A Shared Humanity. Using Literature To Develop The Global Dimension For Key Stage Four Pupils (And Above) In Northern Ireland: An Investigation.

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Introduction

This paper investigates the possibilities in using carefully selected literature to develop various aspects of the global dimension in the school curriculum for Key Stage Four pupils (and above) in Northern Ireland – and, by implication, for pupils at a similar stage in schools in the Republic of Ireland and Britain. The texts chosen for detailed scrutiny, and evaluation of their pedagogical potential, focus on three main themes – conflict resolution, postcolonialism and issues around diversity and interculturalism, and environmental issues; other relevant concerns, however, such as anti-racism, are also acknowledged. Before identifying a range of relevant texts, and providing detailed critical evaluation of a representative selection, the paper offers a quick sketch of some government and curricular initiatives focused on the global dimension, and glances, briefly, at the sometimes contested role which schools themselves can play in the global context. While acknowledging, also, the problematic relationship between cultural pursuits, including the study of literature, and ethical behaviour, emphasis is placed on the key significance of using a dialogical model of education when teaching literature. Although the main focus of the paper is an investigation of texts suitable for Key Stage Four pupils, it is argued, in the conclusion, that a range of appropriate literary texts can also be identified and utilised for younger pupils. Reference is also made, in the concluding section, to complementary research by the present author which reported on the classroom field-testing of some 'Troubles' literature similar to that identified in the current paper; in the earlier research, however, the target group was a representative selection of sixth-formers from across Belfast's ghettoised communities, and the exclusive focus was conflict resolution.

Educational Contexts

In September 2000, the Department for Education and Employment (now Department for Education and Skills) issued a report entitled *Developing a Global Dimension in the School Curriculum*.

As Reynolds et al. (2004) point out:

> The key concepts informing the notion of the global dimension referred to in the report included the following: Citizenship; sustainable development; social justice; diversity; values and perceptions; interdependence; conflict resolution; and human rights. (p.8)

Following on from the initiative in England and Wales (and similar initiatives in the Republic of Ireland), in November 2003 the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) launched its *Proposals for Curriculum and Assessment at Key Stage Three*, which included a teaching pack entitled *Local and Global Citizenship*. This document

> focuses on key themes of Citizenship from local to global levels. These include diversity and inclusion, equality and social justice, democracy and active participation, and human rights and social responsibility. (Reynolds et al., 2004:8)

A similar programme, at a slightly more sophisticated level, has been piloted for Key Stage Four/GCSE pupils. In addition to the areas mentioned above, it is recommended that attention will be given to 'Sustainable Development and Environmental Responsibility' (Reynolds et al., 2004:37).

In the context of Northern Ireland specifically, of course, conflict resolution and reconciliation between the two main communities must be regarded as one of the most important strands of an educational programme focused on the global dimension; not least because reconciliation in Northern Ireland (as in South Africa) can, perhaps, provide a model for similar conflicts across the globe. It is also worth

pointing out, however, that for many years now within Northern Ireland, government directives have highlighted the potential for literature, within an educational context, to enhance and inform cultural, political and broader sociological perspectives. In 1995, for example, the statutory inclusion in the Northern Ireland Curriculum of cross-curricular themes such as Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage (CH) represented government attempts to encourage schools to address the issues of societal division and conflict. It was hoped that, together with other curricular materials, the use of some 'Troubles' literature, within the EMU and Cultural Heritage themes, might help to narrow the divisions between schools as well as in the community at large. CCEA subsequently recommended some specific 'Troubles' authors and texts and defined EMU as being 'about developing self-respect and respect for others and the improvement of relationships between people of different cultural traditions' (1997, p.5). The more recent (2003) CCEA document, referred to above, while it stopped short of recommending specific authors or texts, suggested that pupils can learn, through literature, to 'explore emotions such as anger, empathy' and 'they can use literature, drama, poetry to explore others' needs and rights' (2003, p.61).

Such recommendations are, in my view, both timely and salutary and they provide the springboard for the wider investigation in this paper into the use of literature to teach different facets of the global dimension, including conflict resolution. It is also important to point out, however, that any education programme focused on the global dimension can best be delivered when teachers and schools are most alive to the debate about their, at times, contested role within the twenty-first century's global economy. Critics such as Lynn Davies (2004), for example, suggest that some schools can err by omission by failing to address, through the curriculum,

issues such as arms dealing. Osler and Vincent (2002) argue, controversially, that many schools have responded to globalisation by emphasising 'international competitiveness rather than … the need for greater understanding (p.20). Joseph Dunne (2003 laments the 'homogenising pressures of the modern state system' and argues, perhaps somewhat polemically, that 'the primary institution of the state in this regard is the school' (p.97). Again, within Northern Ireland specifically, the on-going debate about retention of the grammar school system has focused on questions of élitism and privilege and, for critics of the system, has highlighted a divisiveness which parallels (but also, ironically, crosses) the sectarian divide. More positively, however, Osler and Vincent (2002) make a strong case for all schools including in their curriculum education for sustainable development, as well as multiracial and anti-racist work, on the grounds that economic sustainability cannot be divorced from environmental, social and political sustainability. They also acknowledge many positive aspects of the citizenship programme in the Republic of Ireland – the focus, for example, on gender equality and 'greater gender awareness' (p.78) and the 'Environmental Achievement Awards Programme for Schools' (p.81); acknowledgement is also made of the 'significant numbers of global education related projects and events … sponsored and supported by both statutory bodies and NGO's (p.84).

Teaching Methods

If it is arguable, then, that schools can, at times, be seen to be part of the problem as well as, potentially, the solution, it would seem all the more imperative to investigate the possibility that the study of carefully selected literature might open up all of these questions in a liberating and creative way. Before looking at my chosen

texts, however, I want to suggest a general caveat about the study of literature, but also make some suggestions about ways of teaching it. In his fascinating book, *What Good are the Arts*? John Carey (2005) has some instructive observations about the study of the arts generally. He quotes from *In Bluebeard's Castle* where George Steiner argues that

> After the holocaust we can no longer take it as axiomatic that the humanities humanize. Aesthetic sensitivity, we now know can co-exist with systematic demonic cruelty. (p.144)

Nevertheless, Carey does acknowledge the potential power of literature, more than the other arts, to effect change. 'It is that literature gives you ideas to think with … because it is the only art capable of criticism, it encourages questioning and self-questioning' (p.208). In a curricular context, however, it is also important that the teacher is not privileged as a transmitter of 'the great tradition' of knowledge or wisdom. As Aronowitz (1998) suggests in his Introduction to Friere's *Pedagogy of Freedom:*

> Education takes place when there are two learners who occupy somewhat different spaces in an ongoing dialogue. But both participants bring knowledge to the relationship … A second object is to foster reflection on the self as actor in the world in consequence of knowing. (p.8)

Both the context and the ideal articulated in these observations by Aronowitz seem to me crucial in terms of how carefully selected literature could be taught to pupils to advance their awareness of the global dimension. If the literature is taught in a spirit of open inquiry and dialogical interaction, it can, ideally, create conditions which might result in positive reactions by the pupils. It can help to achieve what Lynn Davies (2004) calls 'positive conflict' (p.6) or 'interruptive democracy' (p.6) and the overall result might be the pupils' awareness of genuine cultural hybridity,

rather than essentialist notions of 'the other' (p.92), an acceptance of 'humanity without frontiers' (p.89).

Text and Themes

I want now to identify a range of relevant texts and, by careful exploration of a representative selection, suggest how these texts can be taught, at Key Stage Four (and above), under three key headings relevant to the global dimension in education. The three headings are: a) texts dealing (directly and indirectly) with conflict resolution; b) postcolonial texts, including those which investigate ideas about diversity and interculturalism, and also the theme of racism; c) texts which foster a heightened awareness of the environment. It needs to be pointed out, of course, that these are not totally discrete themes, nor do they cover the full gamut of issues relevant to the global dimension in education. As I hope to show, however, through my detailed analysis of a few chosen texts, responding to worthwhile literature can generate many relevant ideas in a gratifyingly inclusive and comprehensive way.

Conflict Resolution: Texts (1)

In the context of the Northern Ireland curriculum, of course, and with the proposed focus, at Key Stage Four especially, on local and global citizenship, the theme of conflict resolution seems particularly relevant. It has, by now, been well rehearsed that the thirty years of 'The Troubles' have seen a corresponding flourishing of 'Troubles' literature, in the three main genres; as well as reflecting the trauma of those years, much of that literature has also resisted tribal and sectarian divisions and has suggested ways (albeit, at times, obliquely) of transcending the conflict (with implications, too, for other conflicts worldwide, whether these are based

on ethnicity, skin colour or religion). By the same token, the years since the first IRA ceasefire in 1995 have witnessed the continuation of that literary momentum, and the continuing emergence of literature which suggests the ideal of conflict resolution. Relevant works could include poems by Seamus Heaney, for example, 'The Toome Road' (1979) or 'The Other Side' (1972), James Simmons's 'Claudy' (1974), Ciaran Carson's 'Belfast Confetti' or 'Cocktails' (1999), Paul Muldoon's Anseo' (1980), Padraic Fiacc's 'The Ditch of Dawn' (1979), Michael Longley's Ceasefire' (1995), fiction by Brian Moore (*Lies of Silence,* 1990), Robert McLiam Wilson (*Eureka Street*, 1996), Deirdre Madden (*One by One in the Darkness*, 1996), Bernard Mac Laverty (*Cal,* 1983, *Walking the Dog and Other Stories*, 1996) and Seamus Deane *Reading in the Dark*, 1996), and drama by Brian Friel (*The Freedom of the City*, 1974). By way of illustration, I would like to give some detailed attention to three poems, Paul Muldoon's 'Anseo', Seamus Heaney's 'The Other Side' and Michael Longley's 'Ceasefire'.

Muldoon's 'Anseo' (1980) provides an instructive and ironic commentary on the potential links between traditional, authoritarian education and membership of a prescribed organisation, such as the IRA, which operated on hierarchical principles, and enforced ideas of unquestioning obedience to authority figures. While, however, the model of education suggested in the poem is now (hopefully) totally discredited, at another level, the poem could suggest a paradigmatic representation of the abuses of privilege and power, whether by western governments (including, perhaps, the baleful legacy of English colonial rule in Ireland) or by military dictatorships worldwide, and this has more general implications for citizenship education. The rhetoric of the poem certainly reinforces the authoritarian and militaristic structure of the school which the young Joseph Mary Ward attends, and even the teacher's title –

‘The Master’ – has ironic suggestions of patriarchy and gendered privilege. In response to ‘The Master’s’ roll-call, all the pupils who are ‘present and correct’ (p.20) are required to indicate this by using the Irish word ‘Anseo’ – hence their first learned word in Irish has implications of obedience and subservience. The young Ward’s Christian names, of course, reinforce that idea of subservience because of their patronymic indebtedness to the original Joseph and Mary, the servant and ‘handmaiden’ respectively of the authoritarian heavenly ‘master’. Joseph Mary we are informed, is an illegitimate child, a ‘Ward of Court’ (p.20), and thus (again with interesting Biblical echoes) somewhat marginalised and disenfranchised. The stick ‘with which he would be beaten’ (p.20) is a hazel-wand which, in Celtic mythology, has fairy and magical overtones; in the hands of the brutal ‘Master’, however, it is sinisterly transformed into an instrument of pain and oppression –

The Hazel Wand
He had whittled down to a whip-lash (p.20) -

and the fricative alliteration of the consonantal ‘w’ sounds in the latter line captures brilliantly the cruel swish of the administered punishment. Ironically, too, of course, and with obvious ecological implications, nature has been pillaged to provide the instrument of torture. The hazelwand, removed from its natural context, has been ‘sanded and polished’ until, in a beautifully ironic phrase, it has become a ‘delicately wrought’ (p.20) weapon of pain. Eventually, for Joseph Mary Ward, the cruelty has become routine, institutionalised:

> After a while, nothing was spoken;
> He would arrive as a matter of course. (p.20)

Ward has become, as it were, an accomplice in his own brutalisation, a child who is literally beaten and silenced into submission.

As an adult, Ward replicates the experiences which he has endured as a child - in a deeply ironic way, the child is the father of the man. By the end of the poem, the narrator catches up with Ward who is, by then, a Quartermaster in the Provisional IRA. While he believes he is fighting back against British imperialist hegemony in Ireland, the volunteers under his command answer 'Anseo' to him, 'As their names occurred' (p.21). The use of the passive tense of the verb in the latter phrase reinforces the sense of unquestioning obedience and subservience offered by the volunteers to their authoritarian quartermaster; they too, obviously, operate under the shadow of the violence which had been the basis of their 'master's' enculturation.

If Muldoon's poem provides a brilliantly ironic and thought-provoking commentary on a tradition which both militated against the ideals of a liberal, dialogical education and mature citizenship, and fostered intercommunal conflict, Seamus Heaney's 'The Other Side' (1972), in registering the poet's imaginative generosity and his ability to empathise with his Protestant neighbours, suggests also the possibility of reconciliation between the two main communities in the North of Ireland. The poem also provides, however, an interesting contrast to another Heaney poem, 'The Toome Road' (1979), which undoubtedly captures the nationalist's speaker's unease during the recent 'Troubles' at the presence of British soldiers on 'my roads' (p.13) and his sense of their violation of the harmony of the surrounding countryside. Considered together, however, the subtle and imaginative complexity of both poems makes them ideal for discussions at Key Stage Four level about the meaning of citizenship in a divided society, and the possibility of conflict resolution.

At the beginning of 'The Other Side', the Catholic speaker's Protestant neighbour possesses a patriarchal authority of speech and manner, reminiscent of an Old Testament prophet. While the unneighbourly division between the two is ironically

contextualised within the Biblical reference to 'David and Goliath' (p.35), it is also framed by the more homely image of the

loads of hay
To big for our small lanes. (p.35)

Implicit, too, in this image, is the resentment of the Catholic farmer towards his 'Planter' neighbour, who has secured the best land; the Protestant farmer is one of the 'chosen people' (p.34) and he casts a disdainful glance at 'our scraggy acres' (p.34). The fusion of tribal and religious conflict within the crucible of Northern Ireland is reinforced, too, by the description of the Protestant neighbour's brain

swept tidy
as the body o' the kirk. (p.35)

However, while the poem acknowledges that polarisation which has bedevilled civil life in Northern Ireland for so many years, its lyrical mellifluousness helps to temper the starkness of that polarisation and, in a sense, signals a potential softening of attitude even before the 'reconciliation' which occurs in the third and final stanza. What is skilfully suggested there is (for whatever reason) a newfound sensitivity on the past of the Protestant farmer towards his Catholic neighbour. The harshness of 'each patriarchal dictum' (p.35) is replaced now with the colloquial friendliness and vernacular ease of 'A right-looking night' (p.35) and 'I was dandering by' (p.35). The blackthorn stick, no longer intimidatory, is used now to 'tap a little tune' (p.36). Perhaps the patriarchal neighbour has softened with age; more aware of nuances, he no longer indulges in sweeping generalisations. Of course, another reconciliatory factor at work here is that the youthful Catholic speaker has become a dissenter, an inner émigré who is avoiding the family rosary, and has broken away from the 'moan of prayers' (p.36). Even at the end, however, some uncertainty and unease remain,

though Protestant and Catholic neighbour alike share an interest in 'the weather' (p.36) and 'the price of grass seed' (p.36).

Another poem which lends itself perfectly to any discussion of forgiveness, conflict resolution and an ideal of citizenship is Michael Longley's short but haunting 'Ceasefire' (1995). While the poem uses the relationship between King Priam and Achilles (the killer of Priam's son) in Homer's *Illiad* as a prism through which to view the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', as Peter McDonald (2002) suggests, 'its strength resides in the capacity to keep the sense of parallel at bay, as something present but contained' (p.46). The poem is also remarkable for its achievement simultaneously of an intensity of emotion and a sense of calm objectivity. The suggestion of homosexual attraction between the two men, and the sense of the inevitable bond forged from shared military experience are brilliantly fused, and provide a convincing backcloth to the shocking immediacy and surprise of the last two lines:

> I get down on my knees and do what must be done
> And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son. (p.39)

The ideal of reconciliation and forgiveness, despite profound hurt, which is implicit in Longley's poem would undoubtedly chime with Ricoeur's reflections on the power of imaginative education in situations of conflict. Dunne (2003) quotes Ricoeur as arguing that imaginative education enables young people to realise

> 'the unfulfilled future of the past' by coming to understand both themselves and the estranged other in ways that open them to a deeper understanding of a shared humanity. (p.117)

Postcolonialism and Racism: Texts (2)

The ideal of reconciliation and forgiveness is also relevant to the next category of text which, I suggest, ought to feature within a programme on the global dimension in

education, that is texts dealing with postcolonialism, interculturalism and themes connected with racial and social equality. The issue of race and racism has certainly yielded a considerable harvest of texts relevant to Key Stage Four students of the global dimension including, for example, in the American context, Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird* (1960), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977) and Amy Wilentz's *Martyrs' Crossing* (2001); in the South African context, Alan Paton's *Cry The Beloved Country* 1948) is a classic well worth revisiting. However, I would like to restrict myself to a more detailed consideration of just two novels which, as well as touching on racial themes, have a definite postcolonial context, that is, Ishigouro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) and Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999).

Given that local and global citizenship is acknowledged as a key theme within the global dimension in education, *The Remains of the Day* dramatises two highly relevant ideas; namely, the 'colonial' master's inability to see the servant as a fellow human being, and the servant's subsuming of the personal life, to the risk of total abnegation of self, within an ideal of service. The novel also lends itself to an interesting discussion about privilege and inequality generally, whether such inequality is based on class or wealth. While *The Remains of the Day* is set mainly in England, the relationship between Stevens, the butler, and his employer, Lord Darlington, provides a paradigmatic and ironic commentary on the power based relationship between colonial master and native servant as seen in novels by Conrad, Kipling, Foster and many others. There are also parodic echoes of other 'colonial' fictions set in England itself. As Susie O'Brien (1996) points out:

> The transgressiveness of Ishiguro's text is suggested in a review by Rushdie, which notes that *The Remains of the Day* is a 'brilliant subversion of the fictional modes from which it at first seems to descend'; in particular, Rushdie is referring to the fiction of P.G.

> Wodehouse, to whose butler Jeeves, Stevens, the narrator, bears a parodic resemblance. (p.789)

Certainly, the two worlds of the novel, despite the physical contiguity, remain resolutely apart, and fall far short of the ideal which, as Edward Said (1985) suggests, in a wider context, is necessary for genuinely intercultural connection.

> The two necessary conditions for knowing another culture are uncoercive contact with an alien culture through real exchange, and self-consciousness about the interpretative project itself. (p.142)

The reality in Ishiguro's text is that, as far as his masters are concerned, Stevens is not only of a different class, but almost of a different species. A deeply ironic and revealing episode occurs when Stevens is questioned by Lord Darlington and two of his right-wing aristocratic visitors about rather complex and abstruse politico-economic questions. The butler's anticipated failure to provide a satisfactory response confirms his masters' view that the democratic masses are not safe to be trusted with important decisions; confirms, in fact, their anti-democratic convictions. Stevens's failure to be insulted, despite (as he, himself records it) their increasingly contemptuous laughter at his 'stupidity', compounds the irony of the exchange. For him, fidelity and a kind of canine devotion are everything. In his turn, of course, Stevens, as head butler, runs his 'empire' and conducts his 'professional' life in an autocratic way which mirrors that of his masters. Questions of a personal life, such as his incipient relationship with Miss Kenton, the housekeeper, and even the health and well-being of his father, are totally subsumed within the demands of 'duty'. As O'Brien (1996), again, observes:

> Stevens unquestioning submission to a social order reflects and supports the model of filial devotion deployed by empire to mask the enforced servitude of its colonies … The infantilism and dependence such a construction inculcated reflects the attitude of the loyal servant, which Stephens displays in his childlike devotion to his employer, Lord Darlington. (p.790)

Stevens's devotion to that employer is revealed as being dangerous, of course, not only because of this repression of his personal life, but because also of Darlington's political affiliations and the racist fall-out from his (Darlington's) flirtation with Von Ribbentrop and other senior Nazis, in the early nineteen-thirties. At Darlington's request, Stevens sacks two Jewish under-maids, simply on the basis of their religion. He accedes to this request without the slightest demurral – it is his moral duty to obey his master's command. The irony of this obedience is compounded by Stevens's insistence elsewhere that 'service' is enhanced if it is given to men whose lives are shaped by moral purpose and dignity. As O'Brien (1996) points out:

> The sinister, even pathological, power structure underlying this relationship is accentuated by Lord Darlington's World War Two political activities … In the background of this picture of filial devotion, then lurks the figure of the Fürhrer, in whom the idea of political paternalism is taken to its logical and menacing conclusions. (pp. 790-791)

J. M. Coetzee: *Disgrace*

Coetzee's brilliant novel, *Disgrace*, set in post-Apartheid South Africa, is another postcolonial text which creatively interrogates many themes relevant to the global dimension in education – for example, racism, human rights issues, gender and sexuality, the environment – in a provocative and challenging way. The novel is clearly multi-layered, with various parallel issues skilfully and ironically interwoven into the creative hybridity of its fabric. When the novel opens, the central character, David Lurie, is Professor of Communications at Cape Technical University. However, he is forced to resign his post after his affair with one of his young female students is brought to the attention of the university authorities; ironically, however, he could have retained his job had he been prepared to acknowledge his guilt and provide assurances about his future behaviour. Lurie's belief in his personal freedom

– a belief which his subsequent experiences will seriously undermine – and, in his own eyes, his principled refusal to accede to the demands of the university authorities, mask his failure to acknowledge his patriarchal exploitation of a comparatively vulnerable and naïve female student. Having been expelled from his post at the university, he takes up residence with his daughter, Lucy, who manages a smallholding, concentrating on growing organic produce, near the town of Salem in the Eastern Cape. Lucy's rape by three black men, her subsequent pregnancy, and her determination to give birth to her black rapist's child, forces Lurie (who was himself seriously assaulted on the same occasion) to confront the harsh realities of the new post-Apartheid South Africa. He is forced to concede that his daughter's only hope of survival in her isolated outpost rests on her tacit agreement to become a kind of concubine for Petrus, who was previously a helper on her farm and is also the black brother-in-law of the youngest of the three rapists. Revenge for years of white hegemony is seen as a key ingredient in Lucy's on-going humiliation. Her father is forced to acknowledge that patriarchal authority and power have been transferred from whites to blacks, and new racial and sexual configurations, hitherto unimaginable, have to be addressed. An ironic parallelism is suggested, too, between his exploitation of his former student and his daughter's experience with her black attackers. In the light of his daughter's misfortunes, Lurie must question his patriarchal behaviour and implicit assumptions about gender and race. His journey into (for him) a shockingly new postcolonial Africa takes place in a novel with deconstructs issues of race, class and sexuality in a challenging and provocative way.

Environmental Issues: Texts 3

The third and final category of literary texts which I want to investigate encompasses those works which deal directly or obliquely with the environment and issues of sustainable development. The range of texts which could be utilised for Key Stage Four pupils is wide and could include, for example, many of Robert Frost's (1969) poems with their numinous treatment of ecological themes, poems such as 'After Apple-Picking', 'Birches', 'For Once Then Something', 'Paul's Wife' and, in the Irish tradition, poems by Eavan Boland for example, 'Night Feed', 'Before Spring' and In the Garden' from *Selected Poems* (1989) or 'Degas's Laundresses' and 'On Renoir's "The Grape Pickers"' from *Code* (2001) and some of John Donohue's writings about landscape and Celtic spirituality, such as *Conamara Blues* (2000). In fiction, too, a wide range of texts is available including John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* (1948), Mary Austin's *The Land of Little Rain* (1988), Rachel Carson's, *Silent Spring* (1962), Wallace Stegner's *The Sound of Mountain Water* (1969), Margaret Craven's, *I Heard The Owl Call Thy Name* (1976) and Brian Moore's *Black Robe* (1985).

For the purposes of more detailed illustration, I would like to focus briefly on the latter two novels which, among other things, suggest the division between man and nature in North America and Canada, and the potentially tragic consequences of that division. In Craven's book, set in the nineteen-sixties, the young Anglican vicar, Mark, has an intuitive understanding of the native Indian villagers of Kingcome, and their symbiotic relationship with their environment. However, as Charles E Wilson (2005) observes:

> The civil world, represented by Mark and the other whites who visit Kingcome, is marred by materialism, competition and unethical behaviour. (p.68)

Mark, unusually, appreciates the villagers' way of life and understands that

> These 'natural' people are, in fact, one with nature. They do not consider themselves separate from the physical world created by the Supreme Being. (p.68)

Ultimately Mark, who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, dies in his adopted village – called 'home' by 'The Owl'. It is hinted that, in his death, he achieves a kind of pantheistic transcendence, for which his life with the villagers had prepared him. In life, he rejects any division between man and nature, and rejects also that perception of nature 'as a mere resource which is categorically distinct from moral bonds of human culture' (Curtin, 2002: 294). Like the Indians, he is able to view the land 'in the same moral universe we occupy, (and) to include it in the meaning of the word community (Lopez, 1992:33).

The beginning of the divorce between man and nature, the incipient process by which the land is treated as an expendable resource, is suggested also in Brian Moore's *Black Robe*, set in sixteenth-century Canada. Moore dramatises the clash of culture between the French colonisers (including 'the Blackrobes', the Catholic priests) and the native Indians. In his Author's Note to *Black Robe*, Moore (1987) comments:

> They despised the 'Blackrobes' for their habit
> of hoarding possessions. They also held the white man
> in contempt for his stupidity in not realising that the land,
> the rivers, the winds, were all possessed of a living spirit
> and subject to laws that must be respected.(p.8)

The integration of man and nature is a central principle in the Indians' lives, and is complemented by their contempt for material possessions. The imperialist ambition of the French colonisers, the greed of the trappers, and the metaphysical 'witchcraft' of 'the Blackrobes' are all set against the comparative simplicity of the Indians' life-style (even though Moore is unsentimental in his portrayal of the Indians' cruelty to

their captured enemies). The novel, however, in a sense charts the beginning of the end of the American Indians' organic way of life. As Chomina, the Algonquin chief, says, shortly before his death, 'It is you Normans, not the Iroquois, who have destroyed me, you with your greed …' (p.152).

Conclusions

The main thrust of this article has been the identification, and thematic exploration, of suitable fiction and poems which could be used as a valuable resource in teaching various aspects of the global dimension to Key Stage Four pupils in Northern Ireland. As mentioned briefly in the Introduction, however, it is possibly helpful and germane to point out that, with reference to the theme of conflict resolution, specifically, a selection of 'Troubles' literature has been field-tested by the present author in a small-scale action research project. The results of that research have been written up, and published in the journal, *Irish Educational Studies* (2004). The target group for that more focused study, however, was sixth-form students in a selection of schools across the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland. The findings of that investigation provided definite reasons to be optimistic and very positive about recommending a similar selection of literature for use with Key Stage Four pupils. While the study of literature cannot obviously be seen as an instant solution for the deep-seated cross-community divisions within Northern Ireland, it became obvious that pupils could be encouraged to modify sectarian attitudes and to engage sympathetically with alternative perspectives. This research complemented the findings of Marriott (1985, 1998) who, in two investigations focused on children at Key Stage Two, also explored the possibility of using suitable children's literature to modify inherited sectarian attitudes. Other writers too, from within the Northern

Ireland academic community, have stressed the power of literature as an important means of reconciliation. In reviewing Professor Brian Cosgrove's memoir, *The Yew-Tree at the Head of the Strand*, John Wilson Foster (2003) claims that:

> It makes a strong case for the reading, remembering and study of English literature as a potentially reconciliatory force in a divided society like Northern Ireland' (p.77).

Finding suitable literature, such as that recommended by Wilson Foster, or the texts identified earlier in this paper, which address themes such as conflict resolution, postcolonialism or sustainable development, is relatively unproblematic when the target audience is Key Stage Four pupils (and above). In general terms, literature which engages with such relatively sophisticated topics tends to be fairly complex and challenging, and therefore more suitable for older pupils. Nevertheless, as Marriott (1985) has demonstrated, there are also children's books, for example, Joan Lingard's *The Twelfth Day of July* (1970) or *Across The Barricades* (1972) which can address quite serious issues in a way that is appropriate to their audience; and I also would argue that younger pupils, at Key State Two and Three, can be introduced to various strands of the global dimension through well-chosen children's literature. The best texts of this kind, however, have recently been dubbed 'crossover' texts and Jill Paton Walsh (1976) encapsulates their dualistic quality in a beautiful image.

> I imagine the perfectly achieved children's book something like a soap-bubble; all you can see is a surface – a lovely rainbow thing to attract the youngest on-looker – but the whole is shaped and sustained by the pressure of adult emotion, present but invisible, like the air within a bubble. (pp.212-213)

An excellent example of this kind of novel is the recently published, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006), by John Boyne. Focused on the theme of the holocaust, it is written mainly from the point-of-view of eleven-year old Bruno, the son of a camp commandant at Auschwitz. The language and plot are perfectly accessible for

Key Stage Two/Key Stage Three readers, but the novel combines a light surface with a profundity, seriousness and depth of a feeling which must appeal also to the more sophisticated older reader (whether Key Stage Four pupil, or adult). Both young reader and adult alike cannot but be deeply moved by the novel's compellingly tragic climax, and also by its engagement with issues deeply relevant to the global dimension, for example, justice and anti-racism, as well as, negatively, the toxic and destructive power of racial or ethnic hatred. Other relevant novels which might appeal equally to younger or older pupils (or, indeed, adults) - though, obviously, the way of approaching and teaching such texts will vary, depending on the maturity and sophistication of the audience – might include Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* (1987) and *I know why the Caged Bird Sings*, (1969), Breena Clarke's *River, Cross My Heart* (1999), Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1977) and *The Patchwork Quilt* (1985) by Valerie Flournoy.

Relevant global dimension issues might also be taught through literature, in the Key Stage Two or Three classroom, by using texts which, initially, may have been primarily written for an adult audience but which can be adapted 'downwards' ('crossover' texts, in reverse, as it were). Some of Seamus Heaney's poems from *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) – for example, 'Blackberry-Picking', 'Death of a Naturalist', 'The Early Purges' – focus on themes very relevant to sustainable development, and, in my view, could be successfully taught at Key Stage Two or Three, as well as with older pupils. Many of Robert Frost's (1969) poems, once again, have a combined profundity and yet surface simplicity which make them also ideal for use with younger or older pupils.

It might be helpful, and not inappropriate, to end with two literary quotations. Writing about the composition of his poem, 'The Other Side', Seamus Heaney (2002) articulated his sense of the gift and resonances of language, when distilled into poetic form: 'The words had dandered in and reminded me of the possible boundlessness of our sympathies' (p.57). In a similar vein, in his poem 'Auguries of Innocence', William Blake reminds us of the interrelations of all things under heaven, and between heaven and earth.

> To see a world in a grain of sand
> And a Heaven in a wild flower
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And eternity in an hour. (Stevenson, 1971: 585)

In their different ways, both poets remind us of our shared humanity, and our responsibilities as global citizens, both to one another, and to the planet which sustains our existence.

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