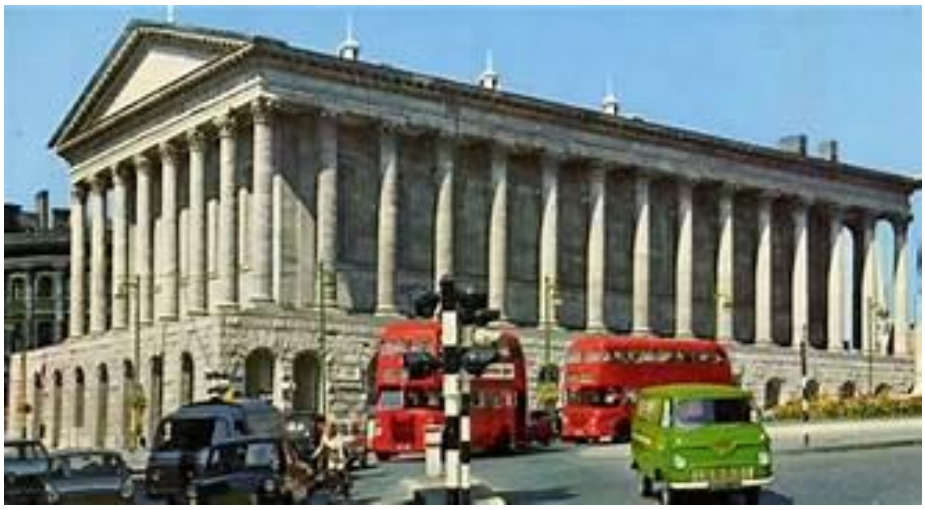
County Grounds and Town Halls

— equality and belonging here and now



Address at a day conference for the senior officers of Birmingham City Council, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer, summer 2001

Introduction and summary

On Thursday 22 April 1993 the then prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland made a speech which has been much quoted over the years, and much mocked. It is relevant to revisit that speech here today, and to do so reflectively rather than with mockery alone, tempting though mockery alone certainly is. An address on equality and belonging in British society, and in British cities, must engage with the prime minister's picture of Britain, not merely mock it.

Later on the same day, an event took place whose aftermath sets the context for today's conference, and for this talk, entirely directly. There was no objective connection between the speech and the event. We here today, however, can see a connection all too clearly. Together with recent government documents and policies about equality and belonging, the prime minister's speech and the event on the same day are the backdrop for today's conference, and the backdrop for this address.

The address has two parts. The first part recalls the speech and the event. Both illustrate the proverbial saying, well-known in both the drudgery and the stubborn heroism of local government officers, that the devil is in the detail, and in the big picture too. The second part discusses points arising with regard to belonging and equality. It will remind us, that is to say, of the tiresome reality that getting details right doesn't necessarily mean getting the overall paradigm or narrative right and that, by the same token, getting the composition of the picture right

doesn't necessarily involve taking care of all the details. The closing paragraphs of the address will be entitled 'only connect'.

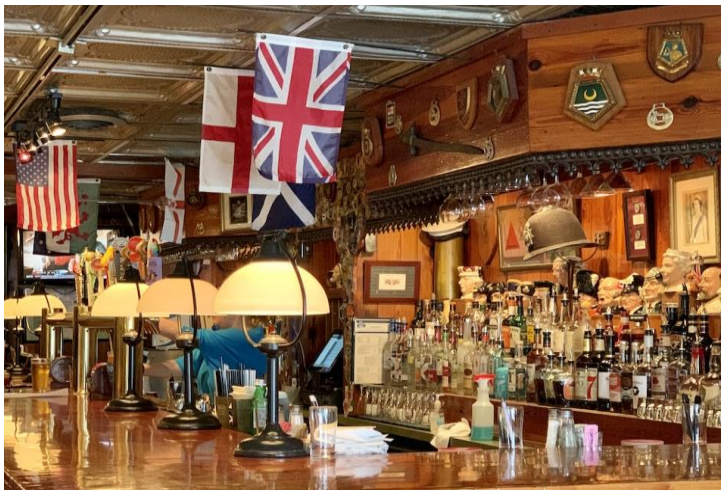
Part One: A speech and an event

Legislators, as Shelley didn't quite say, are the unacknowledged poets of the world. For they not only make and pass laws but also seek election as politicians and in this latter role they use the tools and the tricks of the poet's trade — metaphor, cadence and evocative detail — to achieve their aims, which in their case are to sketch out their picture of the good society, and to comfort and reassure, embolden and impassion, rally and mobilise, their supporters. On 22 April 1993 the acknowledged legislator John Major famously told members of his political party that:

> Fifty years from now Britain will still be the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers, and — as George Orwell said — "old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist". And — if we get our way — Shakespeare will still be read even in schools.

There are several reasons why mere mockery of this picture is inappropriate, or anyway premature. For a start, this is a kind of poetry. It therefore needs to be interpreted rather than taken literally, and dismissed out of hand. Despite its grammar, it should be read as sketching out a picture of how Britain ideally *should be* rather than how Britain *actually is* - it's a vision statement, not data from empirical observation. Second, it's the big picture in the vision statement that is of principal interest, not the details. Third, the big picture is in certain respects attractive. Fourth, the speech belonged to a genre of thinking, feeling and imagining about Britain, and it is the genre that needs our attention rather than, or as well as, Mr Major's version of it. The devil is in the detail, but in the big picture too.

The genre includes, famously, John of Gaunt's speech in Richard II and William Blake's poem Jerusalem. We may also recall, somewhat eclectically, Rupert Brooke's 'If I should die' sonnet; songs such as "There'll always be an England/While there's a country lane…'; the best-selling non-fiction book of the 1990s, *Notes from a Small Island* by Bill Bryson; and Elton John's song at Princess Diana's funeral. The Britain which this genre evokes is, first and foremost, stable and safe, one in which the only significant changes are the predictable and consoling transitions from winter to spring and from night to day. The ways of this ideal Britain are 'ways of gentleness and all her paths are peace'. The recurring reference to greenness evokes self-renewing and gentle change, and also cleanliness and health. An essential aspect of safety and stability is courteous respect for the freedom and private space of others — people go about their daily business without even inconveniencing their fellow citizens let alone disturbing or upsetting them.



'Warm beer' stands for British pubs, those simple public spaces where, amid all the goings in and comings out, everyone is equal, everyone abides by the customs and written and unwritten rules, everyone minds their own business, everyone is cheerful and friendly, everyone is at home, everyone lives and lets live. There is a basic equality, there is recognition and tolerance of difference, there is a sense of belonging - there is, in a word, inclusion. This is not, on the face of it, a totally derisory image of the good society.

That said, it would of course be culturally inappropriate in the current context, and in a range of different ways, to suggest that a British pub is a quintessential symbol of the good society!

Also a cricket field is a public space where there are comings in and goings out, and where people interact, and play out their parts, within the rule of custom and of law. It too is not a totally derisory image of the good society. Nor is suburbia. 'Invincible green suburbs' embody a not unreasonable desire to spend time away from a city's industry. When Mr Pickwick came to Birmingham 170 years ago, this is what he saw and heard:

> The streets were thronged with working people. The hum of labour resounded from every house, lights gleamed from the long casement windows in the attic storeys, and the whirl of wheels and noise of machinery shook the trembling walls. The fires, whose lurid sullen light had been visible for miles, blazed fiercely up in the great works and factories of the town. The din of hammers, the rushing of steam, and the dead heavy clanging of engines, was the harsh music which arose from every quarter.

The suburbs of Birmingham, and of other industrial cities, were to do with getting away from all that heavy clanging. Green and pleasant England is, yes, pleasant, and it is not unreasonable to get away, if you can, from the sullen lurid light and the harsh music of the workaday world.

Later the same day

That all said, there is a lot wrong with Mr Major's account of the good society, both in its devilish details and also - more especially - in its big picture. I shall critique the speech in due course. First, let us recall an event which occurred on the evening of the same day, Thursday 22 April 1993. The event lasted 20 seconds at most, but its aftermath haunts and hunts everyone at this conference and will continue to impact on everyone throughout their working lives. In Well Hall Road, Eltham, south east London, a young man was stabbed and he bled to death on the pavement where he fell. Due to the love, courage and persistence of his parents, family and friends as they battled for justice through the years which followed, his name is widely known, and will be widely known for many decades to come, Stephen Lawrence.

Two weeks later, on Thursday 6 May at four o'clock in the afternoon, Mr and Mrs Lawrence went to Catford police station to meet with the detective chief superintendent who was in overall charge of the investigation into the murder of their son. Earlier in the afternoon they had met with Nelson Mandela, who happened that week to be in London on a state visit. Mrs Lawrence handed to the police officer a sheet of A4 paper on which she had written down the names of six prime suspects. Barely glancing at it, he folded the paper into two. Then in the course of the conversation he folded it into two again, then again, then again. In surface area, by the time he had finished, the paper was one sixteenth of its original size. Throughout the meeting, Mrs Lawrence was to say later, he fiddled with it, toyed with it, screwed it up.

The devil is in the detail. What, if anything, did this particular detail mean? For the officer himself, it was of no significance at all. An alternative view is that his gesture was insensitive and thoughtless. He was talking with people suffering from barely imaginable grief, trauma and distress. Instead of showing a basic human respect for something profoundly important to them — a list of people allegedly responsible for

killing their son because, so the attackers thought, their son did not belong in England's green and pleasant land — he demonstrated crude casualness and lack of elementary professionalism. At the very least he should have communicated to the bereaved family that he was wholly determined to follow up the information about the alleged murderers which had been handed to him.

But the devilish detail meant other things too, even worse things. The Lawrences and their many supporters came to believe that the chief superintendent would not have behaved with such casualness and lack of respect if the bereaved family had been white; and would not have implied, if the murdered person had been white, that he was uninterested in tracking down the murderers.

The devil is in the detail - stray remarks, incidental gestures, fleeting actions, bits and pieces of body language which mean nothing to some people but speak volumes to others. The chief superintendent's action meant nothing to himself, any way consciously. But for others it was a significant detail in a big picture, a significant episode in a big story. It implied that the officer believed that black British people do not merit the same basic respect and consideration from the police service and from other public bodies as white British people. For they are alien, not fully members of the community which the police service exists to serve and protect. Their stories, perceptions and worldviews are outside the norm - for they do not belong with invincible green suburbs, or with the homely live-and-let-live culture of the real England, or with Church of England services in country villages. As both cause and consequence of their not really belonging in this land, they are imagined to be more likely than white people to be criminal, confrontational and unpeaceful, and are more likely than white people to bring upon themselves the stresses and distresses that they experience.

Stephen's friends and family put this chilling perception of the police service and of other public services to Sir William Macpherson through their barristers, and Sir William agreed with it. 'We told Macpherson and Macpherson told the world,' it was said. What they and Sir William maintained was that the chief superintendent had learnt his manners from the manners of his organisation. He had imbibed, absorbed, gathered, caught them, soaked them up (no one metaphor says it all) from the culture, norms, routines, procedures and practices, written and unwritten rules (no one concept in organisational theory says it all) of the corporate body of which he was a member. Manners, as I am using the word, is not something you learn from a rule-book, or a code of practice, or a guide to etiquette. Manners, in the words of a great literary and social critic writing some fifty years ago, are:

> a culture's hum and buzz of implication … the whole evanescent context in which its explicit statements are made. It is that part of a culture which is made up of half-uttered or

> unuttered or unutterable expressions of value. They are hinted by small actions, sometimes by the arts of dress or decoration, sometimes by tone, gesture, emphasis or rhythm, sometimes by the words that are used with a special frequency or a special meaning … In this part of culture assumption rules, which is often so much stronger than reason.

Assumption rules, and is expressed through silence and omission, and through unheeded background noise ('hum and buzz of implication'), and through icon and evocative detail, as in John Major's speech. Or to take metaphors from pictorial representation, assumption rules through the framing and composition, the foregrounding and marginalising. The detective chief superintendent had formed his manners not primarily from what he had been told on training courses and professional supervision over the years, but from what he had *not* been told, from what he had *not* heard. He had built his mental picture of Britain, and of public service in Britain, from what had *not* been foregrounded in the diurnal duties, routines and conversations of his profession.

'We told Macpherson and Macpherson told the world.' But Macpherson did not take their word for it. For day after day at the inquiry he listened to police officers being interviewed and probed by barristers, and he inferred from what he heard the officers say, and from what he heard them *not* say, that - in the now famous phrase - there is institutional racism in the police service. He inferred this not only or primarily from the evidence given by uniformed officers but from the evidence and outlook of chief inspectors, superintendents, chief superintendents, assistant commissioners, and the commissioner himself - institutional racism, it has been said, rises up through the ranks. It is to do, to repeat, with omission and failing to see as well as with overt actions. Many years ago Ralph Ellison put it like this, in his great novel about failing to see as a key ingredient of racism:

> When they [i.e. white people] approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination - indeed everything and anything except me … That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality.

People with disabilities refer to a similar invisibility ('does he take sugar?) and so often do women. The inner eyes of an individual are formed and re-formed through daily interaction with friends and family, through radio, press and television, and through the occupational and professional culture of one's workplace. When the Black British writer and journalist Gary Younge came back to Britain recently from a trip to the United

States it occurred to him, as the plane began its descent into London, that the message on the loudspeaker system should be as follows:

> Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to land at Heathrow. Please stow away your tray tables, put your seats in the upright position, ensure your seatbelt is securely fastened and that your racial identity is put away carefully in a safe place as otherwise it may well pop out and cause you injury.

Back to the prime minister's speech

With these various points in mind, let us return to John Major's green and pleasant land. What is its hum and buzz of implication? What does it omit, not foreground, what does its inner eye not see? What does it attend to, and what does it apparently not even notice? What isn't allowed to pop out there? Most obviously, in the context of today's conference, it fails to recognise the voices, experiences, stories and grand narratives of British people for whom being African, African-Caribbean, Black, Chinese, Indian, Irish, Jewish, Kashmiri, Muslim, Panjabi, Sikh, South Asian or Traveller is an important and non-tradeable component of their identity. Equally obviously, it is relevant to note, women's experiences are not recognised - women don't belong to the foreground of pubs, cricket fields and pools coupons. In so far as they are alluded to they are present invisibly behind the front doors of houses in the green suburbs, where they keep the home fires burning, whilst their husbands engage with the lurid sullen light and harsh music of the city. A woman without a man, to adapt that famous feminist saying, is like an old maid on a bicycle.

Marina Warner, in her Reith lectures a few years ago, quoted John Major's speech and then pointed out that actually, nowadays, that woman on the bicycle cycling to Holy Communion is probably the parish priest and it is she who will be presiding. It was an elegant way of stressing that the devil is not only in the detail but in the big picture too. The issue is not how to add details — clichés such as chicken tikka masala, or handbags — but how to replace the big picture.

Britain is not a place of gentle unchanging conflict-free peace, and never has been, and never will be. Our big picture of the good society may contain gentleness and peace, yes of course. But it must also contain cpnstant struggle, negotiation and change — the heavy clanging of argument, the harsh music of dispute, the sullen, lurid light of controversy and ambiguity, as people strive and clash to build together a common life.

Part Two: Inclusive society

In the second part of this talk I consider two main ideas: (a) how to picture Britain as an inclusive society, and in this connection the notion of

Britain as a community of communities and citizens, and (b) the notion that equality is a necessary value in an inclusive society but not sufficient. It must be complemented and enriched by two further fundamental values.

Britain as a community of communities and citizens

The report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain argued that replacing mental pictures of green-and-pleasant-land Britain involves, amongst other things, moving away from all or most discourse of 'majority' and 'minorities'. If one sees Britain as a 90/10 society — where ninety per cent are thought to belong to one vast majority since they are white and ten per cent to various minorities since they are not — one will misperceive both oneself and one's immediate surroundings. Homogeneity in the so-called majority is a myth, not a true story. So is the idea that 'minorities' have more in common with each other than they do with people in the so-called majority. Ideally, and particularly in a city such as Birmingham, we should cease using the words 'majority' and 'minority' altogether. At the very least we have to complement majority/minorities talk with other kinds of talk as well — for example, the notion that a country is appropriately pictured as a community of communities and citizens.

All communities, in this mental picture, are changing and all are complex, with internal diversity and disagreements. Neither 'minority' communities nor 'majority' communities are static. They change in response to their own internal dynamics and also as a result of the interactions that they have with each other, and as consequence of the phenomena collectively known as globalisation. All overlap with others and so all people have multiple and sometimes conflicting identities and loyalties - no one is purely English, purely Kashmiri, purely African, purely Brummie, for purity itself does not exist. The boundaries round communities are porous and fuzzy.

Some communities and identities have more weight and power than others. But no single community owns Britain, or Birmingham. For 'Britain' is the name of a space where many communities mingle, argue, negotiate and bargain about what kind of common life, what kind of good society, they want to build together. They work together on the detail and on the big picture too.

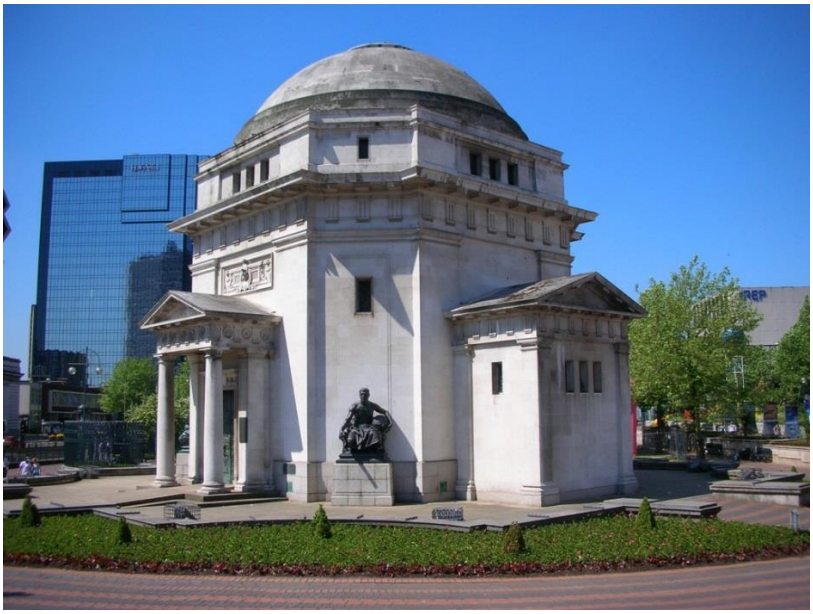
Similarly the name of a local authority is the name of a space, an arena, which belongs to no one — or to everyone — as they strive to build a common life, both the detail and the big picture. The constant danger is fragmentation into fundamentalisms and tribalism, and splinterings into territoriality and defensiveness and disputes - turf wars, barricades and blazing cars on the streets, and their politer equivalents in the council chamber. The good society - 'a community of communities and citizens' - is peaceful not in the sense that someone has won a war, or rules the

streets, such that there are no more riots, but in the sense that activities of dealing, fixing and settling are peaceful not violent. It depends, amongst other things, on respect and recognition for the non-tradeable components in multiple identities, and on all people having good-enough access to the platforms where proposals are made, and to the rooms and tables where deals are struck, settlements are made. At the same time, just as importantly, there has to be a shared sense of belonging.

Belonging to a city has two aspects, as well recalled and summarised in a famous music hall song written about 80 years ago: I belong to Glasgow, dear old Glasgow town, but there's something the matter with Glasgow, for it's going round and round. I'm only a common old workin' lad, as anyone here can see, but when I get a couple o' drinks on a Saturday night, Glasgow belongs to me.

Now again, it would be culturally insensitive to suggest that the archetypal way to belong to a city is through imbibing a few wee drams, or their equivalent, on a Saturday night. A preferable symbol occurs in a novel by a Birmingham resident published earlier this year:

> I am sitting in Paradise Place and looking into the Hall of Memory and suddenly it's as if everything is a metaphor for the way we feel, somehow the entire city has become nothing less than a life-size diagram of our hearts, and I could almost shout with the joy of it, I want to run out into the square and shout to anyone who will listen, I LOVE THIS CITY!, I LOVE THIS CITY…



Equality is not enough

The term 'race equality' simply won't do on its own, it's not expressive enough, not powerful enough. The same goes for the term 'race relations'. The Race Relations Act, whether amended or not, is

insufficient as a legal underpinning. Any publication or legal requirement which conceptualises 'race equality' as a sufficient emphasis, without need for complement, addition or enrichment, is likely to be wrongheaded, and is unlikely to have even its heart, let alone its head, in a right-enough place. I speak strongly but I hope courteously. Let me explain.

One way to begin explaining is to say, equally provocatively, that the term 'racism' is not enough either. It needs an extra letter, the letter s. The plural term 'racisms' is ugly but it stresses that there are several key distinctions which must be recognised and worked with. I will mention five sets of distinctions, all of them of essential importance. If we permit ourselves and each other to deny the distinctions, we shall be both wrongheaded and wronghearted.

First, racism takes different forms according to who the victims are and what their characteristics are believed to be. For example, anti-Black racism is different from anti-Asian racism, and both are different from anti-Muslim racism, also known as Islamophobia. It is relevant in this context to quote from a campaign leaflet issued in summer 2001 in Oldham by the British National Party. It claimed that white voters had a choice between 'Nick Griffin and the BNP or the pro-Muslim Labour party'. A BNP leaflet entitled *Boycott Asian Business* calls on white people 'to take action to put pressure on the Asian community … by boycotting their shops and take-aways. Not ones owned by Chinese or Hindus, only Muslims, as it's their community we need to pressurise.'

Also anti-Irish racism must be recognised, and anti-Jewish racism and anti-Gypsy racism. Latterly, there has emerged in Britain and Ireland, and indeed throughout western Europe, a set of phenomena which may be known as anti-refugee racism.

A second key distinction, clearly related to the first, is between the biological strand in each racism and the cultural strand. Both of these are virtually always present, but in different combinations at different times and in different places. The biological strand uses physical features of supposed difference, particularly skin colour and facial features, to recognise 'the other'. The cultural strand refers to differences of religion, language and way of life. Both strands involve believing that certain differences amongst human beings are fixed as well as significant, and can justify unjust distributions of power and resources, and unjust determinations about who does and does not belong — who is and who is not to be included.

As soon as we recognise that there is always a cultural strand in any racism we have to use the concept of recognition as a value — that is, recognition of cultural difference and cultural identities — and also the concept of shared belonging. Race equality as a value must be complemented, always, with the values of diversity and belonging.

A third important distinction is between, as the customary words are, ‘attitudes’ and ‘behaviour’ On the one hand there are the explanatory stories which we tell and the big pictures in our minds’ eyes in which we locate specific details and events — in Ralph Ellison’s term ‘the inner eye’ behind the physical eyes with which we look on reality. On the other, there is what we actually do — and don’t do — in our manners and in our actions.

Fourth, racism is gendered. Women of all ethnicities engage with it and are affected by it in not quite the same ways as men. When race equality and gender equality initiatives are pursued independently of each other, the principal beneficiaries are respectively Asian and black men on the one hand and white women on the other. In addition it must be recognised that all so-called racial relationships are affected by sexual rivalries, sexual fantasies and currents of sexual attraction.

Fifth, it is crucial to distinguish between institutional racism and, as the term sometimes is, ‘street racism’. Another formulation of the distinction refers to the racism that discriminates and the racism that kills — and a solution to the one, it is stressed, is not a solution to the other. Someone in Birmingham wrote to the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain in these terms:

> Rather than concentrate on minorities based on ethnicity or religion, should we not urge Government increasingly to counter the emergence of an underclass, whose deepening exclusion — known to every youth magistrate — is a matter of shame to the whole nation? Of course this underclass has black, Asian (mainly Muslim) and white minorities within it — but it is the pains, injustices and problems of the underclass as a whole which require fundamental action. It is here that questions of racism, equalities and so on have their sharpest edge.

The writer of this put their finger on a range of crucial issues. The most pertinent of these in the immediate context of today’s conference is that it is white members of the underclass who engage in street racism. They are guilty of wrongdoing, yes of course. But also politicians and journalists are guilty who permit or encourage them falsely to believe that ‘immigrants’ or 'asylum-seekers' are the source of the stresses that they experience. Dealing with street racism involves a range of measures to support victims and to deal with perpetrators. Also, it involves doing something about the distribution of, and competition for, scarce resources in inner urban areas and outer estates, and therefore addressing the real grievances of dispossessed white people.

The inclusive office

There is an episode in *Stars and Bars* by William Boyd, set in America in the 1970s, when two white businessmen are talking. The one is American, the other English. 'How would you react,' asks the American, 'if I said that the one word I associate with you is "hostel"? The Englishman replies, puzzled, and with his mind racing: 'Hostel? As in "Youth Hostel"?' 'No, for God's sake,' says the American. 'As in hostel aircraft, hostel country, as in "The Soviets are hostel to American policy".' All too often in complex organisations, and in the complex tasks of leading and managing a community of communities and citizens, we unwittingly send, and also incidentally unwittingly receive, signals of hostility. This is particularly the case when messages go across boundaries of culture, as in the exchange between the American and the Englishman, and even more so when they go across boundaries of race, gender and seniority, and across the boundary of education officer and member of the public.

There is a famous saying in management theory: 'We advertised for staff but we appointed human beings.' The problem in this respect is not that our colleagues, subordinates and superiors are, in King Lear's phrase, 'poor, bare, forked animals' but that they and we are culturally embedded. Our interactions with each other are haunted and hunted by past history — affected by collective memories and collective expectations. We encounter and treat with each other against the background 'hum and buzz of implication' of which I spoke earlier, and things often go wrong.

Like what? Well, here are some African-Caribbean and South Asian local government officers talking recently about their workplace:

> I'm more aware of subtle racism than I used to be … I haven't faced racism openly, but I know it's there, and yet I can't prove it … You're always questioning, you never know for sure.
>
> You're always having to be challenging, you have to be on the ball all the time, you're continually asking what do I do about this, you can never rest.
>
> Racism affects me every day, all the time, it permeates my whole life.
>
> When I speak to a headteacher on the phone they can't see me and they assume I'm white. But when we meet face to face it's like they're thinking: 'I am white, how can a black person know as much as I do.'
>
> They see you as black, not as a human being.

Most of us white people, I think, do not know how our Asian and Black colleagues feel much of the time, and we have few if any effective ways of

finding out, namely of listening and hearing. One consequence is that we are poor at giving and receiving feedback. We avoid giving positive feedback for fear that we shall come over as patronising, and we avoid giving negative feedback for fear that we shall come over as racist. Also, we misinterpret the feedback that we receive. Particularly we are pretty hopeless, many of us, at telling the difference between assertive behaviour and aggressive behaviour, namely between real anger on the one hand and anger that we only imagine on the other. Either way we're not good at coping with anger when it is expressed, and we frequently fail to appreciate the historical and personal reasons for aggression and hostility when they occur. I am referring to relationships amongst colleagues, of course, and also to relationships between officialdom and members of the public.

It is perhaps just as well that this is all too complicated and sensitive a topic to pursue further in a lecture situation! An address cannot help solve or resolve anything, and most certainly it cannot foster the skills and sensitivities that local government officers need. But it is, I hope, helpful to name certain issues requiring attention, with a view to their being explored in more appropriate settings elsewhere and at a different time.

Suffice to say just at the moment that we need a sense of irony; rigorous commitment to procedural values of fair play and fair hearing; a political philosophy which treasures equally the values of cohesion, equality and diversity; and qualities and skills which may be known as 'cultural literacy' — these include an awareness of problems of misperception and miscommunication in cross-cultural settings, particularly when there is not only cultural difference but also a power differential, and an awareness of one's own inevitable biases, prejudices and partialities.

Conclusion: 'Only connect'

Ninety years ago E M Forster wrote 'Only connect' on the title page of *Howards End*, his novel about the state of England just before the first world war. It was an injunction to what latterly has been known as joined-up thinking.

The devil is in the detail and in the big picture too — detail and big picture need connecting. This address began by drawing a connection between a speech by the prime minister and the murder of Stephen Lawrence. It has argued education should be connected to, imbued with, the values of equality, diversity and belonging. It has maintained too that these three values should be connected indissolubly to each other, and has referred to connections between institutional racism and street racism, and between street racism and social exclusion. Throughout it has tried to connect inclusive institutions and inclusive society, each the ground and consequence of the other.

Finally now, a connection must be made explicitly which so far has been only tacit. Forster's full sentence was: 'Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted'. Prose is important, crucially important —the prose of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, the schemes and policies required by the Race Relations Amendment Act, Ofsted reports, the committee papers and reports whose drafting and negotiating is an inescapable and central component in the work of most people at this conference. But passion is important too, as are the various kinds of poetic detail through which passion is expressed, focused, brought to bear.

Passion implies suffering, anger, determination, love.

I end with a reprise of some of the words and phrases used earlier. We told Macpherson and Macpherson told the world ... Hum and buzz of implication ... Racism rises up through the ranks ... A community of communities and citizens ... Britain is the name of a space, so is the name of a local authority ... The harsh music of dispute ... Race equality is not enough ... The inclusive office ... Accident and emergency ... Poverty, poverty, poverty ... The devil is in the detail and in the big picture too ... Suffering, anger, determination, love … Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted.

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