He admitted that he found some of the material marginally interesting and was 'passing time' until he was moved on. He was however, constantly joining in and remarking on the subject-matter and comments made by other students in an 'involved' way. The group, myself included, tolerated his classroom behaviour politely until the session where he had been constantly in and out of the room whilst I was explaining Marx and the legacy of Marxism for understanding class relationships in modern society. The men were interested and learning their first pieces of Marxist terminology, their 'involvement' and 'detachment' relatively balanced. Ian came back

into the class, sat down at the back of the room and shouted 'This is all fuckin' crap, ain't it?' There was a deadly silence, the men looked first at Ian, then at me because I placed the chalk on the desk, leaned forward and said very quietly (but with more 'involvement' than 'detachment') 'Would you care to tell me what you know about Marxism?' To which Ian replied, 'Er, well nothing really, but I don't care because it's all old stuff and they shouldn't even be learning that any more. It's stupid, don't you all think that? Why are you listening? If I want something, I just take it - and I've no intention of being like my Dad, working all his life ...' and he went on and on about why he chose to behave in a particular way. I eventually told him to shut up and listen, or at least stay in the class, or go away and read Marx and then return and tell the class about it when he had learned something.

The others sat quietly with a measure of 'detachment' watching this interchange between myself and Ian who suddenly realised that they were not going to adopt his point of view. He shuffled uncomfortably because no-one said anything, perhaps realising that he had not begun to 'attain the measure of detachment' which they were in the process of acquiring. He then got up and went out. He did not return to the class. The group had exercised a form of control which did not suit him and no doubt made him feel embarrassed after a number of weeks of actually tolerating his behaviour. What could have been a far more volatile situation was avoided, despite my own reactions under the circumstances because the men remained 'balanced' in terms of self-control and 'process-control'. Normally in the prison, if one individual was creating tension, other prisoners would react in an emotional manner. After his departure, Tim said, 'Good on yer, there Anne, you're just wasting your time on him. That was funny actually, you were down his throat you know. Don't worry about it.' In a later session that day, Ted said,

‘Now, what did you do to that geyser this morning? I hear you gave somebody a bit of a duffin’ up?’

Elias argues that people who find themselves in a ‘critical process’ situation (and many of those serving long sentences have done so as well as those teaching recalcitrant students), may have chances to control the situation and their emotional or affective involvement, but equally, some may not. It is all relative, depending on how overwhelming the actual experience is. Sometimes the detachment, and hence the ability or capacity to see a possible ‘solution’ is ‘unattainable’; but if that level of detachment is attained, then a realistic approach to the situation, untouched by emotion or involvement, can be adopted and the situation changed. Turning to Elias’s own remarks, it is possible to further understand the significance of acquiring these skills:

There are, however, also critical processes which have gone so far that, for those involved in them, no chance remains of keeping their physical and mental integrity intact or even securing their survival. Great though their detachment, their capacity for realistic reflection, might be, the process has reached, for them, the point of no return. They cannot save themselves, whatever they might think or do. (Elias; 1987; 47)

Hence, one of the Fishermen drowns whilst the other survives. It all depends on one’s position in the process concerned, and there is a degree of circularity involved too concerning the balance between levels of involvement and detachment. The more ‘dangerous’ a process is, in which a person finds him or herself, the more likely that his or her response will be highly emotional, thereby lessening the chance to bring things under control. In turn, the less control a person has, the more emotional is their response.

This circularity is known as a ‘physio-psychological and socio-psychological double-bind’ (Elias; 1987; 48) also described as a kind of ‘functional interdependence’ perceived

in a person's relationship to wider social processes. If this is the case, then it would be foolhardy and unnecessary to claim outright that 'attending a course of Higher Education in prison causes change in prisoners' for the interdependent processes must be examined in their totality. It is also worth noting that the double-bind, or circular process in which one becomes involved, is characterised by what Elias describes as 'pent-up structural tensions and conflicts' thus ensuring that any change or sequential development will be slow and gradual until a breakthrough has been achieved.

Through their acquisition of sociological knowledge and through learning to think sociologically, the men on the course have achieved a kind of 'breakthrough'. They have, to some extent and as far as circumstances will allow, reached 'distanciation from the situation in order to achieve detachment' (Mennell; 1992; 207). This theoretical interpretation of those changes and developments in thinking which the students on the Leeds course experienced suggests that once the detachment is acquired, it leads to a better understanding of the forces of interdependence which different groups of people exert over each other. Less elaborately put by one student, 'Now I realise what I was and why. It all makes sense after studying this'.

MUTUAL IDENTIFICATION - As an outcome of the Learning Process

As indicated in Chapter Three, the potential outcomes of the learning process in the prison classroom are located in the combined functions of historical memory and integrative processes which students weave together with the subject matter of the course into the various stages of learning. The all-important synthesis which occurs here when combined in turn, with developments in the students perception of self, as described in Chapter Four, contribute further to dimensions of personal growth grounded

in the acquisition of certain skills. These skills may be loosely described as 'affective', i.e. they involve attitude change and as with all the other processes occurring in the classroom at T2, they have been influenced by life-experience from T1 and subsequently carry over into T3. Recalling Fig. 4:1, we can say that they can be identified as both process and outcome in that an individual prisoner-student's attitude can both shape and inform classroom practice. Mutual identification is to be interpreted as an 'affective' outcome of learning in this study.

The concept of mutual identification as described by Elias is perhaps best understood in the context of his work in *The Civilizing Process* (1939) and *Involvement and Detachment* (1987), where it is seen as a dimension of the increase in an individual's socio-psychological controls throughout the development of modern industrial society.

As Mennell observes:

The social process of psychologisation is a process of transition in mutual identification. Taking more conscious account of how one's behaviour will be interpreted by others can also be described as a higher level of identification with others ... (Mennell; 1992; 102)

Elias was greatly concerned in his work to trace the development of a particular type of personality in Western Europe, a task he achieved in *The Civilizing Process* and in his commentary on what he describes as the sociogenetic and psychogenetic make-up of individuals in 'civilized' society (perhaps more familiarly recognised as the agency-structure or individual/society dichotomy of sociological theory), (Elias; 1939; xiii).

The application of such a macro-theory to the micro world of the prison is not necessarily problematic if one accepts that there needs to be a connection:

... which unfolds at the level of social psychology and social interaction between people face to face in small groups, organisations, communities and sub-cultures on the one hand, and the sort of theory and research which, on the other hand, unfolds at the level

of structure and historical development of state-societies or of human society as a whole. (Mennell; 1992; 94).

Where individuals are engaged in 'dynamic interdependence' then behaviour towards each other becomes ever more complex, interwoven and the consequences unintended. In modern societies, those chains of interdependency become so long and so far removed from each individual, that their very extensiveness fosters the development of constraints and self-control which become characteristic of wider society and characteristic of the personal development of individuals through socialisation. To this end, Elias argues that most individuals, albeit subconsciously, develop a capacity to attempt to account for the effects of both their own actions and those of other people. As societies become ever more sophisticated, 'foresight' is needed and discipline which both encourage 'conscious self-regulation' (Elias; 1994; 445). The development of 'foresight' leads in turn to a heightened capacity for 'mutual identification'.

Observing 'increases' in foresight and mutual identification within the context of the prison classroom where students are studying an academic discipline such as sociology, humanities or liberal arts etc., is possible in much the same way as it is possible to observe the 'detour via detachment' which potentially emerges through changes in thinking. As was stated in Chapter Two, the 'doing' of sociology, for example, is something which can be researched in its own right, in terms of its impact upon students both inside and outside of a prison context. The fact that the subject itself is engaged and concerned with the development of skills which enable students to 'stand back', as it were, from society and self in order to analyse and evaluate social structures and human agency, means that foresight as well as a sense of detachment from one's immediate location within those structures is going to be cultivated.

Students on the Leeds Course would remark on the acquisition of 'detachment' when questioned on how the course had most affected them as individuals:

Robert T.: I'll tell you what I've noticed with this subject, it makes you go back to your cell and think about things a lot. You know, things you might have done, and sometimes you won't ever do them again - you realise you've just been stupid. And you notice what other people say more.

Maurice: I tell you my head's swimming when I go back to the wing with all this stuff I just can't believe half of what you teach.

Ted: Well, I've told you before. I never used to take much notice of the wife. Some of what she said - I used to think it was pathetic, but now I realise that she has a justified point of view. She says I've changed because of that. It's about respecting other people's opinions and all that isn't it?

Now, whilst such brief comments do not provide data on classroom interaction and the learning processes, they do give an indication of how attitudes do change and on how the people concerned interpret that change in relation to others.

The emergence and development of 'detour behaviour', as described in the preceding section of this Chapter, can in turn, lead to an increase in foresight. This is a more subtle process discernible in interpreting the interplay between students in the course of classroom conversations. To illustrate the process in action, the following example provides an instance of how the analysis of everyday life and social action impacts upon the student in a meaningful way, causing him to reflect on wider processes - here relating to issues within the sociology of education, namely, differential attainment, pupil ability and the school itself:

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 5:2

1 Pete: I can remember how vicious male teachers used to be. They used to knock you with their knuckles on the side of your head - you know, to get the point home, drum it in. Your head would be shaking. I bet they wouldn't dare do that nowadays.

5 Felix: The kids would turn on them ...

Pete: ...and the streaming, that's bad that is. Well, how can they do away with it? Surely though they are more liberal now? They must know it doesn't work.

10 Felix: I hated the Grammar school. I was expelled. The only thing I enjoyed was the sports, but as far as I can see now, the kids who conformed at school were the ones who got the jobs. Usually (laughs) they're the ones you have to go see now if you're unemployed. It's like a kind of justice.

After personalising the learning at lines 1, 5, 9, both Pete and Felix start to 'detour via detachment', lines 8, 10, 11, 12, where Felix realises how wider social processes bind people together. His 'foresight' acquired through learning assists in his understanding that social structures and human agency do have an impact on the individual in terms of conformity, and he went on to say 'If I had known then, what I know now ...'.

Then, moving from the stage where students have developed a kind of detour thinking, through the potential acquisition of foresight, further examples from the classroom show how mutual identification begins to emerge as learning advances. Classroom conversation 5:3 on conspicuous consumption, style, fashion, status and eccentricity shows the beginnings of the process emerging through the students involvement in the usual 'weaving' practices as they learn, whilst conversation 5:4 presents a slightly more developed interpretation.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 5:3

1 Allan: I don't agree with all this. It's really down to the individual, you might wear what you like. What about the young kid who adopts a grunge style? They almost go against any style.

Anne: Yes but it's still a particular style used to cultivate an identity.

5 Andrew: Yes, you will go out and pay five or six hundred pounds for a jacket if you can because you wish to retain a sense of being different. You'll always do that.

- Allan: What if a guy pulls up outside a pub in a Ferrari and gets out with a piglet on a lead... now I call that class!
- 10 Anne: You wouldn't forget him would you?
- Pete: No, that's not class, that's just eccentricity.
- Allan: But you're fooling people if you do things like that.
- Anne: You've 'become individual' through consumption, through choice?
- 15 Ted: How would you explain the fact then that plenty of people with money pretend they don't have it? You see, I think they are forced to hide the fact. They spend all their lives making money and then they're scared to show it. What do you think of that bloke who won 18 million quid and says he can't handle the 54,000 a week interest? You see people can't handle it at all...
- 20 Felix: But they dream about it all the time - it's just so stupid.

This type of classroom discussion involves the students in the relating of academic subject-matter - or theory - to practical everyday life, (lines 4-7, 10-19), and in so doing causes reflection *on personal attitudes towards others* (a form of mutual identification) as the discussion develops on the issues being examined. It also encourages deeper thinking on human social behaviour and the sharing of differing perspectives (lines 11, 12, 19) and interpretations of social reality (lines 5-7) which may be embedded in personal experiences. These processes provide the foundations for the development of mutual identification or the capacity to sympathise with the point of view of others, and with the social situation of others. It is within the group itself that one can observe the processes emerging in the continuity of interaction between students, teacher and subject matter.

The following conversation on gender identity also reveals how the capacity for mutual identification can be encouraged through learning. Garfield was a fairly confrontational individual with very strong political views. He was serving a relatively short sentence for

vigilante activity. Gary was one of the few people in the prison he listened to and respected.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION 5:4

1 Garfield: There are plenty of men out there who think women are for free - free fucking, free cleaning, free food and making babies.

Anne: Well, that's gender socialisation for you - it underpins so much of how we see ourselves and how we act. It's the way some of us were taught as children.
5

Garfield: Yeah - my daughter she's twelve. My ex-wife is trying to bring her up normally - you see I went out and bought all these books when she was little and told Lorraine to give her these when she's old enough - you know not to stick needles in your arm an' all that, but what's she gonna do? Say, 'well you did it' - and she'd be right, so you say, 'Ah well, that was different'...
10

Anne: Which is what we all say!

Garfield: An' it's the same with her periods when she starts all that, I'll 'ave the first bloke who takes her virginity...

15 Anne: But someone, at some point *undoubtedly* will probably try to do so...

Gary: ...of course, you can't just do that...

Garfield: I tell you, if she's under age I'll beat 'im to a pulp.

Anne: Well, I'm sure it will happen and you have to face up to that when she grows up.

20 Garfield: Well yeah - maybe if he's a sensible bloke...

Anne: ...we all have a sexual identity - your daughter will have one ...

Garfield: Well, I *was* a father at eighteen - I couldn't handle it - the first three years were awful so I left, then it wasn't so bad.

At line 1 Garfield makes generalisations about relationships between men and women and attitudes grounded in gender stereotyping. Using a 'mixture' of sociological and common-sense knowledge and experience, I attempt to 'manage' Garfield's more

trenchant statements (lines 3, 4, 10, 13) by legitimating his 'non-academic' analysis. Garfield then seeks to justify his approach by drawing on his memories of something he did (lines 6, 7) which he believed was worthwhile for his daughter. However, he falls back on strong emotion and involvement at lines 11, 12, 15 which both Gary and myself attempt to ameliorate. By line 17 Garfield has started to 'detour' a little, to cultivate a glimmer of detachment and sympathy for the situation of the other person - and hence bow to group opinion.

Group processes have a powerful impact upon the individuals who are actively engaged in their construction. The power of group opinion itself, in terms of self-image and self-respect can be seen in the prison classroom as amounting to a kind of self-regulation, paralleling the wider theoretical view that most people seek to comply with group norms, developing powerful bonds over time (Elias; 1994; xxxix). The formation of a cohesive group of individuals with a high degree of control over the behaviour patterns of each other and group attitudes, can be described as a kind of regulating force consisting of strong bonds and relationships between group members. The application of this to classroom practice within the prison lies in acknowledging that social science classroom practice in particular seems to produce an enhanced capacity for mutual identification if it is recognised as an increase in self-regulation which comes about through consideration for others.

On one occasion Ted asked if I thought there were any instances when violence against the person was justified after the group had been discussing why wars were started. I replied that it was an extremely difficult question to answer, one which had preoccupied many thinkers through history and that the only useful answer I could give was that I personally deplored violence although could imagine situations where individuals

succumbed to it. 'There you are,' he said, 'take this for an example then. You're walking home with the missis and you see some geysers snatch a handbag off a woman, right? So you've got to do something because the missis is there and it looks bad if you don't, and you know this prat's caused distress to some poor unfortunate woman. You get the picture? So you've clocked this guy right? You know who he is. I dealt with him later. No police, no nothing. He weren't ever going to nick handbags again. So, it can't be wrong, surely?'. Mostin and Lawrence had listened to Ted's story, which he assured them had taken place many years ago 'when I was fit'. They both argued that Ted was wrong on the grounds that individual justice cannot be meted out without the consent of others, and particularly if it involves violence because then everyone would be 'at it' as Lawrence said. After listening to them, Ted 'backed down' a little, particularly when Mostin said, 'Ted, keep it under control'.

Mennell (1992; 59), also notes that being aware of the complex interdependencies which exist between people and between oneself and others, leads to increases in 'sensitivity' towards suffering as socially desirable/undesirable acts become subject to scrutiny and judgement from one's social peers. This would undoubtedly occur as a result of studying sociology/social science at degree level, as can be seen above, regardless of all other outcomes of the learning process. Although relationships within the prison itself and with one's student peers have an element of transience about them, the experience of imprisonment itself demands a degree of solidarity on levels not encountered beyond the prison walls. Occasionally some student would be shunned by his peers, mainly due to the nature of the offence committed or due to interaction with prison authorities, but for the most part, the group itself would exercise forms of control over class members - but only for the duration of their stay on the course.

To illustrate the point, one prisoner joined the group whose offence was considered deplorable. His particular case had achieved public notoriety when it came to court and everyone in the group knew his 'reputation via the tabloid press' from the 1980s so the offence was not particularly recent. He was quiet, well educated and articulate, but about half of the number of men in the class expressed a desire amongst themselves that he ought not to be a part of the course; that he was a 'nonce' and that he should not be in the dispersal system but in secure psychiatric confinement.

The prisoner concerned was aware of these attitudes towards himself, but made it known to myself and my colleague that he believed himself totally innocent of his crimes, frequently making references to how the tabloid media were to blame for his present situation. The atmosphere in the class was extremely unpleasant for a number of weeks; although some of the men dealt with the situation matter-of-factly most of the group ignored him and were reluctant to engage in 'normal classroom practice and behaviour'. There were numerous stoney silences if he attempted to contribute to the discussion. Closure was most apparent; finally the men took it upon themselves to openly express, through talking to him, precisely what they thought of his presence in the classroom. This actually occurred through them asking my colleague to leave the room whilst 'they sorted things out'. This was done non-violently and the decision was collectively taken by the men beyond our control. It 'cleared the air'. The group control had been so rigid in this instance that we felt unable to intervene - perhaps against our better judgement, but the autonomy of the group was stronger than the autonomy of the individual. A few weeks later he was shipped out. The difference in the group dynamic was noticeable instantly.

These experiences, I would suggest, are those which are carried over into the post-release period as discussed above, albeit as unforeseen consequences of the learning process. What constitutes uniform standards of good behaviour involves lengthy explanations of the dynamics of the structure of social relations (Mennell; 1992; 47) where standards of control are closely interwoven with the formation of social hierarchies and differentiation. It is only through analysing the development of how individuals have gained a sense of what constitutes offending behaviour in the eyes of others that it is possible to see the importance of acquiring consideration, sympathy, and foresight in one's dealings with other people. The prison classroom in the context of this research has provided a forum in which these processes emerge as the learning advances, through weaving, into a synthesis of meaningful outcomes shaped by the acquisition of detachment, foresight and mutual identification as an awareness develops of the social bonds between people.

In addition, the search for an identity and its location within the complex social configurations which constitute social-psychological life, is coloured by individual experience to the extent that status consciousness and self-assurance throughout life in general are governed by what other people may say and think about an individual (Elias; 1994; 176). So, if a child has, for example, experienced low-status within some kind of family environment, the long-term effect of that process upon the individual is likely to be negative in character. If, as an adult, one is constantly subjected to the kinds of experiences which reinforce negative self-esteem - as is often the case for those imprisoned - then any experience taking place within that negative environment which overturns its effects is going to be one worth remembering.

Where that positive experience also encourages the balancing of individual self-restraint (through the development of detachment via reflexive thinking) with the group restraint of wider society (through examining social processes, institutions and structures within the learning context), then it is possible to argue that a kind of moulding process of the individual is occurring. This moulding, and/or shaping of the individual is not to be confused with negative perceptions of individuals as conforming automata, rather it is to develop an awareness and understanding on the part of students that every individual is 'a being among others' (Elias, 1994; 205).

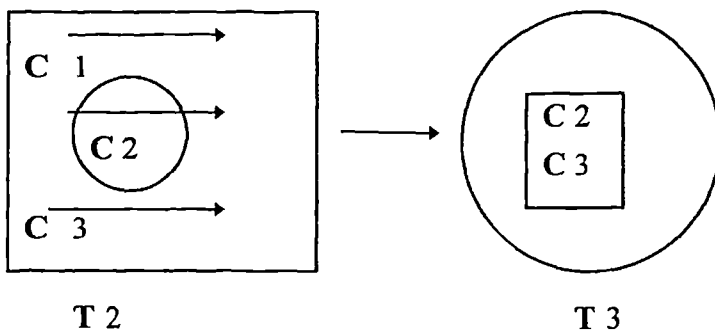
In order to 'be' among others, individuals need an awareness of both public and private feelings - for example, if they 'do wrong', they generally feel, or are made to feel a degree of shame and embarrassment, a fact which is not lost on prisoner-students and which ensures that the psychological and sociological make-up and development of people are inseparable. Whatever standards prevail in any one society, they are formed through complex social processes which tend to have a long history and it is against those social processes that any 'change' or positive developments in attitude, characteristics, behaviour patterns or alterations in so-called offending behaviour must be interpreted. The outcomes of prison education programmes must be assessed and contextualised against those wider social processes.

Changes in conscience do occur within the prison classroom, although they do not occur overnight. They come about, to rephrase Mennell (1992; 103), as the result of '... the way in which people are bonded with each other in [prison] society'. This in turn is what results in the potential remoulding or re-shaping of individual behaviour. The social bonds which students form within a classroom context whilst involved with an intensive course of study, themselves act as a powerful control of levels of involvement and

detachment. At their most instinctive level, those controls contribute towards the process of 'public shaming' (Braithwaite; 1989) and, albeit within the 'community' of the prison, as experienced by Ted above and Ian in the example referred to earlier, they lay the foundations for potentially regulating those drives which may govern offending behaviour. This is illustrated in Fig. 5:1 where it can be seen that C2 and C3 are more 'transferable' to the post-release period than any negative experience of the prison itself,

C1

Fig. 5:1; THE TRANSFERABILITY 'PROBLEM'



Key

- - PRISONER -STUDENT
- - LEARNING CONTEXT WITHIN PRISON ENVIRONMENT
- C 1 - PRISON CONTEXT = NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE, NOT READILY TRANSFERABLE TO T 3
- C 2 PRISONER STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SELF (instutional) = POTENTIALLY TRANSFERABLE TO T 3
- C 3 - EDUCATION PROGRAMME / LEARNING CONTEXT & INTERACTION = POTENTIALLY TRANSFERABLE TO T 3

The encouragement to critically reflect and comment on human social behaviour which underpins social science classroom practice, fosters the development of the individual's capacity for mutual identification. As students begin to acknowledge the 'bounded-

togetherness' of people in general, in terms of webs of relationships, through their learning, some will develop awareness of the fact that :

The individual is compelled to regulate his conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner. (Elias; 1994; 445)

Some will also realise that throughout the development of modern society and within the context of attempting to understand what is meant by the term 'civilized' human beings:

...more and more people must attune their conduct to that of others, the web of actions must be organised more and more strictly and accurately, if each individual action is to fulfil its social function. (Elias; 1994; 445)

Students in prison on the appropriate kind of course will have to reflect, at some point, on whether or not their own behaviour patterns conform to those which, it is claimed, are extensive and automatic. This case study has shown that prisoner-students do receive an opportunity, through studying sociology, to fully comprehend the significant developments which have led people, on the whole, to develop and establish patterns of self-restraint and self-control. That self-questioning process itself becomes an integral part of individual behaviour and ultimately acts as a check or brake on impulsive action in addition to the more widely accepted forms of regulation. As Maurice said on one occasion, 'With what I've learned here with you, no-one will make me act like that again [relating to his offence]. Stupid I was, taken for a mug like so many. And I don't know why'.

The long processes of learning and experiences which make-up the continuum of changes forming the span of one's life (Elias; 1992; 47), combine together in some situations to foster an increase in foresight and identification with others. Elias'

conceptual vocabulary lends itself to the situation within the prison classroom where the potential lies for both change and development arising from the outcomes of learning a particular body of knowledge in a quite specific, non-standard, educational setting.

The outcomes of learning can be detected through observing changes in thinking and conducting analyses of social life and through questioning students on their own perceptions of the impact of study on themselves in relation to personal achievement, status and self-esteem. This occurs where the 'total situation' of the prisoner-students produces a kind of detachment and potentially encourages a form of self-control (Elias; 1987; 9) grounded in small group dynamics and interdependencies which have wider social applicability.

Processes of change and development which have occurred on the macro-level to societies of individuals, show that through time, awareness of the existence of webs of interdependency and their increasing growth, in turn leads to an increase in foresight and mutual identification. People, in effect, become more remorseful if they fail to meet the demands placed upon them by wider society and social controls. Self-restraint too can sometimes operate 'loosely' and fail or distort the balance of control necessary for survival in a complex society.

Within a prison environment, the high degree of control and regulation exerted over the individual is externally exercised and further tips the balance away from the individual. Within the classroom, some of that balance is restored for those who not only 'assimilate' new knowledge, but acquire those social and psychological characteristics and tendencies which determine 'ordered group life'.

Moving to an analysis of a particular programme in a maximum security prison in America, further evidence is presented of the potential for prisoners to achieve some kind of 'self-transformation' (Weiss; 1995; 135) *en route* to ordered group life. The potential for change is firmly located in the classroom.

'THE RE-NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITIES'

Personal development and growth through education may be described as outcomes as a result of new skills obtained in all areas of learning. Not only do students learn a new body of knowledge, there is also potential for quite specific affective outcomes to develop which I have identified above as reminiscent of those concepts which Elias uses to explain the gradual emergence and development of a particular type of individual throughout the 'civilising process' (Elias; 1939). Focusing on the case of INSIGHT, INC. a programme established in Stillwater maximum security prison Minnesota, USA offering a B.A. degree to prisoners, Weiss (1995) argues that the loss of self-esteem experienced by prisoners is profound because they are (in a similar sense to under-achievers in school), 'double failures' both in the legitimate world - because they committed an offence - and in the illegitimate world because they got caught.

According to Weiss the B.A. programme was initiated by prisoners and the responsibility for operating it also lies with them. It is financially self-sufficient with a budget derived initially from business and charitable trusts but is now funded from its own profitable business enterprises. This programme also embraces the ideological 'trappings' of capitalist modes of thought and production - to Weiss this is of significance in evaluating the outcomes of the programme.

Encouraging 'prisoner self-government', Weiss describes how the INSIGHT programme, operated by and working as a separate community of prisoners within the prison, encourages and facilitates formal and informal control (Weiss; 1995; 124). It is a voluntary, 'elite' programme for which prisoners compete for membership, fostering competitiveness and a work ethic which mirrors 'American Dream ideology', in particular, achievement against great odds. The efforts of the prisoners on the programme are 'rewarded' by state authorities, businesses and the media who support wholeheartedly the embracing of liberal corporate values by the INSIGHT members. The whole programme is seen as a means of 'reformation'.

The extent to which members of INSIGHT exercise self-control, restraint and process control in order to conform to dominant modes of capitalist thinking and values parallels the extent to which individuals have developed 'a change of human conduct and sentiment' (Elias; 1994; 443) towards 'civilisation', albeit unplanned, but 'carefully managed' in the case of INSIGHT. Elias point out that:

This basic [interweaving of the plans and actions of individuals] resulting from many single plans and actions of men can give rise to changes and patterns that no individual person has planned or created. From this interdependence of people arises an order *sui generis*, an order more compelling and stronger than the will and reason of the individual people composing it. (Elias; 1994; 444)

The INSIGHT programme, as Weiss indicates, also has unintended consequences, unplanned outcomes which arise from the 'intertwining actions and plans' (Elias; 1994; 536) of those involved with it. It succeeds, however, by virtue of 'image management', it has a potential for change in much the same way as the Leeds course in Full Sutton, but the programme raises questions as far as Weiss is concerned about 'the substitution of ideological control for more repressive means' (1995; 126) and also about issues of legitimating existing class-based relationships of domination.

Finding themselves in such a powerless position of imprisonment, Weiss concedes that prisoners have no status whatsoever as individuals in the social world and become aware of the contradiction in their life between being perceived as a personal failure and subscribing to the ethos of 'the American Dream' epitomised thus: '...the "promise of a society in which individuals have the opportunity to improve their relative position, regardless of their race, creed or class." ' (Weiss, 1995; 126). There is no reason to assume that this particular state of mind is peculiar only to American prisoners, the point being that a society with strong cultural values relating to social mobility (characteristic of modern complex industrialised nations) will have to acknowledge the fact that those imprisoned will need considerable help in reconciling the contradictions which constitute their social reality.

Where the opportunity exists to attend Higher Education in prison, prisoners may use it to combat what Weiss describes as '...alienation on the inside and unfulfilled promises on the outside...' (Weiss; 1995; 126), in a society where restraint via institutional control is not simply a feature of prison life but pervades wider society too. Empowerment through education thus becomes an important and significant feature of prison life where prisoners adopt many attitudes and strategies to deal with their social invisibility.

Echoing the work of Cohen and Taylor (1972), Weiss observes that different prisoners adopt different attitudes about their perceived sense of failure and powerlessness, for example, some become fatalistic, interpreting their current spell of imprisonment as a result of bad luck or fate with little difference between life on the streets and life in prison. These prisoners, Weiss believes, would tend not to enrol in any rehabilitation programmes with a view to acquiring new skills which may potentially foster work habits. For these prisoners, any 'success' they have in life may well only be attained by

virtue of the fact that they have been inside, so they would be more likely to re-offend anyway.

Others are cynical and blame 'the system' or 'not knowing the right people' believing that their criminal activity is due to frustration. These offenders, Weiss argues, can be described as 'illegitimate capitalists' or 'innovators', because they may well use programmes such as Higher Education in prison as a means of self-improvement to ensure they will have a 'fair share' of material goods after release.

Equally, there are those who 'get religion' as a means of atonement for their offences. The expiation of guilt is complete through the creation of a 'new self' and renunciation of past deeds, again encouraging one to believe that change has occurred. Lastly, Weiss considers that there are conformists amongst prisoners who look for special privileges by working with prison officials, cooperating and accepting the norms of oppression. In turn, these people are often despised by other prisoners. It is the least admired strategy for survival in a total institution and during the course of my own research, it was apparent on many occasions that those who adopted it were at one extreme merely excluded by their peers from collective social activity in the prison, and at the other they would be 'cut'.

In the context of an analysis of personal development through learning within prison, general observations on the characteristics of certain prisoners such as those described by Weiss above, are useful. Admittedly Weiss, is commenting on the effectiveness of a very specific and unique project. In addition to its capitalistic and financial underpinnings the programme undoubtedly embraced conservative ideology and values, but the fact

remains that the project took on board the 'failure' of prisoners and transcended it through empowerment and self-actualisation.

The empowering potential of the programme is, in my analysis, interpreted as an unforeseen consequence of the plans and actions of those who supported it in its early years. With an ethos grounded in the work ethic and a desire to foster and encourage responsibility and self-reliance, prisoners on the INSIGHT programme had greater expectations than those with whom I worked, as did others of their achievements. They did however, adopt a measure of detachment, foresight and mutual identification and an enhanced awareness of the interdependencies which exist between people in modern complex societies; they had to because of their links with business communities and because of the demands made upon them to conform. The 'symbolic dimension' of the programme (Weiss; 1995; 130), 'regulates conduct by shaping meaning'. It has become a mechanism for social control.

It is entirely possible that a similar process was being observed with those prisoners who *chose* to attend the Leeds course at Full Sutton but the degree to which the prisoner-students embrace dominant values differs considerably even though the processes which develop through learning are the same. Weiss qualifies his observations by stating that the INSIGHT project, in effect, '...formed a countercommunity with counterdefinitions of prison reality and prisoner identity (Berger, P.; Luckmann, T.; 1967; 165-167),' (Weiss; 1995; 130) which came about as a result of changing traditionally held perceptions of 'the criminal' within the business community. This created a great deal of tension with prison staff who had difficulty in reconciling the outcomes of prisoners' involvement with INSIGHT and Higher Education and their received wisdom on punishment and crime. The two did not rest happily side by side, a

situation also noted in Full Sutton, particularly as prison staff appeared to perceive the course and those on it as a threat to their *own* status and self-esteem:

They hate us doing anything which makes us seem smarter than them, mainly because it undermines their authority. We're the lowest of the low, you see, and they can't bear to see us doing anything like a degree course. It's like a form of jealousy...

Prisoners on the INSIGHT programme threatened the self-esteem of the prison staff because the control and self-restraint exercised by the programme and the need to succeed in business, was more powerful than the control and regulation of the prison regime. Similarly in Full Sutton, the demands of the course ensured that many of the students simply kept themselves occupied, kept their heads down and, unlike many in prison, did not react aggressively when circumstances may have otherwise led them to do so. They found some officers resentful, partly because, as one man said, 'When we do react, we give as good as we get, and in most cases, after being on this course, better, and they don't like that.'

The problem arises because, again, the course is seen to be 'bringing about change' in those who attend. The question being, what degree of change is desirable for those with institutional control? Is prisoner empowerment via education congruent with retributive justice? Perhaps not, but personal growth and development via education might be admissible. As Weiss indicates:

Prisoners are socially invisible; they come to the attention of the public generally as the result of violent protest. To gain power otherwise - to replace force with communication - prisoners must become visible to power-holders as subjects who have qualities other than their master-status as criminals.(1995; 131)

Those prisoners on the INSIGHT degree course in America and those working with them believed that through convincing the business community in particular that they had integrity enough to display success in business through legitimate means, they were

transforming themselves and their subjective reality through amassing positive cultural capital. The achievement of status, the self-transformation and even the 're-negotiating of identities', which prisoners themselves felt had occurred, in short, amounted to 'change' and certainly personal growth. The following passage, reproduced at length, shows a prisoner's own views of exactly what was happening to him over a considerable period of time imprisoned in the U.K. beginning with his account of his first time inside, which he describes as 'Timescale 1':

TIMESCALE 1

" - System is a crock of shit...'appear' to go along with it, but guard against its negative influences. This is a period of 'living in the past' ...ignore the system, ignore the 'carrots', fight against any threat to own beliefs, strategies and principles. A time of conflict and anger...typically telling everyone to fuck off, and getting put in the punishment cells... where others are told to fuck off in more forcible terms...'dirty' protests, cell fires, 'smashing up'. A characteristic of this period, when lying on the bed or walking around the exercise yard with your mates, are thoughts/comments such as 'If I were outside now, I would be in the pub with the girlfriend'. 'This time last year I was driving a Jaguar on the M25 Orbital'. 'Wonder what Tom, Dick and Harry are doing now that I am not there?'. etc., etc., etc...living in the past, and desperately holding on to such memories to protect yourself against the dehumanising processes. Some new tricks are learned during this period, and these enable you to avoid conflict/fights/hassle (sic)...without surrendering own soul.

TIMESCALE 2

You now have a 'reputation' ... the tiresome characters avoid you ... the rest treat you with respect. Not so easy to hold on to past memories... they are becoming painful, distant, and often academic. Beginning to wonder what the fuck it was all about anyway. Could it have been done better? Why don't others get put in jail? Am I some kind of freak? When will it all end? How will it all end? 'Why me Lord'. When this soul-searching is concluded, you either feel very angry, or very knackered and distressed. In the first instance, you are likely to start planning the next crime... which is even bigger and more outrageous than the last.. in the second instance, you will take stock of what you still have .. what there is that you can acquire that will be useful for your 'plans' (Which, in one way or another, are now beginning to take shape), and this done, you will 'go for it' Either way ... Big Changes Ahead!!!

TIMESCALE 3

You have now let go of your past... you remember it ... happy or sad... but your eye is now on the future, and it is that which you are holding on to by way of stopping you

from thinking about 'The System', and it's attendant crock of shit. You are building up new ideas and associations... via new work skill and ideas... further education and ideas... or enhanced criminal methods and contacts."

For this particular prisoner the impact of studying on a degree course was fairly intense and the consequences unplanned, but they did emerge from 'the convergence and collision of the plans of many people' (Elias; 1994; 536). Ted further describes his experiences as follows and I include them in the context of Weiss' remarks on empowerment via education.

"Early work period was spent on computers, partly by way of protecting my brain from degeneration, partly by way of switching off to 'the system', and partly to develop the necessary programs and other stuff I would use in my proposed Business Services project after release. Would have stayed on this tack had it not been for some petty mindedness which got right up my nose... since I am quite happy on computers. They are relevant to my future intentions, and I was building up some good social relationships helping various staff and prisoners with their problems... but when you've just told someone to shove his computers up his ass sideways... it's definitely time for change.

Leeds Study Course was an obvious choice. Not that I bore any ill will to the poor woman in charge of such a daunting task as raising convicts to the intellectual status of graduates... no... I chose Leeds because Moira was a very pleasant sincere person who I had seen around, and felt I could get along with.

My first few days on the course were decisive... I had problems concentrating on the subject, I felt out of my depth, and there was a danger that I would throw education to the dogs completely and take up gardening instead... I had almost had enough of 'the system', and was tempted to put my feet up and go for the quite life. Perseverance was due mainly to the company... I liked Moira, I liked the intelligent lads on the class, and above all I liked the down to earth manner in which Moira was teaching her subject. ... I soldiered on. I am still soldiering on ... but the subject is more comfortable now, and am even beginning to enjoy the new insights and awareness that University study brings. It isn't easy to study at Full Sutton. Day begins at 8.20a.m., when five hundred bleary eyed convicts, some of them with withdrawal symptoms, stagger down the landings for their regulation sausage and slice of toast (courtesy of a fellow inmate who slaves over a hot stove to produce such a masterpiece). By the time we have digested that offering and had a shave, it is time to shuffle down half a mile of covered security corridors to get into the Education Department. Two and half hours of Leeds study with Moira or Anne, and then its time to make the return journey through the rabbit warren to collect lunch ... and listen to the dubious pleasure of 75 balloon-heads giving it some serious grief with their Ghetto Blasters. By 2 p.m., mercifully, it is time to journey once more through the steel lined tunnels to the sanity and calm of the Leeds study room, for another two and a half

hours of academic pursuit." (E.T.Wynne,29/8/95, Leeds University Course, H.M.P. Full Sutton).

Ted's descriptions of his experiences were echoed on numerous occasions by other prisoners, but the linking of his particular educational activities with the production of plans for Business Services were fairly unique. Of course, not every prisoner does what Ted did *as a result* of attendance on courses and Weiss takes issue with the fact that a programme like INSIGHT acts as '...a powerful mechanism by which convicts assimilate the dominant value system.'(1995; 135) and where 'legitimate capitalist values can penetrate prison walls.' (1995; 136) This is in stark contrast to those who believe ultimately that there is nothing legitimate about capitalism and that education should be purely about the freedom to learn. (Davidson; 1995; 11)

The issue here highlights an interesting contradiction worthy of further research and analysis that, far from being 'outsiders' in terms of their relationship to mainstream society, many prisoners, given the opportunity would wholeheartedly embrace a dominant, conservative ruling class ideology. If this is the case, as Weiss suggests, then any assessment of personal development, self-actualisation etc. (i.e. what changes), may well need to be addressed and interpreted from a radically different perspective i.e. that education programmes can and should be evaluated in terms of prisoner empowerment (Davidson 1995). This is particularly true if prisoners themselves will reconstruct their social reality and their identity - successfully - within a prison programme which, to all intents and purposes, in the case of INSIGHT, delivers;

- a). Education for prisoners,
- b). Potential employment,
- c). Model behaviour for the State.

In addition, one has also to look at who amongst the prison population *chooses* to go through such a course and why. Such programmes can and do alienate those prisoners who, for whatever reason, do not make the grade, adding even further to their sense of failure. This is as true of the Leeds course as it is of American Higher Education programmes in prisons and, as suggested earlier, there are many prisoners who simply will not involve themselves with such courses and/or projects as a matter of principle. As

David pointed out:

What you say and do inside means nothing anywhere else. It's apparent when you get out. Any 'crutch' you may cultivate whilst inside, especially religion, often means nothing after a while outside, despite what you say on the inside. Religious fervour is simply a ticket out.

Personal growth and development as outcomes of the learning process are not easily quantifiable. This does not mean that the documenting of them is any the less valid. The synthesis at the heart of learning is formed out of intense and complex human social interaction in the classroom. It develops for each individual through a period of time and in itself is an outcome of combined processes which students admit as 'changing the way you think.' As Ted explained in answer to the direct question 'What has changed then?':

It's like this, when you do this course, instead of going from A to B when you're thinking about something, you go by a longer route, even though you may still get there. You see things differently, you reflect on things, it's the thinking processes that are different.

Allan came at the problem from a broader angle:

I had my world and how I viewed it. The course forced me to question 'Why do I see it like that? What exists outside your personal boundaries?' So I had to question my personal world, a kind of voyage of discovery if you like which then makes you question wider issues of your own volition.

By their own admission, then, the Leeds course prisoner-students were aware that their attendance on the course often resulted in outcomes which could only be described as unforeseen. Those outcomes or consequences being precisely the kinds of personal

development suggested by the men above. The desire to do something simply to pass the time, or keep one's mind active, or indulge an opportunity for association with others, are all well-known motivators for individuals to attend courses both inside and outside of prison. The 'spin-off' for prisoners is neatly described by Cohen and Taylor (1972; 74) in terms of distinguishing physical, mental, personality and intellectual changes which can occur whilst imprisoned and 'doing education':

... intellectual work undoubtedly allows the men a chance to realise certain goals in an otherwise relatively undifferentiated future but it also offers them a chance of finding some sophisticated articulations of their predicament. The work is far from being a mere endurance exercise - a shallow ritual. The men refer to the dramatic changes that this or that book has produced in their view of life. They talk of their personality as changing as a result of what they have read, and they recognise the cumulative nature of these changes. (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972;74)

If we refer back to what the men themselves have to say about these perceived changes, when interviewed about the effects of having completed the course, they are often adamant that they have *not* changed as a person but are aware that their thinking processes have developed to a considerable extent i.e. they *have* developed the detour via detachment. This is perhaps what one would expect an undergraduate to say, given the level of commitment required of anyone pursuing a course in Higher Education. Cohen and Taylor's comments on intellectual change would certainly hold true in this respect for the prisoners whose perceived intellectual development cannot be denied and for whom 'something worked' whilst imprisoned. The question posed by Weiss in his analysis of the effectiveness of the INSIGHT programme, is of course, one which impinges on the thoughts of all who work with prisoners:

After all of the praise and attention the men of INSIGHT receive in prison, how will they deal with post release anonymity? (1995; 138)

CONCLUSION

Personal development and growth through education within the penal system can be perceived in the complex and subtle interactions which occur in the classroom through conversations, debate, discussion, reading, essay-writing and so on, but naturally enough, each subject studied will vary in the degree to which it offers the opportunity to master certain skills. There may be a world of difference between a woodwork course and degree level sociology, neither should be perceived as having greater or 'better' effects on the student. Some students, as with adult learners anywhere (recall Chapter Two), discover or re-discover, skills and talents on courses which they never believed themselves to have and this is done as they 'spin and weave their purposes' (Elias; 1994; 536) into the specific social fabric of learning.

In many cases, past experiences of education have been negative to the point of destroying any sense of worth, self-confidence or esteem that a student may have, particularly where the opportunity to succeed in the State education system has been eroded and denied for reasons well researched sociologically and documented in the relationship between educational attainment, school and home background and wider issues of class, gender and ethnicity (Bernstein; 1961; Bowles, S.; Gintis, H; 1976; Douglas; 1964; Hargreaves; 1967; Illich; 1971; Willis; 1977)

The subsequent impact of this sense of failure on young people and future offending behaviour has recently been examined in some detail, (Devlin; 1995) showing that lack of support for those who suffer particular traumas in childhood may affect educational attainment and potentially leads to offending behaviour and the pursuit of a criminal career as an adult. In short, the implication is that if your family 'writes you off' as a

person and the school does too, the resulting deficit of life and social skills will lead to a life of crime. If this is the case - and Devlin has considerable evidence to support her claims from prisoners - then it follows that prison education *is*, in a sense 'compensatory', that it does have a potential for change as prisoners re-negotiate their identities through learning. Those students who achieve success, in education in prison, should in theory start to 'feel good' about themselves, particularly if they have experienced a relatively high level of failure as a young person.

However, this kind of analysis does not always hold true. Whilst the statistics available *do* show that 'educational achievements of prisoners fall far short of the general population ... and that around 26% of prisoners may have learning difficulties, compared to the national average of between 10% and 14%' (Flynn; 1995), there were students on the Leeds course who were already in possession of degree qualifications. In reply to a question asked of one student who possessed a B.A., by another member of the class, as to why, when he had a good job, good qualifications and so on, did he commit his offence (armed robbery), his response was: 'I did it for the buzz'.

However, the same student admitted when interviewed that he was aware of the consequences of his actions if caught and had been prepared to take the risk because the social system around him was characterised by social, political and economic inequality and, again in his own words, he was 'seeking to uphold a decent standard of living' in a society where it was becoming increasingly impossible to maintain quality of life.

It becomes problematic therefore, for penal practitioners to know 'what to do' with such students in prison because expectations are laid at the door of prison educators to *change* offenders by teaching them a course which will somehow stop offending

behaviour. Re-tuning those expectations to issues of personal development as suggested, through increasing the capacity to think widely and analytically, diverts attention from such claims which will only result in a fruitless undertaking. Development, personal growth and maturation, even the regaining of self-esteem, are best described as *dimensions* of change within the individual and in the case of those imprisoned, may occur as outcomes of a variety of experiences encountered by prisoners whilst serving their respective sentences. That those particular outcomes automatically mean a reduction in offending behaviour does not necessarily follow. The process is far more subtle than that involving a gradual move or shift, as we have seen, towards an increase in self-restraint. The prisoners themselves would substantiate such a claim, because they mediate the learning in a meaningful way and they admit to being aware of 'changes' in their thinking.

The question of the perceived moral integrity of those who offend is just below the surface in discussions relating to either change and/or development as outcomes of the learning process. Detailed commentary and research in this field is to be found in the work of Duguid, grounded in twenty years of involvement with prison education, and the teaching of liberal arts and humanities programmes in correctional institutions. Many of his early experiences led him to explore the issue of development as distinct from change via education in prison through his analyses of what constitutes an *effective* prison education programme and how such a programme can be measured and evaluated as successful within existing penal systems.

Examining the notion that each individual has a potential for 'humanness' in so far as s/he can show respect for the well-being of others, Duguid indicates that:

...education [then] becomes a potential key, a means of identifying, liberating and exploring that humanness. Seen from this perspective, the core of education - in prison and in the wider community - must be development: movement, growth, maturation and improvement. This notion of education as development is quite distinct from other possible ways of seeing education, such as 'change', 'transformation', or 'adaptation'. (Duguid; 1992)

Qualifying his statements, Duguid goes on to describe a view of the impact of education on those who undertake courses whilst imprisoned, grounded in the notion that development in this context is akin to evolution, (not unlike the theoretical approach of Elias in relation to the evolution of thinking processes throughout modernity), i.e. there is an implied 'starting point' from which 'a set of latent virtues' can be developed or made into something. My own observations would support this to some extent, but conversations and interviews with the men on the Leeds course would occasionally reveal that 'latent virtues' sometimes remain forever latent, despite, or even because of, intellectual development through education. Naturally enough, one person's virtues are another's vices, as Ossie commented:

I don't consider that anything I have done is wrong. If your own beliefs and principles are strong enough, you act according to them.

Anne: Would you do the same when you get out?

Ossie: No, but for this reason only. I've done what I've done - I've served time for it, I'm a liability to them all [a commune]. I could bring trouble to them if the slightest thing went wrong. They don't need that.

Ted: You mean you've done your bit?

Ossie: Yeah - now it's someone else's turn. I'll just sit back and watch the others. We all look after each other. I've had my day.

Such comments as those made by Ossie above could lead people to make assumptions about Ossie's character. They might decide, for example, that he was selfish, yet concerned for his peers, or remorseful for what he had done, and that he would not re-

offend and that this was bound to be a good thing. Out of context, the interpretations of his remarks are as varied as the interpretations which can be made regarding 'what is virtue', or what comprises 'a set of latent virtues'. Ossie was, in fact, an ex-member of an Hells Angels commune which was located somewhere in the outback in Australia. 'Robin Hoods of the desert' was how he described himself and his fellow chapter members. His reputation as a raconteur of 'tales from the outback' was unsurpassed and he was a well liked member of the prison community - by other prisoners.

Assessing the personal morality or integrity of prisoners, therefore, can lead the unwary astray into an ethical minefield in which one can rapidly lose sight of the fact that any moral judgements made about the individual prisoner have, in actual fact, *already been made* by wider society as part of the judicial process. Once sentenced, the prisoner has to accept and acknowledge either consciously or sub-consciously that some aspect of the prevailing social codes of behaviour have been transgressed and that 'involvement' characterised by 'What does it mean for me or for us?' transcends 'detachment' as meaning 'What is it? How are these events connected with others?' (Elias; 1987; 7)

As a result of that transgression, most people seem to believe that 'removal' of the offender from existing social networks which characterise 'free' and autonomous life experience is the solution and it is also widely recognised that in the course of that 'removal' an offender will 'change' in order to be re-integrated into society after release having gained or regained the necessary skills of social citizenship which will ensure that exclusion and marginalisation from society are no longer an option. However, the bonds of citizenship can very easily metamorphose into chains under specific conditions of social life and the question central to any analysis of personal development and the prisoner has to be two-fold:

- 1) To what extent does the prisoner *wish* to be reintegrated into society and re-invested with citizenship skills?
- 2) How far does education in prison have a role to play in that process through personal development?

Hopes that education would play a fairly significant role in resolving *all* the complex dimensions associated with criminal behaviour - from providing answers as to why individuals offend in the first place through to counteracting recidivist behaviour - have led to disillusionment with penal policy and practice because the emphasis has been on *change*. Changes in attitudes, changes in values, standards of literacy, changes in lifestyles have all been demanded of education on the prisoner's behalf, if not at his behest, based on the assumption that the prisoner and everyone else desires it. Much of the literature on prison education throughout the last twenty years has been at pains to point out that it is to notions of individual responsibility, decision-making, choice and citizenship rights that one must turn to answer, in broad terms, the two questions I have posed above. 'What changes' can no longer be explored in isolation from the prisoner's perception of self and ultimately cannot be separated from an assessment of the actual role of prison education and its perceived linkage with (re)-habilitation and recidivism. That assessment is reserved for Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLE, PURPOSE & FUNCTION OF PRISON EDUCATION

This chapter will examine the role, purpose and function of prison education through an assessment of existing views ranging from the 'public' view of imprisonment as it impinges on prison education and the views of those who teach and learn in Full Sutton, to those views contained within the literature on prison education. The Chapter includes a critique of the 'correctional' model of prison education.

Commenting on the various 'models' of the role of prison education, the chapter concedes that the value of prison education lies with the prisoner-student in so far as the benefits of education courses and programmes must be understood in terms of their capacity to transform through broadening the mind, instilling confidence and self-esteem, and in offering the potential to choose more widely, courses of action and behaviour which may not be readily associated with successive stays in prison. Such an assessment of the models shows that whilst elements of them appear to be appropriate to what actually happens in the prison, they often seem to ignore the *actual* experiences of those who teach and those who learn in prison classrooms because practitioners focus too much on the perceived linkage between education, rehabilitation and recidivism in order to deliver 'effective' programmes.

'PUBLIC' PERCEPTIONS OF PRISON EDUCATION

'Public' perceptions of imprisonment have a bearing on what follows in the body of the Chapter because they provide an indication of how the dominant beliefs and values in society have a powerful capacity to shape attitudes and in some instances influence policy with respect to prison education. What does the general public demand of prison education, if anything? How much influence do their views and opinions really have? In a similar vein, what role do the media play? And are any of these views congruent with those of prisoners, prisons and prison education staff?

This section, whilst acknowledging the importance of 'public' attitudes seeks only to do that, as prison education, its assessment and evaluation has to be located against attitudes and ideologies pertaining to imprisonment in general. A 'common-sense' approach is called for by which I mean that 'common-sense' attitudes towards prisoners, their treatment, and the expectations and assumptions of the public regarding 'what goes on in prisons' are taken into account as a kind of 'benchmark' against which the actuality of prison education can be measured.

These 'public' perceptions of prison education are rooted in the drift into a 'Law and Order' society desirous of the 'restoration of social harmony', the 'return to a traditionalist morality' and 'unqualified respect for authority' (Hall; 1980). The increase in discipline and regulation demanded by public opinion, fanned by the popular press which has gathered momentum in the last twenty years leaves little room for sympathetic support for prisoners studying degrees whilst in prison. The ground-swell of popular support for Law and Order, also negates attempts at encouraging the public to see prison education as a right and not a luxury.

As a starting point it is useful to summarise briefly, the functions which imprisonment itself is said to perform for modern societies. According to Cavadino and Dignan (1992), it is possible to isolate official versions of those functions as grounded in specific ideologies through time, none of which really convince those who work within the penal system as being successful.

Those ideologies are said to consist, loosely, of the following: a concern with imposing deterrence and retributive justice in the early nineteenth century, with a hope that prisoners could 'return to society'; reformation and deterrence becoming official policy in the late nineteenth century; the adoption of the 'treatment model' in the post-war period where prison rules stated that prisoners should be encouraged to lead good and useful lives and be assisted in the process; by the 1970s, the acknowledgement that this model had failed came to the fore and the May Committee suggested a replacement but failed itself in any form of positive implementation. The Prison Service Mission Statement (1988), Woolf (1990) and Learmont (1996) reports respectively have added commentaries on the conditions prevailing in Britain's prisons and current issues find critical assessment through the work of the Prison Reform Trust and the Howard League for Penal Reform. Cavadino and Dignan suggest that an approach to imprisonment is needed which would fill the perceived moral vacuum, based on human rights (1992; 116) and one which would go some way towards preserving the dignity, humanity and individuality of those imprisoned.

The Woolf Report into the prison disturbances of 1990 states that 'education has an important contribution to make to a prison's regime' and that despite its provision being inadequate in terms of those prisoners who actually have access to it, it is widely appreciated by 'the lucky ones' (1990; 382). This view would seem to be supported in

my own research, but the reality of education provision across the Prison Service currently is determined by lack of funding, lack of clear definitions of programme objectives within sentence planning and apparently little standardisation, e.g. prisoners on the Leeds course in Full Sutton can rarely continue with an equivalent degree course other than Open University if transferred halfway through the course.

If education in prison is to be 'seen as an integral part of the life of prisons' (Woolf, 1990; 382), and, perhaps more importantly seen as a means '...to increase the competence and confidence of prisoners on release, and to improve their opportunities for finding work and a place in society,' then it follows that educational opportunities should be extended rather than stymied as present policies would seem to dictate. The functions of education in prison, not unnaturally, mean different things to different people. The penal reformer may see it as a means of 'softening' a harsh regime, Prison Service staff may see it as a means of keeping prisoners occupied, Security Staff may see it as a risk, prison education staff may see it as a vocation, whilst, as we have noted, for many prisoners, it simply passes the time. For the most part, these functions can be interpreted in a fairly positive manner, i.e. there are positive outcomes to be gained (with the exception of concerns of Security), for all.

On the one hand there is the prevailing view that education is 'a lifeline for people serving long sentences' (Wilce; 1996), whilst the opposing view suggests that it is a privilege and not a right, for the undeserved, paid for by taxpayers whose money should be better spent. Most people appear to believe though, that any education programme delivered to those imprisoned should be of benefit to the recipients. What the public at large probably do *not* appreciate or understand are the 'inherent difficulties' in doing just that (Flynn, N.; Price, D.; 1995; 3). Providers of such a service, according to Flynn and Price, are,

after all, working within institutions whose 'function' is to '...deprive offenders of freedom and to facilitate order and control.' (1995; 3); such is the paradox of providing education in prisons.

In a similar vein, Jones and d'Errico (Williford; 1995; 4), invite us to consider that 'long-standing and idealised views about the meaning of prison', colour and shape attitudes towards educational provision for those who, according to widely held cultural beliefs, ought to be deprived of all that has value in wider society. Notwithstanding the fact that such views are applicable to the provision of general education to prisoners, the provision of Higher Education, its associated benefits of status and 'cultural capital', is seen as unthinkable to those who are believed to have foregone all entitlements to something so prestigious.

Public perceptions of prison education, if grounded in anything at all, are therefore likely to be grounded in that which is culturally and ideologically acceptable. The wider values and attitudes which prevail pertaining to the 'treatment' of offenders are mirrored in, for example, media coverage of those who are known to have received 'schooling' in prison, and then, on release, re-offended. The courses in question would be deemed to have 'failed' because they did not rehabilitate. Learning for learning's sake seems not to be an option that is welcomed or encouraged for those imprisoned.

Porporino expresses the view that, 'The public in essence is pragmatic. They will support what is explained, what they can understand, and most importantly, what can be shown to work,' (1990; 2), in relation to what they perceive as the goals of 'corrections' and those of rehabilitation. It is therefore frequently deemed necessary to measure educational programmes against rates of recidivism to determine their effectiveness in

terms of rehabilitation and community re-integration. I believe however, that it is worth remembering that prisoners 'were' part of the 'public' before being labelled 'prisoner/offender' and that prisoners are perhaps no less pragmatic in their expectations of what a prison service and prison education provides, than anyone else.

Prison education remains at best 'fragmentary' (Flynn, N.; Price, D.; 1995; 4) with calls repeatedly made by practitioners for its standardisation in terms of delivery, rights to prisoners and remuneration equivalent to that received by prisoners who work in workshops and prison industries. Education in prison seems to be the poor relation and, according to Flynn and Price, any recommendations made have been dismissed as 'neither necessary or desirable' or 'rejected as a "right which is not available to law-abiding members of the community"' (1995; 5). If such an attitude is embedded in Government policy, as they claim, then small wonder that public perceptions of prison education are so negative.

The status of prison education programmes generally is described as marginal by Jones and d'Errico (1994) a fact reflected in attitudes towards education, attitudes about its efficacy and problems of financing particular programmes. They offer the following the explanation:

The social world is organised in ways that affirm for each of us that we really are who and what we think we are. Prisoners confront a social world that affirms at every opportunity their rightful place at the very bottom of the social ladder. In the simple act of striving to learn and, in the process, acquiring formal educational credentials, people who are confined for past deviance essentially become deviant once again: Their inclusion within higher education is seen by many as a case of deviants improperly located within the social world that dictates their confinement. The issues of prison higher education take shape in the attempt to make the education of prisoners appear rational within a social world that can't shake the feeling that they shouldn't be educated at all and may, in fact, be getting away with something they don't deserve. (Williford; 1994; 6)

In short, the meaning of imprisonment for most people whose opinions have been shaped into 'militantly populist and traditionalist accents' (Hall; 1980) is not congruent with the meaning of education. More specifically, attitudes towards Higher Education for prisoners are so coloured by contradiction, that any potential for empowerment (a theme to which I will return later in this Chapter), is limited by issues of 'discipline, surveillance and control.' (Williford; 1994; 15)

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN FULL SUTTON

Turning towards an assessment of the views of those who learn and those who teach in Full Sutton, an appreciation can be gained of the effect that those limitations of discipline, surveillance and control place on prisoner-students. Moving from public perceptions of the role of prison education and taking account of the prisoners own views, assists in assessment of their educational needs, a task which also helps to delineate more clearly the role, purpose and function of prison education.

As a practical starting point it has to be acknowledged that no amount of literacy teaching, vocational or skills training, or arts programmes in prison, will entirely offset the disadvantages and marginalisation experienced by prisoners beyond release. As Flynn and Price realistically state:

...prisoners do not have the up-to-date information required to apply for relevant training courses; their release from prison rarely coincides with the commencement date of college courses; and they experience discrimination and rejection by employers when they disclose criminal records. (1995; 13)

What follows is an account of how the men involved with the course viewed prison education generally. Their pragmatic observations are significant when placed within the wider context of public perceptions and against existing models of prison education,

which are assessed later in the Chapter. Their observations also provide a critical framework against which to assess claims made in my own research regarding individual choice, autonomy, and the meaningfulness of learning for the prisoner-student.

THE PRISONER'S VIEWS

The men on the course in Full Sutton had a wealth of experience of prison education programmes because a). they were in the dispersal system serving long sentences and b). many of them had attended education courses as 'strategies for survival' (recall Chapter One). The comments made in this section do not refer specifically to the Leeds course. The men were asked, both formally and through recording of their informal remarks in classroom conversations, what their views on prison education were.

The section recounts their opinions by way of showing how, despite the existence of specific 'correctional' programmes, views and ideologies on what prison education *ought to be*, and the demands of the prison regime itself, what matters is the fact that they as individuals, retain a degree of *choice and control* in what they do whilst in prison. This amounts to a form of *confrontation* or *challenge* with 'the system' which resonates through the men's responses. Aware, in no small measure that education has a potential to change them, the men themselves adopt further strategies, some of which are grounded in *cynicism*, in order to deal with their experiences of 'taking on board education as a catalyst', as one prisoner remarked, an outcome of learning not always appreciated within the wider prison context.

The initial pursuit of a course whilst imprisoned may often be governed by no more and no less than a desire to avoid prison work and the prison regime (Forster, 1990; 21). That much is reinforced in my own research as the following comments show after a

group of students on the Leeds course were asked directly about their feelings on the differences in pay between attending education classes and working in the workshops:

Allan: It's like this, quite simple. They don't like us to do education, in my opinion, they'd rather have us in the workshops ...

Matt: I won't go. You wouldn't get me in them, working for them. I'd rather do something for me.

Allan: All this, it's just lip service. It looks good - nice education block and so on, but at the end of the day, they don't want it.

Matt: It's smart cons they don't want. The screws hate it you see, if they think you know more than them. Where else, tell me, can you do a course like this?

Allan: I reckon if they could shut all education down, they would. It's a threat, you see.

Remarks such as these highlight the role of education in terms of personal choice, i.e. to do something which may be perceived as enabling the prisoner to retain a degree of autonomy and control over his own life in an otherwise restricted environment. The issue of pay itself is also of interest here, as the men indicate, still preferring to attend courses despite the disincentive of pay for those on education (see also Woolf, sections 14.109, 14.110).

The 'rewards' which prisoners obtain from attending courses range from providing an opportunity to 'blank off' prison life to idealistic pursuit of education for education's sake. That attainment can seriously transform the prisoner's sense of self, as has been shown, to the extent that 'success' in this area of prison experience counterbalances the sense of personal failure and loss of self-respect that many prisoners feel. As Forster also points out, embarking upon a long course of study in prison usually means that the course itself gets a 'grip' on the 'inmate's person' (Duguid; 1990; 28). The outcomes of

this could quite reasonably be assumed to be profound in terms of personal change and development, but it is also possible to perceive education in a quite negative light from the prisoner's point of view. There are those prisoner-students, for example, who find the demands of their chosen course more than they can adequately deal with, in addition to their imprisonment. In other words there are 'hazards' which do not necessarily contribute towards 'a good and useful life'.

Some courses bring added stress where students particularly wish to succeed or achieve rather than fail, others even become 'obsessive', as Forster indicates, thus leaving themselves more vulnerable to other occurrences within the prison routine. This can amount to a further form of alienation for the prisoner, and at its most extreme:

... if education 'changes' the personality then it will at the same time change the individual's attitude to his normal cultural environment. The difficulty here is that a prison sentence (particularly a long one) changes a man as does the natural process of maturation. It is dangerous to assume that all the changes in a person are due solely to his educational experience. (Forster; 1990; 30-31)

These remarks are further qualified by noting that prisoners can, and often do, become alienated not only from the prison itself where they have to live out their lives, but also from their family and social backgrounds to the extent that they may - indirectly as a result of their educational experiences - begin to criticise those closest to them. The following comments further illustrate the point and occurred after a class discussion on Marx's theory of class in industrial society:

Maurice: Can I say something?

Anne: Sure.

Maurice: You know, this class has got me into trouble ...this subject can be dangerous...

Anne: Why, what on earth? ...

Maurice: At visits, my sister, I've upset her with something I said.

Anne: Oh no ...

Lawrence: Go on, what happened?

Maurice: Well, it's to do with this, what we're talking about. You see, she's got six kids and worked hard all her life. They've all turned out well, mind. She has a couple of shops, baby clothes and stuff, but she's worn herself out already ...

Anne: Well, that would be a bit like Marx's argument ...

Maurice: Yes, I can see that, but it's not just that. You know these single parents and all the stuff about them being scroungers? People read that in the papers and it's like turning on your own kind isn't it? Well, that's how they've got us I think and my sister's doing it, she says they should get off their arses and work just like she did. And I can see that's wrong now because of what I've learnt, I know the reasons and I tried to tell her bits and she got really upset, and it upset me - so what can I tell her?

Mostin: That's just what happened to me! I told you didn't I? I don't think I could do more than a year of this. It makes you question too much - you might end up back in here because of that - you need to do something ordinary. That's why I'm doing the art now ...

It is worth noting that this form of 'alienation' from significant others is not something peculiar to those studying a demanding course whilst in prison. The very importance of those studies to each student does lie in the degree to which that educational involvement brings about *some* kind of change and/or transformation, and/or development to the extent that it also begins to have a 'knock-on' effect on those significant others of the prisoners concerned.

This can be intense, it can be painful (Forster; 1990; 4; Ted; HMP Full Sutton; 1996; recall Chapter Four), as a sense of perspective has to be retained by students when studying social issues which encourage critical awareness of one's own situation. The

outcomes of this kind of study in a closed and very restrictive environment may therefore not always be desirable.

However, education programmes within a prison setting have to be examined with a pragmatic approach, grounded in the view that those who choose it as an activity should benefit from it (Flynn, N.; Price, D.; 1995; 3). This is important because exactly *how* each prisoner benefits is a question of individual experience. As we have seen, there is no guarantee that the experience will be beneficial for all. For the most part, though, attendance on education courses can be described as an adaptation to prison life by those who:

... try to effect changes in their lives and identities in prison so that their future life will be *different* [my emphasis]. It involves bettering or improving oneself through study or training. (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972; 152)

Focusing on the functions of prison education from the prisoner's perspective provides sufficient opportunities for evaluating its role within the broader dimensions of penal policy. Writing of his own experiences of Higher Education courses in the Indiana State Reformatory, U.S., one prisoner comments that:

At last I had found my lifeline, the exploration and development of my intellect. I thrived on the positive challenge and surprised myself with my academic *savoir-faire* ... The journey, though, was at times frustrating, painful and even maddening, as all growth can be ... Academic excellence was our way to prove our own self-worth and demonstrate our growing, reasoning abilities. (Taylor; 1994; 126)

He remarks, like those in H.M.P. Full Sutton (see below) that the course hinted at '*...hope for a life one day beyond the walls*' and of how the actual classroom practice leads to a form of self-empowerment and self-discovery. For Allan, in Full Sutton, the process is viewed from a slightly wider perspective to take account of motivations and any linkage between education and rehabilitation:

There are many varied reasons why prisoners choose to undertake the Social Studies course offered by Leeds University at Full Sutton prison. One of the reasons I would put forward is that it enables prisoners to not only understand the formation and development of societies, but by participating in the course, it enables them to retain an objective view of real society as opposed to the artificial social environment created within the prison through physical and psychological means. This is important, as the common mistake made by the majority of correctional institutions is to believe that they can re-educate individuals they believe to be 'socially maladjusted' or 'socially deficient'. They think they can do this by putting them in the artificial environment of a prison and then expect them to be able to relate to real society, as a useful member of that society, on their release. This is a fallacy as current recidivism rates suggest. In practice, prisoners have little or no exposure to a real society which could stimulate and support their personal efforts to become a useful member of mainstream society.

Allan had successfully completed the course, enjoyed it and moved on to study psychology with the Open University. His remarks were an indication of the depth of interest he had acquired in applying both sociological and psychological knowledge to his own circumstances.

Similarly, Felix, also a student in Full Sutton, adds to the discourse with his comments on the differences between education departments in different prisons, shedding some light on the role and attitudes of prison staff towards those who have chosen education as an option, and towards education staff:

Felix: In Frankland, there is a different relationship between the officers and the education staff. There the officers always come into the classroom two at a time. They were really tough and they had a room at the end of a corridor next to the Staffroom so all the teachers and officers were in with each other. Here it's really different. You (the education staff) are more independent from the prison, I'd say - more 'us' than 'them'. The officers also call you by the first name here, you notice it straightaway, but I think it's hypocritical.

Allan: It's to do with the philosophy of dispersal. Dispersals are for the garbage of society as far as officers are concerned; that's all you are and the garbage of society should not get a degree course. It's that simple - they think it's too good for us, but if the course was called Reasoning and Rehabilitation or Anger Management, then the status quo is maintained.

These comments throw into sharp relief the fact that the role of education for prisoners is quite frequently at odds with the perceived role of the prison and those who work within it. As Thomas states:

By their nature, maximum security prisons simply are not designed for delivering adequate, high-quality educational programs because too many obstacles subvert the learning process. Some of these are readily discernible, and reflect the conditions of control, others are far more subtle. These obstacles range from overt hostility and disruption of classes by staff to broader sociostructural influences which intensify the discrepancy between educational goals and actual practice. (Davidson; 1995; 27).

Yet, prisoners do learn at all kinds of levels within the prison and do so successfully in spite of opposition to their motives and aspirations. In addition, there are many who enter prison with considerably more educational qualifications than those who are employed to imprison them and/or educate them. This causes untold tension within the prison system and resentment from prison staff as we have already indicated; as one (well-educated) student admitted when questioned about 'going straight' on release:

Yes, I could quite enjoy suburbia and the kids when I get out, it has its attractions, you know ... but then, I have contacts, and, well, ... you know how it is ...

One cannot always assume that either the prison itself, or any activities which prisoners undertake there will act directly as deterrents, and so cultivating empathy on the part of practitioners within the penal system, relating to the *experience* of imprisonment may restore, for both prisoner and practitioner, a balance of mutual understanding which can indirectly lead to a more positive approach to life after release. This can only be achieved if attempts are made, as with my model of learning through 'weaving', to articulate those social processes which form the daily experiences and the context of those in prison. That knowledge needs to be more widely disseminated.

For the most part however, the prevailing view tends to follow the pattern described by a prisoner (serving a sentence at H.M.P. Long Lartin) who conducted a small study on prison education:

There are those prison officers, politicians, Governors, Board of Visitors members, et al. who will quite openly state that in their opinion, any form of education or training for inmates is a direct dereliction of authority, and an insidious plot by a 'Bunch of Liberal Outsiders' to pamper and indulge convicted felons who would be better 'amused' breaking rocks or digging ditches. (Richards; 1993)

As Richards suggests, the role of education in prison is often underestimated. This is because, as suggested earlier, the actual objectives of a particular prison education programme are often subject to considerable scrutiny in order to assess more accurately the specific outcomes in terms of rates of recidivism as opposed to the more radical interpretation of education as empowerment.

I also presented some of the issues Richards raised, to students. Their responses seem to indicate that the goal of education is short of the mark in terms of the actual practice itself. Firstly, I asked if there was agreement with Richards on the view that educational planning within the prison system was nothing short of inefficient due to:

The often chaotic tendency of moving inmates around ...either when their security category has been reduced ...or more often, when the Powers-that-Be blow a fuse... (Richards; 1993)

Their first reaction was to claim in no uncertain terms that education in prison does not meet individual needs because the resources available within the system are totally inadequate and could not possibly provide for inmates whose educational qualifications range from basic literacy through to those who already possess degrees. It was felt that where educational facilities were available to inmates - which is by no means the case on a national level - from their perspective, such provision amounts to no more than a form

of control which may have a 'calming' effect and is subsequently also a form of 'containment'. As Wayne observed,

I don't agree with Richards that it (education) has no priority. It does, but only because it makes life easier for the screws.

David: It's used as a means of control in here

Wayne: Yes, but look at you lot now. Where else would you relax and sit around like that in here?

It would be all too easy to assume that there may be a degree of bias in such strongly stated views, but these men had all experienced other regimes in other prisons and it goes without saying that their collective experiences are many and varied. No real or coherent policy for standardising education for those prisoners who wish to pursue education was felt to be in evidence, although some acknowledgement was given to those institutions where Education Officers and Governors 'did their best' to marry individual needs with available resources. Overall, however, at the time of asking, this particular group of students felt that 'education was for the system, not for the inmates', a view which has re-surfaced persistently throughout this study.

The article by Richards provided a good basis for the men from which to consider their respective experiences of education. These ranged from, 'Screw you, I'm gonna get a degree' through to the more serious observation that it 'Depends on the sentence - if you're inside for the rest of your life you gotta do something to keep sane,' and the more cynical view that one student put forward, 'Well, look at it like this Anne, when some of us get out, we're gonna be really smart at what we do best'.

Cynicism expressed by the men in this way, was tempered by their more pragmatic understanding of public perceptions of the role of prison education and by the prisoners

collective acknowledgement of its role by prison staff. Thomas describes this as 'Getting Fucked With' (Davidson; 1995; 25). Prisoners 'respond' to their 'treatment' by prison staff through taking part in what he calls the 'fucking with the prisoner game'. Any disruption, or physical or verbal threat to prisoners, or any move made to undermine the prisoners attempts at self-improvement, is *expected* as part of the routine behaviour and regime of the prison.

The prisoners therefore adopt what I would describe as a 'cynical-plus' way of responding to or articulating their own attempts at gaining or amassing those skills and talents which would contribute towards a more positive sense of self or worth. It is a form of 'defence' which ensures that they do not 'forget' where they are and who they are, so they resort to the same kind of stereotyping of criminals and offenders as is used by prison staff and by wider society in respect of the master label transcending any other. There is implicit in these responses a desire for the prisoner to retain control over his own destiny whilst in prison. If he 'appears to agree' with those who represent authority or conform with their demands of him, he will ultimately benefit, regardless of what he may actually believe. Hence, remarks such as those above are made, although prisoners know full well that not everyone reoffends on release nor has any desire to do so.

One of the more thoughtful comments made at this time acknowledged that education as an activity in prison is often perceived and 'used' by both prisoners and prison staff (not specifically teachers) as a 'negotiator' in much the same way as one would trade or barter goods and/or services. This was very much the response to a suggestion initiated by a comment put forward by Richards that educational attainment in prison ought to be worthy of sentence review. The initial remarks made were that, of course it should -

everyone else who embarks upon a course of Higher Education especially, gets credit for it in some form or another, given the nature of the work involved and the intensity of the study. It was felt that prisons as a whole seemed reluctant to 'give praise where praise was due', so the vast majority of prisoners, according to this group, 'Grab what they can when they can' particularly in cases where the choice lies between working in the prison workshops or gardening duties.

Group discussions with the prisoners on prison education can prove as enlightening as any other classroom conversations, but enlightening for whom? In these kinds of discussions, the spotlight is on the teacher as correctional educator and on the workings of the prison education system itself as opposed to focusing upon any processes of personal change or development through self-reflection that a prisoner-student - or for that matter any other student - may experience. However, research on prison education must touch upon all aspects of what, in reality, amounts to an extremely unique experience for all concerned and must persevere in addressing exactly what the role of education in prison is.

The men with whom I worked in HMP Full Sutton, felt that education undoubtedly brings about 'changes' in individuals - in classes both inside and outside the prison system. In this sense they agreed with claims made throughout my own research as to how learning impacts upon the individual prisoner-student. Possibly the most one can hope to achieve in terms of documenting these changes is to *listen* to what they themselves say in an institutional context frequently described by those who live and work there as 'totally dehumanising':

Wayne: The problem with the prisons is that there is no end product; they don't turn anything out because at the end of each day, they're only bothered

about if the roll is correct. The only things that change people in prison are education and the chaplaincy.

For Martin and Dudley however, education alone has the potential to change, but they commented that there is nothing spectacularly novel in this view which they believed amounts to common-sense knowledge anyway. However they agreed with Wayne's further observation that through education, 'You see people 'blossom' in prison.'

From Mark there was also this reminder of the reality of educational provision on a national level within prisons:

I've been in lots of jails; everyone of them is different in terms of education, some are rubbish, but there are what you might call pockets of excellence. This one's O.K.

A further comment by a Leeds course student was also scathing in its attack on how both the prison system and educational systems 'work':

There are plenty of blokes in here who can't even read or write or who wouldn't last two minutes in this classroom. What you gonna do with them?

Common-sense knowledge such as this seems to override all further speculations when viewed against the more idealistic approaches as to the precise role, purpose and function of education in prison. The following views expressed by the men contribute to my own research as a whole, as well as presenting a realistic approach as to what the role of education in prisons might be. They constitute the men's 'knowledgeability' about the subject matter of the research (Giddens; 1984). Whilst they do not '...carry total awareness of the entire set of structural conditions which prompt an action, nor the full set of potential consequences of that action,' their views contribute towards understanding the mechanisms described throughout this study, which produce

potentially positive outcomes from classroom learning. They also reinforce the view that prison education is about choice, control, challenge, confrontation and cynicism. The men were asked 'How do you see prison education?':

- To give one hope for the future;
- To learn what's going on around the world;
- While I'm in prison, not only am I doing my time, I'm also using my time;
- For me, it is a way of making amends, to make the best of a bad lot;
- To offer the chance to catch up on subjects and topics that were missed on the out. I am taking education to broaden my thinking on subjects I did not even realise existed. I lacked insight, to the point I went against Social Services. To me education in prison is good, it stops me turning into a recluse and being institutionalised. It is a benefit, my only other option was a dreary workshop where I would be on piece-work.
- Supposedly it's for rehabilitation, but cutbacks are being made. It works, but the pupil must be committed and motivated to better themselves, rather than do it for parole etc. Education should also be the same all over the prisons as, when you move, you can't always continue studies and there should be a wider range of topics with co-operation from the screws.
- It is a form of work for some inmates. It's re-educating prisoners to try to keep them out of trouble in future. From my own point of view, it helps get through the day and there is some pay to help out. You spend some time out of the cell and I wanted to get a better education plus prepare myself for a better job out of prison. But I do

enjoy learning new stuff and find this class especially stimulating. I personally will do this without pay.

- I think education in prison is excellent because prisoners do have the right to educate themselves further, some to enhance their knowledge to improve their life-chances on release, e.g. getting a job, some just for basic learning. Some prisoners do education 'cos they feel the need to channel their energies to positive use instead of going crazy sitting in the cell. It's a show of achievement, a benefit for parole for some prisoners. It's also for illiterate people to have the chance to learn.
- From a personal viewpoint it helps to pass the time constructively and to remain mentally alive. Generally speaking, it depends on the particular inmates as to whether they are taking part to learn a new skill or just filling in the time as an alternative to the menial labour on offer.

These remarks have a bearing on understanding the potential role of prison education as not being solely rehabilitative. The 'expertise' of the 'informant' or 'savvy' (Pawson; 1995), adds a realist dimension to the flow of information from the classroom which helps 'to locate the subject's knowledge into sociological explanations.' As Pawson suggests, asking a straight question, more often than not produces a straight answer and asking prisoners what they feel about prison education practice, can yield a range of 'straight' answers which persistently highlight the contradictions and tensions inherent in the provision of education within prisons. These are reinforced by Thomas stating that 'Prison policies and university policies do not exist harmoniously.' (Davidson; 1995; 38)

The ability to deal with the implications of being labelled prisoner or offender pre-occupied the men in Full Sutton as much, if not more so than the actuality of dealing

with living in a controlled and highly regulated environment. Their views and particular experiences of imprisonment illustrate the complexities of assuming that education and/or training inside will rehabilitate. The issue of being accepted back into their respective social communities was of concern too, with possible rejection being described as the highest price that was paid for offending. A number of men over the three year period of this study stated quite categorically that they would 'go somewhere else' on release rather than re-join familiar communities, suggesting that 'shame', (Braithwaite; 1989) perhaps has a greater role to play in rehabilitation and recidivism than is usually acknowledged. In practice however, such a course of action may not necessarily occur because the practicalities of having nowhere to go, no income, no employment and little understanding of current social practices (especially if a long sentence has been served) often ensure that community reintegration is the only option.

Research conducted by Besozzi (1993), finds that those imprisoned have quite specific views about rehabilitation and recidivism. Prisoners apparently feel uncertainty regarding the actual objective of imprisonment. Is it, they ask, to reduce offending behaviour, punish, or educate 'new' offenders into existing patterns of criminal behaviour simply by virtue of the fact that old and new offenders are frequently housed together?

Besozzi suggests that the communication process between prisoners and the prison system is in need of a radical review because neither knows what the other wants. His work draws upon the specific comments of prisoners who believed that insecurity about life beyond release was one of the main reasons for re-incarceration:

Many inmates tried to postpone their release by demanding a transfer to a halfway house or to an institutional treatment centre. They saw staying in prison as the best prevention against coming back. (Besozzi; 1993; 38)

For Allan in HMP Full Sutton, the following sums it up:

Rehabilitation of offenders is only worthwhile if the ex-offender has equal and fair access to the benefits of society upon release. If the ex-offender is excluded from access to social benefits or stigmatised, then after a period of time in which self-worth is eroded, the disillusioned ex-offender is quite likely to reject the lip service and standards presented by society and construct his own standards necessary to fulfil self-preservation. Resulting behaviour may be seen as anti-social by society at large.

It may be the case that the only way to evaluate the outcomes of learning anything within a prison environment is to divorce such an evaluation entirely from measuring rates of recidivism and even community re-integration. Moreover, as Williford indicates, (1994, 53), it would be more realistic to focus on what can be realised within the confines of the prison, given that some prisoners are serving very long sentences. Looking to what happens beyond release and 'using' what has been learned to further one's opportunities in life may be an unrealistic or worthless preoccupation which dogs the minds and attitudes of some prisoners and prison educators alike. It may do more harm than good, but if prison education from the perspective of the prisoner *is* about choice and challenge then it does stand as a counter-point to the discipline and surveillance of the prison. It also contrasts with the view of the public and those who have advanced the models of prison education grounded in correction and treatment as opposed to enlightenment (Duguid; 1997; 3).

THE TEACHER'S VIEWS

As important as the views of the prisoners themselves are those of education staff on the role of education and subsequently on their own role as prison educators. As a teacher within Full Sutton and therefore a 'staffroom member' I was party to staffroom conversations reminiscent of classroom conversations. However, this study does not demand a staffroom ethnography although the views of some of the teachers add both to

the immediate context and claims of my own study and to observations made later in this Chapter on different models of prison education.

It is important to recognise that the perspective of teachers on prison education can be as pragmatic as those of the prisoners. There are cynical teachers as well as cynical prisoners and there are those who quite genuinely believe that they are performing a rehabilitative role which benefits the prisoner, the prison and the community to which the prisoner may one day return. In short, there are those who wholeheartedly embrace the correctional model of education and those who are themselves 'serving time teaching'. Somewhere between the two 'extremes' of cynicism and rehabilitation are those who teach in prisons because they have a blind faith in education for education's sake.

The starting point for those who teach in prisons may be grounded in personal motives, for example, do they see themselves as rehabilitators or are they simply teachers doing the job of teaching, or is it just a job? These differing motives will shape teaching practice and methods as well as classroom interaction. There will therefore be a wide range of outcomes for students in prison who are taught by someone whose teaching methods are governed by a desire to rehabilitate and someone whose teaching is a means of earning a monthly salary.

Of equal significance are the views of the 'hardened' prison teacher who may well have initially been motivated by altruism, but whose prison experiences have led them to conclude 'Oh, he'll go back to crime no matter what you teach him, you'll never change him'. Such a cynical view, overheard on occasion in the staffroom appears to stand in opposition to the claims that education 'changes prisoners'. This raises questions about

what teachers expect the outcomes of their own efforts to be. Hence the emphasis in my study on the *potential* for change via education or more precisely, personal development.

Writing directly about *How I Learned to Teach in Prison*, Linebaugh (Davidson; 1995; 66), describes his motives to take up teaching in prisons as being grounded in ‘personal, educational, scholarly and political reasons’. Starting out in the 1970’s with a goal to abolish prisons in the belief that they were places which made criminals more wicked, Linebaugh gives a colourful account of his experiences as a prison teacher in America. His emphasis is towards stressing how ‘welcome’ he was made to feel by prisoners, a feeling which gradually transcended any fear, fear which he feels is perpetuated and enhanced by the presence of prison staff (Davidson; 1995; 70). He points out that prison is ‘home’ to prisoners and teaching there presents one with immediate problems of contradiction, because what strikes the teacher is the ‘individuality’ of each prisoner despite the commonality of the experience of imprisonment.

The staffroom break at Full Sutton would yield anecdotal evidence to support this, for example, ‘... [prisoner X] ’s a lovely man. He works hard, studies hard and he’ll do whatever you ask. He’s a pleasure to teach’. An hour later, another teacher would throw her teaching materials down in despair, saying, ‘I can’t possibly deal with that man. Everything I try is rejected. It’s a complete waste of time, mine, his and everybody else’s’.

Meeting the educational needs and personal demands made upon them by prisoners had to be balanced with the more ‘security-conscious’ demands made upon teachers by the prison. Getting the balance right was of primary concern to most education staff who find themselves at the cutting-edge of prison life, torn between the contradictory

ideologies of punishment and education. As one teacher said, 'It's more frightening getting through the gate than it is being in a classroom for five hours with Category A prisoners'. The resolution of the tension between the desire to educate and the desire to punish is an important dimension in understanding the context of this study.

In order to satisfy the demands of education and/or punishment teachers in prison have to 'switch worlds' in much the same way as the prisoners, balancing the 'detachment' of the professional with the 'involvement' of the individual, when, for example, they may not readily agree with the attitudes and/or modus operandi of the prison. Such tensions inevitably spill over into staffroom 'talk'. After one particular prisoner with a reputation for being 'unco-operative' was placed on education, the teacher involved expressed concern:

They'll try to see if we can break him. It's our turn now. It really is an appalling way to go on. I had him last Friday afternoon. He is the most difficult man I've ever had... . What will he do on the wings? Where's he going? How much disruption will he cause?

The concern was for the *effect* this particular prisoner was having on other prisoners rather than on colleagues again highlighting the importance of recognising prisoners as individuals.

Another example of accommodating the demands of education with those of the prison is illustrated by the following. It was often deemed problematic by the prison, for reasons of security, to hold informal presentations of certificates or diplomas to the men. Teachers would occasionally despair of ever achieving anything worthwhile for their students finding themselves in a situation where they were expected to conform to prison regulations to the detriment of their students. 'Why can't they see how important it is,' was a frequent criticism, and the more down-to-earth 'Oh, I give up!', but of course they

did not. However when presentations were allowed, as was the case on one occasion for the men on the Leeds course, the whole education block often participated with men cooking for teaching staff and providing a 'limited' amount of entertainment by way of thanking staff for their efforts. Such events were seen as highlights of the educational timetable for the men and staff concerned and were greatly enjoyed. The presentation of University Diplomas was an important milestone for those who successfully completed the course and an event worth celebrating under the circumstances of its achievement.

Most of those who taught in Full Sutton recognised, as Thomas states, that education stands in opposition to the penal regime, where:

Educational goals include self-directed learning, unrestricted information transfer, and critical thinking. While these ideals are rarely attained in colleges and universities, they are thwarted to a greater extent in prisons, where learning is subverted, resources are restricted, imagination and creativity are stifled, and critical thinking is suppressed. (Davidson; 1995; 26)

For prison teachers, individual teaching experiences such as nature of course and length of time spent teaching in prisons could result in what was commonly known as 'burn-out', where the stresses of the job, for example, dealing with recalcitrant prisoners, would become problematic or beyond the call of normal teaching expectations (three years is considered as 'burn-out-time', although many had done considerably more by way of simply keeping their employment). The teacher/student interaction which forms an important part of the educational experience (recall Chapter Two) would suffer as a result. Attitudes towards prisoners and towards imprisonment would be affected by 'burn-out' and the complex mechanisms described throughout this study which could potentially trigger processes of change simply would not take effect. A teacher with little or no enthusiasm for teaching cannot assist in positive learning. Cynicism grows as a result, but this is coupled with realism as prison teachers recognise the time it takes for

any education undertaken in prison to have any effect. It is not a 'quick-fix' (Duguid; 1997; 7).

Teachers have 'tales' of 'their' students; tales which reveal a wealth of information about the daily routine and practices of teaching in a prison which shed light on the potentiality of education in such a setting. I have included the following brief conversation which reveals a little of the range of attitudes which teachers have towards their prisoner-students:

STAFFROOM CONVERSATION 6:1

1 ...[prisoner X's] made up his mind about doing Book-keeping, he thinks it'll be useful when he gets out.

Now that he's learnt Spanish, he says he can leave the country...

Yes, and no doubt live off the proceeds...

5 Well, it must be worthwhile then...

Do you know, I got a smile off so-and-so today... that really made my day...

Line 1 reveals a little of the weariness typically experienced as teachers wait to see who will join their class. It also shows awareness by them of the motivations of prisoner-students (which comes from experience) who switch from one course to another as they assess its value and worth to them. Lines 3,4 and 5 show something of the humour and cynicism which also springs from years of experience but also shows the trust which lies behind the 'insider-knowledge' which teachers gain of their students. Finally line 6 shows the empathy which captures the humanistic side of teaching in prison. This says more in terms of what prison education can do for all involved with it than any specific model could possibly hope to achieve.

Staffroom conversations can range from comments such as those above, to the mundane and sometimes trivial issues concerning the day-to-day running and management of an education department in a prison: How many men do we have down today? Is there anyone to cover such-and-such a class? Why are they late down this morning? Is there a shut-down next week? Do they really expect us to ration toilet paper to the men? Why don't the officers do their job properly? Why do we have to take our shoes off coming through the gate - what do they think we're going to smuggle in now? Has everyone completed their exam forms? Do you know so-and-so threatened to stab someone at the weekend? In short, the context of teaching in prison *does* spread beyond the classroom experience, not only for the student but also for the teachers who know that the wider context of the prison impacts on learning outcomes.

As in any staffroom in any educational setting, the teachers in Full Sutton agreed that there was a huge element of what they described as counselling in their job, over and above the demands of their particular course. This meant that, as far as they were concerned, a high proportion of the job was 'taken home', although most admitted that they expected this to be the case when working in a prison context. Counselling covered anything from simply being friendly and approachable to students, to supporting them in times of personal crisis or through periods of extremely low self-esteem. One teacher explained that this was a challenging aspect of the job, but qualified the remark through stating that job responsibilities could be whatever you made them in a prison environment.

'Difficult' aspects of the job which were emphasised centred on the fact that there could occasionally be instances where fear of trouble in the prison may put them at risk, or in some instances an individual prisoner may become unruly in class or even violent. When

such events occurred, it usually meant that establishing a positive working relationship with students became difficult due to tensions either within the prison itself or within a particular classroom.

Some teachers feel they have a moral duty to 'change' prisoners who attend their courses and indicated as much when I asked although one or two were unsure saying, 'no because it's an infringement of rights' or, again, more cynically 'it's a waste of time'. Issues of personal change having taken place in prisoners as a result of attending particular courses, were viewed by teachers as being dependent upon whether or not the students actually liked the teacher, or was impressed by what the teacher said. These views were expressed when teachers asked me what my research was about on an informal basis, adding a realistic dimension to the evidence I have presented from the prison classroom (recall Chapters Two & Three on context-dependent interaction). However, it was felt that course content and subject matter could quite easily become a vehicle for change in that adult students in particular start from self-experience, relate it to what is being taught and therein lies any potential for rehabilitation. Those teachers who became familiar with the content of my research were keen to substantiate claims relating to education generally and personal development in prisoners.

Foundation Studies, History, English Literature, Psychology, Sociology and Art were good examples (in Full Sutton) of subjects which provided the opportunity for those processes identified in my study, to occur. One teacher described the process as an opportunity for a student to 'verbalise their guilt', a kind of 'enabling process' which shows that education has a role to play in developing the skills of articulation. This was also considered true of those prisoners who chose to undertake English speaking classes. It was also recognised that some prisoner-students used their class time as 'grouse

sessions' where they cleared their minds in a learning process that, for one teacher, could only be described as healthy. It was widely acknowledged by the teachers that these processes were not peculiar or unique to prison education practice, but were, if anything, magnified or heightened by the circumstances of imprisonment.

Final observations from the teaching perspective in a prison, describing the practical difficulties of teaching there, provide further detail with which to furnish the context of this study. The impact of prison problems upon the quality of teaching and on any positive or beneficial outcomes for the men was always of concern to education staff who, for the most part recognised that what they were doing was valued and appreciated by their students. The frequent transfer, or shipping out, of students who were part way through a course or near completion was a constant annoyance to both students and teachers, but also a reminder that security always takes precedence. The same effect was true of the occasional short-notice shut-down of the prison, or a wing, when teachers had spent considerable time in class preparation, but it was accepted that this was inevitable even if it could not be described as one of 'the perks of the job'.

Describing how a 'lockdown' or shut-down impacts upon education classes in American prisons, Thomas invites us to consider the practical difficulties of teaching in such an environment - difficulties which are (occasionally) lost on the wider public. His depiction is as typical of what occurred at Full Sutton as it is of any prison and I experienced several instances of shut-downs in the course of my own time teaching there:

Lockdowns are one of the most frustrating obstacles used as a security measure, a lockdown confines prisoners to their cells for an indefinite period. ...Visits stop, meals are delivered to the cells, and most activity is curtailed. Lockdowns hinder teaching by preventing students from attending class, using the library, and using other resources to complete assignments. ...a sizeable number of students get behind ... instructors cannot provide makeup sessions to students barred from class because inflexible prison routine does not allow for rescheduling. ... When lockdowns include searches of cells, classroom

notes and papers in progress may be strewn about, destroyed, confiscated, or “lost”. (Davidson; 1995; 28)

The unpredictable nature of daily events and simply the fact of working within a maximum security dispersal prison all presented certain complications, adding a further dimension to the work of 'educating' prisoner-students. Despite or occasionally because of all this, the status which those students acquired through learning, and the sense of achievement gained from successful completion of any course was something keenly felt by prison educators, and which balanced the more obvious frustrations of working in an environment where education was not a primary concern.

The views of the majority of teachers in Full Sutton as to their role and that of education more generally, were grounded in what was in the prisoner's interests. The fact that this sentiment, for the most part, governed educational programmes seems to reinforce the view that prison education can be described as an opportunity within which personal responsibility, autonomy and choice can be exercised for individual prisoners as stated in the preceding section.

Prison tutors deal with their respective classroom experiences in an individualistic manner. What occurs on any one particular day within their classroom environment is not something that can be easily and/or collectively quantified, but I have shown in this study that understanding prison education lies in understanding the detail of prison classroom practice *as it happens*. That means listening to prisoners and to their teachers, to their experiences and their 'wisdom' of the reality of prison classroom life and the potential learning outcomes embedded there.

Whether or not these learning outcomes *then* can be further linked to fundamental changes in the behaviour of offenders - whatever that behaviour entails - has been a

matter for considerable discourse on the relationship between education in the prison system and (re)habilitation, and the following section on the different models of prison education, such as it is currently practiced, illustrates further the difficulties of reconciling the ideologies of education and of punishment.

THE MODELS

This section, whilst not claiming to be a literature review in the strict sense, will consider some of the main debates which have informed prison education policy and practice, particularly in the last twenty years. Beginning with a stark comment, I wish to remark on an observation made with regard to the practice of prison education generally:

The ultimate goal of correctional education is to change behaviour (Arbuthnot; 1990; 45-62).

Do we as 'educators' have some kind of moral responsibility to 'correct' the behaviour of those who have offended and ensure that they will not re-offend? As we have seen from consideration of the views of prisoners and their teachers, there is no easy answer to this question and yet so much of prison educational practice is predicated upon its affirmation.

My study has focused on the importance of the *social* aspects of learning, depicting how, through a subtle and complex process of 'weaving', prisoners may acquire, over time, affective skills which have the potential to shape post-release behaviour. The following assessment of the 'correctional model' of prison education shows how the emphasis on 'treatment' and 'correction' falls short of taking into account the impact which

'enlightenment' may also have on prisoners as it tends to concentrate on the 'cognitive route to cognitive development' rather than the 'social route'.

This section of the Chapter also shows that in assessing any correctional model, it becomes apparent that prison education is about far more than 'changing' the prisoner. It involves, for some prisoners and their educators, a form of empowerment which has been an implicit claim throughout this study. The paradox of prison education is therefore addressed in terms of questioning whether prison education should be described as empowerment or contradiction for the prisoner, thus returning to the initial underpinnings of the Chapter as to the role, purpose and function of prison education.

THE CORRECTIONAL MODEL

Programmes introduced into prisons which encourage prisoners to question or challenge their offending behaviour are generally offered by prison psychology departments in tandem with other education programmes which incorporate the teaching of life and social skills. Collectively, these programmes or forms of training, or special needs education (such is the confusion surrounding their title, role and implementation [Flynn, N.; Price, D.; 1995; 16]), form the core of the 'cognitive' model of rehabilitation described by Ross and Fabiano (1985) in their book *Time to Think*, and their work is summarised as follows by the Correctional Service of Canada:

The cognitive approach concentrates on the faulty thinking patterns that seem to propel offenders toward reinvolvement in criminal activities. According to this model, offenders lack a variety of cognitive skills - the capacity to appreciate the perspectives of others, the skills required to approach interpersonal difficulties in a constructive, problem-solving fashion, and the ability to think before acting. Cognitive treatment approaches attempt to equip offenders with the thinking skills that are necessary to avoid making criminal choices. (Porporino et al; 1990).

Cognitive skills training involves prisoners in evaluating their own and each other's offending behaviour in group situations. In this sense it is not too dissimilar from the *type* of context-dependent interactive learning which took place for those prisoner-students on the Leeds course in Full Sutton. The most significant differences however are that learning of any subject at degree level is not considered to be a direct challenge to one's offending behaviour and that any potential change or development which occurs for the prisoner does so through his capacity to work and process through his course *socially*. The difference also lies in outcomes from the perspective of the individual prisoner. As stated in classroom conversation 4:4, and earlier in this chapter, autonomy with respect to choice of programme attended whilst imprisoned, is important for prisoners in terms of their meaningful interpretations of the experience. In other words, if the prison authorities 'suggest' they attend what are commonly referred to as 'cog. skills' courses, with a view to challenging their offending behaviour, prisoners frequently tell the authorities, politely, what they can do with their courses. Several of the men told me that they feel as though they are 'blackmailed' into taking them so that they can be seen to be 'playing the game' and that it looks good on their sentence plans and reports, hopefully leading to sentence remission. If, on the other hand, a prisoner has decided *for himself* what he wants to do whilst imprisoned, then the outcome is rendered far more beneficial because, in effect, he has chosen to take the social route to cognitive change.

According to Flynn and Price (1995; 16 quoting Ripley; 1993), cognitive skills training embraces some, if not all of the following: problem solving, interpersonal skills, empathy, role-taking, moral reasoning and negative emotion management, despite problems of definition. The correctional model assumes the prisoner is lacking the necessary skills to achieve socially acceptable goals, resulting in offending behaviour in order to achieve

those goals. If the perceived lack of skills is met through educational, cultural and training programmes for the prisoner, then the behaviour will be 'corrected' and job opportunities etc. will be opened up for the person concerned. (The 'opportunities' model to be more precise).

The correctional model also assumes that some individuals make poor decisions in coping with life generally as they attempt to calculate cost and benefit to themselves to meet the demands of the market. Most people, it is argued, make socially acceptable decisions in the face of difficulties because they possess, or have developed, mature cognitive skills. Others are thereby perceived as deficient reasoners whose skills are immature in that they are unable to recognise the consequences of the choices they make to satisfy their needs. If they break the law to do so and become imprisoned, it is widely believed that prison educational programmes (among other things), must promote cognitive development leading to an increase in the ability to make law-abiding decisions.

My own theoretical interpretation of the potential for change (recall Chapter Five), encompasses those elements of cognitive skills listed above, by way of reference to prisoner-students abilities to weave their experiences of learning together via 'detour' thinking and through the acquisition of a measure of involvement and detachment in specific situations. The sensitive question of whether or not prisoners *ought* to attend cog. skills courses in my own study, has thus been sidetracked, because the role, purpose and function of prison education has become located with prisoners themselves rather than being located within the functions of the prison as an institution of punishment and deterrence.

In response to Arbuthnot's claim made at the beginning of this section therefore, the following remarks from students on the Leeds course provide further insights into the experience of imprisonment to illustrate how, on occasion, so-called 'correctional' education programmes may often fall far short of the desired outcomes, especially where those taking part in them have quite definite views on their immediate situation and personal experiences of imprisonment.

Vince: Just being in here is your punishment, keeping you away from your loved ones is enough of a deterrent ...

Wayne: Look at me I got ten years - ten years I'll be sixty, I aren't ever going to end up back here

Vince: Well, it depends on why you were here - in your case that's understandable, but if you need the money and your thing is armed robbery or whatever then the chances are you'll do it again.

Wayne: Some of the screws are OK. they care - take discreet visits, - you know - if you've got problems with the wife. Once every six months you can get close, you know - actually touching each other. Imagine that. People don't realise what it's like, not being able to do that. For some it's really important, the sex thing - these places are made to wreck relationships, can't touch, can't get near. When they get out there's nothing left.

Vince: No money, no house, try to get a job - you might as well forget it - no family left.

Is changing behaviour, the ultimate goal of prison educators? No matter how 'noble' the aspirations of those engaged in such work, the reality of life on the outside and returning to it, contains no illusions for the prisoner-students whose alleged lack of moral reasoning has, as far as some people are concerned, led to their current incarceration. As one student indicated: 'When you have your job taken away from you and the wife and kids want things and the giro doesn't even pay for food, you'll do anything. Those are the choices you face.' The stark realism of remarks such as these becomes more obvious

when placed against the following description of what a cog. skills course is designed 'to combat';

...key areas of developmental deficit which place offenders at a disadvantage in achieving cognitive and social competence. (Porporino, F.; Robinson, D.; 1995; 160)

Achieving cognitive and social competence for some prisoners is basically, a concern with working out how best to feed one's family. Presumably, if prisoners succeed in working out how to do this they *are* displaying cognitive competence to some extent in that they are solving the problem.

Following Williford (1994), in questioning precisely what the role of education in prison has been for the last two hundred years, it is possible to identify that role as having been perceived as mainly correctional. Describing education programmes as initially vehicles for rehabilitation and/or reformation, Williford (1994; viii) goes on to cite the so-called medical models where education had a potential role in 'curing' the offender and the cognitive-deficits model, where education would 'correct deficiencies in problem-solving, interpersonal and social skills' as described above. The use of words such as, 'treatment', 'intervention', and phrases such as, 'referring appropriate candidates for training' characterise the literature on cog. skills evaluation. (Porporino, F.; Robinson, D.; 1995)

The prevailing view today, would, she argues following discussions with 'educators, prison officials and prisoners', seem to suggest that such models do more harm than good, particularly as education rarely seems to have attained the goal of reducing (re)-offending behaviour.

The inability to attain such a goal is perhaps not surprising in the light of comments from educational practitioners and prisoners. From suggestions that prison education is no more than a 'symbolic prop in the drama of rehabilitative services' (Thomas; 1995; 39),

to the more personalised 'I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life' (Malcolm X quoted in Germanotta; 1995; 109), the range of differing views, agendas and ideologies in place in prisons, render the correctional model and its desire to promote 'positive changes in the direction of more pro-social thinking' more than just a little unworkable.

Attempting, through cog. skills programmes '...to assist offenders in rehearsing both new behaviour and new thinking skills' in thirty-five sessions over eight to twelve weeks, six to eight in a group (specified in training for cog. skills staff) and using overheads, pictures, role-play and scenarios seems artificial. The practice and delivery of such courses, whilst well-meaning enough, appears to ignore the practical, human side of the prisoner, i.e. his experiences, his history and his identity - crudely speaking the fact that he is a person. In this sense, cog. skills courses appear to be as deficient as those whose deficits they claim to resolve.

The process of learning and the acquisition of 'pro-social thinking' do go hand-in-hand but they are rooted in gradual assimilation of new knowledge into a person's existing knowledge streams (recall Chapter Three). The process takes time because people do not always accept the 'new' as easily or as readily as others may wish them to, or indeed as they themselves may believe that they can.

Devlin's study (1995) on the linkage between educational failure at school, home background and future offending behaviour is useful on a number of counts when considering the correctional role of education *inside* prisons, not least because she also notes that education inside illustrates one of the most striking paradoxes of the prison system (Devlin; 1995; 169). As her study clearly indicates, many prisoners lack, or feel

they lack, self-esteem and believe that their respective home backgrounds and 'horror stories about home lives' have undoubtedly played some part in shaping the propensity to offend.

It follows then that, in Devlin's analysis, education inside prison goes some way towards redeeming those perceived social and personal deficits which have allegedly accumulated through time for the offender. However the point has to be restated that education will not directly change the individual or directly stop offending behaviour, but the prison classroom can often be one of the first places where an individual acquires a sense of personal identity which is grounded in a sense of worth, a sense of personal confidence and an acknowledgement by both self and others that 'It is O.K. to be me'. Facing up to that reality for some offenders is not easy, for others it has become an impossibility and for the convicted prisoner serving a long sentence in an environment where perceptions of self are negatively reinforced daily, it means that any hope of reintegration into wider society becomes more elusive as time passes. Any positive social interaction, therefore, such as that which can occur within the prison classroom, can only be interpreted as worthwhile.

If, as Devlin suggests, most prisoners have spent a life-time dogged by educational underachievement and have experienced relative social deprivation, then current policies and approaches to curtail education within the penal system may reinforce the view that 'nothing works' in prisons. Prisoners themselves are, furthermore, going to find themselves feeling a greater sense of inadequacy and failure if they cannot satisfy the demands of a far stricter regime.

It is not more 'reforming' programmes which are needed for prisoners (Thomas; 1995; 40), but reformed prisons which fully address the well-being of prisoners. During the course of my own research it seemed ludicrous that some prisoners directed towards the Leeds course and working successfully at degree level on it, were - presumably with skills in place to cope with its demands - also 'advised' to attend cog. skills programmes where they would learn '...more complex and effective problem-solving and coping skills, more reflective and deliberate thinking patterns, and both more pro-social and more consistent attitudes, values and beliefs' (Porporino, F.; Robinson, D.; 1995; 161). The correctional model serves the prison rather than the prisoner.

EDUCATION AS EMPOWERMENT OR CONTRADICTION

If it is right to state that education can make a *difference* to those who are attending courses in prison, then is it also right of prison educators to state 'We are not in the business of rehabilitating prisoners.'? (Davidson; 1995; xvii)

This may seem like a startling claim when viewed against the most dominant schools of thought concerning prison education as correctional rather than as empowering. (Davidson; 1995; 3). I would suggest that it is extremely problematic to attempt to organise prison education programmes with the correctional criteria in mind because the temptation is to then categorise *all* prisoners as either cognitively or morally deficient. As this research has shown, prisoners are individual people and their motives for a). offending and b). attending education whilst in prison are as diverse as any aspect of human social behaviour which is governed by choices and decisions embedded in a continually evolving social context involving other people. The continuum of that experience, as Davidson suggests, has to be also viewed against '...the depth of the

tragedy that is the prison, and of the terrible barbarism to which it gives form...' (1995; 9).

It is quite one thing to state, that education in prison provides opportunities for personal growth *and* does supply some individuals with the necessary skills and training for employment. However, it is more realistic to be aware that, in a global labour market of fewer employment opportunities for the skilled, those who have served a prison sentence are more likely to discover that their (criminal) background does not necessarily stand them in good stead in an increasingly competitive jobs market, even if they have acquired skills and training whilst inside. Educational practitioners in prisons will have to refocus their aims on the central objectives of self-actualisation and empowerment if those imprisoned are to retain and regain a sense of personal worth and integrity in a world where exclusion and marginalisation of offenders are as deeply embedded in the wider social structure as they are within the confines of the prison.

The controversy and paradox surrounding Higher Educational provision in particular in prison may then dissipate, although critics of such programmes may continue to reduce their arguments to the view that 'it makes smart cons smarter and therefore more dangerous'. The fact is that these are the kind of arguments which inform prison educational policy and practice, they are culturally acceptable, and as such, they are powerful reminders in themselves of how people in wider society determine the futures of those who have been sentenced.

Offering courses of Higher Education in a prison setting is dogged by such attitudes and will continue to be so whilst ever attitudes towards Higher Education itself remain shaped by ideologies of elitism and aspirations embedded in cultural beliefs and values

regarding social mobility. As Jones and d'Errico observe (Williford; 1994), ideological and moral concerns result in tension and conflict regarding prisoners, prisons and education generally, and prison Higher Education finds itself at the centre of many debates relating to the wisdom and validity of offering such courses.

Developing their views, Jones and d'Errico describe how prison staff see little or no justification for prisoners receiving Higher Education (1994; 5), a similar attitude to that expressed by officers in Full Sutton who, when I asked them why, expressed a bitterness and hostility which blocked any sympathetic understanding towards the provision of such programmes. They resented the fact that education at any level was to be viewed as a right; as far as they were concerned it was an undeserved privilege.

Thomas also describes how prison staff would demean or belittle his attempts at delivering 'high-quality educational programs' (1995; 27) through overt hostility and disruption of classes. His suggestion that this is due to 'broader sociostructural influences' which are rooted in the difference between prison norms and campus norms, finds credence in my own teaching practice, when officers would walk into classrooms unannounced and take students for cell-spins. Even more disquieting was the attitude displayed by an officer when I was summoned out of the classroom in front of the men and told to move the blackboard (which I physically could not do) - and after three years of it having been in exactly the same place - because it was a security risk and they needed to see into the class. Just as Thomas's students advised him, 'Don't let them do that to you. Next week they're gonna pull the same shit,' the men on the Leeds course said, 'Watch them, they like to make you feel small 'cos it makes them feel big.'

The contradiction manifests itself in many ways. At its most basic, it is simply a matter of 'to correct or educate', but Higher Education does not see itself as a corrector or curer of 'diseased persons' (Jones, R.; d'Errico, P.; 1994; 7), although it might, quite legitimately perceive itself as having a role in transforming, developing or even being something of a 'vehicle for reform' in prison education. Perceiving its role as such, i.e. a *vehicle* rather than an outright reformer, is where the potential lies for Higher Education in prisons, '...capable of doing what prisons themselves were supposed to be doing all along.' (Jones, R.; d'Errico, P.; 1994; 7). However, there may be more than a little arrogance in such an opinion; this has to be recognised and tempered with the claim that whilst Higher Education is a 'specialised practice', so too is the practice of imprisonment.

The view that the institutional conflict which can arise here, brings about meaningful social change within the institution concerned (Williford; 1994; 16), is worth consideration. Both universities and prisons may be found wanting in these debates, themselves grounded in issues of 'should we punish, or should we educate?' This is further compounded by views such as that expressed by Corcoran (quoted in Williford; 1994; 6), that '...the remaking of useful citizens is more the task of education than it is the outcome of custody or punishment.'

Similar views are expressed by Fitzgerald and Sim (in their work on British prisons) when they state that '...education is a privilege, not a right for prisoners', (1982; 64). They raise several general issues relating to the situation of education in prison, questioning its low priority despite its being a statutory requirement since 1823. More seriously, they question the role of prison education as one of increasing control, suiting

the purposes of management rather than those of individual prisoners, paralleling those comments made by students on the Leeds course throughout this study.

The resolution of the conflicting interests of both the penal system and the education system is therefore central to prison education practice. As powerful institutions within modern societies, subjected as they are to policy initiatives and ruling ideologies, they have lost sight of the individual in prison who is both prisoner *and* student simultaneously. For *each* prisoner-student, the meaningful experiences, whether positive or negative, which they gain from both imprisonment and from learning, are a long way removed from those institutional aims and mission-statements which determine general practice in areas of both punishment and education.

The ideology of punishment finds its actuality in 'locking people up'; this is what prisons are about, not about seeing themselves as promoters of human renewal. The relationship between education and imprisonment therefore has to reach or agree a compromise, of a sort, which can only be grounded in mutual respect, or what Jones and d'Errico describe as 'accommodation' (1994; 13). That prisons have failed for the best part of two centuries, they argue, to reform offenders is well-documented sufficiently for educators to take cognisance of the fact. They propose that education, whilst maintaining some kind of distance from issues of penology, has a potential role to play in not only transforming the lives of those imprisoned, but in lessening the antagonisms of prison staff towards educational programmes and prison students in general. In short, any olive branch should be concerned with levels of integration of educational and penal goals, ideals and objectives. The sustainability of the Leeds course (and other courses) at Full Sutton remains as testament to those collective ideals.

Writing on what should comprise the main objectives for a prison education programme, Duguid suggests that the focus be directed towards 'individual attitude change' (1990; 113), rather than employment and/or training. Individual choice, responsibility and decision-making become parameters underpinning prison education programmes, thereby enabling and *empowering* prisoner-students to accept and acknowledge responsibility for their actions within a broader social community. The outcome of such programmes would be couched in terms of the offender's capacity or even ability to make informed choices through having acquired the necessary skills and intellectual abilities required for successful completion of (specifically) an academic course. These claims (Duguid; 1981; 1986; 1987) are not too dissimilar from those made in this study where the actual classroom learning processes have been shown to trigger changes in thinking through interaction, integration and personal development.

Recalling an instance in the classroom at Full Sutton (recall classroom conversation 3:1 and Fig. 3:1 displaying the context of the learning process) it is possible to see how the capacity to make informed choices through what has been learned and the manner in which it has been learned can, 'enhance an individual's capacity and will to act in a socially appropriate and ethically responsible manner' (Duguid; 1987; 57). Similarly, classroom conversation 3:3 which showed how processes of reflection on past experiences contribute towards understanding social structures today, illustrates how the very process and mechanisms of learning enable change in individuals who are deeply immersed in the actual world of the prison.

The context of the prison classroom, albeit against all odds, is where observations can be made, which shed light on how changes in thinking can potentially inform individual action. Duguid describes this as the forming of 'democratic educational communities

within the prison' (1987; 59) which take account of the developmental nature of personal change - a fact brought out in my own emphasis on developing a continuous sense of self whilst imprisoned.

Notwithstanding the fact that many prison educators can 'fall into the trap' of believing that all prisoner-students must be transformed or changed, Duguid argues that prison educators, furthermore, should be aware of their role in terms of education's capacity to cultivate empathy (c.f., my comments on mutual identification, Chapter Five) in students in addition to the more obvious outcomes of enhanced cognitive abilities. Empathy, he believes, should be a major educational objective (1990; 122) where the impact of a particular *chosen* course can ultimately result in 'major life changes' (1990; 125).

Discussing all aspects of prison education ranging from specifying the objectives of programmes to measuring their effectiveness in relation to 'what works in prison education', Duguid has also focused on ensuring that penal practitioners and educators move away from assuming that both prisons and education programmes are about direct rehabilitation. Rather, he observes that education has a contribution to make through recognising the importance of individual development, empowerment and engagement (1992). In short, prison education is about the value of education itself, the moral dimension built in to programmes, and education for citizenship which arguably are located in what Duguid describes as the 'desire' of prisoners, despite their alleged offending behaviour, for justice and fairness or 'virtue'(1987; 60).

This 'virtue' can be learned in the right circumstances, more so if seen to be practiced by all who live and work in prisons. Unfortunately, problems arise, according to Duguid, because prisoners do not often see 'virtue' being practised around them and so there is

little or no reinforcement of their ideals and even less of an opportunity to internalise anything positive, other than through what is learned in the classroom. The internalising of stages of learning is in itself a form of prisoner empowerment which has the potential to transcend the contradictions which characterise prison educational practice.

Moreover, Duguid also acknowledges the dangers of assuming that prisoners 'lack' any kind of cognitive-moral development, a fact again reinforced in my own research where most students would decry the notion that they were either morally or cognitively deficient in any sense. As was frequently pointed out with more than a degree of accuracy, 'We wouldn't be on the Leeds course if we were that stupid, but there are those in here who are complete bozos'. It has to be said though that imprisonment does not render a person cognitively deficient, despite what even the men may think with their rather pragmatic approach towards characterising other prisoners; it may be that their needs are indeed 'special' as Duguid acknowledges, (1987; 58), simply by virtue of being in prison.

Any course which therefore involves prisoner-students in debates or discussions about society, about individuals and social structures, gives them an opportunity to change the way they think, it provides an 'alternative view' and what Duguid calls the opportunity '...to respond to challenges and opportunities posed by daily life in a sometimes less than ideal world.' (1987; 64). This opportunity is presented to those in prison, via prison education, in the midst of the 'chaos' of the prison; a kind of chaos which has the potential to drive educational practitioners into the teeth of correctional models as opposed to those of empowerment.

CONCLUSION

The role of education in prison for educators may well need to be interpreted as separate and/or distinct from the purpose of education for the prison authorities in order to improve matters. For example, the purpose may be to keep prisoners occupied throughout the day, from a prison management point of view, whereas the role for educators might be more specific depending on which particular course has been 'suggested' to an individual prisoner, and by whom. Anti-bullying courses, anger-management courses, cog. skills courses and even 'armed robbers courses', all have their place within existing provision alongside basic literacy, foreign languages and the occasional degree course.

There are also many differing agendas in place as we have seen - those of penal policy, those of education generally, those of each prisoner and each tutor. There needs to be a coherent awareness of each one because underpinning each agenda is the desire for, not simply re-habilitation, but habilitation, meaning in this context, to enable someone to lead or live an 'ordinary' life. Re-habilitation implies that the person concerned, for whom all these courses are provided, suffers some kind of cognitive deficit and as such judgements are so frequently encoded in subjective moralities, it is worth remembering the ever-present linkage between education in prison, recidivism and re-habilitation.

What are the options open to prison educators in terms of delineating their role, their purpose and their function if the linkage between education and rehabilitation is as problematic as research would seem to suggest? In accordance with Davidson, I would suggest that education can and does 'make a difference' to those attending certain

courses. This research has itself indicated as much, but this claim has to be qualified in terms of the difference actually being made.

The outcomes of learning for each prisoner-student are unique and occur as a result of the way in which that student has synthesised the learning process into conscious experience. The potential for transferring any of those learning processes into the post-release period and assessing the possible effects that the learning has on behaviour, if any, is going to be determined by the prisoner-student's engagement with what has been learned and by the circumstances and situations which arise at that time. What is of greater significance is to acknowledge the changes and developments in thinking which may shape decisions (in the future) made in a particular context.

In some cases, it would seem however that educational programmes in prison which appear to have the capacity to transform, are very much grounded in the acquisition of cognitive skills, but again, this must be qualified. Learning to 'think differently' does not have the same implications as teaching someone to 'think differently'. The practice and delivery of courses is crucial in determining their success. The distinction is simple and obvious, but prison education programmes can too easily lose their own balance of involvement and detachment, becoming heavily weighted in favour of teaching at the expense of learning. The 'students' quickly sense this and will do their utmost to resist what they interpret as another form of control and an infringement of individual rights.

Further dimensions to consider in the 'linkage' debate are those which suggest that educational practitioners face up to the challenge that schooling in prisons is not only a way of controlling prisoners and potentially rehabilitating them, but that it *is* about individual empowerment and the politicisation of those serving sentences. If this is the

case, then as Davidson, suggests, do both prisoner-students and tutors become 'eternal protesters' against the status quo (1995; 9), capable of supplying all the necessary ingredients for 'an intelligent riot', particularly where degree level material is being taught and has invited students to challenge the 'less than ideal world' as Duguid suggests? This raises once more the old spectre of 'making smart cons even smarter', but if some political ideologies and policy-makers are to encourage the teaching of citizenship, for example, within prisons, then the right to protest, even in prison, must be granted. Those arguments, however, will always rest on what is being taught, by whom, and in which prison.

Of equal significance is the view that not all prisoner-students *are* rebels and protesters. Many are quite unashamedly conservative and Conservative, attributing their current situation of imprisonment as simply a matter of bad luck or fate with little blame laid at the door of structural inequality. Education for these students is 'functional' (Cordella; 1995; 151), a fact often noticeable when teaching the type of Higher Education course in Social Studies which provided the background for this study. Such students as these often found the course more challenging in that it undermined their traditional values and belief systems which represented those prevailing in wider society. This would be in stark contrast to the more 'ideational' students who tended to discover considerable justification for their previous actions and had every intention of using their newly gained (additional) knowledge of structural inequality to further legitimate specific courses of action. This would be by virtue of acquiring the skills of critical understanding, thus enabling prisoner-students to 'detach' themselves from the dominant culture through challenging its precepts.

The moral and ethical issues raised here are profound. Issues of individual empowerment and personal rights seem to transcend (probably quite rightly) the basic question of a perceived causal relationship between doing a particular course of education whilst in prison and rates of recidivism or rehabilitation. However it would seem appropriate to suggest that a more accurate assessment of prison education generally is to say that it is *not* correctional and yet it *does* make a difference.

The focus must rest on education's capacity or potential to transform and that means in whatever form necessary or best suited to an individual's personal development. As stated in Chapter Three, what a person chooses to do with 'new' knowledge is dependent on sequential changes embedded in the relationship between that knowledge acquisition, personal experience and consciousness. Rather than persist in criticising existing models of prison education, some appreciation is needed of the potential for synthesising all the diverse elements of them into an understanding of the plurality of the experience for each prisoner-student. That understanding needs to be divorced from attempts to measure education's effectiveness in terms of recidivism.

A meaningful programme of education within a prison can only be interpreted as such if the outcomes of a programme are assessed as having been of some worth to the prisoner concerned. This seems fairly obvious but must not be overlooked in so far as most people do not, as a rule, disregard anything which has been perceived as worthwhile to them. The daily routine of a prison regime may be interpreted and experienced as worthless for most prisoners, it has been described as particularly alienating by all the men who were involved with this study, and so any positive attempts made to combat such feelings, as for example attendance on educational courses leading to successful

attainment, do transcend the stigmatisation associated with being recognised as a prisoner or offender.

The perceived linkage between prison education programmes and rehabilitation may well have to be recouched in terms of the degree to which all the attitudes assessed in this chapter regarding prison education can, or ought to be modified, or even in terms of whether they *should be* modified. If education contributes towards making a difference to the attitudes of those inside, and it is accepted that society at large needs educating here too, then for prison education to be judged to have been effective also means that practitioners have to acknowledge that education in a prison context 'cannot be a magic bullet'. Furthermore society at large needs to acknowledge that:

Prisons contain a varied clientele with a multiplicity of needs and a full range of motivations and it would be folly to suppose that the post-release lives of all these individuals could be decisively shaped simply by exposure to a classroom or learning experience or by accumulating a few credits or certificates.(Duguid; 1995; 3)

So, the classroom experience must not be judged to have been effective or ineffective if viewed as an isolated aspect of a prisoner's personal experiences of imprisonment. Understanding the totality of that experience provides a more accurate assessment and evaluation of the context of prison education, from the wider macro levels of social organisation and behaviour inside and outside of the prison, to the micro level of each prison classroom. Hence the approach, in this study, to account for the pre-institutional, institutional and post-institutional sense of self across the continuum of a person's life.

In accordance also with Williford, (1994) I would argue that the potential of education and Higher Education in prisons, lies elsewhere than with correctional models. Its value lies in its capacity for contributing to personal growth and development, self-

actualisation and empowerment, but what is needed is a clear understanding of *how* these processes occur and through which activities or programmes on offer, that potential can be maximised and perceived as beneficial to all.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN A MAXIMUM SECURITY DISPERSAL PRISON

This chapter provides an account of the actual experience of conducting research in HMP Full Sutton through a justification of the research strategy and an examination of the advantages and limitations of using the ethnographic approach in a prison environment. Such an account, is unique in providing a 'tale' from the fairly remote 'field' of the-day-to-day experiences of prisoners in a maximum security dispersal prison.

What I propose to show in this section of the study, is the importance of involving individuals (I quite purposely refrain from using the words 'research subjects') in an in-depth and sensitive research programme which would bear little or no fruit without their consent, co-operation, expertise and specialist knowledge of an environment which, for the most part, remains unseen, barely acknowledged and preferably not thought about or reflected upon for most people. Such an approach, i.e. that of involving the prisoner-students to the extent that they offered constructive criticism etc., on the entire research study, gives further indication of the context of the research.

Demonstrating exactly what it is like to carry out research of this nature and how one feels best able to tackle it is, in and of itself, an essential and valuable dimension of the work and I take as a starting point the following:

The need to learn the culture of those we are studying is most obvious in the case of societies other than our own. Here, not only may we not know *why* people do what they do, often we do not even know *what* they are doing. (Hammersley, M.; Atkinson, P.; 1983; 7)

To this end, the first section of the Chapter will focus on how access to the prison was gained and also on the more general problems of access as a 'way in' in terms of conducting ethnographic research. The degree of participation of the men involved with the research and a close examination of research relationships will contribute towards building a more detailed 'picture'. Much of the current research on prison life is conducted by those who visit for short periods of time - unless, of course, the research has been written by an inmate, so anyone wanting a detailed picture simply has to keep going back inside, short of actually living in the place. Unfortunately, those who do, tend to wish on occasion that they did not have to keep returning to an environment not renowned for its propensity to welcome.

The second section of the Chapter focuses on methodological techniques employed to cope with research in this most sensitive of areas, although they in no way imply the 'rightness' of the ethnographic approach. Nor do they imply that the outcomes will be absolutely valid or rational or objective or even value-free; but a discussion is included on validity and the consequences of respondent validation as a means of casting a realist interpretation on the study.

Finally, the Chapter addresses the issue of generaliseability as the scope of the findings is considered, as is the extent to which the fieldwork notes provide a 'picture' of the reality of prison classroom practice. More general observations will be offered throughout the Chapter on the role of the observer/teacher/researcher with reference to similar theoretically-informed ethnographic studies.

ACCESS TO THE PRISON - A 'WAY IN' TO THE RESEARCH

Conducting research within a prison context might well be described as an undertaking not to be recommended because stating one's aims, discussing the methodology, detailing the content of the study, presenting findings, evaluating the whole thing, here all involve researching 'what goes on' in a prison. It means dealing with the kind of distractions that give hardened research practitioners nightmares; can I do that? should I say this? will it cause trouble if...? This type of environment is a far cry from the cosseted world of academia, and out of 130 prisons / remand centres / young offenders institutions in England and Wales, it is quite conceivable that as a researcher, you find yourself working in *one* with a group of approximately 10 inmate-students, all male, who can be and often are, moved (shipped out) quite literally overnight. The whole range of carefully premeditated methodological strategies and designs may disappear one by one in such a context, but you still have your hypothesis, your classroom and your working relationship with a small core of students who, in this study know, or think they know, exactly what your research is all about.

I had visited the prison once only prior to commencing work as a prison teacher / researcher, after having been 'cleared' for security purposes, regarding such a visit as essential in order to meet the students and give them some indication as to why I was about to spend the next three years 'inside' and had consciously chosen to do so. Fortunately, the group of students with whom I would be working, were part of an already established programme of Higher Education within the prison, so it was relatively easy to join the course as an additional tutor and draw on my own previous experiences of teaching mature students over several years.

On that first visit, after the customary introductions had taken place, the men were invited to ask me any questions they wished - either about myself, the teaching, or the research and my motivations for doing it, so literally from the start, the idea was for the men to know my reasons for 'being there' and we discussed the nature of the research programme and how it would (hopefully) proceed. In an environment as sensitive as a maximum security prison, it is vitally important to maintain open working relationships - obviously on a level that one would not normally subscribe to in more 'covert' ethnographic studies but maybe more so in 'overt' research. I particularly wished to avoid a situation where the inmates would feel anxious or concerned about the research, for whatever reason, and it was very much with those thoughts in mind that I set about conducting this study.

It was decided that an initial 'teaching-only' period would be preferable to commencing research immediately, to allow the opportunity for my own 'induction period' into the prison regime at Full Sutton. Once this had taken place and the students on the Leeds course knew me as a regular contributor to the Diploma programme and that I was going to conduct research on 'higher education and personal change in prisoners', I discussed the outline of the study and my reasons for wanting to carry it out. As these were grounded in concerns relating to the 'transformative capacity of sociology' as a 'learned discipline', particularly for 'mature students encountering it for the first time', there was little opposition and indeed, considerable interest from the men.

To attempt to describe what actually took place in the classroom at Full Sutton on *each* single teaching day is an impossibility. The most one can hope to achieve on that score is to provide a physical description of the prison classroom with its barred window, single blackboard propped against the corridor window 'to stop the nosey bastard officers from

spying on us' as one student intimated, twelve tables and chairs, partitioned pale beige walls between the classes, three filing cabinets, teacher's desk and bright green alarm bell marked No. 9 placed strategically on one wall - 'in case of trouble'. The amount of class contact time was substantial - more so than most university students would actually get in a University, and the time that each prisoner spent with myself, my colleague who taught on the course and with other class members was, relative to other time spent out of cell, at visits or in 'association', quite considerable. Subsequently, the rapport which developed with the different groups of prisoner-students, became a 'way-in' (Hammersley, M.; Atkinson, P.; 1983; 82). The fact that I had also taught mature students for a number of years prior to conducting the research meant that I could focus on the demands of the research rather than be distracted by the demands of a 'new' occupation as teacher. In fact the student-teacher relationship itself became a 'way-in', being a sound basis from which to build fairly positive working relationships, a theme to which I will return later.

RESPONDENT INVOLVEMENT

Formal access to the prison and to the classroom having been gained, a strategy for building on and developing the 'way in' with the men had to be considered. Working from the basis that involvement on a detailed level of all parties, i.e. researcher and 'researched', does not invalidate the work, my initial perspective subscribed in fact to the view that a high level of 'subject involvement' would be the most successful in providing the evidence necessary to build a more complete understanding of the experience of studying degree level material whilst imprisoned. I decided to explain exactly what the research was about, why I was doing it and told the men that they could read sections

and comment on any aspect of it that they wished. In this way, their involvement was grounded in trust; an important consideration when researching in a prison environment.

With hindsight, I still believe this to be the case. Interpreting the classroom context, the interactions, analysing the complex human processes of understanding information and knowledge and comprehending how individuals distil it all into the structure of personality, meant 'getting to know' the men well and simultaneously abandoning any preconceived ideas I might have had about prisoners or the crimes they may have committed. I chose incidentally, *not* to 'check' on their offences through prison records although I could have done so.

The initial group comprised Rosan, Rob, Vince, Dudley, Bunny, Tony, Wayne, Ronnie and Frankie; later in the first year of the programme there would be David, Martin, Mark, Gary, Garfield, Pete, Andrew, Allan; then Ted, Felix, Ossie, into the second year, Tim, Darren, Eddie, Kenny, Peter, Alan, Thomas and into the third and fourth years, Lawrence, Mostin, Leroy, Maurice and Duke and many others who would drift in and out of the course; but always a solid core of students (committed to their studies and aware of the research). I became aware, however, of the fact that there were those 'on education' who would not join the course because research was being undertaken.

One of the first 'sensitive' areas in the research presented itself when I asked the men what they thought about being 'named' in the writing up of vignettes on classroom interaction. The necessity for labelling individuals in this environment as 'Prisoner A' or 'Inmate No. 1' etc., seems equivalent to de-humanising people, ignoring as it does the significance of retaining a positive sense of self, identity and status which negates any attempts at social reintegration or rehabilitation. Equally, both the men and myself are

fully aware of potential security risks and regulations for all concerned. The consensus of opinion at the early stages of the research was articulated by Dudley as follows:

We're people, we are human beings, not numbers; we get enough of that in here and we are already serving our punishment for what we have done. Why don't you just use our first names... if you can.

It is also worth noting that at this early stage of the research, I explained to the men that I would be analysing their conversations, their 'talk', in the classroom. They were intrigued as to how this would be done, and as an aspect of respondent involvement, it seems appropriate to include comment on the adoption of this particular methodological technique here. I explained that I would not be taping the conversations because this would present, firstly, a practical problem within the prison due to security and the question of availability of a tape-recorder every single week over a long period of time when other teachers also had demands on them for other purposes. I also did not wish the men to feel uncomfortable or inhibited in their learning or more general classroom behaviour.

I told the men that I would simply write down what had occurred and what had been discussed after each teaching session had finished and sometimes during classes whilst discussions were taking place. They were quite happy with this arrangement and became accustomed to my 'scribbling', as they described it, whilst they 'talked'. Very occasionally, and much later on in the course of the research, the men would say lightheartedly, 'You got that down, Anne? That was a good bit for your work'. Rather than transcribe each and every conversation, which would have been inappropriate for the method due to reliance on memory, I chose to work with complete blocks of conversations to convey more of a sense of context than would be possible with pages of transcription symbols familiar in the conversational analysis literature (Heritage; 1978).

Researchers have to concede that they mentally become part of the 'world' being studied. The prison researcher's dilemma thus becomes grounded in the question 'Am I truly a part of the world I study?' I admit, this cannot be answered with the desired candour of the 'total participant'. To be truly a part of the Full Sutton 'world' would quite simply have meant being there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week - and serving a five to thirty-five year 'stretch'.

In addition to this, there is a more obvious concern - when offenders have received such vastly different sentences as those involved with this research had, the researcher has to recognise how this will impact upon the individuals concerned. As a teacher, there are also profound implications for the nature of classroom interactions. As both researcher *and* teacher, becoming 'accustomed' to the closed, highly regulated prison environment where some respondents are detained indefinitely due to the nature of their alleged offence, takes a while. It presents the kind of challenge that places unconsidered and occasionally unheard of demands upon both teacher / researcher and prisoner / student. Those demands underpin subsequent research relationships which are also social relationships, which in turn shape the research itself and hence the degree of respondent involvement.

Those relationships, ideally, are also based on perceiving those with whom the research is conducted as 'people' and not simply as 'prisoners'. The cultural baggage associated with the label of prisoner / criminal / offender can be as damaging to the research being undertaken as any other factors which may affect the validity of the work. The depth of information and quality and quantity of data received from those on the Leeds course in Full Sutton would not have been forthcoming at all had there been the slightest attempt to deny the students their individuality, autonomy and humanity.

Interactions with prisoners based on mutuality do not imply naivety on the part of the researcher who also has to remember that the differing attitudes of prison education staff and prison officers, for example, towards those imprisoned is widely recognised and acknowledged as being contradictory. For the former, they work with 'students', the latter would enthusiastically inform me that their job was to 'keep the dangerous garbage out of society, preferably locked up twenty-three hours a day because that's all they deserve'. The prison researcher quickly learns to adapt to these contradictory attitudes and perceptions towards prisoners, attitudes which characterise most relationships in a maximum security dispersal prison, so diplomacy also becomes an important consideration. Being diplomatic becomes second nature, particularly if, for example, one finds oneself having to attend meetings within the prison with prison staff where issues of security and/or cost-cutting far outweigh educational concerns in terms of their priority. (One has to acknowledge, of course, that prison officer training is vastly different from either research or teacher training.) Then back in class, the men ask how the meeting went and what was it about.

Diplomacy above all, if conducting a case study with prisoners, means spending time talking to them about the research and about what you, as a researcher, are actually doing. It means, for example, explaining to them what you are writing down when they speak and why, or firstly asking if they have any objections to your writing a specific remark down. If they have, then you do not use it; if you doubt the veracity of any remarks or comments about the prison, you have to make judgements as to their inclusion; the same goes for the 'sincerity' of remarks made or those which might be misconstrued or cause offence out of context.

A high degree of (prisoner) respondent involvement also means that the research is constantly open to their own 'critical overview' - an issue discussed in detail below with respect to respondent validation. If a student on the course asked me to 'remove' something from the data collected, then I did, either for reasons of security or for their own peace of mind. 'Diplomacy' and being 'tactful' are therefore important in such a setting. Together with 'trust' they formed the basis of respondent involvement in the work and also the basis from which research relationships developed and contributed to 'access' in the wider sense.

Overall, the men were more than willing to be involved, an appropriate sub-title for the complete work was suggested by Dudley and David, 'Just the Way We Are', as Dudley said, 'It's about us and there ain't enough about that.' There were however one or two 'conditions' attached:

Vince: Don't ask us to write it down; it's the motivation, or lack of it in here, nothing personal you understand. I would just forget, I don't know about the others, but that's me. Half an hour's conversation or more is better, more productive for you, I could talk about it all day, but write!

RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS

Flexibility, adaptability and empathy, in addition to the building up of a positive working relationship based on trust all proved to be essential researcher's tools in this study, helping to create an informal, facilitative learning atmosphere, where prisoner-students retained a degree of autonomy that was not always attainable elsewhere in the prison. Achieving a balance between teaching and researching was an important consideration.

The interpersonal relationship between researcher and *respondent* in this study is also worthy of more detailed comment, if for no other reason than the fact that the research was conducted within an all male prison over a three year period. Thus the issue of

gender deserves a mention for it undoubtedly had an impact upon the nature and character of the research relationship.

Firstly, the difficulties presented by striking a balance between teaching and carrying out the research are worthy of mention. They were not insurmountable, but occasionally characterised by frustration for both students and myself when the demands and pressures of one role outweighed those of the other. For example, students were sometimes more anxious to prepare for essay submission or forthcoming examinations, or more interested in course content and subject-matter than they were in answering any specific questions on prison educational practice. As a result, they sometimes became 'bored' with discussing research which, for some individuals, did not feature highly on the agenda and they would leave the classroom for 'association' (recall Chapter One).

Frequent interruptions meant, from a research relationship point of view, that I learned to be tactful in the classroom. Some men would be in and out of the room in a manner not tolerated or expected in a standard educational setting. In a prison, it was the norm. Those who remained in the classroom for the duration of the sessions tended to be those who contributed most to discussions, appeared to enjoy their studying more and who also were most interested in the research being done and who took these opportunities to ask me about the work. The 'blankers-off', i.e. those who chose not to participate in discussions, on the other hand, either did so because they had more important things on their mind, were 'newcomers' to the group and a little insecure, or, realistically speaking were too busy dealing with drug problems.

It also helps to see the impact that these 'drifters' had from a teaching perspective. As 'absent' students they could not obviously contribute to classroom conversations, and

would frequently miss out on 'lectures'. Whilst this did not present a huge problem, ground had occasionally to be made up and subject-matter re-covered to enable people to complete the necessary work which was irritating for those who remained in class all the time. They would then use the make-up time as 'free association'.

The nature of teaching in a prison is characterised by disruption and interruption, as is the routine of the prison itself, so the men simply accepted these events as regular practice. I quickly learned to do the same and so the validity of the research was unaffected as the events formed part of the daily practice of the prison classroom and the wider context beyond it. In addition, because the research was conducted mainly through observation and analysis of classroom discussions grounded in the subject-matter being learned, and was also concerned with evaluating the outcomes of learning processes from an interactionist perspective, there was ample opportunity to gather data from the teaching practice itself.

A further matter of considerable importance was the group dynamic itself. If the men felt 'comfortable' with each other, and this was not always the case depending as it did on knowing the nature of each other's offence/sentence duration/status in the prison etc., then as a class of students, the group would be best described as lively, trusting, enthusiastic, keenly motivated and so on. As with students in any setting, this would be beneficial from a teaching and a research point of view, producing informative debate with a wealth of potential data for analysis. If, on the other hand, the group members were either covertly or overtly hostile towards each other and did not 'gel' as a group, (recall Chapter Five) then the teaching/learning problems had a 'knock-on' effect with regard to the research. In short, there were times when the 'way in' was wide open and

others when the perimeter fence of the prison may well have been located in the classroom.

Over the three year period however, research relationships were for the most part positive with prisoners proving to be helpful, resourceful and supportive, constantly asking about my progress (as well as the more lighthearted 'What percentage royalties do we get?'), and offering insights into a social world whose structures and practices are generally of little interest or concern to most people.

The question of how the men perceived my role as researcher and as teacher is to be answered by interpreting their reactions in class to both roles and being aware of, and noting any differences. Switching 'overtly' from teaching to researching means that one's patterns of expected behaviour 'shift' for those involved in the interactions which both roles generate. The men's attitudes would alter as they adjusted from 'student-mode' to 'respondent-mode' and became conscious of their status as 'prisoners' rather than as 'students' on a degree course. The shift is to be discerned in the different power-balances associated with each role being played. I may have 'power' over students as their teacher, but when I am questioning those same individuals about their social reality, the power-balance shifts in their favour. The men had 'knowledge' about the prisons which I did not share, so they would 'talk' and I would 'listen'. I would describe this not so much as the opposite of the typical teacher / student relationship, but more of a 'mirror-image' of it and also complementary to the researcher / respondent relationship. There would invariably be a few moments of unease in the classroom as new parameters of behaviour or new 'role-sets' became established. As Willis states, 'The ethnographic account ..., records a crucial level of experience...' (1993; 194) and awareness of how

the research relationships impact upon the research forms as much a part of that 'crucial level of experience' as does the subject-matter being investigated.

In addition, listening to the comments of the men on the actual research study itself forms an essential component of the account because the teacher / researcher empathises with the respondents and distils the experience into the totality of (in this instance) the classroom interaction. In much the same way as the students in this study have been described as 'weaving' their learning processes together into a synthesis of outcomes, the teacher/researcher weaves together the teaching and researching experiences and practices into a fuller or broader account of what actually took place.

To furnish a broader account of what took place in the classroom means above all, providing a *realistic* as well as an interactionist account of teaching, learning *and* researching as is possible, and conducting the research as aware of the *circumstances* of the research as is possible (Pawson, R.; Tilley, N.; 1997; xiv). Empathising with respondents and distilling that experience through into classroom interaction 'fleshes out' the actual research. Underpinning this study is the claim that Higher Education 'changes' prisoners, looking at *how* that occurs means looking at everything that takes place in the prison classroom where it is taught *and* not only at the teaching, but at the research project itself and how *that* impacts upon the people involved.

Building up a 'working' set of research relationships alongside a 'working' set of teaching relationships is important because one set has a 'knock-on' effect on the other. The seasoned teacher/classroom ethnographer learns to 'work' the two in tandem and, in instances where the work is conducted over a long period of time, so do the respondents, with implications for respondent validation. Lawrence and Maurice had a

common interest in sailing and both had experiences of seafaring. They were recalling how these experiences led to a 'broadening' of understanding different cultures, including their own, and Maurice had noticed how the subject-matter of sociology had 'made him remember' in a way that nothing else had done for a considerable period of time:

Anne: Memory is really important. I made a point in my thesis about it, how we use it to help us learn.

Lawrence: Oh yes, of course, it helps you make sense.

Anne: ...or identify with what you're learning?

Lawrence: Oh God, yes all the time, it makes it easier ...

Maurice: Yes, it makes it understandable.

Anne: Bauman has a phrase - 'the recapitulation of tradition' ...

Lawrence: Oh that's good, I like that. That's just what it is.

Both Lawrence and Maurice, here affirm the claims and issues I was exploring and feel confident enough to do so because of their familiarity with the group relationships and with the research itself. They were not 'new' to either although Maurice was often hesitant in 'joining in' discussions, and they both 'refine' the 'weaving' theory of learning which I have advanced showing how respondent involvement and positive research relationships ultimately shape methodological techniques.

The luxury of a quiet, private teaching session in a soundproof classroom without interruption or the weekly distraction of one's students being taken away for a 'cell-spin' by officers known as 'spin-doctors' by the men, is unheard of in prison - and it is within this physical setting that the research relationships were built up and worked upon, developing in continuous interaction in order to gain the results. Throughout the entire

research period, it is worth noting that the men strongly felt their classroom space to have been violated if officers entered the room for any reason. Any discussion taking place - whether to do with the course or the research - would simply stop if they entered, and I was also asked to remain quiet by the men apart from responding to their (the officer's) immediate requests. In the interests of maintaining a positive working relationship, this was complied with throughout the study. As Diesing observes, the task of the fieldwork researcher:

... is to become part of the community or group he is studying. This task imposes an essential requirement of permissiveness on the researcher; he must make himself acceptable, allow himself to be socialised, accept the point of view and ideology of his hosts. (1972; 144)

The issue of how the prisoners perceived my relationship to prison officers/staff generally, was of considerable significance in terms of how they interacted with me. If I was, at any stage, considered to be 'on the side of the officers', then the trust and mutual respect would have dissipated - this factor was most noticeable with 'new' students who, until they had been in the group for a few weeks, would assume that I worked 'for the prison'. As a result, they were cautious as to what they would disclose and often expressed surprise at the openness of classroom discussion pertaining to prison matters. 'Older' group members had, in actual fact, recognised that the autonomy of the individual in a prison classroom, and particularly one espousing the ideologies and practices of Higher Education, transcended the ideology of the prison. The 'switch' in self-perception which the prisoner-students frequently had to make on this basis, involved some skillful manoeuvrings on their part.

This ability to 'switch' between the worlds of 'student' and 'prisoner' can be seen for example, in recalling events described at classroom conversation 3:1 where the men had been discussing social cohesion, the development of social control and conformity to norms when a prison officer entered the classroom. Detailed comments on how the men deal with these occurrences are also to be found in my analysis of identity transformation and development through learning (recall Chapter Four), where the individual prisoner's sense of identity is either reinforced, denied or transformed as a result of prison experiences.

Field relations have therefore been an important consideration in this study. In Hammersley and Atkinson's account of ethnographic principles in practice, (1983), it is acknowledged that:

Impressions of the researcher that pose an obstacle to access must be avoided or countered as far as possible, while those that facilitate it must be encouraged, within the limits set by ethical considerations. (78)

The 'messages' which an ethnographer passes to those with whom the research is being conducted - via clothing, spoken language, body language, personal demeanour and so on are of great significance. In a prison context, they can mean the difference between obtaining vast amounts of data or none at all. The issue of my own appearance and the type of clothing I wore to attend the prison provides a case in point. As a female researcher in an 'all-male' prison - although there were female officers and other civilian staff working there - it was made clear from the outset by female education colleagues, and indeed in a 'written code', that I should always be aware of the 'effect' that my style of clothing could have 'on the men'. All female education staff were expected to dress 'sensibly', for example, it was considered 'unfair to the men' if one chose to wear short skirts and so on. In the course of a staff-room discussion at the prison on one occasion

relating to this matter, a male tutor expressed the view that this was quite patently not right as little or no comments were ever directed towards male staff other than to ensure they 'looked smart' and 'could be distinguished from the men by officers'; trainers and sweatshirts were therefore not 'de rigeur'.

Understanding the significance of these attitudes within the prison is important to anyone conducting research there because the ethnographer in particular has to maintain an acceptable relationship with the group. As Hammersley and Atkinson state, it concerns 'the essential affinity between researcher and hosts' (1983; 79), where the construction of an explicit research role contributes to the validity of the work. Dress, demeanour, adoption of language codes and particular types of behaviour, all become essential 'tools' in the ethnographer's resource bank - essential as strategies for survival in a sensitive environment, essential for maintaining a positive working relationship and essential for producing a credible 'tale from the field'. If the researcher in prison 'gets it wrong', the whole project can be very swiftly jeopardised on any number of levels, from simply gaining security clearance to the men refusing to join the class. For a prison classroom ethnographer, impression management counts for a great deal with the acquisition of appropriate 'role-adoption' skills developing into a fine art for example, not disclosing anything which had occurred in the prison such as reasons for a riot as this would be considered to be a breach of security.

It has to be reiterated however, that as a female researcher in an all male prison, issues of gender neutrality *must* be considered but only because the research process *is* inevitably coloured by the adoption of stereotypical male and female roles. The reason for this is *because* the work is being undertaken in a prison setting where role-playing as a strategy for survival is honed to a fine art by penal practitioners, prisoners and civilian staff alike.

The adoption of particular roles in this setting offsets the symbolic representation of the total institution of the prison and so the roles both normalise and regulate the social situations and experiences which individuals create there. From a realistic perspective, being a female researcher in an all male prison and one who does not actually work 'for the authorities', does ensure, whether rightly or wrongly, a willingness on the part of respondents to co-operate, to be supportive and keen to help in any way, although I would be loathe to consider that I had presented myself to the students as a '... socially acceptable incompetent...' (Hammersley, M.; Atkinson, P.; 1983; 85).

On one occasion, I had shown a video about Class Difference in Britain which focused on the life-styles and attitudes of those who had achieved 'upward social mobility' through successful business ventures. One of those depicted in the video had made a substantial fortune from pornography and was discussing his success. One of the men in the group, as soon as the film ended, said, 'You must think that's awful. That bloke is not really happy is he? [Which was not actually the case] Making his money like that! What a tosser, he's appalling really, isn't he?' Now I actually did not have a problem with anything shown in the video and expressed as much to the student concerned who was evidently surprised. It was not the first time that he (and others) had reacted in this way to material which they assumed would cause offence because I was female, 'academic and a sociologist' (he said). His comments sparked off further group discussion on male/female relationships and exploitation. Similarly, when discussing the content of *Vogue* fashion magazine whilst studying consumerism, a number of students believed that I would be offended by their reactions to fashion shots of models, which were no more and no less than the reactions of anyone in circumstances of long-term imprisonment. Their comments were lighthearted and amusing, causing no offence even

to the point where I threatened to take up fitness training so that I could be described as 'a fit bird', which caused great amusement.

Self-presentation *is* a sensitive issue for the prison researcher. It can impact upon the work of the ethnographer in relation to objectivity and subjectivity particularly when compounded by gender relations in a prison environment, where empathy with the prisoner can mean the difference between gaining results or not, although that issue does not necessarily shape all interactions with students. In my own fieldwork, it became apparent that interaction with the men *was* coloured by gender relations which simply became part of the reality of the classroom experience and therefore became an essential dimension of the research relationship. It is extremely difficult under the circumstances of this kind of research, for the researcher to remain 'neutral'.

Understanding the culture of the participants in a prison ethnography is crucial to the outcomes of the research process. Earlier in this study, I indicated that assuming the prior existence of a prison (sub)culture was dangerous for a number of reasons because, if nothing else, it encourages the development of even more stereotypical ideas about those who have allegedly offended. However, that is not to say such a culture does not 'exist' in the minds and hearts of those sentenced. It quite patently does; just as cultural attitudes, beliefs, customs and ideals pervade wider society so too, do they characterise prison communities.

As a prison ethnographer, I quickly had to 'learn' the prison culture from the perspective of the prisoners. It was in my own interests to do so if I was to work successfully with them. No prison ethnographer will produce results if she is perceived of as having little or no empathy with the prisoners *by* the prisoners, and acquiring '...expertise in

manipulating the rules of the game' (Hammersley, M.; Atkinson, P.; 1983; 91) becomes yet another feature of the research, as important as adoption of the appropriate researcher role. Awareness of these matters can determine whether any one research day in the prison is a good or bad day. Equally, what 'works' for one prison researcher may not work for another.

There is undoubtedly a concern to be explored in adopting research roles and in encouraging the development of research relationships built on close rapport with respondents. Hammersley and Atkinson consider the implications of 'over-rapport' in ethnographic research (1983; 98-104) and such claims do have a bearing on the checking upon the validity of one's findings. However, if one is engaged in research over a long period of time, achieving a balance between insider-outsider relationships or 'familiarity' and 'strangeness' (1983; 100) in order to maintain validity contributes to the pattern of the research rather than detracts from it.

Appreciating the men's sense of humour illustrates the case in point. Using the episode described above, when showing the video on Class in Britain, Lawrence had expressed 'delight' at seeing the socialite Tamara Beckwith on film:

Lawrence: Don't you think she's lovely? That's made my day has that. She's delightful.

Anne: Not my type - but you've got to hand it to her ...

Lawrence: She knows exactly what she's doing, a clever girl, but you'd have to say that she's had a good start in life ... and that counts for so much.

Anne: Of course it does, for every Tamara, there are thousands of ordinary women who will never have any of the opportunities she's had ...

Lawrence: Not in a million years, darling, and you must take that into consideration. It makes the class thing very apparent. But I still think she's lovely ...have you got her on any more videos? (amidst great laughter ...and we

continued discussing whether I should give up researching and become a socialite).

The balance between 'familiarity' and 'strangeness' lay in the conversational exchanges which swung between sociology and Lawrence's - and my own - subjective comments.

At one extreme, it shows how 'delicate' the task of conducting ethnographic research (in a prison) is, but it also depicts the reality of social interaction. 'Going native' in a maximum security dispersal prison is perhaps not the best recommended approach for all manner of reasons; equally the adoption of a 'marginal position' and the maintenance of that position is not easy in such an environment. Of consideration too, is the fact that conducting fieldwork of this kind *is* stressful - simply being in a classroom for five hours a day with those who have been designated as high risk Category A prisoners by the judicial system is not always an appealing prospect. Even less so is the fact that one may not actually get out of the prison at the end of the day if the 'gate is frozen' (i.e. all staff are unable to leave) due to some incident. As one of the students on the Leeds course explained, albeit in a different context, the way to deal with such complications in life means accepting, for example, that if one chooses a career in a bank, then one may expect to experience bank robberies at some point. Likewise, if one chooses to conduct field research in a prison, then

Hammersley and Atkinson's description of the 'disengaged/engaged' ethnographer's ability to manage their feelings is sensible (1983; 102). In my own fieldwork, balancing the many roles and subjective feelings about imprisonment, long sentences, punishment, justice and injustice with the more objective task of conducting sociological research was something of which I became acutely conscious, for not only does a prison contain

individuals - in every sense of the word - it is a place of work for many others who firmly believe that they are simply doing a job.

The fact that I had taught prior to entering the prison and that I had experienced the routine admin. procedures characteristic of Further Education for adults, proved to be something of a 'plus' in establishing good field relations with other teachers. The ability to identify with their worries, concerns and pressures ensured that they were in no way disconcerted by my presence in the Department and were keen to help or comment on their situation. Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) comments on the work of Beynon (1983) lend credence to this aspect of my own ethnographic work which can again best be described as a kind of 'mutuality' between on-site practitioners and researcher. Obtaining data from the field is thus made easier, although as Beynon recorded, occasional feelings of 'disquiet' sometimes intrude. This happened most noticeably in my own work when I wrote an account of the effect of a prison riot on the education department at Full Sutton which was published in a national broadsheet paper (see Appendix Three). Somewhat belatedly, I had to seek permission from the prison for publication, although the account had already been sent off. I had simply forgotten to ask and spent a fraught week hoping that I had not jeopardised the entire project. However, in a prison setting, these feelings of disquiet are perhaps more indicative of relationships with prisoners than they are with teaching staff or prison authorities.

The management of all prison research relationships thus becomes a delicate affair and the issue of disclosure, crucial to the success or failure of the entire programme. Any account of ethnographic research relationships has to be made with due consideration given to the social setting within which those relationships were forged. The 'micro' social setting of the prison and all that it symbolises is not as familiar a setting to the

social science researcher as those of many other social institutions. Its marginality - both socially and geographically - precludes detailed description and even detailed discourse, and yet within it, the interdependencies and patterned regularities identifiable in wider society can be discerned. Above all, there are observable and highly visible differences in the distribution of power between individuals within a prison environment, and that distribution of power is as uneven there as it is likely to be in any social setting. The prejudices, hostilities, tensions and stigmatisations which exist between groups and individuals have become the fabric of the prison itself and as such are definitive of it. A prison teacher/researcher is as much a party to those divisive elements as anyone else involved with the day-to-day reality of such an environment; awareness of those divisions and the inequalities (and sometimes injustices) which stem from them, inevitably colour strategies for survival as a fieldworker as much as the prisoner adopts specific strategies for survival upon entering the prison. They therefore shape the research itself.

METHODOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES

This section of the Chapter focuses more specifically on the techniques employed both to facilitate and develop the research into a realistic account of what took place in the prison classroom. It begins with a description of how the men reacted to the 'first' piece of research having been read out to them further illustrating their involvement with the project. Secondly, the issue of validity is addressed through consideration of the extent to which any 'bias' or 'contamination' is present in findings. This is done through suggesting that the methods used add a dimension to the work in reproducing and creating the reality of classroom practice. A third technique employed in validating the account is described in the section on respondent validation which concludes that the

research gains validity through drawing on the knowledgeability and expertise of the men as suggested earlier. Any 'feedback' from them is therefore best described as a 'building block' of the method.

'ICE BREAKING'

I chose, with hindsight somewhat naively, to read the first 'instalment' of the research to the first group of students with whom I worked on the course, after reaching a point where they were anxious as to how the work was progressing. The extract I read was classroom conversation 2:3 on the frequency of re-marriage in contemporary British society and involved Wayne, Tony, Vince, Dudley and Mark commenting on marriage and long-term relationships between men and women. The nature of the subject-matter and the things which were said perhaps contributed a little to their initial disquiet, but this was soon overcome although at the time, it proved to be quite simply, the most difficult aspect of the entire research period - akin to 'stealing souls' or the absolute embarrassment of hearing oneself speak for the first time on a tape-recorder (for them at least). I wondered at the time, how many prison researchers had ever been in a situation where they felt more 'criminal' than any of their respondents had ever felt. They were quiet, anticipatory, a little tense and I was under the spotlight. Would they approve? Had I recounted things accurately? Would they really feel embarrassed? At that moment I could see every single advantage put forward over the years for undertaking *covert* ethnography. The only voice I could hear was Tony's, from three months earlier, as I remembered quite acutely his remark (typical of someone familiar with prison culture):

Everything you do and say is written down in here.

Then Dudley broke the ice, as I paused, fearful that I had undermined all the trust and confidence built up over the preceding months when he leaned back on his chair, giggled and said:

That sounds really posh, man. It don't sound like us...but that's O.K.

and the research relationship survived.

These first attempts at research 'ice-breaking' are reminiscent of the account Willis provides of how his research role was seen by the 'Hammertown Lads' after they had read his early drafts:

- Bill: The bits about us were simple enough.
 John: It's the bits in between.
 Joey: Well, I started to read it, I started at the very beginning, y'know I was gonna read as much as I could, then I just packed it in, just started readin' the parts about us and then little bits in the middle.
 Spanksy: The parts what you wrote about us, I read those, but it was, y'know, the parts what actually were actually describing the book like I didn't ...
 (Willis; 1993; 195)

Throughout the research study, I would give sections of the work to the men to read, their reactions varied from humour, 'Eh, Allan, you were going on a bit there' - after reading through classroom conversation 4:6 on patterns of consumption - to the more poignant 'I really miss Darren, you know, he brought a spark into the group, even if I didn't always agree with him. Reading that through has brought it back as if it were yesterday. I wonder where he is now?' 'Bloody Winston Green, the bastards', came the reply.

Overall this particular technique proved extremely useful, producing considerable amounts of feedback in terms of conducting research generally and more specifically

within the prison system (see below for further discussion on respondent validation). All the ethnographer's dilemmas were raised - subjectivity, objectivity, detachment, involvement, ethical issues, bias - as well as a request to 'remove' an item already included considered to be sensitive, to which I agreed. The following conversation gives some idea of the democratic flavour of the proceedings; echoing Willis's account above:

Vince: Are you really happy for us to edit it? I mean, is that O.K.? At every stage?

Anne: Yes, I told you that right at the beginning.

Vince: That's fine. I feel much better about it - really I do.

Dudley: Aw, come on..., this is academic work. She's gotta do it like this

Vince: I'm sure it's fine, it's just that you've got to appreciate - it's not paranoia.

Dudley: Don't you think we should wait and see the whole thing? You know to get a complete picture before we start editing, deciding on what goes in or out?

Vince: No, I'm not sure.

Martin: No, me neither...

Vince: You see, we've got to be careful...

Anne: O.K., that's no problem. Let's see what you think about this part ...

A section was duly read out and the following comments were made:

Vince: It's good, that's really good. When you include the bits you say, we don't sound as stupid. It's... I don't know... the jumping about from the academic bits to when we speak.

Anne: O.K., I'll include more of them. I think you're right, it gives a more accurate picture of what goes on in the classroom.

Vince: When we speak, in this bit, it all sounds flippant. We're not that flippant are we? It sounds as though we never get serious.

Dudley: You gotta have a joke man, we just do.

Vince: Yes, but not all the time!

David: But class is like that anyway! At least it shows we're enjoying it.

The above comments give some indication of how the whole project progressed and then developed into one of open involvement and interaction between researcher and 'researched'. On another occasion, after having completed the draft versions of Chapter One (Life in H.M.P. Full Sutton), I told the group at the time that I had done so and they asked if they could see it. I subsequently copied it and gave it to Ted, Allan, Felix, Eddie and Tim. Their reactions to this first Chapter were highly critical in that they felt that much more ought to be said about the prison, and could be said, from their perspective. Despite this they said it was the best thing they had read about prisons.

They were anxious to ensure that I had the exact times of the daily regime and movements written down accurately and there was considerable debate about the different regimes on different wings until consensus was reached. Tim 'corrected' my original times which he believed were not sufficiently broken down enough to cover each aspect of the daily 'division of labour'.

This kind of reaction, i.e. to the fact that anything pertaining to the prison was 'accurate' and precise enough to convey a sense of the place, mattered a great deal; so much so, that subsequent pieces of research which involved any description of the prison or its routine I simply 'cleared' with the men before I wrote them up. Similarly when I asked the men for examples of 'the prisoners language' (see Appendix Two), I had so many versions and so much help that we literally spent half a session working through and refining the definitions as the men realised that all the words had different meanings depending upon the location of the prison. Eventually consensus was reached on this too

as we spent an entertaining and sometimes amusing time recalling incidents in specific prisons triggered by thinking about prison language and culture.

What was not foreseen however, was the simple fact that by the time the research was close to being completed, most of those originally involved with it had been moved to other prisons. This had an impact on exactly how much involvement the men actually had with the research. Those who were involved at the beginning I realised, would be unlikely to ever 'see' the final product but I did feel that this was balanced by the fact that all newcomers to the group were told about the research when they joined. Older group members would still be present, as they were often moved on at different times, so their 'knowledge' of the research trickled down the 'hierarchy of expertise' (Pawson, R.; Tilley, N.; 1997; 163). In addition some of the men who were moved out early on in the research period actually came back to Full Sutton.

Rarely do those serving long sentences stay in the same prison for much above two or three years, particularly if designated 'Cat. A' prisoners. I felt at the time however, that the men's responses to the early work differed according to the following:

- a). their concerns for myself as researcher in such an environment,
- b). embarrassment - i.e. 'Did I really say that?'
- c). any possible 'knock-on' effects from the research in terms of their sentence duration, self-preservation and survival within the prison system,
- d). facing up to their own situation as research of this nature confronts the individual with the 'truth' of their position and life-experiences; in a prison environment, many inmates will deny this in order to 'survive',

These responses highlighted a further dimension of conducting the research which neither myself nor the men had thought about, i.e. the 'sensitivity' of reading the work in

terms of its personal effect on both parties. Not so much 'sensitive' because we were in a prison and had to be aware constantly of matters of security, but a deeper sensitivity grew towards the situation of imprisonment and to what was being undertaken in the research. The men's concern for me would be expressed when I would describe instances where I had written critically about prison policy and practice or when criticising specific prison programmes. They would say, 'Can you say that? Watch yourself - you know what the system is like, don't you go losing your job 'cos of us.'

Secondly the responses of each man were coloured by his own interpretations of what had been written, particularly if he was named in a classroom conversation. Ted, for example, would often say, 'Is that what I said?' and Allan would add, 'Yes, come on Ted, you know you did!' whereas others would say, 'It's a good job only you hear us saying these things - we hope!' This kind of reaction was often then dismissed lightheartedly with, 'Wait till she's famous, then everybody will know what you said'.

Facing up to their situation of imprisonment was something which the men had to do when they chose to be involved with the research project. In a sense, they had to be made aware that this would happen from the start but confronting the men with work which described the prison, its routine, its practices and in particular discussing elements of the research which concerned personal change was not easy. As a prison researcher I was aware of a degree of contradiction and tension with this aspect of the work which deepened as the research progressed, but then dissipated as I learned (from the men themselves) that 'going soft' on prisoners does not achieve anything.

Being realistic about imprisonment by again balancing involvement and detachment achieves more positive results; what they respond to is respect for each of them as

individuals and so, if anyone did not wish to be present in the classroom when research matters were being discussed, then that choice was respected. If things were tense in the prison and the men were 'up tight', the research was simply left alone. Alternatively, if the men started to discuss research spontaneously, then teaching was discarded and we had a research session. The different responses and the reasons for them, were important and had to be managed in order for the work to proceed.

A prison ethnographer therefore learns a great deal about conducting prison research - at a very early stage if the level of respondent involvement is high. For one thing the 'paranoia' can be infectious, but it dissipates over time as ultimately one may have to accept that a higher authority will decide what may or may not be included in prison research; but the success or failure of 'ice-breaking' highlights the importance of the many dilemmas faced by prison ethnographers in the circumstances of their particular piece of research. The degree of honesty, frankness, trust, and the extent to which the researcher empathises with the respondents become essential researcher tools in a prison environment, and it is to an evaluation of the effect of these on the validity of the work that I now turn.

VALIDITY, REALITY OR 'CONTAMINATED BY SYMPATHY' ?

As Cohen and Taylor (1972; 180) point out, when a researcher enters a 'deviant's' environment any work produced is often assumed, by those who take the time to scrutinise it, to be tainted by bias. Discussions as above on the nature of research relationships in the prison classroom at Full Sutton may lend credibility to this view, but the unravelling of such social processes is essential for the researcher to detect the extent of the network of explanations possible in analyses where weaving and interweaving

actions link researcher and researched together. The researcher has to make some effort to find the links and connections which bind individuals together in social situations, and whilst the consequent actions of all those concerned are not immediately perceptible, the effort involved adds detail to the picture (here) of classroom life in a prison.

Just as Cohen and Taylor ‘walked into the wing each week for over three years’, finding it ‘difficult not to feel sympathy with the prisoners’ situation’ (1972; 181), I too was aware, over thirty years later in a different prison, that my involvement with the prisoner-students on the Leeds course would be open to criticism in terms of researcher bias. ‘Taking sides’ when conducting research with those who have allegedly transgressed society’s norms presents its own peculiar set of problems, often those best described as ‘moral dilemmas’. One way of resolving the issue is to have recourse to empathy rather than sympathy. The individual moralities and courses of action taken by prisoners, prior to imprisonment and even whilst imprisoned, have to be ‘overlooked’. They cannot and should not be judged by the researcher, for judgement has already been made at the moment of sentencing, so there is a degree of what I would best describe as ‘moral distancing’ which takes place. The empathy arises from awareness of any human qualities and mutual respect between researcher and researched and from both parties being fully aware of each other’s capabilities as human beings. Empathy also develops because one *listens* to those who are not, and in some cases never have been, widely listened to in the outside world.

Empowerment and the politicisation of prisoners have been discussed in previous sections of this research, both needing careful consideration in the light of the cultural shifts that have to be made as part of a successful programme of learning at degree level. Transforming groups of prisoners or individual prisoners into a ‘pressure group’, to

whom others are expected to listen, was never part of my own research agenda, but there was a growing awareness throughout the period of the research that some of the men acquired the necessary skills to help them with their own particular case. This was most noticeable if a particular concept or ideology was seized upon to sustain their unique courses of action, deviant or otherwise.

The most common example of this would occur when discussing the theories of Marx, particularly alienation and exploitation. The men would relate the theories either to specific instances in their life prior to imprisonment or the reasons for them turning to crime, or more immediately to their experiences of being a prisoner where the prison was interpreted by them as exemplifying both ideological and repressive state apparatuses (Althusser; 1984). It has to be said, though, that many of the students simply chose to use their new skills and knowledge to improve, relatively speaking, their quality of life imprisonment.

In their research, Cohen and Taylor refer to 'transformations in levels of analysis' which they believed had occurred as a result of their work with the men on E Wing in Durham (1972; 184). The teacher/researcher cannot fail to notice this, it is the essential underpinning of all her own analyses of what takes place in the classroom and because it is widely remarked upon, may well be misinterpreted as bias. Cohen and Taylor document the 'transformation' as being a kind of shift from personal analysis (on the part of the men undergoing the course) through to literary through to the more objective sociological position. This they describe as a 'therapeutic' move for some as the men transform their personal views (on their situation etc.) into 'fully articulated ideologies'.

My accounts of prison classroom practice show how this transformation has been triggered by describing the context and mechanisms involved in the process. Recalling classroom conversation 2:7 on New Right policies helps to illustrate the point where Wayne expresses a dislike of politics on the grounds that he does not understand it. As he listened to the comments of the others and their interpretation of his remarks - and their 'teasing' - he eventually agreed through nodding his assent and then writing down what had been discussed. In short he acquired a more 'detached' and objective view.

The Leeds course at Full Sutton, in much the same way as Cohen and Taylor's, created a 'climate' for the men. I would add a potentially *favourable* one, in which the men were simply given the opportunity to develop and enhance sometimes latent skills. Just as Cohen and Taylor claim they provided 'a rational and intellectual interpretative framework' within which men could rationalise their behaviour, elements of this could be discerned on the Leeds course, although such a claim has to be qualified by asserting that this is just one outcome. It also has to be remembered that any such research '...only described four years in the lives of men who are facing up to five times that number of years inside.' (Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; 1972; 187). One of the more sobering thoughts which did strike me whilst conducting my own four year 'stretch', i.e. the period of research from 1993-1997, was that Cohen and Taylor's men may well still be inside, or just released.

'Contamination by sympathy' can perhaps be also avoided if the 'discovery and depiction' (Becker; 1963; 168) of what occurs in a prison classroom is portrayed in such a way that it is seen as contributing to existing literature on crime and deviance in a positive manner. Much of this literature seems devoid of 'people'; not only does exclusion and marginalisation dog offenders once sentenced, there often seems to be

little remembrance of the social networks in which they are embedded and are capable of creating and re-creating anew - whether in the prison or beyond release. Becker reminds the researcher of the difficulties of the task:

It is not easy to study deviants. Because they are regarded as outsiders by the rest of society and because they themselves tend to regard the rest of society as outsiders, the student who would discover the facts about deviance has a substantial barrier to climb before he will be allowed to see the things he needs to see. (1963; 168)

Yet, ethnography creates *and* reproduces reality. It is about more than 'discovering the facts' for it reproduces the reality of a world which is meaningful to those who inhabit it. Understanding how we make it meaningful is the stuff of sociological endeavour which involves tracing those processes which make the world meaningful and getting to know them. There are many who assume they 'know' what goes on in a prison but who fail to interpret what makes the experience of imprisonment 'meaningful' to the prisoner. It goes without saying that the 'meaningfulness' of the imprisonment can be either positive or negative for individual prisoners and for many it is more negative than positive. Any piece of research which picks up on some aspect of the experience which therefore can be interpreted as more positive than negative often tends to be criticised for appearing to make the experience beneficial. Most people, including many inmates themselves, accept the stereotypical notion of prisons as 'nasty' places where the last thing you do is acquire degree level qualifications. Anyone who contributes to that process must be therefore biased in favour of the wrong-doer; but such assumptions are misplaced. As yet, there is no law in place which states that learning is a crime.

The documenting of prison classroom practice as researcher/teacher, in the sense that one is doubly interactive with one's respondents, throws any research findings open to wide-ranging criticisms of bias simply because one is defining prisoners as people and not

as prisoners. However, as Becker indicates, there is perhaps some comfort to be gained from knowing that ‘... observing them [outsiders] in their natural habitat as they go about their ordinary activities’, is simply what has to be done ‘... to get an accurate and complete account of what deviants do.’ (1963; 170). Whilst many may wish to point out that a maximum security prison is hardly a ‘natural habitat’, there is little disputing the observation that it does constitute the habitus of the prisoner. Similarly, others may wish to emphasise that Becker is referring to those ethnographies conducted with ‘delinquent gangs’ - but the concern is the same.

The conducting of a prison classroom ethnography *does* mean ‘gaining the confidence of those one studies’, spending months building up research relationships, working out how best to ‘gain access’ and committing oneself to research over a fairly long period of time. It means making ‘moral shifts’, challenging many moralities, accepting that one might have acquired certain kinds of ‘new’ knowledge which were not consciously sought, for example robbing a bank is *never* quite tackled as depicted in the movies, and so on. The classroom ethnography must be taken *for what it is*. It is not a tale of moral condemnation on the actions of individual prisoners. They, as stated previously have already been judged by their peers. It is an account of meaningful interaction between individuals in a highly regulated environment; the appeal to validity lies in the depiction of the reality of the experience for those involved. As Becker indicates:

If we study the processes involved in deviance, then, we must take the viewpoint of at least one of the groups involved, either of those who are treated as deviant or of those who label others as deviant, (1963; 173)

There is a dimension to the research I have conducted which attempts to ‘... capture the perspectives of ... participants’ (Becker; 1963) either with respect for their views on prisons or with regard for their interpretations of the outcomes of learning, but my

analysis moves beyond Becker's approach of seeing the world from the 'viewpoint of the deviant or labeller', because it examines the context, mechanisms and outcomes from the perspective of researcher / respondent / teacher / student / prisoner. The capturing of perspectives and viewpoints in a prison classroom where students are engaged in the task of evaluating and assessing the perspectives and viewpoints of others is a multi-dimensional process. Just as the teacher can criticise the student for not taking sufficient account, for example, of differing sociological theories, the prison classroom ethnographer is conscious that her viewpoint may become firmly embedded in the prisoner's own critique of imprisonment. Drawing on Becker once more, I would agree that:

What we are presenting is not a distorted view of 'reality', but the reality which engages the people we have studied, the reality they create by their interpretation of their experience and in terms of which they act. If we fail to present this reality, we will not have achieved full sociological understanding of the phenomenon we seek to explain, (1963; 174)

My account, rather than envisage the models of learning processes in the prison classroom as two-dimensional (confined to the page), argues that they 'work' best, in terms of explanation, if envisaged as three-dimensional, multi-faceted and many-layered, with the prisoner-student located at the centre, but not static. Such a model of what has taken place in the prison classroom is not finite, because the individual prisoner/student has the capacity to extend his experiences far beyond the parameters of the prison classroom.

The potential for 'change' - in its crudest sense - is embedded in the whole process and the conducting of research into that process through classroom observation and analyses means understanding the complexity of the patterns of human social interaction in that classroom from an empathic perspective. It means knowing the potential 'size and shape'

of the 'model' and being able to view it from as many angles as possible whilst being part of it. In short the prison teacher/researcher has to be both involved and detached - 'contaminated and uncontaminated'.

RESPONDENT VALIDATION - A BUILDING BLOCK?

The 'full sociological understanding' - in this study (and referred to by Becker above), - can only be achieved through exposing those mechanisms which the teacher perceives of as having an effect on the learning process. It is also achieved by asking the student what perceptions *he* had of the experience of learning the subject in question at degree level. Hence the focus on subject-matter, classroom interaction, self-perception/identity and learning outcomes.

If, in addition, individual prisoner-students are shown the accounts of their learning processes and the analyses of them, then the 'picture' is 'fleshed out', as previously stated, because not only do we have the teacher's interpretation, but we also have the student's whose contributions can only build towards a more holistic view. This form of respondent validation can also lessen any perceived 'contamination' - by sympathy or otherwise:

The value of respondent validation lies in the fact that participants involved in the events documented in the data may have access to additional knowledge *of the context* [my emphasis] - of other relevant events, of thoughts they had or decisions they made at the time, for example - that is not available to the ethnographer. They may also be part of information networks that are more powerful than those accessible to the ethnographer. In addition, they have access to their own experience of events, which may be of considerable importance, (Hammersley, M.; Atkinson, P.; 1983; 196)

So much of Hammersley and Atkinson's statement rings true of research conducted within a prison context that it becomes almost self-explanatory in the light of the complete research project. However, if research *is* validated by prisoners, there is always

going to be the additional criticism that they will be concerned with no more and no less than their own personal interests and so may be over-anxious to re-interpret anything that the researcher may present. This is a falsely naive view. As Hammersley and Atkinson indicate, how any respondents react to any research is ‘ ... coloured by their social position and their perceptions of the research act ...’ (1983; 197).

Suffice it to say that the men in Full Sutton were *acutely* aware of their social position and indeed, their reactions to the ethnographic account, whilst critical of any ‘mistakes’ I had made in respect of understanding the prison regime, were enthusiastic and supportive of my accounts of classroom conversations. As the men read through the data and my analysis of it, more was gained from them in terms of insight into their interpretations of subject matter, for example, and learning processes; thus contributing a further dimension to the interactive research process:

Anne: I wrote the thesis precisely because people kept telling me that sociology changed them.

Lawrence: Of course it does, it’s bound to ...

Mostin: It’s the time to think. Most people out there don’t think or care about any of the things we might do in this class really.

Maurice: You don’t have time out there ...

Anne: Going about the business of everyday life?

Lawrence: That’s it, that’s right ...

Mostin: It’s a kind of luxury, the time to think.

Maurice: Well, I’m telling you, it upset my sister and I think she’s got that -er, what did you call it? False consciousness ...?

As I did teach the same subject-matter to more than one group over the period of the research, it was interesting to gauge the reactions of different groups of students to my accounts of classroom conversations relating to topics they had also covered in class.

Ted proved to be something of an 'anchor man' here being one of the longest-serving members in the group. When I read classroom conversation 3:2 (designated 'the rolling lattice-top pastry cutter conversation between Lawrence, Mostin and myself) to the group to gauge their reactions to my interpretation of how students assimilated and combined common-sense and sociological knowledge, Ted recalled his conversation with Andrew (4:6), which had been triggered by the same stimulus material.

The men would pick up on different group dynamics as revealed in conversations, different memories of other events taking place within the prison and different emphases placed by each other on the same basic subject-matter - but the *process* was the same in terms of respondent validation, although more noticeable towards the end of the research period when longer extracts of the work became available for the men to read.

Frequently their remarks would run along the lines of 'Oh yes, I remember when we did that,' or 'That was a bloody good rant we had then,' or 'That was just before so-and-so got moved' or 'We were doing that before the riot.' Such comments reinforce the claims that the experience of learning can be meaningful *because* it is located and embedded in a much wider social and interactive context. It does not occur in isolation from other experiences and events.

The expertise of both respondent and researcher when combined, contribute to the findings of the research. Once the men were familiar with the demands of the course and of the research, their contributions, as respondents, lay in the extent to which they

accepted or agreed with my claims. Those men who were present in the group for longer periods of time, were better able to do this than those who had only been on the course for a few weeks, because their level of 'expertise' regarding the research was more developed. Not only were they 'old hands' at studying degree level sociology, they had also assimilated elements of conducting research and so were 'old hands' at that too.

The 'final product' of the research, however, rests with the researcher. It cannot rest with the respondents for whom the final product in this study is located somewhere in the outcomes of learning and its potential effect on the learner. The 'flow of (research) understanding' (Pawson, R.; Tilley, N.; 1997; 166), between myself and the men came to an end as the study neared completion and I invited them to read more developed sections: 'It sounds hard, I don't really understand it'; 'It looks really good, it sounds like the books we have to read'; 'Can I take it away over lunchtime, I can't possibly take it all in now'; were common reactions, along with the more flattering, 'You're dead smart, you are. And we thought you were just one of us. What are you doing working in a place like this?'.

Respondent validation therefore is more to do with the fact that their views are part of the research method, they form a 'building-block' towards putting together a more complete and realistic picture of the research. The end product, does however remain 'distanced' from the respondents and in this case study, those men present 'at the end', acknowledged that it had, affirming their distance through awareness that it had moved beyond their involvement and their concerns.

The providing of a 'complete picture' of what occurred in the prison classroom in respect of the potential outcomes of learning degree level Sociology means that the

researcher must have recourse to more than one set of data. Obtaining 'feedback' from the men in the classroom contributed in no small way to this and to some extent ensured that the data was not quite taken at 'face value' (Hammersley, M.; Atkinson, P.; 1983; 200). The prison researcher however never quite takes her data at face value simply because there are so many agendas with which to contend in such an environment and attempts to ensure validity can rapidly disappear into methodological black-holes.

As Bloor suggests, '...all observation is, by its very nature selective...' (1987) and how I interpreted what happened in the classroom is not necessarily the way in which each prisoner-student would. What they could do and what they did, was to recognise and agree with the concepts, theories and ideas which informed my analysis (Bloor, 1987) as suggested above.

Writing up sections of research and presenting it back to the men was, as Bloor noted in his work with specialists, an attempt at some kind of 'self-recognition', although misunderstandings can occur as respondents do organise their worlds differently from researchers. Recalling classroom conversation 4:3 on (as far as I was concerned) gender inequality, cultural difference and identity, when I told Lawrence and Duke that it had been included to illustrate these issues under discussion, Lawrence said, 'Oh yes, but it was so funny, I still can't imagine all those wives!' For him, the *meaningfulness* and *memory* of the conversation was the humour, for Duke it was the fact that he had an opportunity to talk about life in Nigeria, for myself as researcher/teacher it was illustrative of the 'weaving' theory of learning. Again drawing on Bloor's experiences of handing his research report back to his respondents (senior medics) to read, the men in Full Sutton would occasionally read it through as though distanced from it:

...with a modicum of detached, superficial interest, with a feeling that it displayed a certain peculiar charm perhaps, but without being so moved by its content as to feel the necessity to define one's own beliefs and practices in accordance with it or in contrast to it. They were unversed in the conventions of academic sociological criticism ...(Bloor; 1987)

The best and also the least which could be done *was* to ask the men's opinions about various aspects of the research. It was, in many respects, the ultimate test (Diesing; 1972; 152) of my interpretation of what had taken place in the classroom. The reflexive nature of this undertaking can also be assessed and evaluated in much the same way as the learning situation in the classroom can, taking account of the many-layered characteristics of conducting this kind of research reinforcing the view that the techniques adopted 'weave' together themselves as a research process in the classroom. Peeling back each layer should be a process of discovery in its own right, if there is sufficient by way of description to reveal the 'contents' to a wider audience. That the researcher and respondent are often the only ones present at the revelation does not render the complete process of research any the less valid. Nor does it mean that it is 'contaminated by sympathy', because even this process is meaningful to both parties as active participants engaged in the construction of social reality.

As Willis observed of his preferred method in his case study of 'Hammertown Lads':

These [methodological] techniques are suited to record this level and have a sensitivity to meanings and values as well as an ability to represent and interpret symbolic articulations, practices and forms of cultural production. In particular the ethnographic account, without always knowing how, can allow a degree of the activity, creativity and human agency within the object of study to come through into the analysis and the reader's experience. (Willis; 1993; 3)

To date, this research has not been 'controlled' or 'manipulated' by outsiders, a fact which was to become something of an issue for Cohen and Taylor. As a body of research

on the potential transformative capacities of Higher Education programmes in prison settings, it may well be the case that it possesses what Cohen and Taylor describe as 'window dressing potential' (WDP) (1972; 205), i.e. it makes things 'look good', but in the thirty or more years which have elapsed since they conducted their research, not that much has changed in terms of psychological survival for those serving long sentences. Cohen and Taylor's work is permeated with the kind of psychological stories with which anyone working with long-term prisoners is all too familiar. There is a hint of pessimism in their understanding and analyses of the effects of such sentences on those who receive them and in their depiction of survival. It depicts a kind of human tragedy on a vast and much misunderstood scale. Beneath the angst encountered in a prison and the perceived amorality, the basic human interactions are grounded in the *social* and by focusing on some of those interactions in the classroom, I would hope to have shown that there is also present a degree of mutuality and reciprocity which can be drawn upon and which moves beyond the pessimism of 'nothing works' in prisons.

GENERALISABILITY

A FINAL ASSESSMENT

An ethnographic account of the classroom experiences of a small number of prisoners in a maximum security prison may not appear to reveal, initially, a great deal about prison education policy on a national level or about how personal change can be brought about through studying degree level sociology whilst imprisoned, but the most significant question underpinning this research has undoubtedly been 'To what extent do people care about change in prisoners?'; i.e. the fact that they (the prisoners) may 'change' their offending behaviour, or 'stop' it altogether as a result of attending some educational course whilst imprisoned. The extent to which the classroom ethnography can throw

light on this is difficult to assess because the question masks the real issues for some within penal policy and practice, which is, 'Does prison work?', and in the final analysis, most people tend to simply 'forget' about those in prison once they have been sentenced.

The research has no easy answers to any of these questions, no palliatives to offer, because the origins of these questions lie deep within prison cultural and institutional practice. In addition, there is still the tendency to perceive prisoners as a homogeneous group rather than individual people with individual tastes, preferences and life-styles, whose commonality lies *only* in their incarceration. The 'desire' of each prisoner to change, or not, is therefore subjectively motivated irrespective of what anyone else may choose to think.

A further question to consider centres upon whether or not the findings of the study and the concepts explored are readily transferable to other educational programmes in prison settings. The processes and mechanisms which come into play throughout the period of learning *are* transferable to other courses where students 'use', for example, combinations of memories, life experience and classroom interaction as aids to learning. Thus the concept of 'weaving' can be employed to articulate what occurs in a prison classroom with respect to learning and how that process occurs.

Not all prisoner-students *have* to study sociology at degree level for this to take place and potentially affect post-release behaviour. *What is of significance is to explore the actual context in which those unique processes are embedded and through which prisoners mediate their learning experiences.* If those experiences are, or have been interpreted as worthwhile, then the potential exists for personal development and possibly a change in offending behaviour.

The men on the Leeds course may not, taking the prison population as a whole, be representative of the 'typical' prisoner, but then (recall Chapter Six) what *is* a typical prisoner-student? Thus the issue of generaliseability raises further questions of prison policy and prison educational practice. The study, as a case study, is 'a detailed examination of an event ...' (Mitchell; 1983; 192) and the structures and interactions and interdependencies which weave together on the course form observable phenomena 'which generate the event', i.e. the learning outcomes in a prison classroom and all that has contributed to their formation.

Claims that 'learning book-keeping or maths don't work the same', is not really the issue because the outcomes of learning are circumscribed by so many different factors such as choice, motivation, survival strategies in the prison and the wider context of each prisoner-student's life experiences. The theory of 'weaving' is therefore a starting-point, an 'initial image' (Ragin; 1987) which can be used to simultaneously narrow the focus and describe the reality of prison classroom practice.

A fuller understanding of how prisoners learn within and alongside of their incarceration is aimed for which then ultimately assists in evaluating the effectiveness of that programme for that prisoner. The linking of ideas and evidence in this research study suggests that the findings are transferable if mechanisms, context and outcomes acquire the attention they deserve as 'configurations' (Pawson, R.; Tilley, N.; 1997; 207) in any programme.

Thus it has to be reiterated that each classroom meeting in the prison is different. The learning processes infinitely varied in form and content with any 'models' of learning providing only a hint of the complexity of that form and content. As important as that

which can be depicted through the adoption of such models and the recounting of classroom conversations and interactions, is the 'data' which is omitted. As suggested above, not every student who attended the Leeds course, or any other, did so with 'personal change' as the key motivator for attendance. For the individual prisoner-student, personal change via education and a growing consciousness or self-awareness of that change or development is, at best, a secondary outcome of the learning processes. The ethnographic account can depict only the gradual and developing nature of any potential 'changes' which may occur and invite anyone interested to view elements of them, for what lies behind the prison classroom experience for each student remains qualitatively unknown whilst at the same time becoming yet another 'facet' of the three-dimensional model of learning. The complexity of each prisoner's 'life-course', the memories, ideas and existing knowledge streams he brings to each class meeting can only be hinted at; his future life beyond the prison remains uncertain and unknowable, and yet it seems plausible to suppose that those interactions observable in the classroom will be interpreted as meaningful and worthwhile by the student and thus retained, potentially beyond release. However, (recall Chapter Two) what a prisoner-student chooses to do with new knowledge is very much his concern alone. The focus of the classroom ethnography therefore has to remain on the *potential* of those learning processes and how they are experienced in a meaningful way for some prisoners who manage to define their situation in relation to wider contexts and networks which bind people together.

The prison classroom ethnographer is engaged in building up a 'complex picture of his subject matter' (Diesing; 1972; 147), attempting to provide the fullest description possible by drawing on different kinds of evidence which become available as the research progresses. The validity of that evidence is to be found in its assessment against

all the other kinds as Diesing suggests. So, for example, as stated above, if I gave the men on the course sections of the work to read, their reactions and responses to it would contribute further to the actual research itself by virtue of their combined involvement (as research subjects) and detachment (as readers of a piece of research) with it. This reflexive process locks the respondents into the research in such a way that their perceptions of it do reveal, in some respects, how much *they* 'care about change' or personal development through learning. Their subsequent comments on the fact that they believe, for example, that they see things differently, or 'think differently' etc. (recall Chapters Four and Five), may be one of the best examples of the self-fulfilling prophecy at work in education that there is, but it does lend credence to the view that 'something' works in prisons.

The 'convergence' between the prisoners information, feedback and reactions and my own observations also render the study more 'dependable' (Diesing; 1972; 167), thus highlighting that the patterned explanation of what occurs in a prison classroom is to be understood from the perspective of student, prisoner, teacher and researcher - at least *because* it is interactionist in nature. It is also necessary to re-emphasise that learning is not simply a uni-directional, linear process, despite the fact that it is useful to construct a 'temporal sequence' supporting such a view with respect to a prisoner's pre-institutional, institutional and post-institutional experiences. This is merely a useful 'device', an analytical tool, to show that the prisoner cannot and should not be seen as *temporally* constrained within the prison. There has been a life prior to imprisonment and there will be one beyond.

Gaining an understanding of the significant experiences which are of intrinsic worth to those imprisoned was a key determinant in selecting the appropriate method, but

conveying a sense of the actual prison environment proved more problematic despite its importance in terms of providing a contextual background to the study, and to the social habitus of the men - a few brief comments here remind readers of the 'reality' of the place:

Andrew: You imagine, a small room, like a living room. Everything, and I mean everything - sink, toilet, bed, table, chair - is in there, all that you need, that you have is in that one space - nothing more - it's ...

Ted: Yes but sometimes you're glad to get in there, it's your place. To get away, aren't you? When we're all out on the landings, the crowding, the crush ...

Allan: Absolutely, it's just ...

Ted: At 'association' time, you can't wait to get back in you cell ...

Observing the group dynamic in the classroom and the patterns of sociation within it provide only a small flavour of the reality of prison life and even that is determined by how much the men feel is appropriate to disclose. Some of them openly admitted that they would not 'associate' with each other at all 'on the out' and so were acutely aware of the 'enforced' nature of their social relations with each other and the 'enforced' interdependency and dependency upon individuals whom they would otherwise choose to avoid. As they were fully aware of the fact that research was being conducted they believed it important that this point was taken into consideration in any assessment of the ethnography.

As Diesing states, the subject-matter of social science research however is 'human' and a classroom ethnography whether conducted in a prison or any other setting, has to be conducted with what Diesing describes as sufficient perception '...to recognise and appreciate the full range of human action...' (1972; 141). In a prison context, that full

range of human action is either not always played out before the ethnographer or is played out to extremes, and so the ethnography is the record of the moment. As such it is a contribution to the understanding of a very particular social situation whose many dimensions cannot always be explored as fully as one would wish to in order to achieve the full recognition that such situations deserve.

Cultivating an awareness of the relationships, the alliances, conflicts and constantly changing balances of power within the prison was necessary for 'survival' as a researcher, but perhaps not unique to the conducting of an ethnography. The connections and relationships between people in any setting have to be understood whatever their character, in social science research, for they have their own peculiar dynamic. Prisons are not immune from this, their social figurations are as complex, if not more so, than many other social institutions and to be involved in such a figuration means knowing full well that the action of any single prisoner through learning or otherwise, cannot be interpreted in isolation. It is much more likely to be 'developmental' in nature and its consequences therefore unintended. That is as true of the outcomes of learning a particular course whilst in prison as it is of attempting to provide a detailed description of what took place in the prison classroom. 'Membership' of the group as researcher/teacher is only ever provisional at best.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE VIEWS ON PRISON EDUCATION

This research has considered the impact of undertaking degree level study on *individual people who are in prison*. It can perhaps do no more than that, but this is not a cause for concern, because the interactions of those individual prisoner-students have been shown to be worthy of study in terms of what they depict of the reality of prison life. Discussing the history of prison education programmes, their respective successes and failures, the different application of different ‘models’ of learning to different ‘types’ of prisoner, is not the function of this Chapter, rather it is to re-emphasise the fact that if penal practitioners and policy-makers *are* desirous of effecting ‘change’ in the behaviour of those who have offended, then they should at least initiate attempts to understand how that ‘change’ can be brought about with all due respect for the autonomy of the individual. ‘Changing’ a person’s behaviour will never be achieved if there is little appreciation of the fact that a person has a *personal* history composed of past, present and future (potential) life experiences. When a man arrives at a prison, he is not necessarily already a prisoner.

This simple fact can be illustrated by the complexities of our use of language. Throughout this piece of research, the decision as to whether to use the words ‘student’ or ‘prisoner’, ‘man’ or ‘inmate’, proved somewhat problematic. It highlighted the significance of attaching ‘labels’ to those who have offended, either actually or allegedly, and the sheer diversity of socio-cultural attitudes attached to the labels as opposed to the

people concerned. The choice of which word most accurately conveyed a description of the men in the classroom at Full Sutton - as a collective group - became a cumbersome task as 'prisoner-student' metamorphosed into 'student-prisoner', 'inmates' into 'offenders' into 'prisoners' into 'mature students' or 'adult learners'. All seemed appropriate and yet somehow inappropriate and even inadequate, for the men were (and still are) also sons, fathers, husbands, grandfathers, lovers and so on.

Education programmes in prisons are assumed, or at least, expected to form part of a constructive prison regime when dealing with these 'so-labelled' people, assisting them towards the leading and living of 'a good and useful life'. This, naturally enough, places a degree of responsibility and pressure on those involved with prison educational practice and ensures that there are particular expectations on the part of prisoner-students, prison service staff and the general public to 'deliver', in the form of 'correcting' (however one chooses to interpret that) any social and/or deviant problems that an individual prisoner may have.

Education programmes in prisons have also been variously described as being underpinned with establishing a wide range of issues from notions of 'citizenship' in prisoners to their individual empowerment through creative skills training. Education programmes in prisons however, will never be able to satisfy the many demands made upon them by 'service providers' and 'clients' respectively, because those demands are embedded in a cultural network of too many meanings and too many ideologies. However the question of 'what changes?' is the one most asked of educational practitioners who work within the current penal system in England and Wales, closely followed by 'How can you show it?' or alternatively, 'How do you know if they've changed?'. .

Implicit in this type of questioning is a burning desire, presumably to bring about change in those who offend, on the part of the questioner. Why? - because, crudely speaking, prisons are perceived as having a supplementary role, often unstated, and a purpose which is as much about changing behaviour as it is about punishment and deterrence. There also needs to be acknowledgement of the fact that there are many teachers and students in prison settings who freely admit and recognise that 'nothing can change' as a result of learning anything on any course. Of equal importance is the fact that some people have no desire 'to change' or to 'be changed'.

However much education programmes in prison may be perceived as changing people, it is worth questioning the fundamental assumptions which underpin this perceived causal relationship and worth remembering, that in prison education practice, 'What changes?' often metamorphoses into 'What works?' (in penal policy). For something to 'change', there is implicit, a desire to 'make or become different' and in a classroom context, the making and becoming different refers, for the most part, to the student. Is the student who completes the course, the 'same' as the one who started it? If practitioners can say, 'No', then we do have to recognise that something has occurred. Whether we call that something 'change' or not is a matter for some debate.

Wide-ranging use of the *word* change seems inappropriate. It encourages prison educators and practitioners to have expectations which cannot always be met, thus adding to the belief that still 'nothing works' (Martinson; 1974) in prisons, despite rigorous attempts to refute this twenty year old sound bite. Attending any course of education in any setting concerns personal growth and development through the process of acquiring new knowledge and learning rather than change. There is a dimension to learning which impacts upon individuals, as we have shown, in ways which practitioners

interpret and describe as change, but in a prison setting, the answer to the question 'What changes?' is all too often linked to issues of what should constitute a correctional programme of education which will stop offending behaviour. This is not to imply of course that education in prison currently has sole responsibility for this. There are a whole series of programmes in place in prisons which claim to do just that; education is simply one aspect of the total prison regime.

If then, we concentrate on personal development and growth as one outcome of education, rather than assuming any kind of change has or is likely to take place, then assessments of the outcomes of the learning process shift on to a different plane. (It has to be said that students themselves, subscribing to the self-fulfilling prophecy as ever, often claim, 'This course has really changed me'). One has to acknowledge that there is perhaps a danger in creating too much of a polarity between notions of 'change' and those of 'development'. Rather an awareness is needed of the fine distinctions to be made between understanding the importance of both within a prison setting.

The future role of education in prisons may well need to be seen in the light of what it has been in the past (Davidson; 1995), and yet my own work seems to indicate that not enough credence is given to the current and ongoing attempts to evaluate and assess the empowering potential of education *for the prisoners*. Rather it seems that there still remains a tendency or a desire to evaluate education programmes which is embedded in justifications for existing models which do 'change' prisoners. Prisons generally do not retain cohesive links with the outside world, as long as they are 'seen' or believed to be 'doing the job of punishing', then society in general largely ignores what goes on inside. Most people are effectively barred from entering prisons for fear of disrupting them, so what hope of successful re-integration for those who spend time there?

The creation of 'an alternative future' for those who have offended, been sentenced and imprisoned, means accepting that something about prisons 'works', in the sense that something has - in crude terms- stopped the offender offending. It means acknowledging that what has been achieved, possibly as a result of educational and training programmes in the prison is 'the desired behavioural and attitude changes in students' (Duguid; 1986). I have tended to remain cautious about this because those 'desires' differ according to who expresses them and why, as previously stated. An education, or training, programme which impacts upon students' attitudes, values, thinking and behaviour whilst providing substantive course content, encouraging the development of 'effective and socially responsible' reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making skills (Duguid; 1986), may be every prison educational practitioner's dream; it may also be the penal policy-maker's nightmare. This, because those who are fortunate to take such courses may develop sufficient social and political awareness that the balance of intellectual power shifts in favour of the offender. However, if this does occur to any prisoner on a particular course, there is little, in effect, that either can or ought to be done. In short, if 'a smart con becomes smarter' who is to 'blame' and why and does it matter?

Retrospectively speaking, education in prisons has been perceived, evaluated and assessed in relation to its function according to wider penal practice. It has to be seen 'to be doing some good', stopping people from offending or re-offending. This attitude is expressed quite clearly by Garland in his analysis of punishment:

... imprisonment, or probation, or rehabilitative policies, or even capital punishment are all too frequently approached as if the major question to be answered concerned their technical efficacy as instruments of crime control. Their evaluation thus turns primarily upon measurements of recidivism, of deterrence, and of correlative crime rates rather than upon judgements of their total worth as social practices. (Garland; 1990; 288)

Those policies may well continue to be adjudged as misguided if the social dimension and appreciation and assessment of their worth for the prisoner continues to be ignored. My own study has placed considerable emphasis on *precisely* that dimension and attempted to assess that worth in relation to the outcomes of undertaking a specific course of learning whilst imprisoned. It has not set out to directly measure the success or failure of that undertaking in relation to recidivism, but rather has concentrated on the *potential* effect that a course may have if construed in a meaningful way by the prisoner, irrespective of what the (ex)prisoner may choose to do beyond release.

According to the survey produced by the Prison Reform Trust on education in prisons (1995), the purpose of prison education is difficult to assess if for no other reason than that there is a diversity of opinion as to the precise needs of prisoners, whether 'special' or otherwise. Those who deliver education in prisons currently appear desirous of 'standardisation', provision of 'guidelines for a unified framework for the monitoring and evaluation of quality' and of 'establishing good practice' so that prisoners are 'enabled to learn effectively', 'acquire vocational skills', 'challenge their offending behaviour' and 'develop the self'. This seems a tall order (although not necessarily one to be dismissed) when, for example, prisoners cannot yet continue the same course when transferred from one prison to another, as I observed many times in the course of my teaching at Full Sutton. It highlights the paradox of prison education so clearly, but gives little understanding of the frustration, anger and sense of wasted time that many prisoner-students have expressed.

The desired objective of prison education programmes however, still seems rooted in Gladstone's 1895 Report (quoted by Flynn and Price, 1995), concerning the purpose of imprisonment as being '... to turn them [prisoners] out of prison better men and women

physically and morally than when they came in' (Flynn, N.; Price, D.; 1995; 37). If this is the case, then practitioners may benefit from taking a slightly different approach to assessing and evaluating its purpose.

Germanotta (Davidson; 1995; 106), invites us to consider *prisoner* education rather than *prison* education - a simple distinction but one which has quite profound implications if applied both in theory and in practice. Prisoner education is about *people* learning; more importantly it is about an individual learning something. It should be perceived as a chosen social process which someone embarks upon, is involved in and contributes to in the hope that it will be of some worth or value. It should also be evaluated as such in terms of a criteria meaningful to the prisoner. As Germanotta suggests, 'Prisoner education occurs whether or not prison education exists in any particular prison setting' (Davidson; 1995; 106) and this approach turns any analysis of prison education into what I would describe as a more empathic assessment in line with my earlier account of the complete process of learning in the prison classroom. Prison education, as Davidson et al. suggest, thus becomes much more than simply a question of 'correcting cognitive deficits', and evaluation of it shifts to the domain of the prisoner rather than that of the policy makers and practitioners.

The research conducted in Full Sutton, focused on 'prisoner education' in as broad a sense as was possible, in an environment whose purpose is perhaps best characterised by Garland (1990) and worth summarising here by way of contextualising this entire study. Crime control, according to his analysis, is only one objective of the prison, and it includes rehabilitation and reform. Prisons, however, can be seen as effective and are by most people because they exclude, they contain, they punish, they use force if necessary, they are the ultimate penalty, they supply a 'cultural acceptable' form of violence against

the person in the name of retribution, and in doing all these things, prison environments, to varying degrees, inflict real hardship, serious deprivation and personal suffering upon offenders.

The prison seen in the light of these objectives, is therefore 'functional' and 'successful' as a social institution. It is tolerated by wider society and as long as it remains desirable to imprison offenders, it will be judged as 'working' because it satisfies the above objectives and criteria. The cultural acceptability of the prison means that it is an extremely powerful institution and so most people do not see any 'crisis' within the penal system nor do they see it as being too harsh. Hence the negative attitude would persist towards prisoners 'doing degrees' in prison, if Garland is right, and my own experiences are anything to go by. The tragedy lies in the fact that such attitudes shape any evaluation of education and training in prisons before the programmes even start.

Garland insists that informed sources do see the prison as a more complex institution which can only be evaluated in terms of its 'success' (functional or otherwise), if there is a rational critique of the prison's penal and social functions. The prison must be challenged, he argues, in terms of how it 'controls troublesome individuals' and continues to exclude and marginalise them in an apparently 'caring society'. An alternative view of the prison has to be developed, encouraged and applied where justice, tolerance, decency, humanity and civility become intrinsic and constitutive features of the institution in order to address the many contradictions inherent in the dominant ideologies of society and their (lack of) application in our prisons.

Having spent four years in a maximum security dispersal prison attempting to put some of Garland's theory into practice, the scale of the task seems enormous, not least because

those who are sentenced come to the prison with exactly the same 'culturally acceptable' views of what a prison is and what it does, firmly in place. Offenders are no more and no less affected by socially acceptable values and codes of behaviour as other people (Sykes, G.; Matza, D.; 1957), so 'teaching' these values through some education and/or training programme, to *some* offenders, may be something of a thankless and fruitless task. This is because the wider values and codes of behaviour which characterise society have already been rejected and challenged, by some offenders and once inside, these values and codes of behaviour are neither reinstated nor reinforced for numerous reasons, on a daily basis. As Garland points out, the 'psychological violence' which exists in prisons is 'retrograde, unnecessary and uncivilised'. My own experiences have shown that it is as widely practised and executed by the authorities as it is by those convicted and sentenced. No-one enjoys being there, no-one chooses to be there and often, those who 'live' in prison, do their utmost to express exactly what they think of the place (see Appendix Three) in a less than socially and culturally acceptable manner.

Prison life is generally experienced and interpreted in a most negative light as we have seen throughout this study, but that does not mean that every single aspect of that experience is negative for each and every prisoner. 'Making the best of a bad thing' is a familiar form of resignation to the circumstances of confinement, and I would reiterate the point that attendance on education courses *is* often the most worthwhile thing that prisoners find themselves in a position to do when considered against the daily regime and penal ideologies depicted above.

The planning of prisoner education, its implementation, evaluation and assessment therefore need careful consideration. Use of the term alone means there would be more awareness of the fact that *people* are at the centre of any policy decisions which are

made. Facilitative learning practices however, and their adoption within a prison setting, do not find favour or sympathy in the current ideological climate, which is a pity because teachers in any setting may wish to be seen as facilitators of learning where learning ‘... is most effective when it is both initiated and evaluated by the pupils themselves’. (Entwistle; 1987; 25). For the most part, in a prison setting, (although there are a few exceptions), the programmes are chosen and decided upon with little input from the prisoners themselves.

Experiential learning, where people are free to learn what they wish, as they wish (Rogers C.; 1983; 26) has its strengths and weaknesses, again, in any setting. Some prison education departments offer ‘open learning’ courses to prisoners, but this tends to mean that they can simply join any existing class/course that may be available (with space) out of any one day’s set educational programme. This tends to be an administrative nightmare for teachers, existing students (who resent the intrusion into ‘their’ group) and for prison staff who are primarily concerned with security and do not know where a prisoner ‘ought’ to be. The existing system simply does not lend itself to prisoner education.

Yet I would contend that elements of this approach to (facilitative) learning have been observed in practice throughout this case study and they seem to have gone some way towards satisfying Rogers’ ‘principles of learning’ in ‘encounter groups’ (Rogers, C.; 1969,1983; Entwistle; 1987, 30). Prisoner education in general may well benefit from the adoption of such an approach to learning centred on methods of discussion and outcomes of self-insight, with less control and power in the hands of authority and bureaucracy and more in the hands of individual prisoners who want to learn.

Summarising Rogers' theory of learning, Entwistle states that:

... [he] came to believe that personal experience had an immediacy and authenticity lacking in second-hand knowledge. Thus learning, or personal growth, depended both on creating a non-threatening climate in which the learner felt valued and on providing experiences to facilitate the expression and discussion of feelings. (Entwistle; 1987; 25)

As this research has shown, the Leeds course learning experience could be described as providing just such a climate because the group dynamic, the subject matter, the classroom interactions, i.e. the context, mechanisms and outcomes, shaped and characterised it to the extent that the learners *did* feel valued. They *did* share and explore personal and past experiences and learned new knowledge - all mediated through the discipline of sociology. The set of learning principles formulated by Rogers could, arguably, be developed and encouraged as positive elements of prisoner education; they *do work for some prisoners in some circumstances*. Those circumstances focus on person-centred education with the teacher as facilitator and the student being encouraged to develop power and control over self. As Entwistle reminds us, these are radical approaches to educational practice and certainly would be described as such within a prison context, where the validity of the student's perspective and 'freedom' to learn are not given a great deal of credence.

Those educational programmes which *have* often proved successful in a prison setting seem to espouse similar principles and approaches to those professed by Rogers. Ironically they are all too often cut due to lack of funding or negative attitudes as to their 'cultural acceptability', purpose, validity or worth. As one officer observed to me, 'How come they get a degree course when my daughter's school has no computers?' which raises the question in turn of who needs educating?

My own interpretation of principles of learning is sympathetic to the view that they should be facilitative. This does not mean that other models should be discounted, but I would reiterate Entwistle's point in respect of the prison classroom as much as in respect of any classroom, that they are not 'knowledge factories' (1987; 30), they are learning environments and so any evidence to show this, quite rightly, *must* come '...directly from the classroom context...' and then be applied or re-applied within it. This, I believe, has been shown to have been particularly useful in this study where the processes and outcomes of learning have been observed in some detail over a period of time, but with an appreciation of factors external to the classroom environment which affect and impact upon the people in it. The 'weaving theory of learning' which has been advanced in this study relating to those in the classroom at Full Sutton is thus not limited by context, i.e. solely by looking at the teaching practices in a classroom, a limitation on the research which is faced by many classroom (prison) researchers. It sees the learning as a dimension of an individual prisoner's experience in a prison setting which becomes woven into the continuum of that person's life. It is thus meaningful, significant and possesses what Rogers describes as the *quality* of personal involvement (1969; 3-4).

For Rogers, the only form of 'effective' education is that based on trust (1983; 307). For prisoners on any course, trust is an essential 'ingredient' of anything they choose to undertake 'inside' and fostering trust in a prison setting is not that easy as we have seen, yet this was achieved with those on the Leeds course, again showing that it is possible to run courses - sometimes against all the odds - which are directly concerned with empowerment, with risk and with students/prisoners taking a far more active, participatory and even emancipatory role in their own education. The reconciliation of the widely divergent aims and objectives of penal practice and policy and educational

practice and policy is an issue that needs directly confronting in prisons today; but those on the Leeds course appear to have enjoyed some kind of 'effective' education either despite or because of existing policy and practice.

The exploration of radical views on learning is to be advocated for those involved with prisoner education. It has to be tackled sensibly, perhaps even cautiously in a system not always sympathetic to the embracing of 'new departures in prison education'. Facilitative learning/education has been shown to bring about desirable outcomes in many educational settings, but our combined socio-cultural expectations of prison education are many and varied. The encouragement of a kind of 'freedom' in and through education, i.e. freedom of thought and intellect, for those who are 'not free' may not be attainable, sustainable or even desirable for some of those imprisoned or those who imprison them; but the sense and degree of personal responsibility that accrues with it should not be denied to prisoners by others, who, by the same token, encourage community reintegration.

Germanotta (Davidson; 1995; 111) reinforces these claims in his further comments on 'the dialectics of prison education' where he identifies three phases of development which a prisoner may possibly experience as a result of attending educational courses inside. Firstly, the prisoner 'connects' with some course or other, often in order to alleviate the stress of imprisonment, or lessen the sentence etc. Secondly, some prisoners begin to appreciate the 'intrinsic value of education' as a form of 'enlightenment', i.e. learning to critically reflect on both their own and the wider histories of social life and appreciating the potential of learning to 'transform oneself as well as the world through critical reflection and subsequent praxis'. A good example of this, states Germanotta, is when prisoner-students:

... read sociological literature and discover that social and individual reality intersect, that social formations are often the creations of the human mind and ultimately of human labour, and that, as Karl Marx reminds us, we make our own history if not always as we please. (Davidson; 1995; 111)

The inclusion here of a short conversation from the classroom at Full Sutton illustrates graphically Germanotta's point, particularly as the context was actually attributable to Marx's theory of class. In concluding this thesis, it is appropriate somehow that the men are 'present' in the final analysis:

Darren: I've heard that term, that 'underclass', used before. Who are they?

Ron & Pete: People like you ... [amidst laughter]

Darren: Alright then ... but seriously, who are they?

Ron: The poor ...

Ted: Unemployed ...

Peter: No money, bottom of the pile, us ...

Tim: Like we said, it's you ... [to Pete]. Anyway, you speak for yourself, pal.

Anne: You'll learn more about the underclass when we look at Social Policy, but ...

Ron: [to Trevor] You writin' this down Trev? Can you keep up? Have you wore your pen out yet?

Trevor: [who was always the butt of classroom teasing] Yeah.

Anne: [to Darren] You'll also find underprivileged groups and some ethnic minority groups described as belonging to the underclass ...

Trevor: That's absolutely right, I should know ... [Trevor was Afro-Caribbean].

Darren had, by his own admission, joined the class to 'keep in touch', 'to learn some new stuff' in order to avoid vegetating in his cell. He admitted he found the course difficult,

but was learning a lot and that it was 'making him think, an' all that'. Again as Germanotta recognises:

Once critical reflection begins, ... prisoner-students find their own life history placed in a new perspective, and they begin to see the possibilities of genuine personal transformation and eventually transformation of the world. They look to higher education to deliver on these possibilities.(1995; 111-112)

And this is just what Darren did:

Darren: Anne, do you think this Marxism will ever work? How come we don't have a revolution now? Are all the people that stupid? Can't they see how the system is shit? This inequality, and that we're all exploited? He was clever Marx, wasn't he?

Then Germanotta's third phase of educational development kicks in. Described as the unfolding of a tragedy, the 'journey' abruptly ends:

The most promising students are suddenly transferred without regard for educational interests. Prisoners who end up in isolation units are punished by being deprived of educational programming. Prisoners who somehow persevere and end up with degrees are often transferred to sites where advanced educational services are not available.(1995; 112)

But the student has acquired a new sense of self-esteem already and also a 'keen sense of frustration' - the characteristics of Germanotta's third phase. Darren was placed in segregation and shipped out of the prison, two-thirds of the way through his course as a result of disturbances when two wings of the prison were destroyed. His experience is but one example out of many on the course who became 'victims' of the more formal and rigid procedures of prison practice. As Germanotta concludes, and as I have witnessed on several occasions, the 'transformation and the tragedy' become dialectically intertwined:

Rather than encouraging further exploration concerning the impact of education on prisoners, the prison system continues to resist and destroy the very element that has demonstrably made a significant difference in turning human lives in new and constructive directions. (1995; 112)

However, much as I have attempted to show in this study, Germanotta looks for a potential solution in the synthesis of personal development through education, critical pedagogy and the more obviously recognisable goals of the penal system. As stated above, no-one chooses to go to prison, but once there and subject to whatever practices and policies characterise the place, there may be an opportunity, through education, if nothing else, to transcend the negativity through adoption of 'realistic strategies'. This applies as much to prison staff, the authorities and prison educators as it does to prisoners.

Those strategies include admitting that education *can and does* empower and politicise prisoners, that it *does* have a capacity to transform via learning through context-dependent interaction and through prisoners acquiring the ability to 'distance themselves from situations' of involvement in order to understand the complexity of the social forces and processes which bind people together. There needs to be awareness of the fact that this process is more likely to result from some courses more so than others. Prisoner education should raise self-esteem and counteract the humiliation, boredom and psychological and physical violence found in prisons.

Adoption of those strategies also means initiating dialogue about prisoner education which is so coloured by attitudes in wider society towards imprisonment, that it has become almost impossible to shake off the linkage with punishment and rates of recidivism. The acquisition, by people and by prisoners of a wider understanding of punishment itself as a social institution (Garland; 1990) and not simply the prison, would also contribute towards a more realistic approach grounded in the culturally accepted view that 'human struggle is common to all and not unique to prisoners' (Germanotta;

1995; 111). As the Leeds course within HMP Full Sutton has shown, it is possible for many people from diverse backgrounds to learn this.

What arises therefore from learning in prison has to be the appeal to mutuality, that is, if prisoners are to successfully integrate or reintegrate into their respective communities. The 'outsiders' have to become 'established' (Elias, N.; Scotson, J.; 1994) members of the community and until they do, no programme of education and/or training in prisons will be deemed to have been effective, which is a pity, because for Darren and his classmates, the social process of acquiring sociological knowledge at degree level, was perhaps as effective as anything else they had done whilst 'doing time'.

APPENDIX ONE

STUDENTS ATTENDING THE LEEDS COURSE

KEY

* Denotes course completed;

S.O. = Shipped out (see Appendix Two);

G. = Ghosted (see Appendix Two).

Name Sentence Duration Nature of Alleged Offence (if known)

Dudley *	15	armed robbery
David R.*	9	armed robbery
Martin (S.O.)	25	'political'
Gary M.	8	drugs related
Bunny *	17	armed robbery
Vince *	22	explosives offences
Garfield (S.O.)	4	'nonce-bashing'
Rosan *	35	'political'
Tony	life	murder
Ram	life	murder
Ossie	18	armed robbery
Felix *	8	(released)
Thomas	life	
Robert		
Allan *	12	attempted murder
Ted *	15	manslaughter
Pete	18	armed robbery
Andrew *(G.)	life	murder
Matt	life	
Chris (G.)	15	
Frankie (G.)	life	
Ronnie *	19	
John	12	
Wayne *	10	drugs related
Rob (S.O.)		explosives offences
Mark S.(S.O.)	life	
Said *		released
David S.	8	robbery
Jeremy	life	murder

Robert P.	5	robbery
Mark V.	18	conspiracy to commit robbery
Robert T.		
Trevor		
Tim	25	conspiracy to import controlled drugs
Leroy	6	
Kenny	7	firearms related
Alan	14	heroin trafficking
Darren	12	G.B.H.
Lawrence	28	importation (drugs)
Mostin	8	firearms
Maurice		
Duke	15	

APPENDIX TWO

THE LANGUAGE OF THE PRISONERS

A.G. - assistant Governor
 A.G./Guv 5 - Governor at wing level
 Albany bomb - lining of Thermos thrown
 banged up - locked up (usually for the night)
 bending up - being 'mufti'd'
 Billy-whizz, a.k.a. Speed - Amphetamine Sulphate
 blow - Cannabis
 brown - Heroin
 burn - smoking substance
 C.C. - confined to cell
 carpet - sentence of 5 years
 cars - control and restraint squad
 cell spin - search
 Charlie - Cocaine
 chivved - stabbed
 cut - stabbed
 down the block - placed in segregation
 duff - pudding
 Funny-farm - Vulnerable Prisoners wing
 GOAD - good order and discipline
 ghosted - transferred unbeknown to others (especially Cat. A)
 half a stretch - sentence of 6 months if serving 1 year at a time
 heavy mob - riot squad
 hooch - alcohol
 L.B.B. - locks, bolts and bars
 lie down - temporary transfer to another jail as a punishment, usually 28 days
 lock down - whole wing shut off from activities
 marking your card - tip off from one prisoner to another
 mufti - minimum use of force and tactical intervention
 the National - transporting prisoners by main coach service
 nonce - Vulnerable prisoners
 OTS - officers training school
 on the block - in segregation
 on top - the game's up
 one away - an escape
 one off - removing a dead prisoner
 P.O. - principal officer
 pp9'd - battery in sock
 pad - cell
 phet - Amphetamine Sulphate
 pongo - doing time
 porridge - doing time

pout - prison officer under training
 potted up - container of urine emptied over someone, usually a screw
 rule 43/on rule 43 - protection for individual prisoner
 S.O. - senior officer
 SSU - special segregation unit for high risk prisoners
 screw - prison officer
 seg. - segregation
 shanghai'd - transferred without warning
 shipped out - moved without warning
 shitted up - dirty protest, smearing cell with human waste products
 skag - Heroin
 slashed - stabbed
 smack - Heroin
 snout - cigarettes / hand-rolling tobacco
 stretch - sentence of 3 years
 strip cell - confined to empty cell with minimum clothing and furniture
 taxing - protection money
 VP s - Vulnerable Prisoners (e.g. former police officers, paedophiles, politicians)
 No. 1 Guv - the Governor of the whole prison
 F35 - receipt for handing out property
 F75 - parole review
 F401 - transfer of prisoner's money to another prison
 1st class mail - newspaper parcels of human excreta
 1074 - a lie-down or temporary transfer

APPENDIX THREE

I wrote the following article after the serious disturbances at H.M.P. Full Sutton in January 1997. The disturbances resulted in considerable disruption to the prison regime, the Education Timetable and had a lasting effect on the men and the staff. The actual number of men in the prison was reduced, to the extent that by Summer 1997, the prison had become known jokingly, as 'Half Sutton' because so many had been shipped out due to the severity of the damage to the wings. The prison was expected to be running 'normally' by October 1997.

The fact that so many prisoners were shipped out affected the Leeds course dramatically, as it did all other courses. It became quite difficult to sustain enthusiasm and motivation with such low numbers in the group and credit must go to the students who were not moved and who 'survived' the worst effects of the disturbances, despite 'losing' personal property, books and spending periods of time in Seg. whilst cells were refurbished. In particular, my appreciation goes to Lawrence, Mostin, Maurice, Ted and Rob, who 'lived through it all', stayed with the course and who ensured that the research continued - as though nothing had happened. They still managed to enjoy 'doing sociology' and I will not forget walking through the smoke-blackened debris of 'C' wing and seeing a copy of Haralambos floating in the water amidst the wreckage of rubble, twisted metal, broken glass and doors ripped off their hinges, furniture, electric wires, sodden food, newspapers, personal letters, magazines, bedding, mattresses and clothing strewn everywhere - for a long time. The wreckage of anger and frustration.

'THE COUNTRY'S MOST DANGEROUS MEN'

PUBLISHED IN THE GUARDIAN (4/2/97) ENTITLED 'LOCKED INTO LEARNING'

For the last three and a half years, I have been conducting research for my Ph.D. on 'Higher Education and Personal Change in Prisoners' whilst lecturing in Sociology on the University of Leeds Diploma Course within H.M.P. Full Sutton. Over that period of time, I have come to know many prisoners very well; I have watched the attitudes towards offenders, imprisonment and prison education in general change, and in some instances, diminish as a result of Home Office policy initiatives.

On the 20th January, 1997, - to coin a phrase, 'there was trouble at t' mill', and yesterday, 23rd. January, 1997, I, along with several other members of Education and other staff at Full Sutton prison, were given a 'guided tour' of what was left of B and C wings where the trouble occurred. Yes, I was shocked and saddened at the damage - but not necessarily because some of 'the country's most dangerous men' had rioted and gone 'on the rampage'.

I was shocked and saddened at the waste of it all. The waste of it all in terms of the frustration and anger of men who, despite or even because of their crimes, try and retain autonomy and integrity in a highly regulated environment; the waste of it all in terms of the frustration and anger of those who tried to 'regain control' of the wings and deal with the immediate dangers of fire and destruction to prison buildings and all that that entails; the waste of it all in terms of the anger and frustration of prison administrative and education staff who, whilst picking their way through the wreckage, broken glass, water damage and bags of prisoners' property, had the determination and 'humour' to say, "Oh, there's one of my text-books, that's less money we'll have to spend."

No-one said, "How could they?", no-one said, "Are they stupid, or what?" We simply stood, looking at the tattered remnants of the place where *people lived*; the books, papers, magazines, posters, clothing, mail, personal property and prison property cast into one undifferentiated smoke-blackened mess.

The graffiti scrawled into the soot was revealing, "...is to blame for this"; the half-blackened sign on B-wing stating 'B-wing is a humane and caring wing' (or words to that effect), added an ironical and grimly humorous poignancy to the tour as did sight of those signs which remained stating the prison services' 'Statement of Purpose' juxtaposed with "...is a wanker", also etched into the soot; and everywhere the eerie, echoing drip of water through cracked concrete.

Some of the cells were untouched; like all 'prison teachers', I looked for the names on the cell doors of my own students, and was relieved to notice that they were undamaged, untouched and still replete with personal property, toilets and washbasins, unlike those smashed in many other cells. One of the 'Leeds students' had hastily attempted to strip his cell walls and place all his property in two volumetric-control boxes, neatly laid side-by-side on his bed. "Good," I thought, "he's managed to salvage something."

Returning to the Education block to teach for the afternoon with the four students remaining out of twelve on the course was not particularly easy; especially when one had apologised to me in the morning for the fact that he was still wearing the same clothes he had been wearing since the trouble started. "I don't know even if any of my property is still there, or if they've wrecked it or stolen it", he had said in the morning. I was pleased to be able to tell him that his cell seemed relatively undisturbed. He was delighted; so was I, because he had described quite spontaneously how he had stood at his cell door for as long as he could 'defending' his property from looters and had only moved when the fire was all around him 'bending low to get beneath the smoke'. The concept of 'property' can take on a whole new significance in a prison. This 'student' is in his late fifties.

Perhaps it is not necessary to say anything more about the 'trouble', but classes 'down on Education', as they say in prisons, were resumed one day after these profound disturbances. Each teacher has listened patiently to their 'prisoner-students' accounts of events; the number of men 'on education' has currently been halved, and as a result of the destruction to the wings, men have been and will have to be moved out of the prison altogether. Classes have been reduced to 1,2 or 3 students and whilst we are all used to this scenario, morale takes another dive, but we continue and men return to learn.

The 'Leeds Course', as it is known, where men are studying the equivalent of the first year B.A. degree in Sociology and Social Policy at Leeds has survived another set-back, as will all education courses in prison, because many programmes 'work' for many prisoners in all manner of circumstances. It is simply a question of knowing how and why they do.

There are notices in 'Admin.' at Full Sutton offering counselling to officers involved in the incident. "We just don't know why they did it, and there was no direct confrontation with the men," said the officer conducting the tour.

APPENDIX FOUR

'MEN TALKING'

The following are best described as 'closing thoughts':

- Dudley: I don't let no-one give me 'rass. I'm as good as them, an' don't you let them give you 'rass neither.
- Martin: Why isn't it O.K. for men to cry? You women you really do get the best of everything.
- Ossie: You think this is bad? I was once in this gaol in South Africa - you've never seen anything like it. Any food you'd get was pushed through the wall by relatives... if you had any.
- Maurice: You see this subject? It's a real challenge to the likes of me and a few others. All our life we've worked hard, we've been taken for mugs and we end up here 'cos we don't understand what it's all about - out there and then - all this stuff we never knew!
- Lawrence: You know, if we wanted to watch anything as superb as that [the dancing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers] up on the wings, oh God, they'd just laugh at us. You couldn't do it - just run it back so we can see the steps, the dancing again, will you?
- Ronnie: You see me, Anne? All I want to do when I get out is get a quiet place somewhere. I can look after myself. Yea, I'd like kids one day, but who knows? It's a fuckin' shit of a world we've created out there, in'tit?
- Vince: How does sociology relate to the arts - music and painting? I'd really love to look at that.
- Darren: What's the difference between 'old' and 'new' money, Anne? What do you mean?
- Wayne: When I was a kid, my Dad battered my Mum you know and I used to stop him and one time the police sergeant came round, pinned me Dad against the wall and said 'If you do that again...' They'd never do that today, so people don't respect them.
- Matt: If you asked people would they have someone standing in the corner of their living-rooms watching every move, they'd refuse, but they say yes to cameras everywhere. They don't realise it's people watching, only cameras.

- Rosan: Your system does not work. You have only yourselves to blame. You have Rocky I, Rocky II, violence - what you expect? Mum, Dad at work - he get home late, kids in bed, is no good! In my country, these two families [the Jamie Bulger case] - the boys and the murdered ones would have to sit down together and confront the wrong-doing. What you do with them?
- Andrew: I'd really like to do something, you know, to help the Black kids on the streets.
- Ted: Those fuckin' ghetto blasters on the wings! I 'ate 'em. They wouldn't 'ave been tolerated in the old days...
- David: I was just in the business of re-distributing the nation's wealth really!
- Bunny: Wat you lot mean? Where dere's muck dere's brass, man? Hey wat so funny? Explain, man - where I'm from 'brass' mean lady of the night, you understan'? Ah, I see! Nuff respec', I gotta go get some food!
- Allan: Is the biker's cafe still there at Sherburn, Anne?
- Tim: Eh, Allan, you gonna stop givin' us all that psychology stuff? You're beginning to sound like one of the screws! It's sociology in here, that's S O C I O L O G Y ...
- Rob H.: Oh, I'll be alright when I get out. I'm a welder. There's always work. I reckon it'll be a bit of a shock though after eight or nine years, don't you?
- Thomas: Thanks, Anne.
- Dudley: ... and there I was head down in this bus-stop you see, and I sussed the cars driving, the patrols, up and down the street, but there wasn't any other cars, and I thought 'Oh - oh, 'ere we go, so I ducked and ran and ran ...
- Leroy: It's wonderful in the Caribbean, Anne. You see, I remember how it was, way back, before the tourists came, clean, quiet, peaceful, when I was a boy - it's just like you're saying. All the good things on the islands, they don't belong to the people any more, it's all about bloody praafit, man, bloody praafit. Like my jaab in nursin'. I have over thirty years experience doin' my jaab an' then they expec' me do wat some jumped up bloody doctor tell me ...
- Darren: Hey, Leroy Daddio - how's your anger management comin' on?
- Pete: Got any papers, Ted?

- Felix: What you're saying about the schools - that's just how it was. We used to think the kids from the Grammar were right prats. They used to get their caps knocked off on the buses, man, there were some right scraps I can tell yer. Way-ay, their blazers were in a right state. I hate to think what their mothers must 'ave said when they gorr 'ome.
- Mostin: When I get out of here, do you know what I'll do? I'll burn all my clothes - every single thing I've worn will go.
- Dudley: Hey, Wayne, wat you brought your Bible down 'ere for? Man, you ain't gonna save none of us!
- Tim: Once I drove my son round the back streets of Liverpool where I was brought up, you know, the terraced houses an' all that. He just couldn't believe it, he thought it was disgusting 'cos, you know, he's been used to the big, nice house an' cars an' all that that entails, 'cos you see, they've no idea ...
- Darren: Why do they 'ave all these posh words in sociology, Anne? You'll 'ave to translate that for me into Scouse ...
- Vince: ... Take Bermondsey and Peckham, for example. As a result of urban policy, blacks and whites are segregated to all intents and purposes from everyone else, it just makes things worse.
- Felix: It's really hard keepin' yer head down, Anne, when you get near the end, like. You just dread trouble, dread it, and you know they're gonna wind you up. Why, it's all a game ...
- Ted: I don't really know about modern kids. Years ago, if a kid was asking for money for something, you told him what to do to get it, and if he wanted it that bad, he'd do it like a rat up a drain pipe. Where I lived, if a kid had asked for a hundred quid for trainers (though I know they wasn't invented), you'd get the wallet, put it down on the table in front of 'im and say 'ere, take it, take the whole fuckin' lot - and this is what you'll eat for the rest of the week ...
- Tim: 'ere Allan, piss off out the classroom, will you, we're trying to do Sociology in 'ere!
- Trevor: I really am going to do that essay for you, Anne.
- Martin: It's the kids, I miss the kids. They're six and four.
- Ronnie: 'Ere, Trev, look at the smoke coming off your pen ...
- Lawrence: But, I would have to say that Marx got it right! Out of every theory we've done, it has a simplicity that no-one else, I think, has quite matched, don't you?

- Maurice: I don't quite follow ...
- Bunny: You like dub? Hey, that's cool. Augustus Pablo, Prince Jammy, yeah ...
- Ted: Who are they?
- Mostin: I remember when I was about five, that was my first experience of racism. My mum had taken me into a tea-shop, now remember, my mum and dad are white and I'm adopted, so it's rather a complicated situation and this white middle-aged man who was sitting at a table on his own reading a paper, turned round and said, 'How dare you bring that child into this place ...'
- Rosan: Your Meeses Thatcher, she put me here for tirty-five years. I go to Brixton first and I learn the language. Is not easy.
- Dudley: Did you watch that programme last night about scientists discovering this thing called the 'top quark'?
- Vince: Quark? That's the sound made by a posh duck isn't it?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Althusser, L; (1984) *Essays on Ideology*; London, Verso.
- Atkinson, P.; *The Ethnographic Imagination*; London, Routledge.
- Bauman, Z.:(1982); *Memories of Class*; London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bauman, Z.:(1990); *Thinking Sociologically*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Bauman, Z; (1991); *Modernity & Ambivalence*; Cambridge, Polity
- Bauman, Z; (1991b); *Postmodernity: Chance or Menace*; Centre for the Study of Cultural Values, Lancaster.
- Bauman, Z; (1993); *What is Post and what is Modern? Neo-tribalism; The aftermath of the collapse of Communism; Postmodern Ethics*; (Lectures to Centre for Cultural Studies University of Leeds.
- Becker, H.; (1963); *Outsiders*; New York, Macmillan.
- Berger, P.L.; (1963); *Invitation to Sociology*; Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Berger, P.; Luckmann, T.; (1966); *The Social Construction of Reality*; Harmondsworth, Pelican.
- Besozzi, C; (1993); Recidivism: How Inmates See It, in *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol 5, (3), 35-38.
- Bloor, M.; (1987); Shorter Report: on the analysis of observational data: a discussion of the worth and uses of inductive techniques and respondent validation; in *Sociology*, vol 12, 245-252
- Bottoms, A.; Light, R.; (eds.); (1987); *Problems of Long-Term Imprisonment*; Aldershot, Hants., Gower Publishing.
- Bowker, L.H.:(1977); *Prisoner Subcultures*; Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books.
- Boyle, J.; (1977); *A Sense of Freedom*; London, Pan Books.
- Braithwaite, J.:(1989); *Crime, Shame & Re-integration*; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Carlen, P; Worrall, A; (eds.); (1987); *Gender, Crime & Justice*; Oxford, O.U. Press
- Cavadino, M.; Dignan, J.; (1992); *The Penal System, An Introduction*; London, Sage.

- Chigwada, R.; (1991); The Policing of Blackwomen, in Cashmore, E.; & McLaughlin, E. (eds) *Out of Order - Policing Black people*; London, Routledge.
- Clayton, T.; (1970); *Men in Prison*; London, Hamish Hamilton.
- Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; (1972); *Psychological Survival*; Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Cohen, S.; Taylor, L.; (1976); *Escape Attempts, the Theory and Practices of Resistance to Everyday Life*; London, Allen Lane, Penguin.
- Cordella, P.; (1995); Prison, Higher Education, & Reintegration: A Communitarian Critique, in Davidson, H. S.; (ed.); *Schooling in a "Total Institution"*; Westport, Conn., Bergin & Garvey.
- Coser, L.A.; Rosenberg, C.; (1982); *Sociological Theory A Book of readings*, 5th Ed., Illinois, Waveland Press Inc.
- Davidson, H.; (ed.); (1992); *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*; vol. 4, (1), Winnipeg, University of Manitoba.
- Davidson, H.S.; (ed.); (1995); *Schooling in a "Total Institution", Critical Perspectives on Prison Education*; Westport, Conn., Bergin & Garvey.
- Devlin, A.; (1995); *Criminal Classes*; Winchester, Waterside Press.
- Diesing, P.; (1972); *Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences*; London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dooley, E.; (1991); Unnatural Deaths in Prison - Is There a Future?, in Reynolds, J.; & Smart, U.; (eds) (1996); *Prison Policy & Practice*; H.M.P. Leyhill, Prison Service Journal.
- Duguid, S.; (1981), Moral Development, Justice & Democracy in the Prison; *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, April.
- Duguid, S.; (1981); Prison Education & Criminal Choice: The Context of Decision-Making; *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, October.
- Duguid, S.; (1983), Origins & Development of University Education at Matsqui Institution; in *Canadian Journal of Criminology*; July, 295-308.
- Duguid, S.; (1986), "What works in prison education?", in *Adult Education* vol.58: (4), 329-334.
- Duguid, S.; (1986b), Selective Ethics & Integrity: Moral Development and Prison Education; in *Journal of Correctional Education*; vol 37, (2), 60-64.

- Duguid, S.; (1987), Democratic Praxis & Prison Education; in *The Howard Journal*; vol. 26 , (1), 57-65.
- Duguid, S.; (ed.); (1990); *Yearbook of Correctional Education*; Institute for the Humanities; Vancouver, Simon Fraser University.
- Duguid, S.; (1992), "Becoming Interested in Other Things" The Impact of Education in Prisons; in *Journal of Correctional Education*; vol. 43, (1), 38-44.
- Duguid, S.; (1993); "Cognitive Dissidents Bite the Dust - The Demise of University Education in Canada's Prisons; in *Convergence*; vol xxvi, No.3.
- Duguid, S.; (1995). "People are complicated & prisoners are people - Using Recidivism to Evaluate Effectiveness in Prison Education programmes".
- Duguid, S.; (1997); *Education Change & Transformation: The Prison Experience*, Humanities Programme, Vancouver, Simon Fraser University,
- Elias, N.; (1978); *What is Sociology*; London, Hutchinson & Co.Ltd.
- Elias, N.; (1987); *Involvement and Detachment*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Elias, N.; (1991); *The Society of Individuals*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Elias, N.; (1992); *Time: An Essay*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Elias, N.; (1994); *The Civilising Process*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Elias, N.; & Scotson, J.L.; (1994); *The Established and The Outsiders*; (2nd Ed.), London, Sage.
- Else, B.; (1986); *Social Theory Perspectives of Adult Education*; Malta, Nottingham University, Interprint Ltd.
- Entwistle, N.; (1987); *Understanding Classroom Learning*; London, Hodder & Stoughton.
- Fitzgerald, M.; & Sim, J.; (1982); *British Prisons*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Flynn, N.; (1995), "Criminal Classes", in *Prison Report*, The Prison Reform Trust Magazine; vol.33; (Winter 1995), London, Prison Reform Trust.
- Flynn, N.; & Price, D.; (1995); *Education in Prisons a National Survey*, London, Prison Reform Trust.
- Forster, W.; (1990); The Higher Education of Prisoners, in Duguid, S.; (ed.); (1990); *Yearbook of Correctional Education*; Vancouver, Simon Fraser University.

- Foucault, M.; (1977); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; New York, Pantheon.
- Frosh, S.; (1991); *Identity Crisis. Modernity, Psychoanalysis & the Self*; London, Macmillan.
- Garfinkel, H.; (1967); *Studies in Ethnomethodology*; Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.
- Garland, D.; (1990); *Punishment & Modern Society*; Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Germanotta, D.; (1995) Prison Education: A Contextual Analysis, in Davidson, H. S.; (ed.); *Schooling in a "Total Institution"*; Westport, Conn., Bergin & Garvey.
- Giddens, A.; (1984); *The Constitution of Society*; Cambridge, Polity.
- Giddens, A.; (1990); *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity .
- Giddens, A.; (1991); *Modernity & Self Identity*; Cambridge, Polity.
- Goffman, E.; (1961); *Asylums*; Harmondsworth Doubleday & Co.Inc. Penguin.
- Hall, S; (1980); Drifting into a Law & Order Society, in Muncie, J; McLaughlin, E.; & Langan, M.; 1996, *Criminological Perspectives a Reader*; London, Sage.
- Hall, S.; (1992); The Question of Cultural Identity, in Hall, S.; Held, D.; McGrew, T.; *Modernity and its Futures*; Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Hall, S; & Gieben, B; (1992); *Formations of Modernity*; Cambridge, Polity.
- Hammersley, M.; & Atkinson, P.; (1983); *Ethnography, Principles in Practice*; London, Routledge.
- Harvey, D; (1989); *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Heritage, J.; (1978); Aspects of the Flexibilities of Natural Language, *Sociology*, vol. 12, 55-77
- Jones, R.L.; & d' Errico, P.; (1994); The Paradox of Higher Education in Prisons, in Williford, M.; *Higher Education in Prisons A Contradiction in Terms?*; Phoenix, Ariz., American Council on Education, Oryx Press.
- Jupp, V.; (1989); *Methods of Criminological Research*; London, Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- Kaplan, A.; (1964); *The Conduct of Inquiry*; New York, Chandler.
- Lash, S.; (1990); *Sociology of Postmodernism*; London, Routledge.

- Lawrence, D.W.; (1994); *The Scope & Diversity of Prison Higher Education*, in Williford, M.; *Higher Education in Prisons A Contradiction in Terms?*; Phoenix, Ariz., American Council on Education, Oryx Press.
- Lindsay, P.; & Norman, S.; (1977); *Human Information Processing*; New York, Academic Press.
- Linebaugh, P.; (1995); *Freeing Birds, Erasing Images, Burning Lamps: How I Learned to Teach in Prison*; in Davidson, H. S.; (ed.); *Schooling in a "Total Institution"*; Westport, Conn., Bergin & Garvey.
- Loucks, N.; (1993); *A Working Guide, Prison Rules*; London, Prison Reform Trust.
- Malin, S.; Kell, I.; & Rust, J.; (1994); *Inside Perspectives, ex-Prisoner's views on prison education*; London, Goldsmiths College; University of London.
- Mennell, S.; (1992); *Norbert Elias, An Introduction*; Oxford, Blackwell.
- Mitchell, J.C.; (1983); 'Case and situation analysis', in *Sociological Review* vol 32, (2) 187-211
- Muncie, J.; McLaughlin, L.; & Langan, M.; (1996); *Criminological Perspectives A Reader*; London, Sage.
- Muncie, J.; Sparks, R.; (eds.); (1991); *Imprisonment: European Perspectives*; Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Pawson, R.; Tilley, N.; (1992); *Re-Evaluation: Rethinking Research in Corrections & Crime*, in *Yearbook of Correctional Education*, Vancouver, Simon Fraser University.
- Pawson, R.; & Tilley, N.; (1997); *Realistic Evaluation*; London, Sage.
- Pawson, R.; (1989); *A Measure for Measures*; London, Routledge.
- Pawson, R.; (1995); 'Theorising the Interview', in *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 47, (2), 295-314.
- Porporino, F.J; (1990); *Foreword*, in *Forum on Corrections Research* vol. 2, (1), 2.
- Porporino, F., & Robinson, D.; (1995); 'An evaluation of the reasoning and rehabilitation programme with Canadian federal offenders' in R. Ross & R. Ross (eds), *Thinking Straight*. Ottawa; Air Training Publications.
- Priestley, P; (1989); *Jail Journeys; The English Prison Experience 1918-1990*; London, Routledge.

- Prison Reform Trust; (1995); *The Woolf Report, A Summary of the Main Findings & Recommendations of the Inquiry into Prison Disturbances*. London, Prison Reform Trust.
- Prison Reform Trust; (1995); *"A Good & Useful Life", Constructive Prison Regimes*; London, Prison Reform Trust.
- Ragin, C.; & Becker, H.; (eds.); (1992); *What is a Case?: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Ragin, C.; (1987); *The Comparative Method*; California, University of California Press.
- Richards, C; (1993); E.P.E.A. No.6, Spring / Summer.
- Rogers, A.; (1986); *Teaching Adults*; Oxford, OUP.
- Rogers, C.; (1983); *Freedom to Learn for the 80s*; Columbus, Ohio, Bell & Howell Co.
- Ross, R.R.; & Fabiano, E.; (1985); *Time to Think - A cognitive model of delinquency prevention & offender rehabilitation*; Johnson City, Tennessee: Institute of Social Sciences & Arts Inc.
- Rotman, E.; (1990); *Beyond Punishment*; Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press Inc.
- Sapsford, R.; (1983); *Life Sentence Prisoners*; Oxford, OUP.
- Scruton, P.; Sim, J.; & Skidmore, P.; (1991); *Prisons Under Protest*; Oxford, OUP.
- Staff Research Branch Correctional Service of Canada; (1990); "Changing Criminal Thinking Patterns: Some Preliminary Findings; from the Cognitive Skills Training Pilot", in *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 2, (1) 3-4.
- Stern, V.; (1989); *Bricks of Shame, Britain's Prisons*; Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Sykes, G.; (1958); *The Society of Captives*; Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.
- Sykes, G.M.; & Matza, D.; (1957); Techniques of Neutralisation, in Muncie, J.; McLaughlin, E.; & Langan, M.; (eds), *Criminological Perspectives A Reader*; from, *American Sociological Review*, 1957, 22: 664-70.
- Taylor, J.M.; (1994); Cogito Ergo Sum, in Williford, M.; *Higher Education in Prisons A contradiction in Terms?*; Phoenix, Ariz., American Council on Education, Oryx Press.
- Thomas, J; (1995); The Ironies of Prison Education, in Davidson, H.S.:(ed), *Schooling in a "Total Institution"*; Westport, Conn., Bergin & Garvey.

Weiss, R.; (1995); INSIGHT, Inc.; Prisoner Higher Education & The American Dream, in Davidson, H. S.; (ed.); *Schooling in a "Total Institution"*; Westport, Conn., Bergin & Garvey.

Wilce, H.; (1996); Jailhouse Shock, *Times Educational Supplement* Feb., London.

Williford, M.; (1994); *Higher Education in Prisons A contradiction in Terms?*; Phoenix, Ariz., American Council on Education, Oryx Press.

Willis, P.; (1993); *Learning To Labour*; (6th ed.), Cambridge, Ashgate Publishing.

Woolf Report, (1991); *Prison Disturbances April 1990*; London, H.M.S.O.