

Chapter 13:

Ideological Struggles:

the spirituality concept and informal education

Introduction

I claimed in Chapter 2 that there was a 'second pedagogical relationship' at work as part of the Stoneleigh Group's piloting activities. This second site developed between and within the partner organisations of the Stoneleigh Group and between the Group and other organisations interested in youth work. The Stoneleigh Project provided the context for this pedagogical discourse. The subject of the discourse was values development for young people and its relationship with the concepts of spirituality and leadership. This, together with the ideas of personal and social transformation and the claims for radicalism in a political as well as an educational context became contentious. This conflict was present throughout the Stoneleigh Project but it had a special significance during the early piloting of the retreats and in the later advocacy work.

The purpose in this chapter is to explore this second pedagogic site. It provides a case study of a group attempting to influence the mainstream practices of education with what they claimed to be a radical approach to informal education that was also aimed at radicalising some young people. It explores the ways in which institutional power and control worked in the maintaining or transforming of the social order at the level of policy making in the youth work sector.

In this chapter, unless the organisation's views are in the public domain, the identity of the organisations referred to, other than the Stoneleigh Group itself, remain confidential. This means that, in some instances, the participants referred to are not identified and the evidence is not presented directly where it might otherwise have been useful to do so.

Spirituality and the Stoneleigh Group Partners

From the start the founders of the Stoneleigh Group had aims and associations with political overtones that led to their interest in advocacy work. The Rank Foundation is committed to the idea of young people being the agents of the rejuvenation of communities. Larry Parsons was the first director. In describing his work to Harris (2002) he drew overtly on Christian influences to explain his approach.

Larry Parsons talks of ‘fanning the flame’ and then protecting it. He talks about “inspiring leadership within the peer group as essential to rejuvenating the community”. He talks about “helping young people who are perhaps unemployed, apathetic and drifting, to dream dreams, to discover that spark within them and to rise up from the ground, and in their turn inspire others, and to show them that they have the power to make life worth living”. All this lies at the very centre of youth and community work and, indeed, education.

This made them natural partners with the voluntary organisations of the Stoneleigh Group many of whom also referred to Christian sources for their inspiration and already received financial support from the Rank Foundation for their work with marginalised young people.

As I have discussed in Chapter 9 the radical approach of the Stoneleigh Group emerged from the thinking of Colin. He wondered if society was in need of transformation not rejuvenation. This interest led him to develop a relationship with the Iona Community and to suggest them as a partner in the Stoneleigh Group and the first provider of the retreats. As their web site states 'The Iona Community ... is committed to seeking new ways of living'. They have a radical agenda of social justice that is inspired by Celtic Christianity and socialist Christian ministry (Iona Community, 2003b). As this quotation from the Iona Community web site (Iona Community, 2003b) indicates this goes beyond the re-creation of the values of society to actions that will help create new values founded on a basis of peace and justice:

The 21st century is now a few years old but all the problems that beset the world in the last century are still with us. The "cold war" may long be over, but wars still rage in many parts of the world and there is a profound concern about a whole range of related issues - the continual widening gulf between the rich North and the suffering two-thirds world of the South; Britain's continuing reliance on nuclear weapons; our lack of commitment as part of the G8 nations to overseas aid; the destruction of the environment wrought by modern life-styles and social and economic priorities; the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; and so much more besides.

As a Community we believe that, if we are to be true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we must say "no" to the arms race and be prepared to give up nuclear weapons unilaterally. We must also work for peace, by prayer, protest, study, non-violent demonstration, education, reconciliation, and political action towards a more just world. This means a redistribution of the world's resources in favour of the poor and hungry.

The working group has a four-fold focus on security, non-violence, the environment, and alternative approaches to economics (the "new economics"). This working group links with the focus of the Community as a whole by reason of the Community's themes: Poverty, Place and Peace.

As described in Chapter 2, from its foundation the Stoneleigh Group intended to advocate for the spiritual development of young people as agents of social change. The members of the Stoneleigh Group looked for new institutional partners with similar radical agendas to that of the Iona Community to support them in their purpose. Andy was invited to become the independent chair of the management team because of his knowledge of this field. He suggested inviting Brahma Kumaris (BK) to join. Its web site describes BK's role as an organisation committed to personal and social transformation (Brahma Kumaris, 2006):

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University acknowledges the intrinsic goodness of all people. We teach a practical method of meditation that helps individuals understand their inner strengths and values.

A worldwide family of individuals from all walks of life, we are committed to spiritual growth and personal transformation, believing them essential in creating a peaceful and just world.

Acknowledging the challenges of rapid global change, we nurture the well-being of the entire human family by promoting spiritual understanding, leadership with integrity and elevated actions towards a better world.

This development gave the Stoneleigh Project high visibility as BK are widely regarded by individuals and institutions who also believe that this is a time of renewal and transformation including government, church and royal figures. A number of follow up weekends and one of the conferences were held at BK's centre.

The next step, also proposed by Andy, was to invite the Wrekin Trust to act as an independent organisation to hold the overall responsibility for the Stoneleigh Project. This created another link to an institution, this time associated with education, that has a long standing and well regarded role in supporting spiritual transformation (Wrekin Trust, 2005).

The Wrekin Trust is an educational charity concerned with the spiritual nature of humanity and the universe and part of a worldwide movement towards personal and planetary transformation.

The Wrekin Trust, through its earlier work in medicine, has strong links with higher education in particular. This association gave the Stoneleigh Project further visibility particularly through the network known as the University for Spirit (2006). The first presentation about the Stoneleigh Project outside of the Stoneleigh Group was given to a conference of this network.

An Integrated Code and the Threat to Power

Although the outcomes of the Stoneleigh Project were, as I concluded in Chapter 12, varied, the claims made by the management group to the partners in the programme tended to emphasise the more radical aspects. The evidence from reports and minutes together with my field notes from various meetings give a picture of an extended debate amongst the partners concerning what was being achieved, what should be achieved and how this should be described. My notes of discussions in meetings and the first forum event, together with the reports tabled at meetings, indicate that representatives of the partner organisations were comfortable with an outcome described in terms of young people transforming through their own actions their personal circumstances at home and at work. They reacted in more varied and speculative ways to reports describing young people as expressing views or acting in ways that challenged social norms. Whilst such claims indicated that the Stoneleigh Project might be meeting Phil's and Colin's aspirations for it, other partners realised, perhaps for the first time, that the managers of the Stoneleigh Project were serious about their intentions of supporting young people to become agents of social change. Additionally, they realised that the Stoneleigh Project programme might be capable of realising these aspirations.

Referring to Bernstein's (1996) three entitlements of an education for democracy, the partners can be understood as comfortable with a programme that was described as enhancing the prospects of the young people and helping them to become included in pathways to adulthood. They were also happy with claims indicating levels of participation that reproduced the social norms through their choices in education or employment. Reactions were more mixed when claims were made of young people transforming their social worlds if, by so doing they challenged social norms, especially when those norms were endorsed by the purposes and actions of the organisation.

The retreat element of the programme was at the centre of the claims for the radical nature of the Stoneleigh Project. The integrated curriculum approach of the retreats, as Bernstein would describe it and as has been discussed in Chapter 10, together with the particular process and content they offered, was identified by the programme organisers within the Stoneleigh Group as responsible for these early signs of success. This extract from Lucy's

first report as the retreat facilitator illustrates this growing excitement amongst the designers of the programme for the results the retreats were perceived as supporting.

The group had reached the point where they would want to start to define more about how their community was functioning and were ready to start tackling the big questions.

The experience was powerful and developmental and this particular mix of people wanted to have personal choice about their use of time.

R-S02(0700)

Bernstein claimed that, for a curriculum constructed under an integrated code to be successful, a number of conditions would need to be met. The first of these he termed 'an integrating idea' (Bernstein, 1971, p. 106 – 107). He held that an overarching idea was necessary to hold together in some organising principle the unusual, loosely bounded and changing bodies of knowledge that emerge as the curriculum within the integrated code. He claimed that this was necessary in order to defend the new knowledge from colonisation by the established power holders (Bernstein, 1971, p. 100 – 106). He also suggested that emerging knowledge without a strong identity might be more easily colonised by existing disciplines that might see it as a threat to their power.

The Stoneleigh Group embraced the content and process of the retreats at Camas and, like the Camas community, emphasised spiritual development as the purpose of the programme. Spirituality, I would argue, became the integrating idea for the retreat programme. This developed after the first pilot retreat in 2000. The literature introducing the retreats to the participants, written by one of the first mentors, Shaun, and sent to the participants of the second retreat, put the aims in this way:

WANTED young people to take part in a UNIQUE opportunity. You should be at a stage in your own personal journey of development to be interested and wondering about some of the big questions of:

Who am I?

Where am I going?
How will I get there?

[CD-SG(2101)]

Later, in the same publicity, a rationale for the retreat was offered. Spirituality was understood to mean having a defined set of values and a clear purpose, developing relationships within and beyond the self, experiencing a sense of the other and developing a desire to give service to that other.

We believe that it is essential to develop an awareness of self, others and the environment in which they live, in other words to develop the sense of their own “spirituality”.

[CD-SG(2101)]

The concept of spirituality as a central theme for the retreats was supported by Colin who was enthusiastic about the emerging link with the Iona Community's centre, Camas. The retreat programme was also heavily mediated by the practice at this retreat community. The philosophy at Camas is worth some analysis as it helps explain the way in which the participants came to articulate the relationship, as they understood it, between spirituality, youth transition and personal and social transformation. A paper written for the Iona Community by Mineter (2001) on the concept of formation was also tabled at the Stoneleigh Group's first forum. Mineter, an academic, a catholic and a trustee of Camas at the time of my research, discusses the potential within Christian, and especially Catholic, faith for helping people address the current environmental problems. He identifies the notion of formation, a central role of the church in the context of the individual and communities. This he understands as a set of beliefs, values, skills and knowledge that prepare people for the world in which they live. He highlights the importance of this idea being forward thinking rather than held in a doctrine that is perceived as no longer relevant. For him it is a political engagement with the world informed by evolving Christian values.

Mineter draws on outdoor education and his experience of Camas as an outdoor, residential retreat, to make his points about how this notion of formation might be practically advanced within church communities. He sees outdoor education as essentially experiential and values based in the forms that interest him. He also comments that he sees these forms growing in relation to those he considers to be recreational in their goals. These engagements with the world as it is in order to form young hearts and minds is, for him, a model for the development of radical Christian fellowship that can respond to the political issues of the day. This paper, heavily influenced by the Iona Community ethos and tabled at the early discussions about the approach of the Stoneleigh Project and its relations with Camas, fed directly into the ideas of the Stoneleigh Project. In particular, the idea of a values based approach rooted in personal experience and paying attention to the meaning the participants found within the experiences, rather than understanding it as a vehicle for the imparting of a packet of received wisdom, was thought to be crucial. It was felt that this would support young people in acting ethically in the world. As such Mineter, already an influence and commentator on the practices of Camas, became a strong influence on the underlying philosophy of the first Stoneleigh Project retreats.

As described above, the 'integrating idea' also received additional support from the new chair of the management group and the inclusion of BK and the Wrekin Trust amongst the partners. This was enhanced by the growing interest of some of the Stoneleigh Group partners and other youth organisations in the Group's network in the proposals for the establishment of a curriculum for spiritual development in youth work. Under a different hat Andy, the new chair, was co-ordinating a response to these developments from the outdoor education profession and saw the Stoneleigh Project as a major verification of the lobbying position that he was taking on behalf of the field. The Stoneleigh Project was featured prominently in his submissions to the consultation group over the last 2 years of the pilot and beyond.

The alignment of the people most involved in the provision of the Stoneleigh Project programme with a particular understanding of the integrating idea of spirituality compares well with Bernstein's suggestion that to effectively maintain an integrated curriculum requires a staff that offer a united ideological position (Bernstein, 1971). Without this, he

suggested, the programme would be open to re-colonisation by a collection code with strongly classified forms of knowledge. The co-operative inquiry also acted as a means to unite all the participants, adults and young people, behind a well-articulated expression of their claims for the meaning and value of spirituality as a central curriculum concept. This was further enhanced by the management group briefing the evaluator to include a rationale for spirituality within his study of the second round of piloting. The strength of this unified position was tested by efforts to recover a more conventional practice and interpretation of the Stoneleigh Project from both within and outside of the Stoneleigh Group.

The Struggle between the Programme Staff and the Stoneleigh Group Partners

Whilst the participants directly involved in the programme became increasingly committed to the central theme of spirituality, within the wider Stoneleigh Group the integrated concept of the retreats was harder to sustain. At times the integrating idea of spirituality and what it was perceived to represent was challenged. The link Colin and Phil had made between values and spirituality was off-putting to several individuals and organisations that had joined the Stoneleigh Group from a more secular background. The issue was complex. Some of the Stoneleigh Group partners raised concerns about there being any link to religion or a particular religion. They thought this would alienate young people from the Stoneleigh Project as most of them they believed would associate religion with institutions that imparted a particular value system rather than thinking of them as organisations that would work with them to build one.

My field notes indicate that this further concern for conflating spirituality and religion represented a view that became a major point of contest within the Stoneleigh Group and beyond. Colin and Phil, having sought to move the outdoor residential element of the programme away from what they perceived as the curriculum of outdoor leadership, in Bernstein's terms a collection curriculum (Bernstein, 1971), had moved it close to what others perceived as an equally worrying collection type pedagogic relationship with religion.

The partners in the Stoneleigh Group reconciled their concerns by deciding that, if they were to define the work of the Stoneleigh Project as spiritual development, they would

address spirituality with openness, clarity and in a way that was detached from or non-aligned with religion. The programme management team significantly influenced this decision. The resistance to institutional forms of values development, whether religious or secular in origin, was not just a matter of concern to the young people as the evidence in chapter ten illustrates. It was also strongly upheld amongst the adult participants representing the member organisations.

Bernstein (1971) proposed that, in a collection style curriculum, teachers reproduce for the students the knowledge provided by the educational institutions of the state. They act as conduits and do not question the truth claims, the relevance of the knowledge to the students or the way knowledge is combined into subjects. I suggest that for some of the Stoneleigh Group partners the experience of their implicit assumptions about society being questioned by the very young people that they were established to help was challenging. They had perhaps not thought of themselves as acting as agents of the State maintaining the status quo in quite the way they were now being asked to consider. There are a number of indications of this in my notes from meetings and especially the forums.

For example, on one occasion I reported the emerging findings of the co-operative inquiry concerning the attitudes of young people to work to a forum meeting. An executive from one voluntary organisation in partnership with the Stoneleigh Group interrupted my presentation. Each time he substituted the words of the participants he did not like, such as spirituality, with words that he did, such as leadership. This editing was repeated in the minutes of the meeting and a draft of the notes on my report to be sent out with the minutes. The chair of the Stoneleigh Group spotted the changes and replaced them with the original version before they were distributed.

However, the best evidence came from a series of papers written by one of the youth workers and tabled at the management team meetings. These defended the Stoneleigh Group approach and its claims for the impact it was having on the young people to the executive and directors of the voluntary organisation that employed him as a youth worker. This defence was made in the face of explicit questioning of the Stoneleigh Project's rationale and threats to withdraw from the Stoneleigh Group on the grounds that it was 'too

radical for comfort'. For them the concern was that, to some degree, the Stoneleigh Project approach was causing their staff as well as their young people to question the aims of their organisation.

The values of the youth workers involved in the Stoneleigh Project were in keeping with the ideological approaches that Jeffs and Smith (2002) claim are rooted in the emancipatory traditions of youth work. In their paper, discussed in Chapter 5, Jeffs and Smith argue that these traditions of youth work are widely under threat from a more centralised and individualised approach. The reactions of the youth workers to any sign of an institution wanting to determine the curriculum of the Stoneleigh Project became a strong theme throughout the life of the Stoneleigh Group. Some of the youth workers claimed that their desire to protect the space of the Stoneleigh Project and the retreats from a strongly imparted curricula were directly and explicitly motivated by a reaction against outcomes based projects that they thought were increasingly dominating their youth work practice. One of the facilitators of the retreats for the Stoneleigh Group cited this concern in an e-mail that he shared with the management team. He resigned from the voluntary organisation he worked for stating that he could not face returning to outcome and funding driven youth work projects. The Stoneleigh Project can be understood as attractive to individual youth workers drawn to what Ord (2007) terms 'critical social education' and even 'radical social education' (p. 117-118) from a context of a youth service and even a voluntary youth organisations that they perceived as more rooted in what Ord terms a 'personal development' (p. 116-117) model of youth work.

The issue became contentious at times and spirituality was sometimes referred to as 'the 's' word' [FN-C05(3600-04)]. After the first year of programmes, the debate about substituting the word leadership for spirituality restarted and in some public documents Colin and Phil made this substitution. However, by now the management team were committed to the concept of spiritual development and decided to be even more explicit about what they meant by spirituality. They made a clear statement to the first forum of the Stoneleigh Group partners that they understood spirituality to be separate from religion. They also stated that they felt each person should explore and develop their own sense of spirituality.

Spirituality, as such, is a "woody word" and those running projects needed to allow an experience to speak for itself without naming it. As each young person discovers their-self to be on a journey of individual challenge, so a clearer sense of themselves, of the joy of life, and of a global consciousness can emerge. The key thing is to help them to begin that journey.

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They pointed out that what they thought was essential for spiritual development in the context of the Stoneleigh Project was that each person had the opportunity to reflect on 'who they were, what they believed in and where they were going' [R-SG(4602)]. Phil's second attempt at defining these ideas on behalf of the Stoneleigh Group read

The emphasis is on non-religious spirituality and self-discovery, to allow participants to clarify their capabilities, values, ambitions and direction.

[CD-SG(5103)]

The concerns of the partner organisations can be understood in two ways. On the one hand were the Stoneleigh Group member organisations with a traditional position concerning religion. The British educational system has a long tradition of accepting faith-based schools. Under Bernstein's collection system of education the faith with which a school is associated would represent an imparted set of values and moral code strongly maintained by the school's pastoral system as well as being represented within its subject structure and daily, termly and annual rituals. Voluntary youth organisations are often similarly faith based though less overtly. I suggest that, for some of the Stoneleigh Group members, whilst it was implicitly acceptable to consider a new balance of power over the organising and construction of knowledge concerning certain social values held by secular authorities, it was less acceptable to question the authority of the establishments that represented moral conduct. These members were wary of the idea of young people having a critical voice or choice concerning their ethics. They did not want the Stoneleigh Project to be concerned with processes that overtly questioned religious institutions and their role in values transfer in society.

For the other more liberal and radical members of the Stoneleigh Group, as well as the practising youth workers responsible for designing the programme, the issue was that, by associating values with spirituality, a connection was implied to the institutions of the church as the traditional authorities on these matters. In their understanding this would assert too much control, or, in Bernstein's terms, too strong a framing. They thought it would not allow the participants to critically appraise certain ethics or construct their own value positions. In their views religious organisations should be understood as only one of the institutions involved in working with values in society and one that should not be involved in the Stoneleigh Project.

Despite the risk of seeming to be allied with the institutional church the Stoneleigh Group decided that the concept of spirituality explored at a personal level was too useful an idea to be abandoned or hidden behind euphemisms such as 'leadership'. The growing interest in the role of youth work in the task of spiritual development at national level amongst civil servants in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and from the National Youth Agency (NYA) was also a considerable influence on the Stoneleigh Group maintaining spirituality as a central concept. They were keen to demonstrate that spiritual development was possible in a way that engaged young people, was experiential and could demonstrate the value of the outdoors in supporting this provision. They were also keen to present a strong case for an approach that was non-aligned with religions. They felt that this stood the best chance of success as an approach that would reach a cross section of young people of no faith or multi-faith backgrounds.

What had begun life primarily as a pilot programme to explore ways of supporting marginalised young people to become agents of social change was transformed into a pilot programme that was now also understood as a means to explore experiential ways of spiritual development for young people.

Leadership as a Colonising Influence: the struggle amongst the Stoneleigh Group partners

Those partner organisations that wished to work with young people to challenge the established structures of power and knowledge maintained the lead in the Stoneleigh

Project. Those promoting this construction of the meaning of the Stoneleigh Project were seeking to transform the meaning of spirituality and leadership into forms that embraced the idea of the young people being their own agents of change. They wanted to encourage them to act from their own moral centres, establishing identities based on these choices and then creating as much as re-creating the social order as they made their transitions into the adult world.

I have discussed Bernstein's model of the pedagogic device in chapter eight and above (Bernstein, 1996, p. 39 – 52). It is a model of the process in which knowledge from the everyday world is disembedded from that context and embedded in a pedagogic context. Bernstein argued that this part of the process, which he termed the distributive rules of the pedagogic device (p. 43 - 46), creates a space in which the knowledge can be re-interpreted and, potentially, transformed. Bernstein termed this space a 'potential discursive gap' (p. 44). He thought of it as a space in which knowledge that he termed 'unthinkable knowledge' (p. 43), that is knowledge that he described as 'esoteric' (p. 43) and beyond the possible given the current accepted or 'mundane' (p. 43) knowledge, could become 'thinkable' (p. 43). Bernstein illustrates these concepts with reference to 'simple societies' in which he claims unthinkable knowledge is controlled by the high levels of religious castes. In a modern, 'complex society' he claimed it is controlled by the educational elite. In both cases, however, he claimed that what these two systems share is an elite who control the meaning that is attached to events in the everyday world (p. 43 - 44).

The youth workers designing the Stoneleigh Project retreat programme were working with the participants to construct knowledge about experiences that they understood as spiritual. On the one hand the authentic setting of the retreat community gave a sense of a way of being that was everyday. However, the detached situation and intentional contrasting lifestyle meant that it can also be understood as acting as a 'discursive gap' between the everyday of the participants and the 'pedagogic device' of the retreat. This process was participatory with the young people as well as the host community members, mentors and facilitators involved in the programme. The participants took control of the process of attaching meaning to what they understood as their spiritual experiences.

As a discursive gap has the potential to create new knowledge, to transform everyday knowledge and, especially, to give the power of meaning making to pedagogues and even young people, Bernstein argued that this space would be contested (p. 44 - 45). He claimed it would be contested by the institutions who might perceive this new understanding as a loss of power and control and so a threat to the established order and their own power. Those partner organisations in the Stoneleigh Group most closely associated with traditional forms of Christian belief or most closely related to the establishment such as the State or royalty were those that sought to contest the Stoneleigh Group's emerging ideas of spiritual development and especially its association with social change. This was extended to include similar organisations beyond the Stoneleigh Group approached during the advocacy phases of the Group's work. Those organisations most in support of the Stoneleigh Group's concepts were those associated with what they claimed to be radical forms of spiritual development that sought to empower people to transform themselves and their worlds.

The struggles amongst the Stoneleigh Group partners, for example over the use of the terms spirituality - the 's' word - and leadership to describe the programme, can be understood as the beginnings of an ideological struggle over the programme as Bernstein suggested would occur. The constant debates amongst the participants, between the management team members and within the Stoneleigh Group at the early forums discussed above, I would suggest, reflect the degree to which the idea was thought by many to be radical, perhaps too radical. The extent and persistence of the challenges to the idea can be explained as attempts to re-colonise the Stoneleigh Project with more conventional ideas.

I have described above how a debate developed concerning the use of the term spiritual development to define the central purpose of the Stoneleigh Project. The radical aim of social transformation did not go down well with all the members of the Stoneleigh Group whether couched in the language of spirituality or leadership. However, it was the association with spirituality that was most contentious. Despite the decision to continue with the concept of spiritual development as the central organising idea of the programme some members of the Stoneleigh Group remained critical of this choice.

Whilst I indicated that the term 'spirituality' was interpreted diversely by the members of the Stoneleigh Group as meaning personal as well as social transformation some still felt the concept of leadership was more acceptable as an umbrella term for values development work. It was a term ingrained in youth work and outdoor education as a 'good thing' for young people to acquire. From a youth work perspective this harks back to the rhetoric of Baden-Powell and Hahn. In Chapter 5 I described how both men, influenced by military experiences and ideas, promoted the concept of youth leadership as a way to revitalise a commitment to a set of established social values that were thought to be in decline. Some members of the Stoneleigh Group thought that the Stoneleigh Project could be constructed in a way that drew on these long held beliefs.

The first organisation to propose the adoption of leadership development as the 'integrating idea' was a founder member of the Stoneleigh Group. Its rationale, represented by an executive at a forum, was that it would maintain the potential benefit of the proposed programme and make it more widely accessible to new partners in the Stoneleigh Group or, in a later dissemination phase, to other potential youth organisations that might adopt the programme. In other words he felt that the conflation between values development and spiritual development was not helpful and that the programme would lose none of its impact by focussing on a set of clearly articulated values and leadership.

The strategy of integrating the programme within existing established practice received significant external support. The NYA, through its director, advised the Stoneleigh Group to develop the programme in much the same ways as the partner organisation above suggested. His explanation for recommending this strategy was that a programme of values education under the guise of leadership development would disseminate more widely amongst both the voluntary and statutory youth work sectors. At the time the NYA were beginning the consultation on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills concerning spirituality in youth work. This consultation will be discussed further below. At this point it is interesting to note that the advice from the NYA suggested avoiding spirituality as a term to describe the purpose of the programme.

The turning point occurred when the person representing the dissenting organisation in the Stoneleigh Group suggested inviting one of his trustees, a general, to brief the Group on leadership. By associating leadership as an idea directly with a military institution in this way, however unfairly, he lost the debate for the time being. The management team were actively resistant. Even amongst those in support of adopting leadership as the central concept for the programme it conjured up a negative image of a particular form of hierarchical leadership holding established values. The forum at which the talk was to take place was poorly attended and the debate between leadership and spirituality was dropped at this point. As it happened the general cancelled on the day and the talk did not take place.

Leadership did not disappear from the discourse of the Stoneleigh Project. A number of people wrote documents describing the work of the Stoneleigh Group that replaced the term spiritual development with values or leadership development. Examples included the second grant application to the Rank Foundation, a presentation to the directors of several of the partner organisations and the report from a Stoneleigh Group forum. Colin explained the reason for recommending a shift of emphasis in his own organisation. He suggested that the appointment of a new chairperson of the grant awarding committee would react more favourably to leadership projects. He thought the business and Christian background of the new person would react unfavourably to projects related to secular ideas of spiritual development.

From the perspective of the approach to education advocated by the Stoneleigh Group, both the term leadership and spirituality were considered equally contentious by some. Both were associated with institutions understood to represent the established values of society. This was seen as problematic because of their association with what Bernstein would term collection type curricula that imparted an established body of knowledge leading to conventional pathways of identity formation. What the pedagogues and the partner organisations that perceived themselves as more radical and spiritual were defending was a space in which they could take a student centred approach to values development. They did this in order to offer one piece of practice that valued the knowledge, meaning construction and voices of the young people and could question the

traditional values of society. For them the approach was more important than the concept used to define it. However, the concept, at first thought to be a useful integrating idea for an integrated curriculum had become the focus for a struggle seeking to control the curriculum and pedagogy of the retreats. Bernstein would argue that this was inevitable and that, despite the emerging conflict, the idea was a necessary defence against the re-colonising efforts of more conservative individuals and organisations.

The attempts to contest the programme and redefine it in more conventional ways were constantly resisted by those who were suspicious of more conventional pedagogic approaches and ideas. They were concerned that those influenced by the old institutions of church, army and state were simply attempting to colonise and control the new territory the Stoneleigh Group was attempting to create.

What was taking place within the microcosm of the Stoneleigh Group was a struggle between institutional representatives of the three established institutions of the church, the state and the military for a role in controlling the task of the values development of young people. Those pedagogues within the Stoneleigh Project who were committed to supporting young people in developing their values from their own experiences and finding or creating identities in the world where these values could be expressed had to work hard to sustain the programme's independence. This was made harder by the use of the terms spirituality and leadership, terms, as discussed in Chapter 4, already historically central in the struggle for the control of the moral development of young people.

However, despite the fears of the Stoneleigh Group, the institutions of the church and the state represented within the Stoneleigh Group partner organisations and network, the military were only a temporary player, did not necessarily want to restore the process of values development to an older, traditional model. It is also possible to interpret the events as an attempt to control a successful and high profile programme in order to maintain power within education by holding on to their influence on values development whatever form it took.

It is also worth noting that the youth organisations with the closest affinities with the church, the state and the military never became involved in the Stoneleigh Group. However, the National Youth Agency maintained an interest, mainly because of its recently acquired State funded project of developing a youth service curriculum for spiritual development.

The Struggle for Ideas after the Stoneleigh Project

The attempts to marginalise the elements of the Stoneleigh Project that were considered to be more radical failed. The individuals and organisations involved in the Stoneleigh Group that were considered to be radical and spiritual maintained the control of the pedagogy and curriculum of the retreat programme. Spirituality was maintained as the concept defining the approach and social as well as personal transformation was re-asserted as an aim. The research for this thesis ended when the pilot work on the Stoneleigh Project stopped. However, since then Andy supported by others, on behalf of the Wrekin Trust and BK, have used the reports from the Stoneleigh Project in two ways. Firstly it was used to encourage other educational institutions interested in spirituality as a part of their curricula to convince them that there is an effective experiential approach to spiritual development and that it can be used with young people.

Secondly it was used to inform a national consultation that culminated in the report on Spirituality and Spiritual Development in Youth Work produced by the NYA (Green, 2006). This report encourages the approach of using spiritual development as a vehicle for values education in secular as well as Christian youth work. The DfES commissioned this consultation. The recommendations of this report represent a shift from the position held by the NYA during the life of the Stoneleigh Project that encouraged a separation of spiritual development from values education in youth work. Those using the results of the Stoneleigh Project to advocate for spiritual development believed that their work was one of several important influences that brought this shift about. Green (2006) thinks that the idea of spirituality has an important role to play in preserving an approach to the youth work curriculum that is free from the influence of outcome led approaches. She proposes that it does not seem to matter so much what it is about or what it achieves but that it

maintains for youth workers a particular way of relating to young people that is valued by both parties.

A lot of creative thought has been brought to bear by youth work staff and thinkers about how the existing 'products' of youth work can be recognised and accredited. ... However, another effect of increased targeting is that youth work practice can change so that its success is measured principally in targets achieved. This can have a detrimental effect on the holistic, relationship based approach which is embedded in the values of the profession. By having something like 'spirituality' in the curriculum and practice there is a whole area which is much harder to pin down and constrain. The divergent nature of 'spiritual development' means that outcomes are much wider and individual. The outcomes are nearly all in the changes of value and meaning for the young person and these are much harder to quantify than a skill or piece of knowledge which can more easily be tested or monitored. Spirituality and spiritual development are by their nature 'free' subjects, and exploration of these areas potentially puts young people in touch with profound thinkers and social reformers. ... Spirituality as an area of the curriculum has the potential of exploring values at a deeper more profound level which results in the full education of the young person.

(p. 19)

Green's plea for a pedagogic space in which changes in meaning and value for young people are encouraged and where they can encounter the ideas and values of social reformers could well be an argument in favour of programmes such as the Stoneleigh Project. Indeed, the advocates for the work of the Stoneleigh Project claim to have been influential in the development of these proposals. They saw this as one of the most important outcomes for the Stoneleigh Group.

Elsewhere in the report the author endorses the role of youth work as a means to facilitate equity for young people in society or to address the inequitable aspects of society on the development of young people. Green argues for the importance of spiritual development as

a part of 'the youth work offer' (p. 16) to young people. This, she claims, would encourage a critical approach to the opportunities they receive from society in their transitions to adulthood.

In many of the significant times when youth work has been called upon to describe itself the value based nature of the profession has been reiterated. The values of equality, empowerment, education and participation emerge from a philosophy of the profession which is about the whole nature of the young person.

(p. 15)

It is in this context that the report defends 'free' curricula, and spirituality as a 'subject' that can only be offered in such a way. This implies that the content of the curriculum in this area is, in line with Bernstein's criteria for an integrated curriculum, up to the participants within it. For Green, the value of the spirituality term is that it maintains a space within youth work that allows for and encourages some agency on the part of individual young people in the development of their values and their choices of actions. This she understands as a useful way to help young people to have a voice of their own and for them to develop a degree of equity within society. This view is congruent with the view of the pedagogues of the Stoneleigh Project and the partner organisations who were perceived as more radical and spiritual.

Unravelling the Conflation of Values, Spirituality and Religion

Throughout the life of the Stoneleigh Project the interpretations of youth work practice that were understood to be more radical had to struggle to maintain a space in which their radicalism could be sustained. Despite a number of challenges from within the Stoneleigh Group and beyond, spiritual development that supports young people in their efforts to become agents of social change remained the programme's purpose if not the actual outcome for very many young people.

The Stoneleigh Group maintained two spaces for pedagogic discourse. One involved the participants in the retreats and the other the representatives of the partner organisations and

other interested bodies. From the perspective of the programme 'spirituality' may have been a problematic and even an unhelpful concept confusing and alienating some adults and young people as much as drawing and inspiring others. On the other hand the word was used successfully to defend a particularly valued approach to values development in youth work from those interested in restoring established social values and collection curricula approaches with which to teach them. High regard was accorded to spirituality as a personal matter on which it was thought that public definitions of appropriate curricula should not trespass.

From the perspective of the advocacy work spirituality was effective in creating a space for a discourse about its meaning and value in youth work. Leadership as a term was used in an attempt to secularise the debate. Whilst addressing the problems of alienation and confusion caused by the term 'spirituality', concern was raised and upheld that it was a concept also widely associated with the promotion of an established set of values. Those organisations with an interest in maintaining the established distribution of power would not be so timid about proposing a curriculum or pedagogy for work under leadership as an 'integrating idea'. The result would have been the loss of the potential radical pedagogic space that the Stoneleigh Group had created. As such those members of the Stoneleigh Group committed to supporting young people in becoming agents of social change resisted, mostly successfully, this colonisation of their work.

There were a number of factors in favour of spirituality as an 'integrating idea'. First, the Stoneleigh Group were able to use it to justify an integrated curriculum taking a person centred approach to values development. Later, this argument contributed to the National Youth Agency making the same defence in its consultation report (Green, 2006). The term acted as an effective defence from collection type models of values development open to influence from those with an interest in maintaining social order and not transforming it. In addition the person centred approach fitted well with youth work values perceived as under threat from the State. These values underpinned an approach that believed in the agency of young people and their rights to develop this through participation in society, subversively and radically if desired. This was congruent with the views of some members of the Stoneleigh Group that society needs a radical transformation and that young people can

help with this task. This they thought was achieved through the construction of identities founded on values derived personally from experience. Spirituality was thought of as a term that made it possible to get close to these values without getting close to religion.

A number of factors are against the use of spirituality as an overarching concept. The conflation of values development with spirituality alienated and confused as many people as it motivated. The lens of spirituality through which the programme was regarded prevented a deeper understanding of values development and of integrated curriculum models in informal education outdoors. A number of organisations were hesitant to engage with values development because of the association through spirituality with religion. The feeling was that it was not the appropriate domain of secular organisations. It also felt that it provided a foothold with which the pedagogues within religion could seek to regain control of the emerging new curriculum of values development.

Whilst the radical elements in the Stoneleigh Group sought to resist the Stoneleigh Project being used to support conventional pathways to adulthood they can be challenged on the grounds of the findings related to their own approach. It can be argued that both sides in the ideological struggle did not respect the actual aspirations of the young people involved. Fortunately, the integrated curriculum approach bolstered by the ethos of youth work practices meant that the young people felt the Stoneleigh Project did empower them on trajectories of their choosing. However, the claims made for the Stoneleigh Group did not respect the findings that many of these trajectories re-affirmed established pathways to adulthood and, whilst many young people experienced personal transformations, it only occasionally led to actions of social transformation.

Those who made use of the findings of the Stoneleigh Project after the piloting was concluded held the view that spirituality was a force for good in the transformation of our society and that it should be a part of the development of young people. They were successful in contributing to this view being adopted by the NYA and the DfES. However, it is possible the separation of values development from the concept of spirituality and the institutions of religion might also aid the transformation of society. Such a step, together with a growing understanding of how outdoor approaches to informal education founded

on an integrated model can support this work, could be a better approach to supporting the project of values development. It may also enhance the equity experienced by young people as they are in transition to adulthood. This seems a better strategy if this transition is to include the role of creating as well as re-creating the society in which they are to live. If this is the case, what is needed is advocacy for State involvement in values development that recognises this as a time in which radical social transformations need to occur. An important part of this work would be the recognition that young people will experience the transition to adulthood as an increasingly problematic process that needs appropriate support but also holds significant potential for a new society.