> Are minority persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavourably with the unstated norm of white middle-class suburbia?…
>
> Books should recognise that other cultures have their own values; they should not be judged exclusively through British eyes against British norms. Wherever possible, people from other cultures should be given the opportunity to speak for themselves.
>
> (1981, pp. 41–43)

These guidelines clearly draw on a relatively broad understanding of what the term 'culture' denotes in 'multiculturalism'. They stipulate not simply that a few symbols of other lifestyles be tossed into the curriculum but that the social ambitions and histories of 'other peoples' be represented and, indeed, that 'other peoples' should be seen to be representing themselves. These guidelines may also provoke us to consider the way 'diversity' and 'representativeness' are signified. In this example the reference to whiteness and the accompanying images of black and white children make it apparent that non-whiteness is being employed in the same way it was in the school exchange, i.e. as the key signifier of cultural/racial difference.

Exercising the empathetic imagination

The multicultural educator is rarely merely interested in confronting students with otherness. Bringing examples of Indian food and dress into the classroom is offered as good practice in both of my examples of multicultural education. Yet, in neither case, is the aim to construct classroom-bound mini-museums of cultural exotica. Rather, such exercises are designed to serve the wider purpose of enabling empathy, of generating cross-cultural understanding and solidarity. As this implies, multiculturalism is characteristically concerned with more than simply learning about others. The 'multiculturated' student is not someone who can merely list the cultural attributes of others. Rather, she or he is supposed to be able to

engage and be 'comfortable' with others. Hence, the emphasis within multicultural education on enabling students to 'see things from others' point of view'. In the BBC series handbook it is explained:

> We simply cannot understand other cultures, societies and historical epochs without sympathetic imagination, that is, without rising above our own values, preferences and views of the world and entering into their world with an open mind… It is only by means of sympathetic imagination that we can cross the space that separates us from other individuals and understand why they view and respond to the world in a certain manner. Without sympathetic imagination we remain prisoners of our own limited world…[unable to enjoy the] diverse and fascinating achievements of the human spirit.
>
> (1981, pp. 86–89)

To 'cross the space that separates' is to develop both a wider, less limited, appreciation of 'the human spirit' and the relative nature of cultural values. Such sentiments contain an interesting irony: multiculturalism affirms difference, but for universalist ends. Indeed, the rhetorics of 'world togetherness' and 'one world' are collided and conflated with those of 'cultural diversity' and 'cultural affirmation' throughout a great deal of multicultural discourse. A popular classroom technique that brings these themes together involves instructing students to research and write about the migratory histories of their own families. Within the BBC series this latter exercise is titled 'Where are we all from?'. It includes children's family histories as well as their more immediate accounts of moving:

> When I came to school I felt very lonely because I had no friends. In Liverpool people talked differently and played different games. They had a Liverpudlian accent. Down here no-one could understand me and I was different than all the rest.

> When I first came to this school there were no Chinese people here, except in higher classes. I was the only Chinese girl in my year, and I was a bit nervous. I thought it was funny seeing coloured people—Greeks. I thought in this country there were English people. I didn't know there were so many different races.
>
> (1981, pp. 18–19)

This particular exercise culminates in all the students' migratory movements being plotted on a map of Britain and the world, a process that appears designed to show both the diversity of routes students have travelled as well as their shared experience of being involved in migration.

Another fairly common way the themes of diversity and commonality are pursued is through twinning arrangements between schools, students and communities deemed to be sufficiently 'culturally' different. Within the exchange between Albert Road and Garfield primary schools particular emphasis was placed on the development of relationships between the students. More specifically, the desire to combine respect for difference with the appreciation of sameness is seen to be fulfilled through the establishment of *friendships*. Indeed, both the teachers and educational researchers involved in this exchange used the emergence of friendships as the key indicator of its success. When individual children indicated that they had formed such a bond it was taken as evidence of the 'crossing of barriers' and the establishment of 'new identities'. Indeed, the desire to see children getting along animated the event to such an extent that when children refused to form such emotional links their behaviour was judged 'not so hopeful' (Grugeon and Wood, 1990, p. 129), as if by their actions they were refusing to participate in multiculturalism.