A bad press: the representation of political correctness in national newspapers

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A BAD PRESS?
THE REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS
IN NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

by
Janet C. Guinea B.A.

A Master's Dissertation, submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
Master of Arts degree of Loughborough
University of Technology

September 1994

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Department of Information and
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ABSTRACT

A textual analysis of the negative representation of political correctness in national newspapers. Considers "PC" as multicultural tolerance, in terms of language vigilance, challenge to the "canon" and equal opportunities, and as intolerant censorship. Examples of practical programmes and conflicting academic opinion are given. Newspaper coverage is influenced by factors which 'close' the text to the readership. This manipulation of information is analysed in Case Studies from 1994: a headteacher's rejection of tickets to see Romeo and Juliet in January because of its 'blatant heterosexuality', and a speech by Prince Charles in May referring to the PC threat. Omission and selection of information illustrates that actual events fail to correspond with the media's preconceived patterns of associations. Two neutral studies, "Back to Basics" and the pending review of the National Curriculum for History, show that information manipulation is a common occurrence. Coverage becomes fictionalised and circular in order to avoid complex analysis of issues. Concludes that the press mirrors PC in its blinkered representation of stories and excludes new information in the attempt to adhere to unambiguous mainstream opinion.
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I would like to thank my supervisor Mr Paul Sturges for his ideas, guidance and encouragement throughout the course of this work.
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INTRODUCTION

The loony left, trendy notions, thought policing – these are all terms which have been associated with political correctness. But what is the difference between a trendy notion and a positive move to prevent discrimination? There is a divergence of opinion about political correctness. In Britain the existence of serious equal opportunities policies, codes of conduct and gender awareness programmes in various organisations reflects an increase in social and cultural tolerance. In general these initiatives run parallel to media comment about the movement called political correctness. The term is subject to extreme swings of opinion. It is 'largely imaginary' or 'all-pervasive' (1). It is the subject of irony, humour or blatant hostility. My research is concerned with the occasions when these two paths cross. This is to be focused within the specific information medium of national newspapers.

My main concern is with the manipulation of information by the media. I aim to establish that newspapers are a highly selective information medium. This will involve a critical interpretation of two case studies from 1994 in order to analyse the appropriation of the term political correctness by the media. The intention is to see the extent to which newspapers create patterns of classification which affect the representation of news. To substantiate this, the analysis of the two events specifically connected with the term political correctness will be compared with two neutral stories during the same time periods. These will provide a control: a means of judging whether the press is responsible for the negative categorisation of events according to pre-conceived patterns or ulterior motives.

Chapter One will define political correctness considering its origins and historical usage. In this way I will establish the main concepts which have become associated with the term. This will provide the basis for my own use
of the phrase throughout the text. The main concepts will be reinforced by some practical examples of organisational policy which have come to be known as political correctness. Simultaneously I will consider the weight of academic opinion opposing such policies. This will outline the difference of opinion about political correctness.

Chapter Two considers some of the broader factors which influence the way news events are covered. These include the news medium itself, professional, legal, political and economic aspects. This will establish the variety of selection processes at work in the presentation of news. This selection of information in turn creates layers of value in newspaper articles. It will be necessary to consider the audience as both passive recipients of news and as interpreters of news. The function of this research is to decipher the layers of meaning at work in the newspaper text: to act as an interpretation of news.

This provides the groundwork for Chapter Three which covers the methodology for the case studies. This chapter is separated into three sections. The first will consider the function of the case studies as part of this research project. The second contains a practical description of the sample newspapers and the case studies in order to provide a background to the story analysis. Finally there will be a full outline of the interpretative techniques which I will use to uncover meaning within the text.

The case studies will be analysed in chronological order in Chapters Four and Five. This will include descriptions of articles, headlines and cartoons, for example. The studies intend to be a practical exercise in uncovering the way information is manipulated by newspapers.

Finally Chapter Six will bring together the observations made in the previous chapter with a view to assessing the implications of media control of information about political correctness. I hope to illustrate that newspapers
in general depend on pre-conceived meanings at the expense of new or alternative information. The press works to create patterns of associations which ignore specific contexts. This manipulates the representation of political correctness, and gives it, essentially, a bad press.
In order to define "political correctness" it is first necessary to consider its historical context: from origins in authoritarian political regimes such as Maoist China in the 1960s, to its adoption and adoption by staff and students on North American campuses in the late 1980s, and finally to its emergence as an issue in Britain. This background provides the basis for an assessment of the main concepts which have come to be associated with the term, such as language use, academic course content, and the composition of institutions. This chapter will focus on the polarisation of views regarding political correctness. The assessment of the main concepts will be reinforced by practical examples of gender-free language guidelines, equal opportunities programmes, and racial awareness policies from several organisations. In turn these will be countered by examples of academic opinion opposing such policies.

Origins

Ivy League liberals on North American campuses in the 1980s used the phrase "political correctness" as a type of 'self-mockery' (1) or as an 'ironic reminder to themselves to do the right thing' (2). This associates the phrase with the idea of self-regulation and self-parody. A consideration of the historical context of PC and the link between these now highly charged words "political" and "correctness" will provide the basis for the outline of the main concepts now termed political correctness.

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of the word "correct" reinforces the idea of self regulation (3). Nineteenth century use associates it with rectitude and moral righteousness. Even in its contemporary form, use of
the word "correct" establishes right over wrong, true over false. Used in whatever context, the word creates value judgements and sets standards. The word "political" introduces the idea of party politics. Once set in a political context, use of the term "correct", which advocates a true as opposed to false set of values, necessarily becomes open to charges of totalitarianism. To be correct suddenly becomes exclusive, restrictive and, therefore, theoretically undemocratic. Thus the combined term suggests that a political side has been taken.

The link between the authoritarian political regime in the People's Republic of China in the 1960s is made by Tony Thorne (4). "Correctness" is a recurrent term used by Chairman Mao. Mao asserts that the spread of "correct" thinking has the potential to make a tangible impact on society:

It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. (5)

The spread of Maoist correctness, however, is associated in history with the totalitarian state and also by definition with Marxist principles. There is also, then, an association with leftist politics. Thus for the politically democratic West this type of correctness is associated with the restriction of ideas and information.

It is clear, however, that in Britain none of the political parties, left, right or centre, wish to claim political correctness. The word 'political' in the context of political correctness is associated with a much wider interpretation of politics, encompassing culture, society and language. In fact, a more apt term could be
ideological, defined by Raymond Williams as, 'the set of ideas which arise from a given set of material interests or, more broadly, from a definite class or group' (6). In the 1980s the phrase "ideologically sound" was used to represent liberal, culturally-aware viewpoints. The term identifies a minority cultural or political position as opposed to the conservative majority.

With the linguistic change from "ideological" to "political", and the more neutral "sound" to "correct", comes an often overwhelming publicity for ideas or activities termed PC. The academic term ideological has been displaced by the more hackneyed political.

Initially the term politically correct seems to represent the same challenge to the mainstream as the phrase ideologically sound. Political correctness challenges ideological assumptions by championing the causes of the previously under-represented: women's and gay rights, the attitude of society to people with disabilities and racial justice. The issues in themselves confront social and cultural problems traditionally associated with leftist politics.

With political correctness, however, it is not the issues themselves but the means of addressing the issues which take precedence for both proponents and opponents of PC. The excesses of a minority of PC activists, those with the "Fuck Free Speech" badges, for example (7), are open to accusations and mockery. By deliberately embracing concepts associated with totalitarianism, such as anti-free speech, they play into the hands of a conservative and sensationalist press. In spite of the social and political motives behind PC issues, 'it is the intolerance that has come to be called "political correctness"' (8).
The ideas behind political correctness hinge on the need for tolerance and respect of 'difference' (9). Yet this seeming liberalness is contradicted by the often blinkered manifestations of PC: the use of language; the content of courses in schools and academia; and the composition of institutions. Opponents find grounds for criticism because the active ways in which people try to achieve tolerance for supposedly radical views are seen to be 'undemocratic in principle and ineffective in practice' (10).

Use of language

On US campuses restrictive speech codes were introduced to outlaw offensive speech. A Brown student was expelled for shouting extreme racist and sexist obscenities (11). This illustrates the point made by D.Charles Whitney and Ellen Wartella that, 'such newsworthy "events" signal not only an attempt at censorship but that someone has expressed an idea that someone else thinks is worth censoring' (12). The manipulation of language as a means of avoiding giving offence is not restricted in America to university campuses. In May 1994 the National Scrabble Association of America deleted up to 100 words from the US Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (13). This type of extreme reaction is less widespread in Britain. The British Scrabble Association's official statement admits the Americans have the right to remove words if complaints have been made by pressure, but affirms that, 'We have not experienced any such pressure in the UK and have no plans to make any changes to the 3rd edition of the British equivalent'(14).

Yet there is a tendency to exaggerate the impact of politically correct language in Britain. In The Higher in 1993 Lucy Hodges indicts a publication entitled The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook as an example of the spread of PC in this country (15). The book,
however, is clearly intended as a humorous catalogue of supposed politically correct terminology:

'You'll find it invaluable when you want to look up the outmoded, offensive terms you've been using, like "black", "prisoner", "fat", and "old" - and replace them with up-to-date, unexceptionable equivalents, such as "African-American", "client of the correctional system", "possessing an alternative body image", and "chronologically gifted".' (16)

Issues are lost beneath jargon. A blinkered outlook is shown by some opponents of political correctness, illustrated by their inability to address the PC issue seriously.

This is an aspect which Sara Mills of Loughborough University considers in her briefing document proposing guidelines for the use of gender-free language for the University:

'From this document, it is clear that the types of changes which are required are not of the order suggested by the media, and characterised as 'pronoun-envy', ie, that feminist would like to change 'man-hole cover' to 'person-hole cover' and 'manipulative' to 'personipulative'. This trivialising of the gender-free language debate is regrettable...' (17)

This briefing document focuses on the implications of sexist language, 'which may alienate female (and male) students' (p.2.). It offers guidelines on non-sexist language use and terms of address. For example, 'Such terms as 'Madam Chairwoman' or 'Mrs Chairman' assume that 'chairman' is the norm, and that a woman chair is in fact
a deviation from this norm' (p.3). Similar guidelines are
issued by organisations as diverse as the British
Sociological Association (18), the National Union of
Journalists (19) and the Open University (20).

The British Sociological Association also gives guidelines
on anti-racist language:

'This anti-racist guidance needs to be seen in
the context of a general commitment to anti-
racism since many words can be racist or anti-
racist depending upon the context in which they
are used' (21).

In this instance the BSA recognises the significance of
context in the definition and understanding of individual
words. On the other hand, the Association issues word
guidelines for the contributors to the BSA journal, which
is in effect a list of preferred terms:

'Black: This term is often used to refer to a
variety of non-white groups... The idea of
"black" has thus been reclaimed as a source of
pride and identity. To accept this means that we
should be sensitive to the many negative
connotations relating to the word "black" in the
English Language (black leg, black list, etc)' (22)

Here the emphasis on the harm that language can do fails to
take into account the context in which words may be used.
Tactfulness ceases to be a subjective issue: it must be
externally regulated.

Foucault's theory of language indicates the underlying
logic behind the control of word use. The accepted
knowledge of a period, or its ideology, is the product of
those who exercise power in a given society. Language reinforces the dominant ideology. Tony Thorne summarises Foucault's view:

'...cultural messages are not free of ideology, assumptions of power relationships or the reinforcement of orthodoxies, all of which are expressed unwittingly through choice of language' (23)

Language is traditionally regarded as fixed. As such it is seen as part of a great tradition. Political correctness pinpoints the implications of speech and power of language to enforce cultural intolerance, and consequently racism and sexism. As indicated by Sara Mills in the briefing document, this can be 'conscious or unconscious on the part of the speaker' (24).

The National Union of Journalists issue style guides for their members. Suggestions for avoiding bias against women and race in reports include lists of alternative phraseology: 'Instead of man or mankind, try humanity, human race, people...'. The main advice, 'Try the double standard test - would you use this description of a man?' (25), intends to prevent prejudice.

Opponents focus on the reduction of vocabulary as the result of such guidelines. In Britain politically correct books for children have been accused of weakness as the desire to avoid offence endangers good storytelling (26). A further danger is that real social issues are concealed. For instance, the nominal change to the phrase 'differently abled' can have the result of removing the perception that disabled really do have difficulties in an able-oriented society. The renaming or exclusion of words is ineffectual because the root of inequality or injustice remains. The language change is only superficial and nominal.
Overall, opponents' objections are concerned with the externally-imposed check on the freedom of expression. The Observer in June 1994 reported on the sociology lecturer, Keith Sharp, who refused to renew his subscription to the BSA due to the restrictive guidelines already illustrated (27). Sharp's article, referred to by the newspaper as, 'the first academic study into PC', will be considered later in this chapter in connection with equal opportunities. The Observer considers Sharp's comments that words have meaning only in context and that language guidelines ignore this. Language guidelines are accused of restricting the freedom of expression.

PC struggles with language in order to determine a non-offensive vocabulary. Words which are now avoided in mainstream usage indicate respect and tolerance towards different cultures and lifestyles. The official Loughborough University guidelines claim, 'far from being a form of censorship, gender-free language shows that a conscious choice has been made to include all potential addressees' (28). But the inherent paradox remains: labelling or renaming, which is a type of language vigilance, is seen as restriction and intolerance by opponents.

Content of courses

This facet of political correctness is least obviously connected with changing language. Political correctness has become associated with the cutting of Western courses in favour of non-Western subjects. There is, however, a PC vocabulary which has arisen as a result. This uses terms such as eurocentric and DWEMs or Dead White European Males (29). The primary concern is the introduction of alternative viewpoints which challenge previous content and methods of teaching. This has been termed the 'politicisation' of courses (30). Manipulation of courses
in schools and academia is central to American coverage of the PC debate. The term political correctness has come to summarise the school of thought which is challenging inclusions and omissions to the curriculum.

Dinesh D'Souza in *Illiberal Education* comments in detail on the impact of multiculturalism. He describes the student sit-in at Stanford University in 1988 and refers to the catchphrase, 'Hey,hey,ho,ho, Western culture's got to go' (31). He rejects the changes currently taking place on American university campuses because the revised curriculums are not concerned with the achievements of ancient cultures but instead with a blinkered perception of current society. The new course structures seem to give a distorted view of history, for example, in the refusal to consider the extent of African involvement in the slave trade to America.

A further charge against the politicisation of courses stems from the belief that there are certain fixed truths in society which should remain unchallenged. It is an assumption that the school curriculum is not chosen but simply reflects the 'truths' of history. This point of view will be clearly illustrated in the study of the impending changes to the school history curriculum in Britain in Chapter Five. D'Souza recognises that choices are inevitably made about course content. His objection is to the imbalance of the curriculum as a result of new courses in America. Opponents, however, are noted for their 'PC hysterics' about the increase in 'ideological critiques and non-western canons' (32). The worry for traditionalists is that the inclusion of non-canonical writers will lead to the exclusion of Shakespeare. Shakespeare has become an icon for opponents of political correctness, as will be illustrated in the Romeo and Juliet case study in Chapter Four.
The impetus behind political correctness is to raise an alternative set of values which challenge the idea that language and certain values are fixed. The difficulties cited by D'Souza are not concerned with the presentation of an alternative viewpoint, but by the fact that the new is supplanting the old. Traditionalists similarly judge the curriculum from a preordained standpoint which, because it is perpetuated as the common sense of the majority, is perceived as unchallengeable.

Equal opportunities

This aspect again revolves around the perception that the society of today is multicultural. Victimisation and under-representation of certain groups cannot be denied. The National Union of Journalists Equality Council booklet refers to the anti-discrimination policies in America. Companies 'with proven patterns of unequal treatment of women and ethnic minorities...can be legally required to make changes' (33). This contrasts with British legislation. Efforts to recognise difference are apparent in programmes of affirmative action, which aim to increase minority representation in organisations. The NUJ asks for a commitment in Britain towards similar practices:

'Positive or affirmative action does not mean employing less qualified applicants because of their sex or race. Nor does it imply discrimination against males or whites. But it does commit management...to survey their firms current employment practices for hidden barriers to equality in order to abolish them' (34).

The demands for racial and sexual justice do not seem ill-founded or radical. D'Souza describes in some detail affirmative action programmes at Berkeley University which aim 'to alter the ethnic ratios of the campus' (35). His
conclusions are concerned with the continuance of discrimination as 'Quotas which were intended as instruments of inclusion now seemed to function as instruments of exclusion'(36). The American PC backlash claims that preferential treatment policies undermine qualifications (37). Evidence of banding is cited by opponents. This entails fixing results of tests and using flexible admissions policies according to racial group. This type of positive discrimination devalues existing norms. D'Souza develops this argument by considering whether the ideals of affirmative action are met by preferential treatment. He uses examples of poorly prepared students and a high drop out rate amongst candidates accepted due to these policies. He admits that the gain for universities is an increase in diversity, but concludes that race is only one of many factors which should be considered in the choice of students.

An objection to these policies is that a concentration on the need to reflect a multicultural society fails to take into account other contexts. A blanket policy is in danger of missing social issues which might influence a student's chance of admission, such as poverty or disability. Race should not be the only factor in a consideration of discrimination. Opponents object to race essentialism or pluralism which establishes race as the primary determinant of human behaviour. Robert Hughes highlights this in Culture of Complaint. He comments that danger arises when 'differences get raised into cultural ramparts' (38).

Keith Sharp, noted for his refusal to subscribe to the politically correct British Sociological Association, has recently, with Christopher Winch, written an article considering the relation between the manipulation of language and equal opportunities policies (39). This ultimately refutes the assumption that 'the regulation of language use must indeed be fundamental to the assurance of
"equal opportunities" (40). The article rejects the ideas propounded by Dale Spender, whose work provides the basis for the language guidelines already referred to:

'The fact is that 'man' and 'he' have both generic and specific uses and the context and sometimes the intentions of speakers and writers tell us which way the word is being used. Ordinary people are perfectly capable of disambiguating terms from context and other clues' (41).

The article argues logically that words achieve meaning from their context. Thus blanket language guidelines are untenable. This argument, however, is based on an equally leading assumption. They reject institutional policies which regulate the use of language and state that, 'the policing of language in this way is a radical departure in both everyday and academic life' (42). They rely on a blinkered conception of the freedom of expression which in reality is constrained by tact and respect, and external regulations such as obscenity laws, censorship and film and TV vetting. Webster demands, 'we should...acknowledge quite openly that absolute free speech does not exist, either in this society, or in any other' (43).

* * * * *

This chapter has shown the centrality of language use to the PC debate, and the polarisation of views regarding the issue of political correctness. Chapter Two considers general factors which influence the presentation of news in the national press. Newspapers are set the task of reporting these conflicting points of view. The outcome of this will be seen in the case studies in Chapters Four and Five, where real issues are ignored in the obsession with a minimalist naming game.
CHAPTER TWO

The aim of this chapter is to summarise the factors which influence the content and presentation of stories in newspapers. The identification of criteria which affect news coverage will indicate key areas to be addressed in the practical study. In short, the chapter will provide the groundwork on which the Chapter Three on Methodology will be based.

The aim is to establish that news is a highly selective representation of events. It is necessary to assess the conflicts and constraints which make up layers of values inherent in a newspaper report. This chapter will begin by considering the relationship between press freedom and the freedom of expression. The difference between them will indicate the essential selectivity of news production. This selectivity works towards creating layers of value or meaning within different newspapers. Next will be outlined the external constraints imposed in terms of the news media form itself, - professional, legal, political and economic factors. These constraints contribute to editorial decision-making and determine which views are covered and how they are presented. Furthermore it will be necessary to consider the part played by the audience as passive recipients of the final news format and yet also as interpreters of news. In this way the implications of the conflict between news as a closed form of events and news as linguistic structures open to multiple readings must be taken into account. A consideration of the factors which influence the presentation of news will enable the development of interpretative techniques to be applied to the case study samples. This will indicate practically the ways in which information is manipulated and coverage actively constructed by the press.
Press freedom and the freedom of expression

Historically newspapers in a democratic society have been considered essential as vehicles for free speech. They have the potential to act as a 'Fourth Estate' which provides a necessary check on government (1). Judith Lichtenberg comments that, 'freedom of the press in democratic societies is a nearly unchallengeable dogma - essential, it is thought, to individual autonomy and self-expression, and an indispensable element in democracy and the attainment of truth' (2). The newspaper Pravda, in contrast, was characterised by the British press as a state-controlled newspaper, manipulated by the former Soviet Union:

'Up to 45 million readers in the Soviet Union are familiar with Pravda, the official daily newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party.'(3)

More often, however, the media exists as 'the control valve which determines what speech will be let loose upon the public' (4). This image is useful as it reveals the deliberate choices that have to be made for the production of news. The newspaper industry may expose the flaws of government, but does so in a way that begins to establish its own set of values by the choice of views which are broadcast:

'The press...works not only to enhance the flow of ideas and information but also to inhibit it. Nothing guarantees that all valuable information, ideas, theories, explanations, proposals, and points of view will find expression in the public forum' (5).

The Royal Commission on the Press recognises that newspapers serve a fundamentally interpretative role:
'Newspapers and periodicals serve society in diverse ways. They inform their readers about the world and interpret it to them' (6)

It is inappropriate to consider the newspaper as an independent medium for information. This fails to take into account the controls imposed on production. The press must interpret events. The question is which factors influence presentation. The following sections will identify aspects which affect the translation of information in the press.

The characteristics of the media

The characteristics of the media can constrain or influence coverage. The physical newspaper form is necessarily limited. Printed on flimsy, unbound newsheets, each issue is a physical indication of the disposable nature of the media. Access to information is limited due to the lack of comprehensive content lists or indexes. Newspapers are not designed to be saved or used as a valuable source of reference. Readers are dependent on the visual techniques used by newspaper editors for access to information. These include use of variable typefaces, photographs and cartoons, which are incorporated not only to transmit news stories, but also to catch the eye of the reader.

Similarly time and space limits imposed by the news form exert pressures on the reporter. The twenty-four hour time schedule necessitates the swift organisation of news reports. Space constraints demand that a story is expressed in a minimum or specific number of words. News stories consequently are prone to categorisation in terms of "events". As a result events can be taken out of context. Decontextualisation fits items into standard narrative structures. Tabloid newspapers may stress "the negative or "personality" aspects of the event and the quality press may focus on political or theoretical angles (7).
Overall the textual form of newspaper production ensures that similarities between both quality and tabloid press can be identified to show that the 'demarcations between the serious press and the tabloids are not as watertight as they first appear' (8).

Professional

For Carl Hausman journalistic values involve fairness, objectivity and completeness (9). Similarly Andrew Belsey and Ruth Chadwick identify the principles of editorial selection as 'fairness, justice, democratic significance and avoidance of bias and harm' (10). These values, however, can conflict with actual newspaper practice.

In particular the ideal of journalistic objectivity comes under scrutiny. Objectivity implies that there is necessarily a neutral point of view. This can be disputed in the sense that reporting is itself selective and interpretative of events. Also in practice it is hard to draw a clear line between the merits of different professional values. One aim of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom is to challenge objectivity as a valid ideal:

'To challenge the myths of "impartially" and "balance" in broadcasting, and "objectivity" in newspapers by campaigning for the genuine presentation of the diversity and plurality of society' (11)

The idea is that objectivity is in fact impossible to attain. Bias is inevitable in any representation, simply because 'the text of the report is necessarily sundered from the real event' (12).
The Institute of Journalists has a Code of Professional Ethics which rejects the 'expression of comment or conjecture as established fact, or the submission of deliberately inaccurate or distorted stories including those in which essential facts are knowingly suppressed'(13). Distortion of information by way of deliberate omissions or selectivity is officially not to be condoned. The initial statement in the code, however, contains a caveat in the admission that the press 'must be free, but freedom, being liable to abuse, brings its own responsibilities'(14). The freedom of the press is dependent on self-regulation, which must struggle to balance professional conduct with other aspects influencing news presentation.

Legal

The setting up of the Press Complaints Committee in 1990, on the strength of advice by the Calcutt Committee, has attempted to make press self-regulation more effective. The Committee guidelines avoided major legislation with regard to government control of the press. This preserved the perception of the newspaper media as an outlet for the exercise of a democratic right to free speech. Again, however, the report stresses the conflict between the press as a medium for free expression, and that events presented in newspapers are controlled by other influential factors:

'17.16 Freedom of expression is vital in a democratic society. It is in everyone's interests that it should be upheld, provided that this is not at the expense of other important rights. All rights, however, carry responsibilities, especially when those exercising them have the potential to affect other people's lives. The record of the press in this area has not always been good. It must now
demonstrate that it can discharge its responsibility and that, through its own conduct and self-regulation, it can command the confidence of the public. If it is not prepared to put and keep its own house in order, further legislation must follow' (15).

Legal developments recognise the distinction between free speech and a free press. There have always been legal constraints on the press through libel law, the Race Relations Act and Obscenity Acts. In 1989 the Sun was ordered to pay £1,000,000 to Elton John in a libel case (16). Similarly the Race Relations Act prevents the use of words calculated to incite racial hatred. It thus imposes 'a form of censorship. But it is not for that reason wrong' (17). These aspects reinforce the view that the press is not free to print regardless of legal constraints.

Political

Certain newspapers have traditionally supported a particular party in Britain. Editorial columns in the Daily Mirror and Daily Mail in May 1994 urged the readership to 'Vote Labour'(18) and 'Vote Conservative'(19) respectively. The short-lived News on Sunday (April 26th 1987 - June 8th 1987) was aimed at a left-wing market which, 'meant that its editorial policy and news agenda would have to be "ideologically sound" and politically correct' (20). The manipulation of news for political ends is accepted. Personal intervention on the part of owners also affects the political slant of a newspaper. The government in 1981 ignored Rupert Murdoch's purchase of The Times and Sunday Times newspapers. This contravened the ruling by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on newspaper ownership (21). The Government's sanction was said to be a reward for the support he had given, through his newspapers, to the Conservatives in the 1979 election.
In spite of this, however, an unpredictable readership means that politically the audience does not necessarily correspond with the political slant of the newspaper, 'due to the discrepancies between the political attitudes expressed by the newspapers, and the party affiliations of their readers' (22).

Economic

The advent of marketing has determined that bias towards specific user-groups should not be considered as restrictive manipulation of information, but instead as shrewd sales techniques to attract the largest possible audience. In the newspaper business the question of bias is deflected by the understanding that different papers produce news weighted according to their different customers. McNair states, 'each have their own definition of what constitutes an important story. They are value-laden...This is not the same thing as saying that journalism is biased'(23).

A conflict with regard to traditional political allegiances may arise due to economic factors, in particular due to the interference of the proprietor. For example, following Robert Maxwell's purchase of the Daily Mirror in 1984, employees felt their positions as professionals had been compromised, since a lack of editorial independence ensued (24).

The proprietor can have a manipulative influence on production. In 1985 Rupert Murdoch's papers, The Times, Sunday Times and tabloids supported the deregulation of broadcasting. In the light of the fact that Murdoch was about to launch his Sky satellite project, this can be seen as a manipulative use of the information medium to promote the proprietor's own business agenda (25).
O'Neil maintains that the free market actually inhibits the dissemination of information. Editorial powers may conflict with proprietorial rights and 'to survive within the market place, the press has to satisfy the preferences of its consumers'(26). The market encourages news to be presented in ways according to the 'pre-existing values and beliefs of its audience'(27). Consequently mass journalism exists within the confines of the dominant culture.

The Audience

There are, then, a variety of selection processes at work in the presentation of news. The audience, however, plays a part in the interpretative process. The report becomes 'a representation of that event to its reader...such meanings will be related to other texts and meanings, through the structuring of the report and in the reader's own interpretation' (28).

Andrew Edgar highlights the role of the reader in the interpretation of the news story. The meaning of the story is 'shaped by the cultural tradition to which the reader belongs' (29). Similarly, 'news is...a synthetic, value-laden account which carries within it the dominant assumptions and ideas of the society with which it is produced' (30). McNair identifies the dynamic nature of the newspaper form by emphasising the impact of language on interpretation. He endorses the views of John Fiske that, 'news, like all texts, is polysemic, ie, contains a plurality of meanings' (31). Set against this endless capacity for interpretation is the linguistic attempt to control the presentation of news:

'Journalists work, semiotically, to select aspects of the real world, then to present them in a narrative form which allows them to be made
sense of, but also prevents potentially disruptive readings of events being made by the audience' (32).

In this way the media struggles to exert power or control over readings and plays 'an important role in the "labelling" of radical political action as deviant' (33).

The presentation of alternative views proves significant:

'Media sociologists have turned increasingly from the problem of proving bias to that of investigating the factors involved in the production of journalistic accounts of the world, and in particular the conditions under which openness - openness to accounts and interpretations of social reality which are not those of established elites - can be maximised' (34).

The dialogue between reader and text indicates the instability of the interpretative form is not restricted to a single reading. The report is subject to external constraints, yet because of the connection with an unstable, unpredictable readership, the text is open to many different readings. Journalistic output is, then, paradoxically both closed and open to alternative viewpoints. Consequently newspapers are a dynamic entity. It is the aim of the case studies in Chapters Four and Five to use methods of interpretation to uncover the layers of meaning at work in newspaper texts. The following chapter will describe these methods and outline their function as part of the overall study.
CHAPTER THREE

This chapter is divided into three main parts. Initially there will be a section on the function of the case studies as part of this research project. Next there will be a practical descriptive outline of the case studies to be undertaken and newspapers to be sampled. Finally there will be a discussion of the methodology and interpretative techniques to be applied.

Function

The previous chapter defined some of the factors which influence newspaper content. Choices and judgements made in the production of newspaper copy work towards the presentation of an authoritative interpretation of news events. In turn specific values can be perceived to underlie the creation of the news. The case studies intend to be a practical exercise in uncovering the levels of meaning in the text, and revealing ways in which information conveyed by newspapers is manipulated and constructed. Primarily the samples are concerned with the representation of political correctness in the press. Chapter One has established the polarisation of views regarding political correctness. The wealth of comment apparent in academia and beyond suggests that comparable divisions of opinion are likely in the newspaper medium.

The aim of the study concerns the extent to which newspaper coverage tries to close this presentation, and prevent "potentially disruptive readings of events being made by the audience" (1). The samples will work towards establishing whether this is indeed the case. Analysis of the selected stories will attempt to uncover internal contradictions within the language and structure of news stories, which will illustrate the destabilisation of the media.
Here the analysis of two neutral stories alongside the PC samples will be useful. The consideration of stories not immediately connected with political correctness will assist in providing a control. This will demonstrate whether manipulation of information is a common occurrence in news production.

The studies will hope to establish ways in which the press struggles to balance an unambiguous, authoritative representation of the news item with often contradictory elements of the news stories themselves. Presupposition and political biases, for instance, often can be seen to lead to confused representations and the blurring of information as story developments fail to fit in with original narrative structures. This in turn leads to distortion of the news items in the attempt to regulate coverage.

Description

Two different news stories connected with political correctness have been selected from 1994. Also two stories with neutral themes have been selected within the same time period in order to test the ideas underlying the study in general. The first study is set within a two week time span, from Wednesday 19 January to Wednesday 2 February. The studies will referred to as the Romeo and Juliet case and the neutral "Back to Basics" case. The second study is set within a single week, from Wednesday 4 May to Tuesday 10 May. The studies will be referred to as the Prince Charles case and the neutral National Curriculum for History case. Each time span begins the day before the designated PC story breaks in the national press. Each extends some time beyond the immediate impact of the stories. A brief outline of the backgrounds and relevant developments follows.
i. Case Study One

In October 1993 Ingrid Haitink of the Hamlyn Foundation issued invitations to headteachers of schools in deprived areas for pupils to perform in a production of Romeo and Juliet. Subsidised tickets were also offered for a Royal Ballet production at Covent Garden. The headteacher of Kingsmead Primary School in Hackney, Jane Brown, refused the offer and later in a telephone conversation with Haitink was said to have done so because the play was 'blatantly heterosexual'. A further reason is later cited, namely the headteacher's reluctance to expose the pupils to a play depicting feuding families, since the Kingsmead Estate is renowned for gangfighting. It was not until the following January that the Hackney Council press office received an enquiry by the London Evening Standard about this refusal. During the media coverage it becomes apparent that the woman Jane Brown lives with, Nicki Thorogood, was on the board of governors at the time of her appointment. This results in an investigation by the Labour council into allegations of a conflict of interests.

The control story to be considered simultaneously is the use of the Government campaign slogan, "Back to Basics". Relevant items will include references to actual occurrences of the phrase and analogies made by individual newspapers.

ii. Case Study Two

This time period focuses on coverage prompted by Prince Charles' lunchtime speech to regional newspaper editors at the Newspaper Society in London. The speech referred to the threat of 'political correctness', increasing cynicism in modern life, praise for British institutions and support of physical punishment for children. Most newspapers focus on the prince's use of the phrase 'political correctness'.
Parallel to this news event, a prominent neutral story is coverage of the imminent release of the review of the National Curriculum by a committee chaired by Sir Ron Dearing. In particular the teaching of history comes under scrutiny due to a minority report released by Chris McGovern, himself a member of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA).

iii. Newspaper Samples

These stories are to be considered in a selection of eight national newspapers, *The Times, Independent, Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Guardian, Sun* and *Daily Telegraph*. Sunday newspapers may be used when appropriate. The development of the stories will be considered in chronological order.

Techniques of interpretation

These techniques have evolved as a result of the analysis in Chapter Two which illustrated the way editorial choice of information coverage influences the representation of events. The section concerning the functions of the case studies refers to the structuralist term, closure. This is a useful concept in media analysis, since 'it directs our attention to the way that stories are constructed to promote or encourage certain meanings, and how other possible ways of making sense of the event or action have been absented, discouraged or closed out' (2). The following techniques will be used with a view to uncovering the way newspapers attempt to close the text.

The newspaper samples will be examined broadly in terms of layout and content.

**Layout:** This is concerned with the physical presentation of the story: the amount of space allocated to an
item; the physical position of the report, entailing a consideration of the juxtaposition of articles; the location of items; typography, such as the use of quotation marks, italics or bold, as a means of emphasis.

Content: This is concerned with the representation of the news story. An analysis will be made of the use of headlines, straplines, which are 'a subsidiary or introductory headline which comes first and qualifies the main headline' (3), cartoons, editorials and news reports. Specifically, attention will be paid to the language used in articles, such as imagery, slang, humour and labelling as a means to summarise or categorise a story. The structure of the story will be considered as a means to assess balanced reporting. This will be in terms of the positioning of quotations, examples, photographs and captions in the context of articles, which work to establish editorial priorities.

These techniques will be used as a basis for analysis. A study using these techniques will enable a critical interpretation of newspaper texts. This will consider the following issues:

- The study of themes which lead to a decontextualisation of events.
- The adoption of newspaper "angles" (4) such as the emphasis on "negative" or "personality" aspects of a news story.
- A consideration of the reliance on unambiguous responses in order to fit news into an established pattern or narrative structure.
- The selection of specific material: a comparison between coverage in different newspapers will reveal
whether certain papers exclude or avoid certain information in order to adhere to fixed patterns of associations.

- An analysis of omissions of material, considering questions or issues which remain unanswered, or avoided, resulting in distortion or misrepresentation of information.

- The destabilising of the newspaper's authority, entailing the study of reports for contradictions, confused representations or blurring of issues caused by an adherence to patterns of associations which do not fit the actuality of the news.

- The analysis of the balance of news reporting: a consideration of space allowed for alternative and oppositional views to be presented, or exposure to viewpoints outside the mainstream.
Day One: Wednesday 19 January

Day One concerns references to the phrase "back to basics". Each newspaper introduces the Government's proposal to review the housing programme for homeless people in connection with the term, back to basics. There are striking differences between newspapers. The Independent on page 2, although noting the plans are 'inextricably linked to the debate over the Government's "back to basics" theme', attempts to broaden the context by considering the social element of the proposed review.

This can be seen by the way the Independent maintains a consistent usage of the term 'single parents' throughout the article. This contrasts with coverage elsewhere in the study. The preferred term in The Times, Daily Telegraph and Daily Mail is 'single mothers', in the Daily Express, 'queue jump mums', and the Sun, 'single mums'. In this way the Independent, through its preferred language terms, does not restrict coverage of a policy issue concerning the homeless in general to a single context.

The Independent avoids turning a policy issue, affecting all homeless people, into a gender issue, by affirming that the housing review concerns the 'statutorily homeless - a category not limited to single parent families'. The other papers, by focusing the impact of the policy on single mothers, relate the housing issue specifically to the value-laden moralism of the back to basics slogan. The stress on the policy as an attack on single mothers, as opposed to the broader and in reality more socially disturbing issue of the homeless, highlights the connection
with the Conservative slogan back to basics. The translation of the policy depends on a single context. As a result this connection between policy, and a superimposed moralism, becomes a means of manipulating information according to political allegiances.

The following analysis of language illustrates the use of the slogan to sustain a political bias. In *The Times* on page 7 there is an emphasis on the 'bravado' of the Government's initiative. The element of daring is stressed as the Conservatives 'risk fresh controversy by pressing ahead with proposals' and that the Cabinet aim 'to demonstrate that it had not been blown off course'. The language in the *Daily Telegraph* on page 2 emphasises the courage of the 'political initiative' to reintroduce the housing reform policy:

>'The Government's efforts to regain the political initiative will be stepped up tomorrow with the publication of controversial plans to stop single mothers jumping the housing queue'.

Here the sentence structure creates a polarity between authority and lack of authority. The Government is associated with the authoritative 'publication of controversial plans'. This contrasts with the use of the morally disparaging term 'single mothers' and the slang phrase 'jumping the housing queue'. The shift of language suggests negligence on the part of the single mothers in the second half of the sentence.

Furthermore coverage of the housing reform proposals is inserted into a different article. As such the housing reform proposals merely serve to illustrate a separate theme referring to 'the Government's efforts to regain the political initiative'. The housing reform story is not allowed its own space. Consequently coverage refers to the
story simply as a means to illustrate a party political dispute. Overall a party political interest presides over social issues.

The *Daily Mail* assigns specific judgemental values through language use, omission of information and unanswered questions. The *Daily Mail* on page 5 is unambiguous in its attack on 'unmarried mothers' and 'single young parents'. The final comment in the news item claims that, 'of the 140,000 declared homeless each year, 10 per cent are unmarried young mothers or teenage runaways'. The implied association between these two generalisations promotes the idea of the homeless as irresponsible types of youth. This is enforced by the moralistic framework implied by the appropriation of the back to basics motif.

The *Daily Mail* develops these values in its leading article on page 8. This maintains a judgemental attitude by creating the opposing categories of 'unmarried teenage mothers' and 'married couples with children'. The news item has provided the building blocks for support of the impending review. The leader develops this by presenting a selective account of housing issues. On the question of temporary accommodation while 'unmarried teenage mothers' wait their turn, the *Daily Mail* demands 'this accommodation at the taxpayers' expense should be functional rather than plush'. This blinkered view does not take into account the actualities of bed and breakfast accommodation, and instead implies that the homeless are in fact privileged.

In the *Daily Express* on page 8 the leading article also focuses on the 'lone mothers policy'. The development of implicit polarities between the political parties on social issues results in a blurring of the real issues at the heart of the policy. The inference is that it is a deviant judgement that supports single parents:
'Sir George is right to stick to his guns. And right to ignore the woolly-headed liberal theorists whose policies do so much to rot the fabric of society'.

This tirade, however, can be logically exposed as flawed. The sentence affirms that policy is a determining factor on social structure. Ironically, the 'woolly-headed theorists' are not actually in power and do not make policies. The claim that liberal social views have a major impact on society, exaggerates the distinction between the representation of the moral Right and the 'woolly' Left. Consequently the logical strand of the leading argument is actually blurred and confused due to the preconceived structure which relies on unambiguity and a fixed thematic pattern.

The Sun on page 2 shows through the structure and language of its report an identification with the family values of back to basics. This is endorsed by a partial citing of authoritative sources. Other newspaper samples use quotations equally from both Jack Straw opposing the reforms and Sir George Young proposing them. The Sun, in contrast, quotes from the latter only, thus omitting a relevant point of view. Furthermore the Sun uses language which seeks to conceal realities. The report claims, 'the scheme was unveiled despite revelations that Tory MPs Tim Yeo and Gary Walker had love children'. The phrase 'love children' detracts from the sense of hypocrisy and double standards which initially incited the row over the proposals. The Sun, in turn, sets up its own gender-specific double standard by asserting that men have 'love children', whereas women are 'hopeless lone mothers'. The appropriation of stock phrases results in a lack of specificity. Generalisations are a means of avoiding a particular context which does not fit in with an overall pattern.
Day Two - Thursday 20 January

All the newspapers in the sample refer to the Romeo and Juliet case. The *Independent* on page 3 immediately asserts the link between Jane Brown's reasons for refusing the subsidised tickets and its value as political correctness:

"'Political Correctness' claimed its latest victim yesterday in the shape of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.'

The term is defined and named instantly. It is set apart in quotation marks and given capital letters. The use of the word 'latest' attributes a history to political correctness. The term is presented as part of a pattern of similar events.

There is an association made between the named and isolated term, "Political Correctness", and its alleged predatory nature, as it claims its 'latest victim'. This works to influence attitudes, not only towards the concept of political correctness, but also towards the alleged proponent of political correctness - Jane Brown.

The *Sun* on the front page combines the use of quotations and a loaded terminology to secure a negative angle. The sentence, 'Last night Ms Brown was branded "totally mad" by councillors as education chiefs ordered her to explain the ban', employs terms generally associated with power and authority, such as 'branded' and 'ordered'. This is endorsed by four quotations which oppose Brown's decision. One reference to a 'colleague' counters this. The potential authority of a supportive source is undermined by a lack of specific naming. Furthermore, if it is the case that supporters of Jane Brown are unable to give their names for professional reasons, this information is omitted. Textual evidence is finalised by the exclusion of information.
The *Daily Telegraph* establishes instant hostility in a similar way to the *Independent*. The story is presented on the front page with a main headline, "'Correct' teacher outlaws love of Romeo and Juliet'. The word "correct" is set apart by the use of quotation marks and isolated from the main sentence. Consequently the term is established as "other". This combines with the negative implication of the word 'outlaws'. This negativity is reinforced by a cartoon by 'Matt' set within the article. This depicts a teacher, wearing dungarees, standing with a group of schoolchildren outside a theatre advertising, 'Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona'. The caption reads 'This sounds more like it'. The pun relies on a preconceived image of the "correct" teacher and the values supposedly endorsed by this. In effect the news item has already been defined and fixed for the readership.

The *Daily Mail*’s headline on page 3 associates homosexuality and political correctness, 'Wherefore art thou heterosexual, Romeo?'. This is confirmed as a negative association by inaccuracies and omissions. The excursion to the ballet is defined as 'an all-expenses paid trip'. This is incomplete information as only subsidised tickets were offered. There is no mention of Jane Brown's supportive colleagues or the additional reason for rejecting the offer due to the feudal nature of the school's catchment area and the reluctance of teachers to encourage fighting in any way. Furthermore, the weight of the quotations cited, seven negative responses to her decision, unanimously condemn the headteacher.

This hostility is accentuated by the leading article on page 8. The opening line in the *Daily Mail*, 'Was there ever so sadly comic a pas de deux between political correctness and the innocence of childhood?', immediately tries to fix political correctness as the antithesis of childhood innocence. An aura of innocence is maintained through
idealistic phrases such as, 'innocence of childhood', 'boys and girls' and 'wonderful opportunity'. But in order to convey editorial wit, the article reveals a disturbing subtext. The article speculates about what the headteacher would approve of:

'The dance of the sugar plum fairy, perhaps: Sorry - only joking! But really, it is impossible to keep a straight face. The whole affair is tutu ridiculous'.

The joke of the leader hinges on the vulnerability of alternative lifestyles to satire already noted in the cartoons by 'Matt'. In the Daily Mail, the joke hinges on a preconceived idea of ballet and ballet dancers, by using references to 'tutus' and 'the sugar plum fairy'. The joke about the 'fairy' reaffirms a stereotyped conception of male ballet dancers as homosexual.

The significance arises in the contrast between this homophobic framework and the idealised 'innocence of childhood'. The leading article initially claims that the trip to the ballet would reflect the innocence of childhood, but 'the boys and girls have been denied a wonderful opportunity'. The need to provide a joke reveals latent prejudices associated with ballet culture. The humour unhinges the belief that ballet is an idealised, neutral entertainment which reflects childhood values. The leader, then, blurs its supposed antitheses. The Daily Mail contrasts the idealised image of innocence with adult jokes, which are admitted may be extreme - 'Sorry - only joking!'.

The Guardian has a brief summary on page 1 which reads, 'No go Romeo! A headteacher is reported to have prevented pupils performing in Romeo and Juliet on the grounds it would not further their development'. The summary of the
story is not clearly defined. This, then, contrasts with the visual juxtaposition of an adjacent 'Austin' cartoon. This connects political correctness and homosexuality in the depiction of two men acting the balcony scene, with the caption, 'School Play Romeo and Julian'. The news item directs the reader to more detailed coverage on the back page 22. Though the news summary in content is unspecific, it is in fact influenced by the innuendo created by its association with the cartoon.

The article on page 22 takes a different approach to the previous samples on Day Two. The reason for Jane Brown's rejection of the tickets appropriated by the majority of sample papers, namely that it is "a blatantly heterosexual love story", is not mentioned until other reasons have been recounted. This news coverage is not instantly defined by the homosexuality tag, although the cartoon on the front page is perceived in this way. The Guardian is the only newspaper to establish its coverage as a response to the London Evening Standard report the previous day. This creates a framework of media coverage. Therefore the inclusion of Brown's opinion, that 'the media coverage of her cultural programme was "sensationalised and ill-founded"', is given added authenticity due to the media context already established in the newspaper report.

Similarly the Guardian includes information which explains previously unanswered questions. Brown's silence in the media is accounted for: 'Ms Brown last night refused to defend her actions in advance of today's emergency council meeting'. This reference is omitted in other newspapers which have contributed to the negative angle on Brown.

The Guardian attempts to broaden the context beyond the polarities of Left and Right wing extremism:
'But beneath the surface of what was being portrayed as a simple tale of loony-Left political correctness lay a richer debate about the educational purpose to which Shakespeare should be put. It encapsulates starkly conflicting interpretations of the Bard'.

Three main points can be made about these comments. Firstly the Guardian focuses on the creation of the story in relation to its coverage in the news. Language such as, 'what was being portrayed', 'simple tale' and 'beneath the surface', can be seen not only as witty references to the 'play' element of the actual story, but also as indications of media interpretation and creation of news. Secondly, and closely related to this, is the conscious attempt to allocate context. The Guardian broadens the context beyond mere politicising and introduces a consideration of the educational impact of the story. Thirdly the article hints at the 'conflicting interpretations' of Shakespeare. The Guardian does not try to close the reader's perception of Shakespeare. These aspects illustrate alternative views compared with the newspapers already covered on Day Two.

Day Three – Friday 21 January

Several newspapers continue the issue of the proposed housing reforms. In The Times on page 9 the language reveals groups of phrases which form antithetical patterns. 'Tory split' and 'ministerial divisions' are grouped, then contrasted with references to the group identified by 'single mothers','lone mothers' and 'pregnant teenagers'. This creates a structure based on opposing categories.

The Daily Mirror's headline on page 2 refers to the proposals, 'Minister hits curb on mums'. The story initially serves as a means to highlight dissension within the Conservative government:
'Crackdown on single mothers - and one of its own ministers branded it all "a great mistake"'.

The second focus is the concentration on the social evils associated with the supposed morality of the "back to basics" policy, which could 'end up forcing families to sleep rough'. Alternatively, the Daily Express on page 2 links groups of phrases in order to adhere to the moral framework represented by the back to basics tag. This sets up married couples as the 'tax-paying' norm. The article focuses on the injustice of present policy which is reinforced by reference to 'luxury homes', 'luxury private housing', 'up-market flats and houses', 'funded by the tax-payer' and 'the private rented sector'. The introduction of the moralistic phrase has a judgemental effect. This gives a blinkered account of housing issues, since the news report is identified not as a discussion of homelessness or even the proposals for a housing reform but restricted to a single moral context.

In the Romeo and Juliet case, Day Three brings Brown's apology for the refusal of the ballet tickets. This is commented on by most of the samples.

On page 3 in the Independent the factual account is physically juxtaposed on the page by items which have a visual impact on the content of the report. There are three photographs featuring Kenneth Branagh in Henry V, a pas de deux, and Laurence Olivier in Othello. These action shots, depicting beauty, talent and success, are contrasted by a recent photograph of Ms Brown following her first council interview. The favourable impression derived from instantly recognisable symbols of culture and fame, contrasts with the photograph of the unknown headteacher associated with political correctness. The visual impact here detracts from the bland reporting of factual events in the news article.
Newspapers use the juxtaposition of incongruous items in order to emphasise the negative angle associated with political correctness. The *Daily Mail* on page 9 asks, 'what Shakespeare would have done if some of his other great plays had been forced to meet the same ideological standards'. Here politically correct plots are associated with the excesses of liberal reform. This politicises the issue. For example, *King Lear* is said to be 'degrading to the poor and the witless - sorry, economically disadvantaged and intellectually impaired. He will become a strolling youth worker'. The phrase has been appropriated to summarise the headteacher's original decision. One example of ideological excess, here a politically correct decision, is immediately associated with the excesses of anti-royalism and liberal reform. The newspapers appropriate a satirical politically correct language which groups together different types of excessive behaviour. This is in turn identified as offensive behaviour. The phrase has become representative of all that is hostile to the mainstream.

In the *Independent* on page 6 the headline claims, 'Baghdad, Hackney come to Tories' aid'. This refers to the Labour MP George Galloway saluting Saddam Hussain and the Romeo and Juliet episode in Hackney. These two instances have been 'seized upon by the Tories like a life line to the drowning'. An explicit connection is made between the decision of the headteacher in Hackney and the Labour MP. Political correctness is associated with Labour and the "loony Left" in the sentence, 'For a beleaguered government, it seemed loony leftism had returned in the nick of time'. Again two different types of extremism are grouped together to form a common enemy. The article illustrates how groups or patterns of behaviour are categorised.
In the *Daily Mail* on page 5 the headline summarises events by the statement, 'The politically correct world of Ms Brown'. This phrase implies a way of life or 'world'. This reinforces the idea of political correctness as a movement, which is set apart or isolated. A similar technique is used on page 7 in the *Daily Express*, 'The crazy world of headmistress Jane'. The *Daily Mail* in particular associates the ideology of political correctness with Brown as an individual whose 'world of political correctness was being turned upside down'. A personal angle is introduced. This is illustrated by a sentence structure which relies increasingly on an isolation of the 'she' as an offender. A bold inset highlights three further alleged charges against the headteacher:

'She barred nativity plays...She ended the tradition of the caretaker playing Santa...She ordered pupils to use teachers' first names'.

The hostile attitude towards the headteacher is reinforced by a deliberate distancing from politically correct idiom. The newspaper calls her 'Ms Brown (as she is described in a council Press release)'. The use of parentheses sets the term apart. Following this admission, the *Daily Mail* reverts to calling her 'Miss Brown'. The refusal to use the politically correct term "Ms" is conspicuous by its absence. Later in the article the *Daily Mail* itself attempts to identify a PC trait:

'Even the headmistress's name appears to have been politically corrected. She is listed on the electoral register as Jane Hardman Brown, but at school she is plain Jane H.Brown'.

This adopts the view that the word Hardman was dropped because of the inclusion of the word 'man'. The *Daily Mail* speculates on only one reason for changing a name in order
to fit an image of PC and therefore categorises Brown as a proponent of political correctness.

A political agenda similarly attempts to fit certain types of behaviour to a specific pattern. The Daily Mail quotes Gus John, Hackney's Director of Education, who objects to the inappropriate ideological considerations which Brown applied to the play. His words, however, are given a political significance:

'Strong words from an employee of a council traditionally associated with the "loony left"'.

The member of a Labour council, who does not necessarily support political correctness, is identified as acting against the norm. In this way the Daily Mail fixes the connection between a Labour council with "loony left" views as standard.

Day Four - Saturday 22 January

The Romeo and Juliet story is developed due to allegations of a conflict of interests at the time of Brown's appointment as headteacher of Kingsmead. The debate over political correctness appears to be temporarily displaced by the new dispute. Juxtapositions, inferences and selective use of information, however, provide a link with the label political correctness.

In The Times on page 14 a feature entitled 'A Montague comes out' does not immediately refer to the Hackney case. The humour, however, relies on the notoriety of the Romeo and Juliet story. The article consists of a parodied balcony scene, with a gay Romeo. Interestingly, the scene also makes a connection with the back to basics single parents controversy:
'Romeo: But anyway you're a fine one to speak about the age of consent. You're not 14 yet -

Juliet: Am too...

Romeo: Yes the council block over the road is full of mothers your age. Or it was until Sir George Young chucked them out on the street...Juliet, listen to your father. For despite being a Capulet, he talks traditional values...'  

Once Romeo has been identified as gay, uses slang language. Juliet's script remains ostensibly Shakespearean until she becomes associated with 'single mothers'. At this point her language also becomes slang. The gay Romeo and the potential single mother, Juliet, are grouped together by their modern or casual use of idiom. They become the antithesis of traditional values. Underlying this shift in language use is the implied association between traditional values, or the back to basics theme, with cultured behaviour and speech. Negative aspects, such as slang and immorality, are grouped together beneath the umbrella term political correctness. This is finally illustrated by the conclusion of the play:

'Curtain: To thunderous politically correct applause'.

The Sun takes the most extreme view of the Romeo and Juliet story on page 7. Coverage includes a full length photograph of Brown with the headline, 'I watched as the Romeo ban head kissed woman pal in garden'. Significantly this article is situated next to the editorial on page 6. This contains a tirade against homosexuality which uses sexual stereotypes in an attempt at humour:

'Governments pump millions into AIDS propaganda as gay actors mince into No.10....Teachers tell
children homosexuality is normal...The loudmouthed luvvies should belt up'.

The stereotyped representation of homosexuals as effeminate reveals a blatant homophobia which is established as the authoritative editorial voice. Therefore a specific homophobic readership is addressed, which asserts as the norm that homosexuality is to be treated with scorn and viciousness.

Set against the violence of this editorial towards gays, the news item is severely prejudiced. A scandalous situation is created as a result of the newspaper's patterning of deviant behaviour. This can be seen by the extent to which the simple caption to the full length photo of Brown, 'Head: Jane Brown was seen with another woman in her back garden', which in a different context is a most unremarkable event, appears highly loaded in the context of the manipulative structure of the newspaper. Similarly the sentence, '...there was a succession of women in the house before Ms Brown's close friend Nicki Thorogood moved in...', is distorted merely by the juxtaposition of the homophobic editorial. The newspaper creates a pattern of associations within which unremarkable events are presented as abnormal. Selective reporting distorts events surrounding the conflict of interest by focusing on personal details. These appear abnormal in the context of the newspaper's layout and content structure.

Day Five - Sunday 23 January

The Independent on Sunday on page 17 attempts to set the PC debate into perspective by denying the 'great plague of political correctness'. This notes that PC attitudes tend to blur values, but observes this is also a major feature of the press. The most interesting element of this up until now marginal viewpoint is the self-referential aspect
of the feature. In effect the article defines itself in terms of the relation of its subject matter with other newspaper and media items: 'Even Jeremy Paxman got in on the act', 'as John Patten explained on *Newsnight* and references to the 'Sun reporter'. The result of this self-referentiality is that the focus is diverted from the actual circumstances of the initial news story. Instead the story emerges as a single item in a complex web of media coverage which is seen to create and superimpose a viewpoint, '...the anti PC brigade seizes on whatever tenuous excuse it can to air its view that PC is Always Wrong'. The media coverage of the event is highlighted as the most important aspect of any story. News items themselves are secondary. In fact the headline itself, 'Why the anti-PC brigade have never had it so good', refers primarily to the media opponents of the story.

**Day Six – Monday 24 January**

The theme of back to basics occurs in the *Independent* on page 16. A cartoon by 'Kiddell' shows two pictures. The first portrays a Michael Heseltine caricature wearing a cassock with a badge saying, 'Yesterday's man'. He is saying, 'We're all singing from the same hymn sheet, we're not preaching...all we said was "Back to Basics" - we didn't expect the Spanish Inquisition...'. The second picture depicts a Michael Portillo caricature in a cardinal's outfit and badge which reads, 'Tomorrow's man'. His words are, of course, 'Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition'. The phrase Back to Basics is associated with ineffective political rhetoric. The Heseltine caricature claims he is 'not preaching' yet uses religious jargon, such as 'hymn sheet' and 'singing', which parodies political rhetoric. Similarly his clothing presents the image of a preacher. His claims are thus contradicted by his use of metaphor and the image he himself projects. His words, and implicitly his symbol of back to basics, are destabilised.
In contrast, the Portillo caricature enters with the Monty Python rejoinder which can be fully anticipated as the words are fixed in the history of comedy. Portillo, even apart from the explicit tag, 'Tomorrow's man', exudes security by his appropriation of the expected joke, and as such, in spite of caricature, is the positive image opposed to back to basics. Back to basics is a gimmick to be used as a means of humour.

The Daily Telegraph on page 4 relates the back to basics policy specifically to the fortunes of the Prime Minister: 'Many Conservative MPs have been stunned by the sudden reversal in Mr Major's fortunes as the Back to Basics policy has descended into tragedy and farce'. The phrase becomes a symbol for internal party feuding:

'Most worrying for Mr Major, the disarray over Back to Basics has revived the sniping over his leadership among dissident Tory back benchers egged on by now hostile tabloid newspapers such as the Sun and Daily Mail.'

The Daily Telegraph pinpoints the influence of back to basics, not within policy, but within the bounds of newspaper coverage. The threat of 'disarray' is judged to arise from the manipulative press: a 'concern over the differing messages coming out over Back to Basics'. The article is focused on the impact of the press itself on the concerns of party politics. The underlying motif is the influence of press manipulation. The article ostensibly refers to the appointment of Chris Meyer as the new image consultant for Major. But the emphasis remains self-referential. Meyer's job is, in effect, 'to rebuild Mr Major's image and repair relations with the press'.

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Sample newspapers refer to Barbara Cartland's contribution to the origination of the back to basics slogan. The Independent on page 7 locates the Cartland story in the sphere of the romance novel: 'I offered romance to Major, says novelist'. Consequently the phrase back to basics takes on a fictional quality as the language in the article mimics the romance genre. Phrases such as, 'The last four months of scandal', 'revelation following embarrassment', 'she offered him a policy, "back to romance", but he thought he knew better' and 'Her vision of a policy to unite the nation first flashed before Mr Major's eyes one day last summer...', combine the political and the romance metaphor. This incongruity is illustrated in The Times on page 8:

'The culprit who coined the term "back to basics" which has caused the Government so much anguish, has finally owned up. It was, of course, the novelist Dame Barbara Cartland...not previously associated with think tanks'.

The back to basics phrase is devalued by the association with the Cartland connection. Newspaper coverage exploits the actual incongruity by use of romance terminology. The Daily Mirror's editorial column on page 6 parodies a romance novel by the 'person who claims responsibility for the Back to Basics policy'. In this way the political catchphrase easily becomes a pretext for entertainment. The focus on the impact of sensational pulp fiction on policy works to trivialise the political slogan.

This is reinforced by the location of the article adjacent to a feature by Glenys Kinnock. This article has a social welfare bias, which contrasts with the melodramatic leader. There is an explicit connection with the editorial theme:
'As the Tories' back-to-basics crusade flounders, Glenys Kinnock could be forgiven a wry smile...Unlike its embattled standard-bearers, she has a direct line to what ordinary people really think about "family values".

The article contrasts archaic language of chivalry and romance, such as 'crusade' and 'embattled standard-bearers', with socially-aware terms illustrated by references to 'the welfare state', 'direct line' and 'ordinary people'. This grouping of language associates romance terms with the Conservative party which consequently appears outmoded.

Day Eight - Wednesday 26 January

The events of Tuesday 25 January complicate the Romeo and Juliet case as school governors, using the rights granted by the Conservative policy of local management of schools, vote to support Jane Brown. This move is supported overwhelmingly by parents.

The Daily Mail contains a confused attempt to assimilate this new turn of events with its preconceived patterns. The headline on page 7, ''Romeo" reprieve', is qualified by the strapline, 'Defiant Governors refuse to suspend ballet ban headmistress'. The initial claim that Brown 'sensationally held onto her job last night' assumes her dismissal was the natural sequitur, and the contrary scenario is consequently defined as sensational. Similarly in the Sun on page 10 the call to suspend was 'dramatically rejected last night...Jane Brown was allowed to stay on...'. The language implies a considerable concession has been made.

The Daily Mail must omit or blur information in order to sustain editorial support of Conservative policy. Coverage summarises Conservative policy:
'Since education reforms in the late Eighties, power to hire and fire, exercise discipline and run school budgets was devolved to the governors'.

The article refers to the possibility that Patten 'could be asked to overrule the governors'. But coverage avoids the fact that here Tory policy effectively prevented the Labour council from dismissing Brown. In the Daily Mail on page 8 an article with the headline 'Hackney Hypocrisy' selects information which misrepresents issues. A claim such as, 'Libraries have joined the struggle to purify books. Children's literature has been maimed in an attempt to make it acceptable to the ideologues...many classics only remain in a terribly bowdlerised form', selectively ignores the traditional practice of abridging books for children. The words 'purify', 'maimed' and 'bowdlerised' become euphemisms in the text for censorship. The assertion, however, is that this is a new practice introduced by the PC movement. The article avoids a historical perspective and decontextualises children's literature in order to meet a preconception about the supposed novelty of language control. In conclusion the following statement, 'It is illiberal to believe there is one "correct" view on the issues of modern life' reveals the inherent similarities between the effects of political correctness and the dogmatic assertions of the newspaper, each of which set up principles as indisputable.

The Daily Telegraph contains a surprising feature article which offers a supportive and alternative viewpoint. The feature by Brenda Maddox on page 17 has the headline, 'Are admen ethnically challenged?'. Essentially it addresses the tendency of commercials to portray a selective picture of British life:
'From the commercial alone you would have little idea that anyone black, brown or yellow in Britain ever bought a car, went to the pub or queued up at a building society'.

This claims 'the real trouble with political correctness is that it has not gone far enough'. Firstly Maddox takes into account that the real effects of PC in Britain are minimal. Secondly she notes that the avant garde eventually becomes mainstream opinion as, 'many of the old words will no longer do. You just have to read English fiction from between the wars, with its "yids" and "niggers", to realise that one era's slang is another's obscenity'. Overall the article is a thoughtful presentation of political correctness within the context of the media and commercials. It reveals a valid representation of a marginal and, according to the press, deviant viewpoint: PC is simply a phrase to represent the need for changing outmoded values and terminology.

At the same time, however, the feature is set within the specific context of the media and commercials. It is physically situated on the Arts page. Therefore in relation to other items it is not defined as a mainstream opinion.

Day Nine - Thursday 27 January

It becomes apparent that the Conservative Government is faced with a dilemma due to the school governors' decision. The Labour council threatens a demand for government intervention or legal action if the governors do not reverse their decision on the Brown case. The Government is put in the position of supporting its policy of devolved power for governors, or reversing this by supporting the Labour council in its stand against Brown and hence against political correctness. In either case, the Government must renege on a fixed standpoint. Their preconceived ideas
about the expected attitudes of both education authorities and school governors, in this test case, prove at odds.

The *Independent* on page 2 addresses the political context in its recognition of 'the potential government conflict:

'Beyond the particular circumstances, the row exposes the confusion at the centre of the Government's policy of shifting power and accountability away from local education authorities to school governors'.

The PC label has developed a flexibility which complicates the traditionally fixed categories employed by newspapers as a means of definition. PC is now associated with the parent governors, whereas the Labour representatives explicitly reject political correctness: John McCafferty, 'leader of the Labour-run Hackney council, said it would be reluctant to carry out its threats but would do so if the governors did not fall into line'. These changed allegiances subvert the preconceived patterns in the press. In reality events do not follow the pattern which groups the "loony left" with political correctness. The *Independent* emphasises 'the confusion at the centre of the Government's policy', which has exposed this incongruuity.

The strapline in *The Times* on page 6 reads, 'School governors under attack as battle lines are drawn on headmistress' future'. Military or war imagery emphasises the significance of the event. The actuality is that the school governors are 'under attack' by a Labour council. Yet this is not clearly outlined in *The Times*. The article contains language which hints at the reversal of roles, by reporting that 'extraordinary alliances formed yesterday'. Ultimately *The Times* Withholds the specific connection with party politics. This blurs the political significance of the developments.
In the *Daily Telegraph* on page 7 the language of the report sustains the impression that the Labour council has contributed to the situation:

'Hackney, a left-wing council with a gay and lesbian sub-committee, was exasperated by its inability to suspend a lesbian head'.

The reference to the 'gay and lesbian sub-committee', unmentioned in other paper samples, suggests complicity with the 'lesbian head'. The Labour council, it is inferred, is indirectly responsible for the developments.

In the *Daily Mail* on page 25 the headline, 'Patten's parent power on trial', suggests a focus on the policy dilemma. The article, however, glosses over this. Inset photographs and descriptions of the characters in the story focus on personalities and divert attention from the educational issues. Characters are grouped under the headings, 'The Governors', 'The Partners', 'The Authority' and 'The Militant'. The two latter categories use headlines which purport to analyse the 'dilemma it poses the education secretary'. The groupings, however, reiterate connections between groups such as Hackney council and union representatives. The definition of the 'Militant' attempts to categorise Trade Unions with a reference to 'rhetorical rants'. This category, in turn, is associated with 'The Authority'. Language reinforces this by grouping terms such as 'loony left', 'a string of scandals', 'Government condemned', 'political correctness' and 'the worst schools in the country' with the education authority. The Authority is established as historically 'loony left', for which political correctness has become a byword. These patterns blur the actuality of the Labour council's rejection of Brown's 'PC' decision. Overall the newspaper summary leaves questions unanswered.
In the *Daily Express* coverage on page 19 Brown's political correctness is translated solely in terms of her sexuality. The impact of the headline, 'Romeo head: I'm having a gay affair with my ex-boss', combines with language throughout the article. This suggests a confession, thus implying a sense of guilt or deception, which is expressly related to homosexuality. The caption to the photograph of Brown reads, 'Confession: Jane Brown'. Corresponding language is found in, 'admitted she was having a gay affair', 'also revealed she was a member of a pressure group for homosexual school teachers' and 'Admission' (my italics). Furthermore the language describing the governors' decision to support her also gives the impression that their action is contrary to 'normal' behaviour: 'The governors refused to suspend her on Tuesday in defiance of Hackney education chiefs'. The framework of the article is fixed by the emphasis on her sexuality rather than political and educational issues. The article decontextualises the news developments.

The *Guardian* coverage contrasts with other Day Nine samples. Located on the front page, the focus from the outset is explicitly political. The newspaper refers back to Patten's original use of the term political correctness as a means to expose the dilemma facing the Government. The leading article on page 21 gives a close analysis of the now confused polarities:

'On the left stands a hated inner city Labour education authority which ministers labelled "loony left" long ago. On the right are the beloved local governors and parents to whom the Government transferred so much power in its 1988 Act. So far so simple. But now the story departs from the script...'

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The Guardian's comment on government activities - the labelling of an education authority and the transfer of power to governing bodies - is structured by the image of the stage. The article uses the metaphor of scriptwriting in a way which adds to the perception of the creation of news. The headline, 'To intervene or not to intervene?', puns on Shakespeare, and continues the theme of the stage through the metaphorical stage directions, 'On the left' and 'On the right'. The article identifies the destabilisation which occurs when people and organisations fail to fulfil their allocated roles, as is apparent in the Romeo and Juliet story.

This sense of media creativity is further reinforced on page 2 of the Media section:

'Ian Katz unravels a saga of political correctness and official dithering, fuelled by a media witchhunt, in one of London's poorest boroughs'.

Political correctness, initially defined as a 'saga', resonant of the earlier newspaper references to the 'world of political correctness', is set in the social context of 'one of London's poorest boroughs'. Kingsmead is described as 'a blighted labyrinth of five story concrete blocks that hits the headlines with dispiriting regularity'. Significantly this introductory phrase is the only reference to political correctness. The article instead works to redefine the term in its wider social context. This is illustrated by references to practical manifestations of political correctness, such as 'idealistic policy statements', 'upbeat information booklet presented to new parents' and the school's 'equal opportunity statement pledging tough action'. The article does not restrict its definition of the impact of PC to a solitary definition. Overall the analysis presents an
alternative perspective supportive of Brown. This support is expressed by an avoidance of generalised groups of words to sum up her action.

Day Ten - Friday 28 January

By Day Ten the lack of new developments in the Romeo and Juliet story results in an increasing circularity of coverage, with references to previous items in other newspapers.

In the *Independent* on page 17 the headline, 'The PC vs the East End Ministry of Truth', is resonant of George Orwell's *1984*. This connects both the East End and PC with totalitarian regimes. The article accuses Jane Brown of an 'illiberal and narrow-minded' attitude for refusing the original tickets. This, however, is set against an admission of media hype:

'...it has dominated television news bulletins, covered front pages, provoked bitter political rows in Hackney and at Westminster, drawn in the Government, and spawned an almost hysterical debate about Shakespeare, culture and the control of schools'.

Jane Brown is identified as the latest diversion for the media: 'She was a symbol of the controversy about "PC", or political correctness, an issue that is in danger of obsessing much of the media and some politicians'. Like the *Guardian* on Day Nine, the article takes a more objective view of the implications of political correctness, which are distinguished from an association with the Romeo and Juliet story. Much of the article contains the repetition of the theme of PC as a pretext 'obsessing much of the media'. This reveals a distinct circularity in the press and lack of new ideas.
Day Twelve - Sunday 30 January

In the Independent on Sunday on page 9 the article, 'The making of a Hackney martyr', highlights the idea of PC as a gift to the right. This reinforces the pattern of associations which tend to structure news reporting:

'The press, serious and tabloid, British and Foreign, went wild. The sensible left asked how an alleged socialist could deny deprived children. The right did not need to ask anything. Their worst suspicions about barmy local government were confirmed'.

There are similarities to the Guardian on Day Nine, as the Independent on Sunday comments on the incongruity between real events and the media script. This is shown by a reference to the governors who 'failed spectacularly to play their allotted parts'. The article creates a scene which implies pre-scripting, thus implicitly indicating the patterning at work. Furthermore the language used throughout the article reinforces this. References to 'media assault', 'the remarkable transformation of Ms Brown from figure of fun to martyr' and 'a small item was transformed into a big news story' uses terminology in accordance with the 'play' metaphor. The language implicitly constructs an image of news creation.

Day Thirteen - Monday 31 January

Almost two weeks after the first coverage of the Romeo and Juliet case, articles show signs of setting the story in perspective.

The Daily Telegraph on page 17 refers to the Romeo and Juliet story as a witchhunt. The headline reads, 'No place for trial by ducking stool'. Throughout the article runs
the metaphor of the pillory: 'a whiff of medieval custom' and 'savage punishment'. In this way there are similarities with the Day Ten article in the Independent on page 17 which refers to 'household demons' and 'a serious witchhunt'. The metaphor is seen to summarise the common media perception of the Romeo and Juliet story. It describes a technique of vindictiveness used by the press. Both articles challenge the hysteria caused by the affair. Simultaneously there is a recognition of the influence of the media as the creators of popular opinion. The metaphor of the witchhunt self-consciously illustrates the overreaction of the newspaper media. The power of the press is implicitly discerned to be more influential than PC in spite of media claims to the contrary.

The headline in The Times on page 27, 'Who is really in charge?', demands a re-examination of local authorities and governing bodies. The situation of the article in the Education section suggests an analysis of the educational issues which the 'Jane Brown controversy' has surfaced. Instead the article generalises about the overall 'common sense' of the governors. The article holds back from attributing blame:

'The experience of the last six years show that ordinary people do make good governors. Goodwill, understanding and common sense are required from all the partners in the education services: governors and parents on the one hand and governments and local authorities on the other'.

This blanket use of the term 'common sense', attributed to the governors, must logically embrace their recent support of Brown. Noticeably the article seeks to conceal the governors' implicit association with political correctness. The connection between common sense and PC would
destabilise the paper's exclusive groupings. Consequently the term is omitted. Generalisations about common sense, and the avoidance of the issue of political correctness, effectively blur the idea that common sense may on some occasions be associated with political correctness. Thus the article retains the pattern of a polarity between these two ideas by the omission of information.

The generalised idealism of 'common sense' is continued in an adjacent feature. This illustrates a similar blurring of ideas in the use of the back to basics phrase as a link with the reform of education.

'If we are serious about getting back to basics, then we must move away from mere words, the posturing of the public platform, and find the bedrock of old-fashioned concepts such as truth, honesty, decency, respect for others and respect for oneself'.

The article implies that 'old-fashioned concepts' are intrinsic to education. These supposedly inherent values are associated with the term back to basics. These principles, in turn, are linked with the 'majority of teachers'. Thus positive values are set against a group of hostile influences on education, which are defined by terms such as 'civil servant and "experts"' and 'a lunatic and vociferous fringe of teachers'. By supporting the 'inherent values' in education, however, the article glosses over the realities of the situation. The article, in its rejection of 'lunatic' teachers, yet its defence of the unquestioned right of the headteacher, paradoxically supports the authority of the head Jane Brown, whilst rejecting her 'lunatic' ideology. Again there is a reluctance to attribute blame to the governors which would undermine government policy. The article groups the 'truth, honesty and decency of old fashioned concepts' of back to basics
against the lunatic fringe, yet the actual developments of the story contradict this strict pattern. The text supports an inherent contradiction. The strict patterning in effect destabilises the logic of the article.

Day Fourteen - Tuesday 1 February

Coverage of the Romeo and Juliet story decreases. John Patten issues a statement which highlights a refusal to become involved in the affair.

In the Daily Telegraph, The Times and the Independent, the Romeo and Juliet story is subsumed by other news items on education, for example Patten's 'stand on school assemblies' in the Daily Telegraph on page 2. The story has ceased to be headline news.

The Independent uses the back to basics slogan as a means to satirise the Prime Minister in Miles Kington's article 'A rude awakening for the PM - it's Norman's novel'. The article creates an excerpt from an allegedly new novel by Norman Lamont which parodies the Prime Minister as one Peter Sangster. This uses the guise of fiction to present a critique of the substance of back to basics. Overall the article highlights the nominalism of the phrase by referring to the revision of the slogan by the press secretary:

'Back to Basics had been crossed out as a title. Instead, it was now called Forward to Fundamentals'.

The Sun takes the nominalism of the phrase one step further. It becomes a caption beneath a photo of Prince Charles 'after a cooling swim'. The caption reads 'a back to basics view of Prince Charles'. The emptiness of the phrase is highlighted by its adaptability to any occasion.
Day One - Wednesday 4 May

Although sampling begins the day before Prince Charles made his speech, references to political correctness occur due to political campaigning in newspapers, as Day One precedes the May council elections.

The *Sun* in its editorial on page 6 uses the term political correctness to reveal distinct political loyalties. By setting up a political framework of Labour versus Conservative, the *Sun*'s coverage demands that issues are fitted according to exclusive principles. Compare these two antithetical statements referring to the Conservative and Labour parties:

'Conservative councils generally give good value and keep council tax down to the minimum. Labour councils hand out YOUR cash to barmy, politically-correct causes like lesbian and gay clubs'.

The paper associates the Labour party and political correctness. The PC tag has negative connotations, even without the derogatory appellation of 'barmy'. This, in turn, infers the ubiquitous loony left, which is endorsed by terminology such as 'potty'. The *Daily Express* in the editorial on Day Two on page 8 likewise establishes a vocabulary which groups Labour-run 'madcap schemes' in opposition to Conservative, 'sensible projects'.
The majority of news articles on Prince Charles' speech quote extensively from the prince's own words. The significance lies in the words which fill in the gaps and establish a narrative structure.

The *Daily Mail* covers the speech on the front page, and pages 6 to 9. The headline on page 1 links the speech with the recent Conservative party policy as, 'Charles goes back to basics'. This immediately associates the prince with a specific political party and in turn refers to the idea of 'traditional values'. This coverage continues on pages 6 and 7, which consist of a double page with the banner headline, 'Charles, scourge of the trendies'. Both headlines contribute to the idea of a division between the traditional and the modern. Back to basics is set against the 'trendies'.

The *Daily Mail* establishes similar polarities. Charles is located on the side of the Conservative Party and Labour is set in opposition to this as a matter of course. This distinction demands an implicit association between Labour and 'those who undermine Britain':

"But while Tories embraced Charles's concern at the "all-pervading cynicism" in national life, Opposition MPs claimed that he was removed from the realities in modern Britain".

The divisions here connect 'national life' with the Conservatives, and 'realities in modern Britain' with the Opposition. The pattern of traditionalism versus modernism, instigated by the prince's speech, is reinforced by additional imagery and grouping of words to describe the news event. The groups of words which oppose the idea of political correctness include 'curse of political
correctness', 'trendy dogmas undermine Britain', 'intellectual trendies', 'experts' and 'scourge of the trendies'. Alternatively, the groups which support the prince's speech include 'passionate attack', 'defending all that he sees as good', 'courage', 'pride' and 'rich heritage'. From these examples a distinct pattern can be seen.

This is developed by the creation of a vocabulary based on metaphors of medievalism and battle. The emblem of royalty, introduced by the royal speech-maker, is linked and enhanced by images of 'attack', 'defense, 'courage', 'pride' and 'heritage'. This reinforces a conception of British historical tradition. The emotive use of standard political rhetoric emphasises the idea of a tradition at risk, begun in the headline indicating 'those who undermine Britain'. This positive use of imagery is set against terms such as 'curse..dogma..fanatics..scourge'. These again are resonant of the medieval. Yet the terms also signify those hostile to religion, and subject to the witchhunt, already noted in the previous case study in the Independent and Daily Mail on Days Ten and Thirteen respectively.

As the article proceeds, the threatening group is explicitly defined as 'political correctness', 'trendies', 'experts' and 'intellectuals'. This formulates the hostile agents as academics or the intelligentsia, who are feared to be undermining tradition.

Pages 8 and 9 develop the Royal angle of the news item. The banner headline asks, 'Was it a good day for the Royals?'. The headlines read, 'Yes:says Paul Johnson' (page 8) and 'No: says Anthony Holden' (page 9). Both articles concentrate on the impact of Charles' speech. The Yes/No structure of the double page layout suggests a balance between two different points of view. The structure, however, refers to an analysis of whether the
Royals were favourably presented by the day's news. This consequently deflects from any real debate. In fact, the affirmative praise given by Johnson in the preceding article is simply reiterated as a given fact in Holden's rejoinder. The focus of Holden's article refers to the speech as a pretext for publicity:

'Charles's speech yesterday was a good old-fashioned appeal to British jingoism'.

The articles reduce issues to a sleazy assessment of royal merits. The underlying framework of the royal personality angle decontextualises the issues raised. The Yes/No structure is designed to limit a serious discussion of the issues.

The first line in the Daily Express's coverage on the front page establishes a framework of Left versus Right, and implicitly Labour versus Royalists as, 'Left-wingers rounded on Prince Charles'. The vocabulary throughout the article reinforces these distinctions. The language used in association with Charles' speech is aggressive: 'scathing attack', 'hit out', 'savage attack' and 'slammed'. The Daily Express picks up on the battle imagery of the Daily Mail. These metaphors are linked with 'courage', the defence of 'traditional values' and 'well-tried principles'. Alternatively, vocabulary for the 'politically correct' opposition is again located in the area of modernism and in particular with 'trendy intellectuals', 'educational theorists', 'childcare experts' and 'fashionable university theory'. Intelligence, theory and new ideas are grouped together as political correctness which threatens the traditional.

The Daily Mirror on page 3 reveals a manipulative selectivity in its coverage of the prince's speech. The Daily Mirror reflects social aspects, and its coverage
endorses child care. This is opposed to the prince's view. The headline, 'Slap-happy Charles', ignores the issue of PC and focuses on the prince's support of physical discipline:

'But his backing for a short sharp slap enraged child care campaigners'.

The omission of references to PC works to secure an unambiguous narrative. To include the reference to PC would entail an internal contradiction in the newspaper. The Daily Mirror would be seen to oppose political correctness, like the prince, yet support child care campaigners in their opposition to the prince. The need to support an unambiguous response to a news event results in the omission of an issue prominent in all the other newspapers in the sample.

The Times sets a political agenda with the headline on the front page, 'Prince enrages the Left with attack on "trendy dogmas"'. The article, however, makes several references to 'a recent speech by Michael Portillo'. This is seen to be the forerunner to the Prince's comments. This focuses on an internal party political context:

'Labour MPs accused the Prince of attaching himself to the agenda of the Tory right. Conservatives were swift to note the similarities between the Prince's address denying the "all-pervading cynicism" sweeping the country and Mr Portillo's recent speech blaming Britain's ills on national cynicism'.

The event is located within a historic pattern of Conservative opinion as 'the Prince was clearly echoing Mr Portillo's diagnosis of a new British disease'. The prince is set in the background as merely recycling the politician's opinion about political correctness.
The *Daily Telegraph* creates its news coverage around the theme of political correctness, introduced by the headline on the front page, 'Prince attacks "fanaticism" of trendy experts'. Like the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, academics, fanaticism and trendy experts are fixed as hostile agents, which have 'for too long bedeviled British life'.

Most significantly the coverage in the *Daily Telegraph* makes an explicit link between the term political correctness, as used to represent an attack on traditional values in the prince's speech, and the relation between political correctness and the pending changes to the national curriculum. On the front page the prince's story is linked to the headline below, 'Teacher attacks history lessons reduced to 1066 and all chat', by the strapline, 'Political correctness: a classroom view'. This is resonant of the strapline qualifying the story of the prince's speech, 'Political correctness: a royal view'.

Although the education issue is distinctly connected to the PC debate by the strapline, coverage on the front page omits information about educational requirements. There is a reference to 'other glaring omissions from the landmarks of European and British history...'. But these supposed omissions are postponed until brief coverage on page 3. The layout prioritises the alleged curriculum inclusions:

'In their place is to be a new emphasis on such "educationally correct" issues such as ethnic and gender perspectives'.

This not only echoes politically correct language in the use of the phrase "educationally correct", but also conceals real developments beneath an all-encompassing phrase. This generalises the actual educational strengths of ethnic and gender perspectives.
In the *Sun* the history curriculum coverage on page 13 has the headline, 'You're history: Britain's glorious past banished from lessons'. The layout of the article presumes to give a balanced coverage of different schools of thought regarding the history curriculum. The article contains two insets - one entitled, 'Out: Henry VIII, Churchill, Guy Fawkes', the second, 'In: Struggles of Namibian women..."world issues must come first"'. The accompanying pictures and caption, however, work to support the group entitled 'Out'. The pictures showing Henry VIII et al present full faces only. In contrast, the photograph of the women show emaciated women living in poverty. This contrast is accentuated by two headings which attempt to lead a reading of the article. The heading referring to the 'FACTS' of Agincourt and the Gunpowder Plot, is set against the 'OPINIONS' of social history. This attempts to influence the images of the 'Struggles of Namibian women', by implying this is opinion, and thus speculative, as opposed to the fixed incontrovertible facts of Henry VIII.

The *Daily Mirror* on page 9 uses a similar technique in its coverage of the history curriculum changes. The headline reads 'OUT GOES 1066 AND ALL THAT...'. In the *Daily Mirror*, however, there is a different focus on the allocation of categories:

'OUT goes the compulsory memorising of the dates of important events such as the 1066 Battle of Hastings... OUT goes a plan to correct sloppy English in the school playground...IN come compulsory team games for children aged 14 to 16, ...IN come studies in work-related courses...IN comes a recognition that the teacher, not the Government, knows best'.

Unlike the *Sun*, the *Daily Mirror* does not focus on the inclusion of ethnic history, which avoids a racial bias.
The article affirms the proposed new curriculum. Underlying this is the standard rejection of Conservative policy in 'a recognition that the teacher, not the Government, knows best'.

Day Three – Friday 6 May

In the Daily Mail the editorial on page 8 links political correctness and the national curriculum review, observed in the Daily Telegraph on Day Two. The news article on page 11 echoes the editorial in its continuation of the polarisation of views hostile to innovation. These are identified by images of conflict:

'The prospect, revealed only 24 hours after Prince Charles attacked the "intellectual fanaticism" of political correctness, will provoke a storm of criticism'.

The leading article rejects education based on the '"correct" approach', which is associated with 'Education advisors'. The political framework implicitly connects education advisors with leftist values by the way they are set in opposition to the Conservatives. Political correctness is the blanket term which surrounds these concepts. The developments in the events relating to the history curriculum debate on Day Three, however, demands that these strict polarities be reconsidered. The article on page 11 is entitled, 'History rebel "got his facts wrong"'. This refers to a retort by Sir Ron Dearing and Chris Woodward of the SCAA committee to McGovern's minority report. Dearing and Woodward refute McGovern's claims that the history syllabus would be damaged. McGovern is consequently represented in the article as a 'rebel history teacher'. In this context McGovern's criticisms appear discredited, and consequently the furore created by the leading article is unfounded.
The Sun follows up the coverage of Charles's speech on page 6. A large inset cartoon by Tom Johnston covers half the page. This depicts two worried parents on the phone calling 'Hello! Prince Charles?...We were wondering if you'd come round and smack our Ronnie!"'. Our Ronnie is a caricature of a "thug" with a skull and crossbones tattoo. The Sun presents an overpowering set of values in its coverage. The cartoon is set beneath the editorial which focuses on the punishment of Michael Fay in Singapore. The leading article suggests that if the cane was used here, 'Britain would be a better place'. This opinion, combined with the juxtaposed cartoon, establishes violence as the norm.

Set in this context, the feature below affirms that violence must be met with violence. The headline reads, 'Charles is right...we must fight the trendies before they destroy us' (my italics). The article continues with metaphors evoking battle: 'Prince Charles has raised the flag', 'an army of ordinary folk', 'concerted attack' and 'victory'.

The narrative structure relies on unambiguous responses. As such there is a reluctance to define or analyse possible grey areas. Therefore the articles referring to Charles' speech, which support smacking and reject political correctness, are accentuated by the establishment of an alleged consensus of opinion. This is illustrated by the appeal to a majority readership of 'ordinary folk', or, 'the very backbone' of society. Through this language the Sun defines a specific readership, which is associated with 'common sense'. Alternative views are grouped against common sense by way of terms such as 'daftest ideas', 'trendy dogma', 'so-called experts', 'politically-correct menace' and 'loony list of shame'. Deviancy is associated with faddishness, intellectuality, stupidity and threat.
The idea of the threat is associated with the block of concepts set beneath the PC umbrella-term. As a result, however, the tirade becomes somewhat blurred:

'We are swamped with violent videos and films straight out of a slaughter-house. The TV fills our lounges with an open sewer of four-letter words, sexual perversion, immorality and prurience - all in the name of entertainment'.

The incongruity between complaints about TV prurience, and the actual prurience associated with the Sun's page 3 models, reveals a double standard ignored by the newspaper.

The Daily Mirror again avoids reference to the anti-political correctness element of the prince's speech. Coverage is restricted to a 'Griffin's Eye' cartoon, depicting teachers on a polo field being set upon and caned by caricatures of Prince Charles and other 'royals' playing polo. The caption reads, 'Well, I'm definitely not teaching my history class about the kings and queens of England'. There is a link between the speech and the history curriculum developments. The structure works towards unambiguous coverage. The consensus opinion of the paper is directed towards social comment in the grouped support of teachers, child care and a cynicism towards royals. The naming of political correctness would demand an appreciation of the prince's sentiments. Editorial bias, therefore, works towards the exclusion of a news item, PC, prominent in other samples, in order to retain an unambiguous position.

The Daily Express also explicitly associates political correctness and the curriculum. On page 8 the headline, 'How Prince Charles's passionate attack on the dogmas that undermine Britain hit wider targets', suggests an analysis of the implications of the speech for the curriculum.
This, however, is diverted into an attack on the members of the royal family:

'Traditionalists like him value the support given by inherited structures and customs - except when they get in the way of their own freedom'.

The promise of an analysis of 'wider targets' is in fact reduced to a discussion of personalities. The effect of political correctness on the curriculum, and the issues raised by the manipulation of course content, is deflected into a focus on personalities.

In *The Times* on pages 18 and 19 there are two articles referring to the speech. On page 18 there is the headline, 'All hail our politically incorrect Prince'. This appears to address the place of 'political correctness on the agenda' by asking, 'what was at issue?' The ensuing debate, however, reveals value judgements already in place which fix the conception of PC. The sentence in the second paragraph refers to the prince's praise of public service and voluntary effort:

'It would be difficult for the most curmudgeonly feminist to disagree'.

This immediately establishes a PC stereotype, which has the same impact as the 'Matt' cartoon of the dungaree-wearing teacher on Day Two in the Romeo and Juliet case study. The need to fit issues into a rigid structure results in the use of uncompromising, unambiguous language. Furthermore these terms are reinforced by unfounded claims, which rely on the blurring of facts and innuendo. For instance, 'PCism is a much more serious and wide-ranging thing: it is about manipulating public doctrine for private ends'. This insinuates the existence of a movement named 'PCism' which works towards personal profit. The elitism of the issues
surrounding PC, as identified in Chapter One, is here re-defined as selfishness and in terms of private gain.

Ultimately the article is forced to address the issue of curriculum choice:

'...there can be no single right answer about what should go. This opens the door for a great many attempted answers which seek to use the opportunity for sectional ends. "Back to Basics" is a vulnerable programme; historians can always be found to ask: "Whose basics?" and argue for some sectional interest or nasty habit as an ancient lifestyle. Sometimes they are even right'.

This final concession, 'Sometimes they are even right', hints at the complexities involved in the choice of subjects for the curriculum. Even 'sectional' interests, which in the article are associated with 'PCism', can be right, although they may be considered 'a nasty habit'. The strict polarisations of right and wrong do not always apply: PC in some cases may even be 'right'. But there is no elaboration of this grey area. The pattern of associations remains in place as the final paragraph glosses over any ambiguity. This refers to a glorification of British pride in its institutions and its achievements: 'Political correctness does to our national culture what the architecture of brutalism did to our urban landscape. The Prince was right again'. The article draws back from addressing a complex issue. This results in the destabilisation of the newspapers unambiguous structure.

On page 23 in the Guardian the leading article, 'To play the philosopher', takes a personality angle on the prince by referring to his dilettantism: 'It was a terrible mish-mash of phoney nostalgia, cardboard dragons and warmed-over
beer. But what people said about what the Prince said was much more interesting. This last sentence locates the article within the media. It focuses on the newspaper media as the creators of interest. This circularity is reinforced by references to other newspaper 'subjects' such as back to basics and tabloid headings:

'Chunks of the speech are pure John Major in Back to Basics mode...Let's put Charles in Shock Plea to Vote Tory thoughts to one side'.

The article focuses on the satire of other newspapers, as seen by the use of the tabloid 'Shock' heading. It is established that the real interest of the Charles story lies in media reactions.

Day Four - Saturday 7 May

The Times on page 16 continues to group the evils threatening the history curriculum under the blanket term, political correctness. The headline, 'This curriculum is bunk', is overshadowed by the strapline, 'The new history syllabus claims to be traditional. Don't be fooled, says Christopher McGovern: the clue is in the small print'. An explicit link is made by McGovern between political correctness and the history curriculum:

'The debate over the history to be taught to our children represents a kulturkampf - a struggle over what constitutes British civilisation. Pernicious ideas about "political correctness", so recently attacked by The Prince of Wales, have invaded our schools'.

Phrases such as 'Pernicious ideas', 'they litter the curriculum', '"correct" perspectives at the top of the agenda' and 'The devil is in the detail' establish the
"correct" in opposition to the traditional 'landmarks of British history'. The article addresses a specific sympathetic readership by asserting 'our own national past', 'our identity' and 'these islands'. The article attempts to close the reading by creating exclusive patterns which work against each other. This results in an implicit racism. There is a specific focus on 'a British people', which expressly excludes ethnic communities in Britain. The claim that traditional British history is 'of a higher priority for British children than Asian or African history' reveals an exclusive targeting of the readership, markedly hostile to other races. The final sentence reinforces this: 'It is time to pull down the temple of "political correctness" and to save what we can'. The word 'temple', set within a discussion of history and communities, becomes a loaded word. It suggests 'other' non-Christian religions. A demand for this temple to be pulled down reveals an antipathy towards other cultures and religions.

Day Six - Monday 9 May

The headline 'Cause for Correction' in the Guardian Media section on page 4 introduces an article featuring an alternative view. The article identifies the common assumption which distorts the idea of political correctness:

"A pre-occupation with the fashionable theories and trends of the day is threatening to eat away at the values of our society", the prince said. But surely one of these values is justice, fair shares for all'.

The article uses Prince Charles' speech as a means of exposing the preconceived set of 'values', which are assumed to be threatened by political correctness. The
comment that, 'surely one of these values is justice, fair shares for all', points to the distortion which occurs when values are seen as fixed. The tendency to group together what is notionally beneficial to society under the stock term 'values' can result in a failure to consider specific contexts. This is noted to have occurred here since 'justice' is a main characteristic of politically correct programmes.

Significantly, the term political correctness, once initially referred to in the article, does not reoccur. Aspects associated with PC are not fixed by a restrictive terminology. The article tries to break down the blurred idea of 'values'. Consequently there is a consideration of the value of equal opportunities, uncluttered by a limited terminology.

As an alternative viewpoint, however, the article is marginalised in a similar way to the article in the Daily Telegraph on Day Eight of the Romeo and Juliet case study. Contrary to the main reports it is fixed in the Media section of the paper, on the Arts page and refers expressly to arts subjects. As such it represents a marginalised position.

In the Daily Express on page 2 the Kilroy item diverts attention to the media of TV by referring to Kilroy's show, where, 'There, real people habitually take no nonsense and intellectually demolish politicians, academics, social workers, counsellors, therapists and all the pedlars of political correctness'. The article cheapens professions by grouping them together as 'pedlars of political correctness', set against the solidarity of 'real people'. This affirmation of a readership decontextualises the issues behind professions which are grouped under the blanket term PC.
Beneath the headline 'Anger over teaching changes' on page 5, the *Independent* reverts to ambiguous terminology in its coverage of this supposed 'anger'. The report is comprised of sentences linked by their references to likelihood: 'New controversy is likely to break out over the national curriculum today', 'the change to the curriculum for sport, English and History are all likely to spark fierce debate', 'Controversy is also likely to surround the new English curriculum' and 'History is also likely to prove controversial' (my italics). The *Independent* hints at the likelihood of occurrences in the language in an attempt to sustain interest in a speculative debate. The repetition of the term 'likely' tends to weaken the supposed conviction of the passage. This has the effect of destabilising the actual content of the news.

Day Seven - Tuesday 10 May

The revised National Curriculum is finally published after all the speculation.

The *Daily Telegraph*‘s coverage of the slimmed-down version of the National Curriculum takes up most of page 4. The headline reads, 'National Curriculum: Patten gives more freedom in the classroom'. The language emphasises the effect that the new curriculum will have on the teachers, not the pupils:

'Sharp reductions in compulsory content will leave the nation's teachers on the loosest of reins, so ending a five-year experiment that aimed to raise standards by prescribing in detail what every child should learn'.

Phrases which refer to teachers' 'freedom', 'sharp reductions in compulsory content' and the 'loosest of reins' imply a slacker schedule for teachers. This is
endorsed by the implication that the new curriculum will lower standards. Teachers are grouped by the implication of laziness, which works to undermine their authority.

The second item in the Independent's leader column focuses on the curriculum debate. This acknowledges a marginalised viewpoint. The headline, 'Removing rancour in the classroom', introduces an affirmation of the need for a wider scope of subject matter beyond the confines of Britain:

'The history course is too Anglocentric for an international trading nation'.

This sets education in the context of the country's actual economic situation, which legitimises a wider scope for the history curriculum. Furthermore it appropriates the language of political correctness in the term 'anglocentric' which implies a hidden politically correct agenda.

The Daily Mail on pages 22 and 23 links the developments in education with the back to basics slogan of January. The main headline across the double page reads, 'Classes in common sense: Patten's curriculum is cut back to basics'. The Daily Mail consciously adapts the back to basics phrase to indicate 'traditional values':

'Though he (John Patten) did not actually use the notorious phrase, that was the clear aim of his radical overhaul of the national curriculum'.

Throughout the article the inference is that 'common sense', represented by the term back to basics is fixed and pre-determined. It is implied the curriculum must reflect these values. Back to basics, as a theme for traditional values during the first case study, is re-employed as a
means to group timeless values in opposition to the groups represented by 'a militant minority'.

The *Daily Mirror*'s coverage of the curriculum developments is secured by an inherent support of the Labour party. This becomes apparent by the opposition to the Conservatives. The comment column on page 6 congratulates Patten for backing down 'from his rigid, ideological plans'. This is illustrated in the report on pages on 8 and 9. This works to vindicate the teaching profession simultaneously in content and typography:

'After six years and £500 million, the Tories learn TEACHER KNOWS BEST'.

In this way the 'ideological' debate suggested on page 6 is reduced to the level of a party political dispute.
CHAPTER SIX

The case studies seek to demonstrate the way in which the press controls the communication of information about political correctness. In Chapter Two I outlined the essential selectivity of the newspaper medium. News reporting involves judgement-making. Choices, however, are always significant. This conclusion will attempt to discern the significance and implications of the choice of material and the manner in which it is represented.

Firstly the neutral samples have shown that the manipulation of information is a common occurrence in the representation of news. In Chapter Four I have shown that the phrase back to basics is translated into different contexts. On Days One and Two in the majority of papers, the back to basics motif acts as a catchphrase to enforce the underlying moralism of the news articles. The appropriation of the term works to enforce a judgemental value against 'single mothers'. This contrasts with the Daily Telegraph's use of the phrase on Day Six. Here back to basics is seen as perpetuating a debate about the internal political conflicts in the Conservative Party. Alternatively, with regard to the Barbara Cartland connection, the political slogan is trivialised as the incongruity between policy and romance is highlighted. The significance lies in the newspapers' flexible use of information. Phrases can be manipulated according to a preordained political or moral bias.

Newspapers adapt the angle towards the back to basics phrase according to specific contexts. In Chapter Five, however, the selected control story is found to be less neutral than expected. Prince Charles' oblique references to experts become a means for several newspapers to connect the theme of political correctness with the allocated neutral news concerning the National Curriculum for
History. Considering the centrality of educational course content to political correctness, as illustrated in Chapter One, this does not initially appear unusual. Therefore the occasions when newspapers avoid cross references to PC are significant. Thus the Daily Mirror refuses to mention political correctness, either in its coverage of the speech, or its focus on the history curriculum. In this way the paper sustains unambiguous coverage of each story. The prince is criticised for his support of smacking, and the revised curriculum is applauded for its affirmation of teachers. Any reference to PC must be excluded in order to sustain an unambiguous rejection of the prince's comments. Similarly to consider the implications of the changed curriculum in terms of its political correctness would contradict an editorial position which unambiguously supports the teaching profession.

Alternatively the Daily Telegraph explicitly connects rumours about the revised 'social' curriculum with 'The Political Correctness Debate'. This overlap becomes a means to divert coverage from a balanced consideration of curriculum changes. The immediate association of the changes with a viewpoint marked as hostile throughout the newspaper samples, reveals the tendency to categorise ideas or actions which offer a challenge to the mainstream.

It is clear that political correctness is fixed as a negative category. This introduces the newspapers' use of thematisation. Journalism, due to the need to report at speed and within the constraints of a preordained newspaper policy, must look for all-embracing themes as a means of clarification. The problem arises when themes become a means to categorise events. The case studies have shown how the use of language and metaphor works to group events, actions or ideas together. These become patterns of associations which create layers of value in the newspaper text. In Chapter Five the Sun groups all social ills under
the umbrella-term political correctness. This results in a blatant contradiction between the Sun's open association with prurience, in its publication of topless models, and its condemnation of the same in its editorial.

Both case studies have illustrated that the stories identified with political correctness become defined according to the preordained themes created by the newspapers. In Chapter Four the Independent sets political correctness apart typographically and creates a history of PC in its first sentence on the Romeo and Juliet story. In the Daily Mail in Chapter Five a pattern of traditionalism versus modernism is sustained by use of linking metaphors throughout news articles.

These patterns are highlighted by the omission or blurring of information in order to support a preordained value structure. In Chapter Four the Daily Mail must identify PC as a movement responsible for all current censorship in order to sustain an editorial support of the Conservative Party. Newspapers can be seen to work towards excluding grey areas in their coverage in order to maintain an unambiguous structure.

There is evidence of alternative views supporting political correctness. Occasionally articles recognise that the issues connected with PC offer a critique of the ideological framework. The challenge of the status quo does not lie primarily in exposing the flaws inherent in the dominant ideology but instead by replacing outmoded norms with new. Generally, however, these items are marginalised by their positioning in the newspaper. They may be situated on the Arts page, or distorted by an influential juxtaposed article. The hostility towards political correctness remains mainstream.
In this way newspaper coverage reflects academic opinion. The focal point for academic opponents of PC lies in their objection to the implied victim status adopted by those felt to be alienated by the majority. D'Souza talks of 'the current revolution of minority victims' (1) which puts liberal opponents on the defensive. Robert Hughes's resistance to affirmative action for the under-represented, hinges on the fact that the emphasis on ethnicity denies a type of 'all American dream', which historically has never existed. Hughes locates the origins of ethnic unease with this American myth, with the emergence of a political correctness which emphasises otherness and difference (2). It does not occur to him that political correctness is simply another expression recognising longstanding inequalities. Similarly Camille Paglia rejects the status claimed by victims of date rape and asserts 'the only solution to date rape is female self-awareness and self-control' (3). Any sense of vulnerability or victimisation felt by the minority group is accused by opponents as weakness or an attempt to manipulate the liberal majority.

These attitudes have been seen to be exaggerated by the national press. In Chapter Four the Daily Mail attacks alternative lifestyles by ridiculing their vulnerability as 'Tutu ridiculous'. Similarly the objection to a curriculum sensitive to different cultures reveals a veiled racism. Newspapers develop themes by grouping together difference under a single term. In Britain the Labour party has been able to discard the appellation of the loony left. With the removal of this traditional whipping boy of the Establishment, the new target appears to be the symbol of political correctness. The 'media have used political correctness as an excuse to recycle old prejudices and arguments' (4).

This recycling of old prejudices under the new phrase results in a circularity which has been identified in the
case studies. Newspapers reveal a tendency to be self-referential. In Chapter Four in the *Independent on Sunday* an article offering a seemingly alternative viewpoint constantly refers back to other newspaper articles and media genres. The focus is diverted from an external news story to the internalised action of news creation.

This creativity can be seen in the fictionalisation of the news story. *The Times* rewrites Shakespeare in its parody of Romeo and Juliet; the *Daily Mail* in Chapter Five embellishes its coverage of Prince Charles' speech with literary metaphors of medievalism and battle. Alternative points of view become 'infotainment' in the press (5).

These techniques of reporting illustrate the extent to which the media controls the representation of information. Fictionalisation and circularity in effect avoids in depth analyses of issues. Newspapers limit the exposure of new ideas. The creation of self-contained patterns and definitions can be seen as a type of language control. This groups together terms, 'concentrating on the text at the expense of context' (6). In this way the press reveals remarkable similarities to political correctness.

Admittedly PC has fallen into a trap of its own making. The demand for the categorisation or boxing of anti-PC speech as a means to challenge elitist views leads to PC itself being boxed or labelled as the fascism of the left. The national press reveals a similarly blinkered reaction to contexts in its representation of PC. The bad press, which political correctness receives in the newspaper media, is not perhaps entirely unwarranted. An analysis of press coverage, however, gives a revealing insight into a media creativity, which through the use of jargon, word play and exclusive patterns of association ultimately works to exclude new or alternative information.
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