

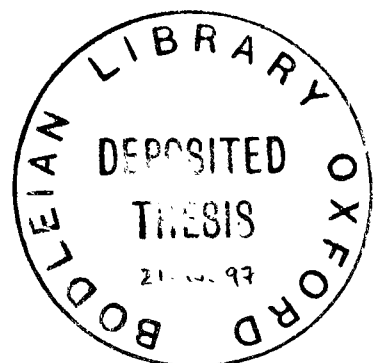
**EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP
IN A PLURAL SOCIETY:
WITH SPECIAL APPLICATION TO SINGAPORE**

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Thesis submitted to the University of Oxford for the degree of D. Phil.

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Abstract

The thesis aims to suggest directions towards a defensible conception of citizenship and approach to citizenship education in Singapore. In recent years, citizenship in Singapore has centred around the themes of identity and participation.

Among educationists in general, there is a recognition that citizens need to be prepared for involvement in the political process. In plural societies, however, there is no one set of values which can guide deliberation and resolve differences. Consequently, there are questions as to the values which could be advocated in citizenship education.

The approach in this thesis is to analyse the concept of citizenship, with due consideration given to the values and assumptions of Singapore society, and its social, political and economic circumstances. This analysis is carried out in the light of the research and theorising on citizenship and citizenship education in England and Wales.

Controversial issues exist on which there is no agreement on which society is divided. The neutral approach, which is sometimes suggested as being appropriate for handling such issues, is examined. The larger question of state neutrality is also discussed, and a case is made for state perfectionism. In addition, it is argued that there are legitimate variations in moral judgement, and an account is presented of the nature of moral thinking that admits of such variations.

It is suggested that a common culture is important in a plural society because this provides the grounds for policy decisions, particularly where state perfectionism is espoused; it also allows for the development of a national identity. Developing this common culture requires public deliberation in exploring the values and issues concerning a society.

Finally, the arguments that have been presented are related to citizenship and citizenship education in Singapore, and recommendations made.

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Glossary of Acronyms

AWARE	Association of Women for Action and Research
AWSJ	Asian Wall Street Journal
CAVE	Centre for Alleviating Social Problems through Values Education
CCD	Centre for Citizenship Development
CCSE	Centre for Citizenship Studies in Education
CDIS	Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore
CUA	Catholic University of America
CVEL	Centre for Values Education for Live
DES	Department of Education and Science
GOS	Government of Singapore
GPC	Government Parliamentary Committee
HDB	Housing and Development Board
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ICS	Institute for Citizenship Studies
MITA	Ministry of Information and the Arts (Singapore)
MOE	Ministry of Education (Singapore)
NAVET	National Association for Values in Education and Training
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NIE	National Institute of Education
NSOED	The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
PAP	People's Action Party
ST	The Straits Times
STWE	The Straits Times Weekly Edition
SuT(S)	The Sunday Times (Singapore)
SuT(UK)	The Sunday Times (UK)

Introduction

The thesis aims to suggest directions towards a defensible conception of citizenship and approach to citizenship education in a plural society like Singapore, particularly with respect to the questions of identity and values.

The concern in this thesis is with moral values because these have impact on the way citizens think and act in the political arena. 'Values' will therefore be used to refer to 'moral values' unless otherwise specified.

'Citizenship' entails certain values. It is associated with such notions as duty, rights, freedom, and a sense of belonging, and such virtues as patriotism, courage, and responsibility; all of these are value-loaded terms. However, a plural society is composed of different groups or cultural traditions (see NSOED, 1993: 2259), and is divided in terms of its values. Consequently, there are questions as to the values which could appropriately be advocated in citizenship education.

These questions are relevant to Singapore, and the answers to these would also impinge on the conception of citizenship there. In recent years, citizenship in Singapore has centred around two main themes – those of identity and participation. There is the recognition of the need to develop a national identity, and to engender in Singaporeans a sense of national identity; there is also the question of the kind of political participation that is appropriate in Singapore given its cultural, social, political and economic circumstances.

Where citizenship education is concerned, there is the question of the approaches that should be used. On the one hand, for instance, there is increasing recognition of the appropriateness and effectiveness of such pedagogical methods as group discussion which involves collective deliberation. On the other hand, there is also a concern that children should be taught accepted, 'Asian' values and viewpoints. The problem lies in the fact that the two aims may not always be consistent.

In approaching this problem, an important task is to analyse the concept of citizenship, with due consideration given to the values and assumptions of Singapore society as well as its social, political and economic circumstances. This analysis will be carried out in the light of the research and theorising that has been done on citizenship and citizenship education in England and Wales.

Like Singapore, England and Wales are plural, democratic societies, although there are significant differences in terms of their cultural composition, and historical and political background. The aim is to examine the conceptions of citizenship and the approaches to citizenship education in England and Wales, as well as the values and value systems underlying these, with the view to drawing lessons applicable to Singapore.

The outcome of this examination will together with a study of the extant values and value systems in Singapore and of its social and political development be brought to bear on the question of the values which could legitimately be espoused in Singapore. The result will then be applied to citizenship education.

With regard to the terms used, 'citizenship education' will be used to refer to any programme that is ultimately concerned with preparing children to function fully and appropriately as citizens, although these may not in fact be called 'citizenship education' programmes, and citizenship education may not be their immediate goal.

The thesis will begin with a statement of the issues concerning citizenship in Singapore, and with an examination of the development of the concept of citizenship over the years. The relation between moral education, political education and citizenship education will be discussed in Chapter 2. Chapters 3 and 4 will present the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales and in Singapore, as reflected in official documents and statements, and in citizenship education programmes. The value and philosophical assumptions underlying these will also be identified and elucidated.

In Chapter 5, reference will be made to the neutral approach used in Western liberal societies in citizenship education, as well as to the debate surrounding this approach. The reasons advanced in favour of pedagogical neutrality, and the conditions under which it is appropriate, will be identified. The following chapter explores the larger question of state neutrality, and the arguments underlying these. A case is made for state perfectionism.

The concept of a rich and elaborated common culture is developed in Chapter 7. Such a common culture would form the basis for state perfectionism; it would also constitute the core elements of a national culture and identity. The associated notions of public deliberation and of a community of educated people will also be discussed.

Chapter 8 pulls together the issues which have been raised in the preceding chapters, and relates these to the development of an appropriate conception of citizenship for Singapore. The implications for citizenship education in Singapore will be elucidated in Chapter 9.

Chapter 1

Citizenship in Singapore: Statement of the issues

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an account will be provided of the issues pertaining to citizenship in Singapore. The problems, arising from the current usage of the concepts associated with citizenship and their application, will be demonstrated. An outline is then given of the tasks that need to be performed in the thesis. To begin with, however, the context will be set in which the debate about citizenship takes place.

1.2 Singapore: Background

In this section, an account will be provided of the background against which the notions of citizenship and citizenship education in Singapore will be discussed.

1.2.1 Geography

Singapore is located 137 kilometres north of the Equator, with peninsula Malaysia to the north, and Indonesia to the south (MITA, 1994). It comprises one main island, which is 42 kilometres from west to east and 23 kilometres from north to south, and about 60 small islands. 2.87 million people live on the total land mass of 641 square kilometres. This means that the population density is 4,477 per square kilometre.

1.2.2 History

The history of modern Singapore dates from the nineteenth century (Chan Heng Chee, 1991; Clutterbuck, 1984; Drysdale, 1984; Turnbull, 1977, 1989; Vasil, 1992). In 1819, an official of the British East Asia Company, Stamford Raffles, made an agreement with the Sultan of Johore and the Temenggong (Village Chief) of

Singapore to establish a trading post on the island. By the time Singapore was made a British Crown colony in 1867, it had developed from a backwater to a thriving trading port. In terms of ethnic composition, the population had also taken on certain characteristics which it displays today.

With the exception of the Japanese occupation during the Second World War, Singapore remained under British rule until 1959 when it was given a limited degree of self government. When the Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1963, Singapore joined it as a member state. The other members of the Federation were Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak.

However, problems soon arose between the central government in Kuala Lumpur and the state government in Singapore. Apart from differences in the personalities of the main political players and in their approach to politics, one of the main problems was the disagreement over the management of ethnic interests. The Malaysia that the central government had in mind was one which protected the interests of the indigenous people. Among other things, this involved the institution of preferential quotas so that the Malays enjoyed special access to jobs and promotions. The Singapore government, however, believed in what they called a *Malaysian* Malaysia, i.e. one which would not be 'identified with the supremacy, well-being and interests of any one particular community or race' (Drysdale, 1984: 381).

The Malays were, however, the indigenous people of Singapore, and the Singapore government acknowledged this by making Malay the national language, by promising to safeguard the interests of the Malays, and by offering them free education. These measures did not satisfy the Singapore Malays and, in July 1964, simmering resentment erupted in riots between the Malays and Chinese; twenty-two died and hundreds were injured.

The rift between the leaders of the Federation and Singapore continued to widen. Feelings ran high on both sides of the border. Faced with the possibility of renewed racial violence, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of the Federation, asked Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, to take the state out of the Federation.

Independence, achieved on the 9th of August 1965, was both unexpected and undesired. Despite differences with the central government, Singapore's political leaders had believed - as many did - that Singapore was not economically viable as an

independent nation, and that its future was to be found in the merger with Malaysia (Turnbull, 1977: 273-274, 297).

Despite their disappointment over the failure of the merger, the political leaders embarked on the task of ensuring the survival of the country. The most immediate concern was the economy. Singapore's economy had been developed on the assumption that the other federated states would provide both the source and the market for manufacturing. Singapore had also been developed as the administrative, business and communications centre of the Federation (Drysdale, 1984: 379). The loss of the hinterland seriously undermined these assumptions.

The announcement, two years after independence, of the planned withdrawal of British troops also meant that Singapore had to train its own forces, and build up its own defences. This came at a time of vulnerability when threats were coming from two sources. There was the position of confrontation utilising covert attacks, taken by Indonesia in protest at the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, which only ended in 1966. There was also the threat of communist insurgency, which remained until the 1980s.

The leaders of newly independent Singapore were also faced with the tasks associated with nation building. These included the construction of an infrastructure, and the housing of a population which had lived in urban slums or rural villages, many without proper sanitation or water supply. The educational needs of the population also had to be met. Not least among the problems was the task of building a nation in a situation where there had been little by way of a national identity. As C M Turnbull points out:

Singapore had no indigenous pre-colonial traditions, the colonial period had left no strong cultural legacy among the mixed, transient immigrant society, and post-war emphasis on achieving merger with the Federation precluded building up any exclusively Singaporean identity (Turnbull, 1977: 300-301).

It was necessary, therefore, to instil a sense of national identity and loyalty in children, and this task was undertaken by schools. Also, the media was expected to take on the responsibility – and to be used by the political leaders – for encouraging this sense of identity and unity in the population, and for dealing with issues in such a way as not to endanger social stability or economic development.

Given the problems faced by Singapore at its independence, its survival was by no means certain. Nonetheless, Singapore has survived, and the speed and magnitude of development it has undergone has been the subject of much comment and analysis (see, for instance, Sandhu & Wheatley, 1989; Tyabji, 1985). Singapore now enjoys the highest standard of living in Asia after Japan, with a per capita indigenous Gross National Product in 1993 of S\$24,871 (MITA, 1994: 30)¹. In 1996, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development removed Singapore from its 'developing countries' list, describing it as a 'more advanced developing country' (George, 1996: 1). Singapore is a clean and orderly city-state that is relatively free from crime.

In the view of some critics, however, Singapore has paid a high price for its progress. Action taken by the government against political dissidents and activists, opposition politicians, members of the media, etc., since independence has been criticised as being in violation of human rights; the same critics also question whether there is genuine liberty, including freedom of expression (see, for instance, Asia Watch, 1990; Frank *et al.*, 1990; Tremewan, 1994). In addition, the government's insistence that the form of democracy practised must be appropriate to its 'Asian' culture, arouses suspicion that Singapore is not a genuine democracy, and that its leaders do not intend it to be one. The promotion by its leaders of 'Asian' values has also raised questions as to whether these could be used as a means to maintain political control (Leifer, 1996: 29).

What Singapore is today has been shaped by the People's Action Party (PAP) which has been in power since 1959, for large part under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew. Lee, who was Prime Minister for thirty-one years, stepped aside in 1990 in favour of his chosen successor Goh Chok Tong. Nonetheless, he retains the position of Senior Minister, and is acknowledged to be highly influential in government. Goh assumed the premiership on the promise that he would maintain the course taken by Lee, but allow greater liberalisation. The degree to which this has happened, and its relevance to political participation, will be examined in this chapter.

1.2.3 Population

Today, the population of Singapore displays the diversity in its makeup that it has for over a century (Clammer, 1985; MITA, 1994: 27-42; Wang Gungwu, 1989).

¹The exchange rate in 1993 was approximately £1 to S\$2.50.

The Chinese make up 77.5 per cent of the population, and come primarily from four dialect groups: Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hakka. The Malays comprise 14.2 per cent of the population. Some are indigenous to Singapore; some are of Javanese, Bugis, or Balinese origin; others migrated to Singapore from present day Malaysia. 'Indians' (7.1 per cent of the population) are the third major ethnic group in Singapore. The majority are of south India ancestry, but the term 'Indians' is used to refer to all people whose forefathers originated from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Eurasians, Arabs, Jews, Europeans, etc., make up about 1 per cent of the population.

The early colonial rulers managed the diversity within the population by keeping the different ethnic groups separate. Each group was allocated a specific area in which to live and, for a time, had its own leader (*kapitan*) who handled the internal affairs of the group. However, Turnbull points out that

(the) natural divisions in Singapore's mixed population were so deep that the authorities had no need to employ any conscious 'divide and rule' policy. Except at the highest level, Chinese, Malays and Indians were separated in language, religion, customs, social organisation and economic activity (Turnbull, 1977: 56).

Since independence, however, efforts have been made to integrate the population to a greater degree. English was chosen as a neutral language which could be used for communication by all. This, together with the policies stemming from the 1950s of integrated schools and a common curriculum, also meant that children of all ethnic groups and belief systems could attend the same schools and interact with one another. In 1989, guidelines were passed for public housing, which caters for over 80 per cent of the population, to ensure a mix of people of all races in housing estates, and to prevent the formation of ethnic enclaves. This measure was the formalisation of government policy since the 1970s to allocate flats so as to ensure a 'good distribution of races' (Ooi *et al.*, 1993: 4).

There is a wide variety of religions within the population, with 86 per cent of Singaporeans professing to belong to some system of belief. Many Chinese identify themselves as 'Buddhists' and 'Taoists', terms which are used often to refer to variations of traditional religion which incorporates elements of Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian thought, and of folk religions (Tong *et al.*, 1992: 83). Many also practise 'ancestor worship', which involves praying to, and making offerings for, their predecessors. In recent years, a noticeable number have been converting to Christianity.

The Malays are, with rare exceptions, Muslims. Many Indians are Hindus. Some belong to neo-Hindu sects such as that of Sai Baba. A number of Indians are Muslim, Sikh, Christian or Buddhist.

The ethnic and religious diversity is made complex by the fact that people also display different interests and concerns, depending on language spoken and on social class. For instance, Singaporeans who speak their 'mother tongue' as a primary language (i.e. Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, for the Chinese, Malays and Indians respectively) are generally considered to be more inclined to promote the maintenance and development of their culture and values. In contrast, English speakers are known to give greater priority to such concepts as democracy, liberty and rights, and to the values associated with these concepts; they would, therefore, be more likely to chafe against what they consider a lack of personal freedom. Hence, depending on language spoken, Singaporeans may be associated with certain interests and concerns.

Variations in social class, which is determined in part by education, may also reflect differences in interests. Those in the lower middle and lower classes (frequently referred to in the local parlance the 'HDB heartlanders'²) are generally regarded as being conservative in terms of their values and customs, and as being interested in 'bread and butter issues', such as making ends meet and the price of consumer goods. It is the educated middle class which is more concerned with such issues as liberalisation and greater political participation.

Hence, the diversity within the population is complex, with interests influenced not only by membership of ethnic and religious groups, but also by differences in language, education and social class. It is entirely possible, for instance, that an English-speaking Chinese may have more in common with an English-speaking Indian than a Mandarin-speaking Chinese.

Given the diversity in the population, it has been an achievement not only to have avoided conflict between the different groups, but also to have gained a reputation for being a country in which the various groups live harmoniously together. However, ethnic violence is within the living memory of many older Singaporeans (see, for instance, Quah & Quah, 1989: 106-107). In 1950, for instance, there was a trial involving the tussle for custody of a teenager between her natural,

²This refers to the fact that many of these people live in the HDB estates. 'HDB' being the acronym for 'Housing and Development Board' which is responsible for building and managing public housing in Singapore.

Dutch Roman Catholic parents and her adoptive, Malay Muslim parents; controversy surrounding the trial lead to racial riots, which ended in 18 deaths with 173 people injured (Clutterbuck, 1984: 72-73; Quah & Quah, 1989: 107).

Many Singaporeans were born after those events, or are too young to remember these. For them, ethnic harmony is a given. Nonetheless, older Singaporeans – particularly the political leaders – are conscious of the need to maintain ethnic and religious harmony, and to prevent anything that could disrupt it. Hence, books or films that might be offensive to the culture or the belief system of any group are banned in Singapore. In 1990, the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act was passed to 'distinguish more clearly the promotion of religion as a unifying cultural anchor from the subversive promotion of divisive religious values in politics' (Brown, David, 1993: 26). The act gives the state legal powers to deal with activities, such as aggressive proselytising, which could adversely affect relations among the different groups.

1.2.4 Economy

Economic development is accorded great importance by the political leaders. It is an issue to which they devote many of their public speeches.

Since independence, the strategy has been to change from import substitution, which involved the raising of tax barriers to protect the country's manufactured products, to one which requires sophisticated technology and a skilled workforce. This has necessitated a more educated workforce, one which is able to communicate in English and so have access to the technology of the West.

Together with the desire to attract investment from multinational companies is the aspiration for Singapore to become the centre for services in the region, e.g. in the area of logistics (Mah, 1994). It is no surprise, therefore, that the government is concerned both to maintain social and political stability, and to ensure the existence of an adequate and disciplined workforce.

The lack of natural resource gives heightened significance to the quality of the workforce. According to Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's transformation from an underdeveloped country to an independent industrial society depended, not only on how well it could mobilise internal and international capital and expertise, but also on

how successfully it could 'get people to learn skills and crafts, and acquire the managerial and marketing know-how' (Drysdale, 1984: 408). Lee's comment, made in 1970, would still apply today.

The political leaders often remind Singaporeans that, in a country with little by way of natural resources or an agricultural base, food and a substantial portion of its water supply would have to be bought from external sources even if production ground to a halt. They point out that the smallness of the country and the lack of natural resources mean that there is little the country can depend on if the economy is seriously disrupted. Hence, there is a sense, not only of the need to ensure the conditions necessary for the smooth running of the economy, but also that there is a very small margin of error.

1.3 Citizenship in Singapore: Two main themes

The issues concerning citizenship which have surfaced in recent years centre around two main themes. One theme is concerned with identity. The political leaders believe that ethnic culture is a vital source of values and tradition which are authentic guides to action, and to any other values individuals might wish to adopt; ethnic culture is also believed to provide them with a sense of self and identity.

There is also a perceived need to develop a sense of national identity in members of a young nation. To this end, a set of values has been drawn up which - it is believed - all Singaporeans can share regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation. The hope was that these values would act as a bonding agent for individuals of diverse backgrounds and world views; the values would also provide a set of principles which would guide interaction between individuals, and between the state and the individual.

The second theme of citizenship concerns the kind of political participation appropriate for citizens. The belief among the political leaders, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter, is that there should be limits with regard to the kinds of topic which can be discussed in the public arena, the people who may raise these topics, and the manner in which discussion of such topics should be carried out. These limits on political participation are attributed to the delicate balance in relations among the various groups which may be disrupted, for instance, with insensitive handling of ethnic or religious issues. Such limits are also necessary to ensure social

and political stability on which economic success and, it is believed, survival depend.

A number of other reasons are also given as to why a style of politics in which issues are openly debated is inappropriate in Singapore. One reason is to do with the perceived culture and values of the Asian peoples that make up Singapore. These peoples are seen as being disinclined to create situations in which conflicting views are fought out in the public arena, preferring instead to seek consensus on issues. Hence, the sort of confrontational style of politics found in some Western liberal democracies is considered inappropriate to Singapore.

Another reason offered is that the regular participation of citizens in open, possibly confrontational, debate is not conducive to a unified effort by a nation working towards common, national goals. It could divert the energy of individuals from the more productive contributions that they could make in their field of work, and to society. It could also lead to vociferous demands being made by individuals or groups, so that their interests are satisfied at the expense of those of other groups or of the nation.

Hence, the two main themes of citizenship in Singapore are concerned with identity and political participation. The next task is to elucidate the issues arising from these themes.

1.3.1 Identity

Since independence in 1965, the government has made efforts to encourage the development of a national identity, and a sense of national identity. This has been necessary in view of the brevity of Singapore's history as a nation and the plurality of its makeup. The policy of integrated schools, and the choice of English as the working language, which have been noted, are two of the means used by the government for this purpose.

It was also noted that the government has drawn up a set of values which could be shared by all. The chosen values would also reflect the 'Asianness' of the people. Placing the interests of the community above those of the individual, for instance, is regarded as a value which distinguishes Asian communities from other

societies. If, as will be argued, values are an essential aspect of identity, then a set of shared values would be crucial to development of a national identity.

With the emphasis on ethnic identity and 'Asian' values, it is not surprising that there have been a number of government policies in the past decade encouraging individuals to learn and use their 'mother tongues', and to look to their ethnic culture for moral direction. These policies, which have inevitably resulted in a greater awareness by individuals of their ethnicity, have implications, both conceptual and actual, for the development of a national identity. In addition, there is the question of consistency between promoting ethnic identity on the one hand, and national identity on the other. The notions of ethnic and national identity, and the issues associated with these, will be addressed in Chapter 8.

In defining 'Asian' values, the political leaders often set these in opposition to 'Western' values which are presented as being 'liberal' and, even, 'decadent'. The leaders are concerned that Singaporeans are, or could be, influenced by trends in Western countries, such as sexual permissiveness, and the decline of the institution of marriage and the family as it is traditionally conceived, as well as the decline in personal and work discipline. They attribute these to the fact that individualism, an essential element of liberal thought, has been allowed to grow with little control in those countries.

The political leaders also believe that, within the country, there has been a shift in values from a communitarian outlook to one that is more individualistic, especially among younger Singaporeans (Goh Chok Tong, 1988: 13)³. This shift is attributed to the influence of the English-speaking West; this, in turn, is considered a consequence of the fact that Singaporeans are educated in English, and of the openness of the country to external influences arising from travel and the media.

If there has been an increase in individualism, however, there is the question as to whether this can wholly be attributed to the influence of Westernisation and liberalism. The issue of individualism in Singapore, and the factors which might account for it, as well as the conception of communitarianism in Singapore, will be examined in Chapter 8.

³The concepts of 'individualism' and 'communitarianism' will be examined in Chapters 4 and 8.

Whatever the case may be, the desire to stem 'Western influence' was a reason why the Shared Values were drawn up. The stated aims of these are to 'preserve the cultural heritage of (Singapore's) communities, and uphold certain common values which capture the essence of being a Singaporean' (GOS, 1991: 1). The five Shared Values are:

Nation before community and society above self;
 Family as the basic unit of society;
 Regard and community support for the individual;
 Consensus instead of contention; and
 Racial and religious harmony (Tan, Sumiko, 1991a: 1).

In the White Paper on Shared Values, the placing of the interests of society as a whole above those of the individual is identified as a major factor in Singapore's success (GOS, 1991: 3-7; Tan, Sumiko, 1991a: 1). The document gives as examples of this the periods where Singapore faced grave economic problems, such as the withdrawal of the British troops in the 1970s and the recession in the mid-1980s. The latter is probably an allusion to the decision made by government representatives and the trade unions, and adhered to by workers, to follow a policy of wage restraint until the economy recovered. Solutions such as this, the argument goes, would not have been possible had individual or group interests prevailed.

Not surprisingly, therefore, there is a statement in the Shared Values that the interests of the nation should be placed above those of the community or the individual. Its inclusion could also be an attempt to pre-empt the perceived inclination of individuals towards communal politics, in which members of the different communities agitate for the interests of their community at the expense of those of the nation.

The family unit is regarded as the basic block in society, and as the best environment in which children can be brought up, knowledge transmitted, and the elderly cared for. The highlighting of the sanctity of the family unit as a value is an attempt to guard against trends in developed countries of more permissive social mores, such as casual sexual relationships and single parenthood, as well the increasing reliance on the state in providing care for the handicapped or the aged.

The value 'regard and community support for the individual' was included to redress a possible imbalance in the Shared Values, given the emphasis on placing the interests of the community above those of the individual. There is an

acknowledgement here that, although the community is important, 'the individual has rights which should not be lightly encroached upon' (Tan, Sumiko, 1991a: 1).

The value of resolving issues through consensus instead of contention is seen as complementing that of placing the community above the individual. It means 'accommodating different views on the way the society should develop, and working hard to develop a consensus on particular courses of action which have majority but not unanimous support, in order to bring as many people on board as possible' (GOS, 1991: 4).

Finally, racial and religious harmony is instituted as one of the Shared Values because this is considered essential to the well-being and prosperity of the nation. It is also important because the belief is that ethnic relations once damaged are difficult to rebuild.

In all, the Shared Values are regarded as

key values which are common to all the major groups in Singapore, ...which draw on the essence of each of these heritages. All communities can share these values, although each will interpret and convey the same ideas in their own cultural and religious traditions (GOS, 1991: 3).

These Shared Values have been selected because they are thought to be the values that 'helped the society to thrive in difficult circumstances, and to maintain its self-confidence when confronted with uncertainties and external influences' (GOS, 1991: 2).

Several issues arise from the conceptualisation of Shared Values, and in the way these are presented. First, the Shared Values are highly general and abstract in nature. The values have been drawn up in consultation with representatives of the main ethnic and religious groups, and few people would actually disagree with these. However, it could be argued that, given the level of generality and abstractness, it is difficult for people to see the relevance of these values to their lives in practical terms.

Also, the Shared Values are supposed to be derived from religious traditions common to all, and individuals are then to reinterpret these in the context of their particular culture and religion. However, the question arises as to how far it is meaningful to isolate values from the context of the moral concepts and understandings in which these are embedded. There is the further question as to what

it entails to then reinterpret these values within the context of one's belief system, and the degree to which such reinterpretations impinge on the meaning of the values.

The question also arises here, as it does with 'Asian' values, as to the basis on which the Shared Values were selected. The issue concerns what it could mean to *select* a value, and what would constitute appropriate grounds for selection.

There is a body of literature which sets out and examines the conception of citizenship, as well as those of national identity and shared values, in Singapore. Speeches and writings by politicians such as Senior Minister and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, former Culture Minister S Rajaratnam, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and other members of the current Cabinet, reflect the conception of citizenship, and the associated notions and issues, by the national leaders as it has evolved over the last three decades.

This corpus has been subjected to analysis, mainly by sociologists and political scientists who have also conducted studies and written on the subject of Singaporean culture and identity, as well as the effect of government policies on these (e.g. Chew, Ernest, 1991b; Chiew Seen Kong, 1983, 1990a, 1990b; Chiew Seen Kong & Tan Ern Ser, n.d.; Chua Beng-Huat, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994c, 1994d, 1994e, 1995a, 1995b; Chua Beng-Huat & Kuo, Eddie, 1991; Hill & Lian, 1995; Siddique, 1989; Tamney, 1996; Chan Heng Chee, 1971, 1980; Chan & Evers, 1978; Mutalib, 1992a, 1995; Quah, Jon, 1977). In addition, sociologists such as Chua Beng-Huat (Chua, 1995a), John Clammer (Clammer, 1981, 1985, 1989, 1993), and Michael Hill and Lian Kwen Fee (Hill & Lian, 1995), and philosopher Ho Wing Meng (Ho, 1976, 1989), have also written papers subjecting the notion of 'Asian' values to analysis and criticism. These speeches and writings will be elucidated and examined as the thesis progresses.

1.3.2 Political participation in Singapore

One of the main themes of citizenship in Singapore concerns national identity, and the concepts and issues associated with it. The second theme has to do with the type of political participation that is appropriate to Singapore.

In all democratic countries, there is an element of participation of citizens in the political process. In democratic systems, therefore, participation by citizens, in

terms of influencing policy decisions which affect their lives, is an important aspect of citizenship. The type and level of participation differs of course from country to country. In Singapore, it has varied greatly at different periods of its history.

Apart from the Japanese occupation during the Second World War, Singapore was under British rule for much of its modern history. The first elections took place in 1948 for six members of a Legislative Council who were elected in a popular vote. Nonetheless, the amount of influence of the Legislative Council was limited as government remained largely in the hand of the British. Limited self-government was granted seven years later, and complete self-government with a Legislative Assembly comprising a full complement of elected local representatives and led by a Singaporean Prime Minister, and with a Singaporean Head of State was only achieved in 1959.

Hence, the people of Singapore have enjoyed self-determination for a relatively short period of their history. However, whether or not the people had the right to influence the political process through the vote, there was the option of bringing pressure to bear on the government. In the 1950s, many students, a large number of whom were from Chinese medium schools, actively expressed their views through direct action. In 1954, for instance, there were demonstrations against the compulsory requirement to register for National Service. Students also supported the industrial strikes which followed these demonstrations (Chan Heng Chee, 1976: 39ff.; Clutterbuck, 1984).

After Singapore became independent in 1965, the exigencies of the early years led the PAP to take a firm line on any political activity that was perceived as threatening the stability of the country. The ruling party did not hesitate to use various laws, such as that allowing imprisonment without trial, if it thought this necessary. Whatever the case may be, the populace had, by the 1980s, become so disinclined to take part in political matters that politicians have on occasion commented on the political apathy of Singaporeans. Indeed, Chan Heng Chee has described Singapore as having 'an administrative state'; she sees it as a country in which the populace has been 'depoliticised', and where there has been an increase in the power and role of bureaucrats (Chan, 1989).

In recent years, however, there has been a perception, not least among the political leaders, of the need for Singaporeans to take more interest, and to play a larger role, in political matters. The PAP has indicated its willingness to be more receptive to the views of the people. In fact, Goh Chok Tong took office on the

promise that his would be a more open and consultative government, willing to go to greater lengths to take the people's view into consideration (Vasil, 1992: 251).

The declared openness has been accompanied by governmental effort to introduce measures through which Singaporeans could participate more in policy making. In addition to the extant parapolitical organisations aimed at involving residents in the management of their housing estates⁴, town councils were introduced with the stated aim of enabling individuals to influence decisions at a local level (Hill & Lian, 1995: 180ff.). A government Feedback Unit, Government Parliamentary Committees, and walkabouts by ministers and Members of Parliament were also instituted to allow the views of Singaporeans to be heard (Chua Beng-Huat, 1995a: 23ff.; Rodan, 1993b). The type of participation the measures have made possible, and the success in encouraging participation will be discussed later in this and subsequent chapters.

These measures notwithstanding, the fact remains that there has been a degree of dissatisfaction on the part of the populace. Successive elections have resulted in a continued decline in support for the PAP, even though it is widely acknowledged that there is no other party large enough, or able enough, to form the government. Between 1980 and 1991, the percentage of votes won by the PAP fell from 75.55 to 61 per cent. Over the same period, the number of elected opposition members in a parliament of under a hundred increased from nought to four. This is a dramatic change, considering the PAP had won all the seats in every election between 1968 and 1980.

The dissent expressed in elections by the populace, arguably, indicates a degree of dissatisfaction with the government, and disagreement over policies. Indeed, a point of contention has emerged concerning the level and type of participation, e.g. with regard to the expression of opinion on public matters. An exchange in 1994 in the local press between Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Catherine Lim, an academic and a writer of popular local short stories, is a case in point.

Lim had written an essay for the *Straits Times* arguing that the Singapore government suffered from an internal conflict between Goh and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in terms of the style of government (Catherine Lim, 1994b: 12; STWE, 1994b: 13). The consequence, she argued, was that the consultative,

⁴See Chapter 4 for an account of the parapolitical organisations.

consensual approach promised by the Goh government was being abandoned in favour of the authoritarian style of its predecessors. She gave as examples of the change in style the decisions that year not to allow single mothers access to public housing in order to discourage single parenthood, and to peg ministerial salaries to that of high earners in the private sector despite public disquiet. To ensure balance in her article, Lim gave due credit to the past achievements of the PAP government, and also spoke of the inclination on the part of the disaffected to overlook these achievements.

Nonetheless, her article brought a swift response from Goh who stated that Lim had 'gone beyond the pale' in suggesting that he allowed himself to be overwhelmed by Lee Kuan Yew (Chua Mui Hoong, 1994: 1). In a series of letters to the press (Chan Heng Wing, 1994a: 13, 1994b: 23), the following points were made:

First, consultation - to which Goh remained committed - meant soliciting the views of Singaporeans, after which he, as Prime Minister, had to decide and act in the long-term interests of the majority. Consultation did not mean that the political agenda concerning major issues affecting Singaporeans should be set by those from 'political sanctuaries', e.g. journalists, novelists, short-story writers or theatre groups.

Second, anyone who wanted to influence the political agenda should do so as a member of a political party.

Third, it was appropriate in a traditional Asian society that respect be accorded to the Prime Minister, and that this respect should not be destroyed by 'denigration and contempt'.

Several points could be made here. The first is that consultation, if it is to be genuine, should not just be a difference in style. Chan Heng Chee has pointed out that, in Singapore, consultation with the people is done on the government's terms, through the channels it has created in the parapolitical organisations such as the Citizens' Consultative Committees, the Community Centres, the Management Committees, and the Resident Committees⁵. Citizens give their views through these channels from the standpoint of petitioner, rather than from a position of strength (see Chan, 1989: 81). On his part, T T W Tan describes the government's promotion of the parapolitical institutions as 'an attempt by the government to organise,

⁵See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of the parapolitical organisations.

communicate (sic) and control its citizens' (Hill & Lian, 1995: 165), while John Clammer suggests that it is difficult to think of any instance in which a government policy has been abandoned or changed as a result of public pressure (Clammer, 1993: 42-43)⁶.

It would be pertinent to point out that, for the PAP, good government is *strong* government. The belief is that, while it is inevitable that some will be adversely affected by policies, all ultimately stand to gain from the benefits that eventuate. For that reason, policies necessary for the good of the nation must be implemented even if these are unpopular. Strong government therefore means the courage to make difficult decisions if these are for the good of the country, and the determination to implement these unflinchingly. It requires the ability to convince the population to co-operate with policies, even difficult ones, for the sake of the common good (see Lee Kuan Yew, 1979a: 38).

This leads to the second role that the PAP government takes on. The PAP sees itself as providing the lead in making decisions that are vital for the overall and long term interests of the country as a whole. Such decisions may mean immediate consequences that are difficult to accept; however this is the point which they claim self-serving individuals and interest groups fail to understand, or simply refuse to accept these difficult decisions are necessary for the long term good of the country (see Lee Kuan Yew, 1979a: 37-38; Vasil, 1992: 212-213).

Hence, for the PAP, the role of government is not to identify public sentiment and to act accordingly; in fact, there appears to be a belief that public sentiment is not to be trusted since people are irrational. This being the case, it is not surprising to find that despite Goh Chok Tong's promise of a more open and consultative government there is a lack of enthusiasm for consultation even among second generation leaders (Vasil, 1992: 213).

⁶The Graduate Mothers Scheme is sometimes given as an example of a government policy which was dropped in response to public opinion. The Graduate Mothers' Priority Scheme was a policy introduced in 1984 giving children of graduate women priority in seeking admission to schools. The adverse public reaction that greeted it led to it being withdrawn. However, to think of this as a triumph of the view of the people over that of the politicians would be mistaken. As Lee Kuan Yew himself points out, the government simply went about achieving the same objectives in a different way. In place of the Graduate Mothers' Priority Scheme, a income-related tax incentive was offered to those in the targeted group to have more children, and this policy remains in place (Hill & Lian, 1995: 152-156; Tremewan, 1994: 129).

The PAP's approach to consultation raises questions about democracy, and its associated concepts. These, and other questions which need examination, will be outlined in next section.

1.4 Questions to be examined

The questions which need to be examined centre around the concepts and issues associated with identity and values, and with political participation.

Where the former is concerned, it has been noted that there is a body of literature on national identity, both by the national leaders and by analysts. Nonetheless, there is scope for philosophical work to be done in analysing and clarifying the concepts used in association with citizenship in Singapore. For example, personal and national identity are conceived in terms of 'Asian' values. As was seen, this has sometimes involved representing as being unique to Asian societies, not only the Shared Values, but also those values regarded by the political leaders as being worthy of maintenance, e.g. filial piety and the traditional family structure. This is plainly incorrect since many of these values can also be found in Western countries, as in other parts of the world. The question has to be answered, therefore, as to what sense, if any, values could be said as to 'belong' to a society, or to embody its character.

The notion of national identity also requires elucidation. It should also be noted that the characteristics which distinguish one society from another, and which make individuals think of a society as being distinctively their own, has to do with culture in the broad sense of the term: the food, the architecture, the literary and dramatic arts, the interests and obsessions of its members and their qualities and peculiarities, the form of language used, and other shared understandings. However, one of the primary arguments that will be put forward in this thesis is that values are an important element of identity. If so, the notion of shared values requires elucidation with respect to national identity. Since values comprise an essential aspect of citizenship education, and since the issue of values are of concern in Singapore, the focus of the thesis with regard to national identity will be on this particular aspect.

It could be said that the PAP government sees one of its leadership roles as conceiving and articulating the values and norms of society, and in guiding the

manner in which this is to be done. According to a minister, Lee Hsien Loong, the approach should be to 'take a conservative but not unquestioning approach': i.e. to

Retain (the respective) heritages, but examine them for values which need to be modified, and scrutinise foreign traditions for ideas which can be incorporated, but do so cautiously (Lee, 1989a: 20-21).

Lee believes that the values which should be retained are those which are communitarian, or 'other-directed', because these values have been a distinguishing feature of the successful Newly Industrialising Countries in Asia. This, as was noted, raises the question as to what it could mean to select values, and the basis on which this can be done. The issue here is not just about the possibility of individuals selecting their personal values; it is about the choice of values of, and for, a whole community; it also concerns the nature of moral values, and how – if at all – these may be 'selected' for retention or promotion. This will be elaborated on as the thesis develops.

In devising a conception of citizenship appropriate to Singapore, it is necessary to take into consideration the relation between personal, ethnic and national identity, as well as the nature of values and the way in which this impinges on the adoption of values.

Factors generally relevant to the conception of citizenship also have to be taken into account. These factors will be identified by way of examining the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales, where citizenship and citizenship education have been systematically developed and theorised. The point of this examination is to yield considerations relevant to Singapore.

In addition, analysis of the notion of citizenship in Singapore and the associated concepts and issues, together with the social, political and cultural context, will be carried out with the view to identifying the factors that are applicable, including those which might render considerations used in England and Wales inappropriate to it.

With regard to political participation, important questions concern how substantive values and goals for the country ought to be determined. It will be argued that state perfectionism is a defensible position that can be taken by a government. However, the espousal of a set of values and goals by a government would, if these differed substantially from those held by the populace, constitute an illegitimate

imposition of those views on them. Hence, a way needs to be identified by which such values and goals may be determined.

It was earlier noted that the PAP reserves the right to set the political agenda, allowing only members of political parties to seek to influence it. This criterion for setting the political agenda does not make reference to the views of the citizenry. As a consequence, there is the possibility that the agenda set may not be congruent with that of the people. In addition, congruence – if achieved – would be fortuitous rather than a consequence of deliberate, considered policy.

There is also the question of the relation of political participation to citizenship. If participation can be shown to be an essential aspect of citizenship, then any conception of citizenship would need to include it in some form.

The relation between the notions of political participation, citizenship and national identity also needs to be explored in greater detail. This would have to be taken into consideration in pointing the way towards an appropriate conception of citizenship for Singapore. This, and the other questions that have been raised, will be addressed as the thesis progresses.

Within the area of education, a number of studies have been conducted, and a fair amount written, on moral education in Singapore. These include several studies conducted by Eng Soo Peck on moral education in Singapore (Eng *et al.*, 1981; Eng *et al.*, 1982; Eng, 1984, 1989), an empirical study of moral education in a school in a doctoral thesis by Joy Chew (Chew, 1988), and a number of articles on aspects of the subject by S Gopinathan (Gopinathan, 1980, 1988, 1993, 1995), and Tan Tai Wei (Tan, 1994). An account of these writings, and of their significance for citizenship education in Singapore, will be provided in Chapter 4.

Since moral education in Singapore is deemed to encompass citizenship education, a political element is usually reflected in the curriculum and, hence, in these writings. Children are expected, for instance, to learn to be patriotic towards the motherland, and to have a sense of loyalty towards their fellow countrymen. They are also expected to acquire some knowledge about the political system in Singapore.

Nonetheless, the emphasis in the citizenship education programmes has – for large part – been on morality, and the processes by which desirable values can be fostered, rather than on the qualities and processes by which individuals are enabled

to function as citizens in the political arena. The relation between the moral and political elements of citizenship is simply assumed, and goes unexamined. The only full length work dealing specifically with the political aspect of citizenship education was written by Then Lien Mee two decades ago, and its focus was on political socialisation rather than political education (Then, 1975). There is, hence, a need to make up the lack.

It is pertinent to note that any discussion of social and political concepts and issues in Singapore needs to take into account several factors sometimes referred to as the 'geopolitical realities' (see, for instance, Chan and Evers, 1978: 120ff.; Mutalib, 1992a: 72; Quah, 1977: 207ff.; Vasil, 1992: 7ff.). The discussion of citizenship is no exception. The factors include

- (i) the shortness of Singapore's history;
- (ii) Singapore's small size, and the lack of natural resources;
- (iii) the fact of its location in the midst of a Malay-Muslim region;
- (iv) the diversity in the ethnic and religious makeup of its population;
- (v) the priority given to economic considerations; and
- (vi) the role the PAP government sets itself with regard to the values and norms of society.

The 'geopolitical realities' are regarded by the political leaders, and by analysts, as givens. These factors inform and place limits on the political conceptions that are possible e.g. that of citizenship, and on the policies and actions that are appropriate in Singapore - and need to be borne in mind in the discussion to follow.

To summarise, the work to be done includes

- (a) clarifying the concepts of personal, ethnic and national identity;
- (b) examining the nature of values and of moral thinking, and implication of these for the adoption of values, and explicating the relation between values and identity;
- (c) elucidating the relation between political participation, citizenship and national identity;

- (d) suggesting, in the light of the above, directions towards a conception of citizenship appropriate to Singapore; and
- (e) making recommendations for citizenship education in Singapore.

1.5 Conclusion: Issues raised

This chapter provided a description and a preliminary examination of the conception of citizenship in Singapore. It also raised a number of concepts and issues that need to be analysed in order that directions can be suggested towards a coherent and appropriate notion of citizenship.

It was suggested that conceptual analysis is required, not only for the notion of citizenship, but also for concepts associated with it such as that of identity. The notions of Shared Values and 'Asian' values conceived as being integral aspects of identity in Singapore, and demonstrated in this chapter as being problematic need clarification. The relation of political participation to these concepts also requires elucidation. In addition, the way in which citizenship is conceptualised and theorised about in other countries should be examined, since this may shed light on the Singapore situation.

It would therefore be pertinent to look at the conceptualisation of citizenship through the centuries. By using England and Wales as a concrete example, and identifying the relevant factors that go into the conceptions of citizenship in these societies, it would be possible to identify the considerations which are relevant to, and also those which are different from, the Singapore situation. Lessons could then be drawn which would contribute towards the devising of a valid and appropriate conception of citizenship for Singapore, as well as the process by which this should be done.

Chapter 2

Historical outline of citizenship

2.1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to suggest an appropriate approach to citizenship education in a plural, democratic society like Singapore. To do this, it is first necessary to arrive at a defensible conception of citizenship in such a society. For this reason, the nature of citizenship and its development over the years, and the particular conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales, and in Singapore, will be examined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

The present chapter traces the development of citizenship through the centuries. It will take into account the strands of social and political thought which have influenced the notion of citizenship as it evolved over the years. Two broad traditions of citizenship are noted: the civic republican and the liberal individualist traditions. Present day schools of liberalism and communitarianism, and the elitist and participatory forms of democracy, are also elucidated and related to the traditions of citizenship.

2.2 The nature of citizenship

In much of the literature on citizenship, the approach that is adopted is to trace the development of citizenship by recounting or examining the writings of major historical figures on the subject. Another approach is to identify broad traditions within which the various conceptions of citizenship can be contextualised and understood. These approaches are useful because reference made to factors, such as the individuals and the traditions of thought, that have influenced the notion of citizenship throws light on the way it has developed. Also, the varying emphases on different factors account for differences in what 'citizenship' is taken to mean. To begin with, however, it is necessary to clarify the notion of 'citizenship', and make some important distinctions.

Citizenship is clearly concerned with the attributes of a citizen. A citizen is, in turn, a member of a political entity. This cannot be just *any* kind of membership of a political entity because there are individuals who are not called citizens, but subjects

or denizens. Subjects are people who live under the rule of a monarchy, tyranny, oligarchy, or any government, to whom or to which they are deemed to owe obedience and loyalty, and where power lies in hands of the ruler or rulers (see NSOED, 1993: 3118). What distinguishes the citizen from the subject is, therefore, sovereignty¹. There is in citizenship the notion of the influence of individuals over who gets into power, and how policy decisions are made; legitimate political authority is that which is accepted by citizens.

The association of citizenship with sovereignty is to be expected since the concept of citizenship originally arose in the inception of democracy. As Bryan Turner points out, the concept of citizenship arose with the development of the city-state in the classical world of Greece and Rome (Turner, 1992: 47). 'Citizen' was used to refer to members who enjoyed the full rights of citizenship, including the right to influence the decision-making process. It is this involvement in the political process that Aristotle highlights in his description of a citizen:

A citizen is... one who has a share both in ruling and in being ruled (Aristotle, 1970: 131).

Even in the ancient world, however, the notion of citizenship was complex. In ancient Rome, for instance, there were two kinds of citizens, one with voting rights and the other without. Both, however, had the status of citizen and the civil rights that came with it, i.e. they were able to own property, and inherit and pass on property, and were protected from certain types of punishment.

The granting of status without suffrage (*civitas sine suffragio*) is sometimes thought to be an incomplete form of citizenship. A N Sherwin-White, however, argues against this. For him, suffrage in terms of the ability to take part in the political process or, indeed, the right to stand for public office is not essential to the Roman ideal of citizenship. What is essential is the civil status enjoyed by citizens as they go about their lives, guided and protected by Roman law (Sherwin-White, 1973: 265).

It is also significant, as David Stockton notes, that the Roman notion of citizenship arose out of the idea of 'res publica'. This connoted 'constitutional government, the operation of recognised rules, as opposed to what the Romans called "regnum", absolute and arbitrary domination' (Stockton, 1988: 128). In this, there is a point of similarity between the ancient Roman conception of citizenship, and the

¹Derek Heater (1990: 283) makes a similar point.

ancient Greek version of it as expressed by Aristotle: there is the recognition of a link between citizenship and organised government.

Aristotle believed that his definition of 'citizen' was best applied in a democracy; he also acknowledged that the meaning of 'citizen' could vary according to the constitution of the state. It could be pointed out that the meaning of 'citizen' has indeed undergone changes through the ages, depending on the law of a state. This certainly applies to the scope of citizenship. For a long time, and in many countries, only certain classes of men were granted the status of citizenship; women and slaves were excluded from it.

Also, the privileges and duties of a citizen, and the provisions made to enable individuals to carry these out, have evolved through the years. According to T H Marshall, political citizenship (i.e. the rights associated with participation in the political process) only came into being in the nineteenth century, about a hundred years after that of civil citizenship (which is linked to the rights necessary for individual freedom). Social citizenship (the rights needed to defend one's rights on equal terms with others) was fully recognised and catered for only in the present century. The notions of political, civil and social citizenship will be elaborated on later in this chapter, and in Chapter 3.

However, Marshall's account of citizenship cannot be regarded as the only account or a complete account of citizenship, even within the Western tradition. Bryan Turner, following Michael Mann, points out that Marshall's account involves a certain 'ethnocentric specificity' so that it suits the English context, but is 'historically and comparatively inappropriate for other societies' (Turner, 1992: 40). In 'Outline of a Theory of Citizenship', Turner provides a historical and sociological account citizenship in England, Germany, France and America, and demonstrates the differences in the nature and development of citizenship in these countries.

Turner points out, for instance, that the constitutional settlement of 1688 in England resulted in a core of institutions such as the Crown, the Church, the House of Lords, and traditional attitudes about the family and private life, which continued to dominate British life until the present century (Turner, 1992: 53). On its part, the American example shares with that of the French 'a strong rejection of centralised power, adopting also the discourse of the rights of man and privileges of independent citizens' (Turner, 1992: 54). Hence, Turner elucidates, in his account, the ideas and values supporting the conceptions of citizenship as these have developed in the respective countries. As such, he provides a critique of, and an alternative to, what he

has described as 'the monolithic and unified conception of citizenship in Marshall' (Turner, 1992: 55).

At the very least, Turner's account demonstrates that conceptions of citizenship do vary, depending on the particular historical circumstances and the extant ideas and values which influenced their development. Such differences may result in legitimate variations in the conception of citizenship. At the same time, there is the Aristotelian idea that a citizen is necessarily a citizen of a particular country. If an important aspect of citizenship comprises making moral evaluations, and if - as will be argued - there are legitimate variations in moral values from society to society, a case could be made that different conceptions of citizenship are not only legitimate, they are necessary in order that they be appropriate to the particular society in which they apply.

2.2.1 Parameters to the discussion on citizenship

Since citizens are necessarily citizens *of* a particular political entity, the position taken is that there may be legitimate variations in citizenship depending on the values and traditions of the society in which a conception of citizenship is to be exercised. This is not to claim that the concept of citizenship is infinitely elastic. Indeed, there are certain parameters which limit the extent to which 'citizenship' can be stretched.

One parameter that can set in the discussion on citizenship is the form of government, which in this thesis is assumed to be democratic. There are two reasons for making this assumption. The first reason is a conceptual one. As was noted, the notion of citizenship arose in the beginnings of democracy, with the result that 'citizenship' and 'democracy' are intimately related.^{*} This relationship is embodied in the fact that a vital element of citizenship is the sovereignty of the citizen, and it is in a democracy that this sovereignty can best be exercised.

A citizen enjoys a degree of influence in the political process of the country. For this reason, people living under a (pure) monarchy, or in a totalitarian government, where they have no part in determining the government or its policies, cannot be properly called 'citizens'. This would be the case even if, as in the case of ancient Rome, they enjoyed the status of the citizen, and there were a constitutional government. Hence, although there may be variations in conceptions of citizenship,

the notion of citizenship should be seen in the context of the democratic ideal, and developed with reference to it.

The second reason for making democracy a parameter is that the theorising about citizenship in this thesis takes place in the context of democratic societies. Much of the literature that will be referred to is derived from Anglo-American societies which are democratic in nature. Singapore, which is the subject of the thesis, has since its independence, adopted a democratic system of government in which free and fair elections are held, and the laws of the land made by an elected parliament. Even its critics have to admit that, whatever the practice, the rhetoric in Singapore is that of democracy, although this is by no means the only discourse to be found there.

The second parameter that should be drawn concerns plurality. The present discussion takes place in the context of plural societies. The literature on citizenship and related subjects that will be examined have been written in England and Wales, and in Singapore, all of which are plural societies. In these countries, there is not only the fact of plurality, but also a growing consciousness of the need to take account of it in citizenship education.

A plural society is one in which 'there are several large ethnic groupings, involved in the same political and economic order but otherwise largely distinct from one another' (Giddens, 1995: 244). Plurality in the form of multi-ethnicity could arise from immigration. It could be said that plurality could also take the form of social differences, such as educational or class differences, which could result in different values and outlook on life. The same would apply for geographical or regional differences.

Plurality can also result from the fact that societies are not or no longer held together by a single religion or outlook on life. In *After Virtue*, for instance, Alasdair MacIntyre traces the religious and cultural developments in Western history that resulted in a situation in which individuals no longer share basic beliefs and assumption, or notions of the good (MacIntyre, 1987). Hence, differences of views arise which have no means of being resolved with an appeal to values, or a conception of the good life, that can be agreed on by all.

Whatever the case may be, plurality means that there are differences in values, systems of belief, notions of the good, and in the interests of the constituent communities. These need to be taken account of in deciding public policy, a task

which may be difficult, given the different even incommensurate claims arising from those differences.

In this thesis, 'the good' will be taken to mean the ultimate reason or end for one's life and actions. Since rational beings desire coherence and purposefulness in their lives, the moral conceptions and goals related to the good would therefore be comprehensive, i.e. these would have significance, and be pervasive, in one's life (MacIntyre, 1992b: 141ff.; Rawls, 1987: 3n; Raz, 1990: 293 & 308).

With regard to plurality in Western societies, it could be argued that these societies were never really homogeneous to begin with. There were, for example, small communities of Jews, Moslems or gypsies in many Western societies. Even where a society was broadly Christian, there might have existed sects and denominations which held beliefs that differed from those of the majority.

Nonetheless, it could be said that, despite the presence of these minority groups, a particular, Christian world view was widely held, and the power structure of society was such that it could be enforced. This is no longer true today. It is doubtful whether England and Wales can accurately be described as being Christian when a substantial portion of the population does not profess or practise Christianity. Even if it could, there would be considerable reaction, by individuals or whole communities that do not subscribe to Christianity, against any attempt to enforce a Christian world view and the associated values.

Modern Singapore has, from the start, been a heterogeneous society in which different cultures and systems of beliefs have co-existed. Like England and Wales, there is a need to take account of, and find solutions to, differences, despite the fact that there is no commonly agreed world view or notion of the good on which decisions could be based.

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To reiterate the points made so far, there are limits to which the meaning of 'citizenship' can be stretched, and these restrict the discussion on it. Two parameters identified were those of democracy and plurality. These parameters also form the points of convergence which make possible the meaningful comparison of conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales, and in Singapore. At the same time, these make possible the identification of factors in one context for application in the other, as well as the cross-application of lessons learnt.

2.2.2 Characteristics of the citizen in a plural and democratic society

It was seen in the last section that certain parameters can, and should be, set in the discussion on 'citizenship'. This means that some things can be said in terms of the knowledge, qualities and skills necessary for individuals effectively to function as citizens in a plural, democratic society.

First, the notion in democracy of the sovereignty of the people means that individuals play an essential role in the political process. The choices individuals make in exercising that sovereignty are therefore of importance, and should be the result of their personal and considered reflection. Choices should be made freely, and not as the consequence of undue influence or coercion by certain factors or by other individuals. In other words, individuals must have a degree of freedom and autonomy, and this in turn means that there should be conditions which support that freedom and autonomy.

Second, there are requirements to do with the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Citizens need some understanding of political issues and their context, of the possible alternatives, and of the consequences of any decision taken. They must be able to make up their mind on a rational basis, and according to values they believe are defensible. They may need to make evaluations of a moral nature because decisions about political issues often involve such evaluations, and also because morally good and bad consequences can issue from decisions made.

Admittedly, not all evaluations are of a moral nature. For instance, decisions about the most effective way in which to cut unemployment call on economic theory, rather than morality. Nonetheless, it could be said that the decision *that* it is a good thing to cut unemployment (as opposed, for instance, to refraining from interfering in the economy and allowing market forces to work) is an evaluative one which calls on the individual's moral concepts and values.

Also, 'citizenship' is as much a normative term as it is a statement of status and the rights and duties accruing from membership in a political entity. The use of the term 'humanity' in the normative sense could provide a useful parallel. It is possible to describe a person as being a symbol of 'humanity'. Here, reference is made, not to the person's biological or even sociological attributes, but to the ideal moral qualities

which are associated with being human. Hence, a person who fails to display such qualities where appropriate is described as 'subhuman' or 'inhuman'.

In a similar way, there is a sense in which 'citizenship' functions as an evaluative or normative term, and is used to refer to the set of ideal qualities that are associated with being a citizen. Hence, it could be asked whether individuals could properly be called citizens if they lack the moral or other qualities associated with being citizens, e.g. if they understand and participate in the political process, but do not do so in a morally correct way. Similarly, it would be a dubious goal in citizenship education to produce individuals lacking in, among other things, the ability and inclination to apply moral considerations in making political evaluations.

More will be said as the thesis progresses of the conditions needed to foster the characteristics appropriate for citizens in plural, democratic societies. The point being made is that there are certain requisite characteristics of citizenship in a plural, democratic society. These include

- (i) a degree of freedom and autonomy;
- (ii) certain types of knowledge and skills which enable individuals to comprehend and reflect on public issues; and
- (iii) a sense of morality, both in terms of the moral values that individuals are personally committed to, and an understanding of the conception of morality in their society.

To provide a more complete picture, however, other considerations need to be identified which are relevant to the formulation of a conception of citizenship. These involve the substantive positions that have been taken on the notion of citizenship. It is these substantive positions that will be examined in the next section.

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2.3 Developments in the concept of citizenship

Since its early beginnings in the ancient Greek city-state, 'citizenship' has taken forms which have been grounded in different traditions. These various forms can broadly be classified under the 'classical' or 'civic republican' tradition, and the 'liberal' or 'liberal individualist' tradition. Adrian Oldfield, Derek Heater and Dawn Oliver distinguish between the two traditions (see, respectively, Oldfield, 1990; Heater, 1990: 283ff.; Oliver & Heater, 1994). Alasdair MacIntyre makes a similar

distinction when he points to the opposition between 'liberal individualism in some version or other and the Aristotelian tradition in some version or other' (Heater, 1990: 283).

In 'Return of the Citizen', Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman examine the distinction between 'citizenship-as-legal-status' and 'citizenship-as-desirable-activity' (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). As in the liberal individualist tradition, citizenship-as-legal-status highlights status, and the rights associated with it, as the defining element for membership in a political community; like the civic republican tradition, citizenship-as-desirable-activity emphasises participation in the community as a defining aspect of citizenship (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994: 353).

2.3.1 The Civic Republican tradition

The origins of the civic republican tradition are usually traced to the ancient Greek city-state. An incipient form of civic republicanism can be found in Aristotle's notion that man is essentially a political animal, and that the political entity – in this case, the city-state – provides opportunities for individuals to serve the community. At the same time, morality is seen as having to do with giving one's service to, and fulfilling one's duties in, the community. In the civic republican tradition, therefore, it is an essential part of citizenship, and of being a moral individual, to participate in the government of the political community. Such participation is regarded not simply as a privilege, but as a duty.

For the ancient Romans, the citizen had to have certain virtues. These included

manliness, especially in the form of a readiness to perform military service and to fight with valour. It meant patriotism; and it meant an unswerving devotion to duty and the law (Oliver & Heater, 1994: 13).

Roman children were accordingly subjected to character training which was supposed to inculcate in them such qualities as courage, religious reverence, self-restraint and justice (Heater, 1990: 19).

Oldfield describes the civic republican conception of citizenship as one in which

the emphasis on practice gives rise to a language of 'duties', whose discharge is necessary to establish individuals as citizens among other citizens. It is thus a communally based conception of citizenship: individuals are only citizens as members of a community (Oldfield, 1990: 178).

Within the civic republican tradition, therefore, citizenship is regarded as a practice, rather than simply as a status. Moreover, participation is not just a privilege; it is a duty. As a consequence, the involvement of the individual in the affairs of the nation is considered to be of crucial importance. The kind of public service that an individual should offer includes anything to do with defining, establishing and sustaining a political community (Oldfield, 1990: 181).

It should be pointed out that writers, such as Oldfield, and Heater and Oliver, sometimes use the terms 'communitarianism' and 'civic republicanism' interchangeably (see Oldfield, 1990; Oliver & Heater, 1994: 115ff.). Oldfield, for instance, sees civic republicanism in communitarian terms. Among other things, he describes the individual as not being prior to society, and sees individuals in this tradition as being constructed as a result of their membership in society, and their interaction with it (Oldfield, 1990: 178). These are all terms used by communitarians.

Although it is possible to conceive of situations in which civic republicanism and communitarianism may converge without incoherence, these are different schools of thought, and should not be confused. As has been indicated, civic republicanism is a tradition which is based on the assumption that people are essentially political animals; the emphasis is accordingly placed on the duty of individuals to participate in the affairs of the political community. Often, certain qualities are associated with this duty of service to the state, e.g. patriotism and courage.

On its part, communitarian thought developed as a reaction to certain liberal ideas, and comprises a distinctive body of theorising concerned with the philosophical assumptions and ontological claims about individuals and their relationship to the community. The philosophical basis of communitarianism is that individuals are beings embedded in the community, and that their identity and values are formed as a result of interaction with the shared understandings in the wider community.

With its emphasis on the community, communitarianism may resemble civic republicanism in terms of the stand adopted, and the recommendations made concerning citizenship. However, certain philosophical and ontological assumptions

characterise and support mainstream communitarian thought, and these are lacking in civic republicanism. Further, although patriotism may be an element of 'advocacy' communitarianism, the emphasis here is not (solely) on the nationalistic aspect of loyalty and service to one's country, but on the community at every level, whether this is the family, the cultural or religious group, the grouping at which local government is based, or the national community (see, for instance, Etzioni, 1993, 1994). Hence, although there may be similarities between 'advocacy' communitarianism and civic republicanism, the two are separate traditions arising from different assumptions, and the distinction between the two should be maintained to avoid confusion.

Hence, civic republicanism is one of two traditions of citizenship. It is also distinct from communitarianism. The point should be made that, in civic republican thought, individuals can, and should, have a degree of autonomy. This autonomy should be circumscribed by the fact that it ought to be exercised, 'not just with respect given to the autonomy of other people, but also in accordance with a practice which is socially defined, and which they have a duty to engage in' (Oldfield, 1990: 178).

In the liberal individualist tradition, however, morally autonomous beings are able to choose 'whether or not to exercise the rights of the status of citizen in the public, or more narrowly political arena' (Oldfield, 1990: 178). Therein lies the main difference between the civic republican and liberal individualist traditions, i.e. over the choice which individuals are considered to have concerning participation in the political process.

2.3.2 The Liberal Individualist tradition

In contrast to civic republicanism, the liberal individualist tradition emphasises individual rights (Heater, 1990: 283). Early statements of liberal thought in the modern era can be traced to the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution in the eighteenth century. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all men were equal, and that they had certain inalienable rights, such as those to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (Clarke, 1994: 111-115). According to the Declaration, governments derived their powers from the consent of the governed for the purpose of securing these rights; these rights were instituted in, and protected by, the Constitution of the United States of America and its subsequent amendments. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen that emerged

from the French Revolution made similar provisions for French citizens (Clarke, 1994: 115-117). These included the freedom and equality of men, the right to liberty, property, security and resistance against oppression, and the freedom to do whatever did not injure another.

Less than a century after these Declarations, J S Mill wrote his famous book *On Liberty*, arguing for the importance of the freedom of the individual (Mill, 1979). Mill believed that the individual was 'the proper guardian of his (sic) own health, whether bodily, *or* mental and spiritual', and was in the best position to determine the good which he or she would pursue (original emphasis) (Mill, 1979: 138).

Mill also argued that individuals should be allowed to pursue a life that seemed good to them (Mill, 1979: 138). For him, the only freedom worthy of the name was the freedom to pursue one's own good in one's own way. Individuals should therefore have liberty of thought and feeling on all subjects, as well as the freedom to express these; they should also be free to plan and live their life in a manner that suited them. That liberty should not be violated except in situations where this was necessary to prevent harm to others. In a similar way, the liberal individualist tradition in citizenship holds that freedom from state interference is a right in itself; this freedom is also necessary for citizens to flourish as moral individuals (see Heater, 1990: 283).

The central feature of the liberal individualist tradition is that the right to participate in the political process is just that: a right, not a duty. Hence, as Oldfield points out, the emphasis in the liberal individualist tradition is on the status of citizenship; there is also an attendant fear that this status may be undermined, particularly by the government (Oldfield, 1990: 177). The result is that certain needs and entitlements are regarded as being necessary for human dignity and for individuals to be effective agents in the world. In the liberal individualist tradition, therefore,

Individuals are sovereign and morally autonomous beings, whose duties are to respect the similar rights of other citizens, to pay their taxes, and to come to the defence of the polity when it is under threat. Further than this, and beyond whatever duties individuals feel they have toward family and friends, they have no obligation to the wider society other than those they freely enter into on the basis of contract (Oldfield, 1990: 178).

The liberal individualist tradition could therefore be viewed as an essentially 'private' conception (Oldfield, 1990: 178). This is in contrast to the civic republican tradition, which is one that is community-based.

2.4 Recent debate on citizenship

In their paper surveying recent work on citizenship theory, 'Return of the Citizen' (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994), Kymlicka and Norman note that there has been a renewed interest in the 1990s in the concept of citizenship. Apart from the increased number of articles on citizenship in academic journals, politicians – in England and Wales, for example – have highlighted citizenship as a major theme in their speeches; several official documents have also been issued on the subject. These speeches and documents will be examined in the next chapter.

In recent years, individuals and groups taking the ideological position known as the New Right, have been influential in Anglo-American societies. Kymlicka and Norman note that, in the recent debate on citizenship, these individuals are inclined to de-emphasise the notion of social rights, focusing instead on the fulfilling of obligations as an important aspect of citizenship. Members of the New Right have therefore redefined social citizenship: in place of the entitlements accruing from social citizenship, they have emphasised the citizen's obligations to society.

New Right 'philosophy' also gives a central role to the market in the economic scheme. The belief is that the market is the ideal instrument to take account of the wants and preferences of individuals; therefore, if market forces are allowed freely to work, the result would be greater responsiveness to the demands of the individual, whose autonomy would then be given greater expression. Hence, citizenship is redefined with an emphasis on the citizen as consumer and as a decision-maker within the market.

The idea of the role of the market in expressing individual liberty is one of the two strands of liberal thought that has had influence in recent years. The other strand takes a contractarian form, and it has been argued for by John Rawls.

Rawls's contractarianism, like other forms of liberalism, advocates a state in which individuals are allowed to select or devise and pursue their notion of the good life. Where his philosophy is distinctive is in his argument as to how the principles

governing the selection and pursuit of the good life are to be determined. Rawls argues that, if individuals were to decide the principles that would underlie a state, and if they did not know what their interests were, they would choose a principle of justice which would ensure, first, that each person had the right to the most extensive system of basic liberties possible and, second, that any social and economic inequality would only be allowed if they were of greatest benefit to the least advantaged (Rawls, 1990).

The liberal individualism underlying both libertarian philosophy and Rawlsian contractarianism assumes that it is individuals who comprise the constituent parts of a society, which is nothing more than the sum of the parts. It is the interests of the individual that matter, and that provide the benchmark against which the desirability of policies are to be measured. This approach has come in for criticism, particularly by the communitarians.

The communitarians argue that the ends of individuals and, hence, their identities, are not formed independently of the resources of a society, e.g. its social forms and shared understandings. This being the case, a major consideration in decision making should be the protection of these resources. In general, communitarians would take issue with the idea that individuals and their interests should provide the benchmark by which the desirability of policies are to be determined; they would argue that the community and its interests need to be considered as well. It is therefore believed that, even where individual rights were held in high regard, there would be situations in which these rights should not be exercised. The communitarian view therefore questions the assumption made by many liberals that the right is prior to the good, i.e. that individual rights come logically before any particular conception of the good life.

The difference in the conceptions of citizenship in liberal and communitarian thought, resulting from different assumptions and values, comprises one of the main debates in citizenship today. Another debate involves the divide between the elitist and the participatory notions of democracy. The historical development of citizenship has seen a divide along this line from the earliest times. Plato, for instance, was highly critical of the idea of a democracy in which ordinary individuals were supposed to govern themselves. For him,

people are bad judges in many political matters. The common man (sic) has no experience or expert knowledge of such things as foreign policy or economics, and to expect any very sensible judgement from him on such matters is to expect the impossible (Lee, H D P, 1970: 24).

Plato used the analogies of the large and powerful animal, and the ship's captain (Plato, 1970: 254-255, 249-250), to highlight the perils of democratic government. In the first analogy, a man in charge of a large and powerful animal copes with the situation by working out a system as to the actions that would soothe or annoy it. In such a situation, what is good or bad is made solely with reference to the reactions of the animal. In the second analogy, the ship's captain is prevented from going about his business by suggestions from the bickering and ignorant crew members. For Plato, therefore, the consequence of democracy is that the wishes of an ignorant but powerful people determine public policies. At the same time, the differences in view that are inevitable make it impossible to give clear direction to the political community as a whole.

More recently, Joseph Schumpeter argued that government by the people was both impossible and undesirable because of the ignorance, irrationality and apathy of the people (Schumpeter, 1970: 282ff.; see also Heater, 1990: 49-50). Schumpeter also believed that leadership had an important function of government. He therefore favoured a democracy in which citizens chose in competitive elections individuals who would decide public policy. In a similar way, the People's Action Party in Singapore takes the position that the role of politicians is to provide strong leadership, and to make difficult decisions for the good of the country as a whole.

Arrayed against this position are the arguments in favour of a more participatory form of democracy in which citizenship is given greater expression. On this view, the sovereignty of citizens is fully exercised in their participation in the political process. The idea of limiting participation to simply electing representatives to government every few years is regarded as a impoverished conception of citizenship. Rather, individuals should participate fully at all levels.

J R Lucas bases his argument for participation on the belief that it allows individuals to acquire both an understanding of the issue at hand, and a sense of ownership of decisions reached. These, in turn, make meaningful the use of the term 'communal decision' (Lucas, 1976: 141-142). For Derek Heater, participatory democracy is 'safe' because '(the) more citizens are involved in the making of policies and decisions, the more protection they have from the abuse of power by "the authorities"' (Heater, 1990: 217). In any case, he argues, it is only proper that the people who are affected by political and administrative decisions be involved in the decision making process. On her part, Patricia White is one among a number of proponents of the position that participatory democracy should extend to the work place. Workers ought to exercise a degree of control in running the organisation, and

in the decisions affecting their interests; this is appropriate to them as democratic citizens and as human beings (White, 1983: 41ff.).

It could be noted that the divide between the elitist and participatory forms of democracy may coincide with that between liberalism and communitarianism. Those who support participatory democracy are often motivated by liberal principles, and those who argue for an elitist form of democracy with an emphasis on strong leadership sometimes do so from the standpoint of the greater good of the community. The notions of participation, and of liberalism and communitarianism, will be examined in greater detail as the thesis develops.

2.5 Conclusion

An account was presented in this chapter of the literature on the nature of citizenship, and its development over the years. It was noted that the notion of citizenship is closely allied with that of the sovereignty of the citizen and, hence, with his or her influence over the selection and process of government. In point of fact, conceptions of citizenship do vary depending on the particular historical circumstances, and the extant ideas and values. Such variations are necessary, given that a citizen is inevitably a citizen *of* a particular country.

However, the notion of citizenship is not infinitely elastic; it is possible to set parameters to the discussion on citizenship. One parameter is the assumption of a democratic form of government. Another is that the context of the discussion is one of plurality.

Given this, a number of statements could be made about the nature of citizenship in countries where these parameters apply. For instance, citizens, who have influence over the political process, need to have a degree of freedom and autonomy. They also need the knowledge and skills, as well as a sense of morality, that are required to make judgements which are both considered, and appropriate to their community.

Two traditions of citizenship - the liberal individualist and the civic republican were then elucidated. It was noted that current debates on citizenship fall along two divides, that between liberalism and communitarianism, and that between the elitist

and participatory forms of democracy. The way citizenship is conceived may vary depending on the position taken with regard to the liberal-communitarian and the elitist-participatory debates.

In addition, there are a number of contingent factors that need to be taken account of in conceptualising citizenship. These include the historical development of the politics of a society, and its cultural values and traditions. To obtain a better understanding of these factors, the next two chapter will provide an account of the recent developments in the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales, and in Singapore, and set these in the context of the cultural and philosophical background of those countries.

Chapter 3

Conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provided an account of the concept of citizenship and traced its development. The present chapter examines in closer detail the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales as reflected in public statements and policies, and in citizenship education programmes available to schools. It highlights significant changes to the conceptions of citizenship in the present century, with emphasis on those in the last two decades. The aim in tracing these developments is to identify the assumptions and primary concerns underlying the various conceptions of citizenship.

3.2 Historical development of citizenship in England and Wales

It was seen in the last chapter that T H Marshall's account of citizenship is most appropriately applied to England and Wales. Apart from the extension of citizenship to include civil, political and social rights, the notion of citizenship in England and Wales has undergone a number of changes in the last hundred years.

At the turn of century, the conception of citizenship was influenced by the notion of fulfilling one's obligation to God, and the importance of living 'for king and country'. Children were taught to be 'upright and useful members of the community... and worthy sons and daughters of the country to which they belong' (Heater, 1990: 85). It was also believed that individuals should be prepared for their station in life. In 1894, for example, the journal *Justice* noted that working-class children were being taught basically to honour the Queen and to obey their superiors (Heater, 1990: 85). Hence, citizenship was conceived as a two-tier system in which citizens would act according to their station and its duties: members of the working class were expected to be docile and obedient to their betters who would, on their part, fulfil the roles of leadership in society.

During this period, the conception of citizenship was also influenced by British Idealism. There was the idea that the social and political spheres provided

individuals with the opportunity to realise themselves both as citizens and as individuals (Heater, 1990: 74-76, 99-100). British Idealists, such as T H Green, noted that differences in education and income resulted in different levels of political participation. They argued that it was not possible for individuals to function properly as citizens if they had to direct all their efforts towards their own survival and, hence, that the state should intervene to ensure a basic level of welfare (Heater, 1990: 75). There was therefore incipient in Green the notion of social citizenship that was to be developed by T H Marshall.

Those who were inspired by Green also believed there was a role that they could play as individuals. Many were involved in setting up schools for young people, and in conducting classes for adults who would otherwise have had no access to formal education. Hence, there is a sense in British Idealism of the contribution that individuals could make to others in their society. The idea seemed to be that it was in making such contributions that individuals became citizens and moral beings in the full sense of the terms (see Vincent & Plant, 1984).

On his part, R H Tawney believed that unequal social provisions led to inequalities or the deepening of existing inequalities. In his 1931 book, *Equality*, he presented arguments for making educational provisions for all:

(In) spite of their varying characters and capacities, men possess in their common humanity a quality which is worth cultivating, and... a community is most likely to make the most of that quality if it takes it into account in planning its economic organization and social institutions if it stresses lightly differences of wealth and birth and social position, and establishes on firm foundations institutions which meet common needs, and are a source of common enlightenment and common enjoyment (Tawney, 1979: 55-56).

Tawney's argument was therefore that the provision of secondary education of a similar standard for all children would ameliorate inequalities, make the most of the individual's talents, and contribute to the formation of community. Eventually, in 1944, secondary education was made compulsory for all children by the Conservative Minister R A Butler (Heater, 1990: 100).

Other aspects of social citizenship also resurfaced in the mid-twentieth century. Marshall argued that, apart from civil and political rights, individuals required certain fundamental provisions to function effectively as citizens, e.g. social and health services. These 'social rights' were eventually instituted as entitlements in some countries and, with this, came the birth of the welfare state.

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, a different notion of social citizenship was introduced and implemented. State welfare was seen to encourage dependence on the 'nanny state' (Heater, 1990: 101), and social entitlements were cut back; at the same time, the individual's contribution were emphasised (Hurd, 1991: 17-18). The idea of the individual's contributions to society is encapsulated in the notion of 'active citizenship'. 'Active' citizens do not merely pay taxes; they contribute to the community by doing voluntary work and giving to private charities, as had been the case in the Victorian era (Carvel, 1988: 1; Heater, 1990: 299; Patten, 1988: 23; Riddell, 1993: 8).

According to Douglas Hurd, the approach should be to work out the distribution and exercise of power within the state so as to achieve a balance between freedom and responsibility for the individual (Hurd, 1988: 14). Social policy should therefore be underpinned by 'the diffusion of power, civil obligation, and voluntary service', all of which are central to Conservative philosophy (Hurd, 1988: 14). Hurd and John Patten suggest that citizens should get involved in setting up organisations like housing associations and neighbourhood watch schemes, and in such activities as raising money for charity and serving in local government or as school governors (Heater, 1990: 299; Hurd, 1988: 14; Patten, 1988: 23). Both therefore emphasise the citizen's contribution to the community through voluntary work. However, the idea of the active citizen may not be consistent with the Conservative Party's notion of the citizen as consumer, as will become apparent as the section progresses.

It could be said that active citizenship has undermined social citizenship in the sense meant by Marshall, viz. a social citizenship which emphasises the social rights of citizens accruing from the need to protect their civil and political rights, and the attendant obligation of the state to provide for these needs. Active citizenship reverses this emphasis by placing on individuals the responsibility for making such provisions, both for themselves and for others in the community. Hence, by emphasising responsibility to the community, the impact of active citizenship is that less importance is accorded to social rights. Although certain rights are guaranteed within the Citizen's Charter, it will be seen that these are relatively insignificant, and do not make up for the weakening of social rights and, consequently, the undermining of 'social citizenship' as used by Marshall.

Apart from the recasting of social citizenship, the Conservatives have reconceptualised the citizen as consumer. In this, they were influenced by the thought of F A Hayek which provided the philosophical basis for libertarianism. Hayek believed that individual liberty would best be protected if individuals were allowed to

express their choices through market forces, which would most effectively manage the complex information regarding demand and supply, and respond accordingly. He therefore advocated that the state should interfere as little as possible to allow market forces to work (Barry, 1987: 117-118; Gray, 1992: 7, 23-24; Plant, 1992: 80ff.). In their notion of the citizen as consumer, the Conservatives have accordingly paid much attention, first, to the choice of the consumer, and the importance of allowing market forces to function freely; and, second, to the delivery of services provided by the state and the newly privatised organisations.

Until recently, say the Conservatives, individuals had generally to accept whatever was offered by the public services, and the manner in which these were delivered. In 1991, the Conservative Party produced the Citizen's Charter, the aim of which was to reform public services, and provide a 'comprehensive programme... to raise quality, increase choice, secure better value, and extend accountability' (Oliver & Heater, 1994: 47). Launched by Prime Minister John Major, the charter was described as 'a revolution in choice, in information, in accountability and individual power' (Riddell, 1993: 8). It lists the 'rights' of individuals in terms of the services provided, and the manner in which these should be delivered. These, it was believed, would 'empower' citizens so that they no longer needed to suffer the public services whatever the standard or quality of service.

The Citizen's Charter has been hailed as 'a Magna Carta for our time' (Clark, 1991: 14). Jonathan Clark argues that present day individuals participate in public life, less by organising and voting, and more by 'earning and spending'. Hence, consumer issues, rather than issues of representation, are at the centre of modern politics, and the oppressive institutions that confront citizens are not so much those associated with politics or religion, but those of the social services and nationalised industries. The Citizen's Charter therefore provided protection from, and redress for, the petty but real tyrannies that confront individuals in their daily lives.

However, the Citizen's Charter deals specifically with consumer rights. Despite Clark's argument, it is questionable as to whether such rights can be considered an essential element of citizenship. It is the social rights of citizenship, as conceived by Marshall, that are relevant and important in terms of enabling individuals effectively to participate in the political process. At best, therefore, consumer rights are a peripheral component of citizenship.

The promotion of active citizenship together with the notion of the citizen as consumer raises, for the Conservatives, problems of consistency. The active citizen

who has responsibilities to the community over and above the paying of taxes, and who is willing to sacrifice time and resources for the good of others, does not have much in common with the rational consumer who makes decisions on the basis of his or her personal interests and considerations.

It might be argued that consumers could exercise their purchasing power in a way that is appropriate to active citizens, e.g. they could make it a point to buy goods from companies which contribute their profits to charities and community organisations. However, it is questionable as to whether the mere responsible exercise of purchasing power will quite satisfy the notion of active citizenship. After all, the idea of service to others in the community is absent in the notion of the citizen as consumer.

In any case, there exists a disagreement in moral orientation, if not necessarily in logic, in the conception of society - and, hence, of the citizen - between the notions of the active citizen and of the citizen as consumer. In the case of active citizenship, individuals have a duty to contribute to the community and to the needs of others. In the case of the citizen as consumer, it is the rights of consumers, with regard to a certain standard of service, that are considered important; also, individuals are expected to make decisions on an individual basis and in their personal interests, triggering market forces in the processes, rather than with a view to the general good. At best, an approach using these two conceptions of citizenship lacks coherence.

Apart from the developments that have been described so far, there has also been a linking of citizenship to regional and global concerns and identity. The notion of 'world citizenship', which had currency in the 1940s, has seen a resurgence in recent years (Batho, 1990; Edwards & Fogelman, 1991). This resurgence has partly been the result of government action. For instance, the idea of European citizenship and the sense of European identity have come about as a result of the British government's activity directed towards greater union with the other countries of the European Community.

The resurgence of the notions of European and world citizenship can also be attributed to other factors. In England and Wales, as in many countries, there has been growing concern about issues which transcend national boundaries. These concerns include that for the environment, human rights, poverty and animal welfare. The nature of these issues is such that the problems are not limited to particular countries, and can only be dealt with effectively, if at all, through international co-operation. These concerns have sometimes been formalised into movements and

organisations, e.g. Greenpeace and Amnesty International. A consequence of the heightened awareness of issues of this type is a greater sense that individuals belong to a world community. This, together with the realisation of the economic advantages that can accrue from regional co-operation, has resulted in a revival of the notions of regional and world citizenship in recent years (Heater, 1990).

However, the notions of regional and world citizenship raise certain questions. The concept of European citizenship, for instance, has come up against a number of difficulties. The concern centres on the perceived need, not only to retain the country's control over its economy and internal affairs, but also to maintain its identity. For instance, there is an aversion, among the Conservatives in England and Wales at least, to the idea of surrendering national sovereignty to a central European government, and English and Welsh culture and identity to a European one (Thatcher, 1988: 19).

The notions of regional and world citizenship, and the questions arising from these, are not prominent issues in Singapore and will not, for this reason, be discussed in detail. In any case, the notions of regional and world citizenship are problematic. There are questions, for instance, as to what it could mean to be a citizen of the world when there is no established political process for deciding global issues, or institutionalised means by which individuals could influence this process. 'Citizenship' is most appropriately applied with reference to the nation because it is in that context that the essential elements of citizenship can be found: e.g. the existence and sense of a national culture and identity and, hence, the possibility of loyalty to the political entity; and an established link, in modern democracies, between the sovereignty of the people, and the expression of this in public policies. In other words, the concepts of regional and world citizenship are parasitic on that of national citizenship.

Hence, even if it is conceived in political terms such as that of citizenship, the relation of the individual to a regional or world culture and identity is merely analogous to that between the individual and the nation. Indeed, it has been argued the notions of regional and world citizenship are problematic. Nonetheless, a case could be made for the notion of an individual as a member of *moral* communities, whether these communities are at the level of the group, nation, region or world. This question will be addressed in second half of the thesis.

To summarise, an account was provided in this section of the conceptions of citizenship that have developed in England and Wales over the last hundred years. In the first half of the present century, the focus was on the extension of citizenship from civil and political rights to social rights. In the last two decades, however, there has been a return to a conception of citizenship that had currency in the Victorian period, one in which citizens were responsible for others in the community, and contributed their time and resources accordingly. Promoted together with this notion of active citizenship is that of the citizen as consumer. It was argued that the latter not only provided an inadequate view of citizenship, it was also inconsistent with the notion of active citizenship.

Finally, the problematic nature of 'regional citizenship' and 'world citizenship' was noted. It was suggested, however, that a case could be made for a conception of the relation between the individual and the regional and world communities, if these were viewed as moral, rather than political, communities.

3.3 Citizenship education in England and Wales

The last section examined the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales, and the development of these, in statements made by theorists and politicians. This section traces the changes in citizenship education, describing programmes available in schools, and elucidating the assumptions and concerns underlying these. The concern with plurality in England and Wales is highlighted, and an account is given of the developments in citizenship education. Significant programmes related to citizenship education are also examined.

3.3.1 'Political education', 'moral education' and 'citizenship education'

It should be noted that the concern of the thesis is with education for citizenship. Citizenship education is taken to refer to the aspect of education that prepares pupils for a future role as citizens of their country. Such a role is essentially political since it has to do with the country's politics, 'the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated' (Crick, 1964: 21). However, it is first necessary to clarify the meaning of the terms used.

'Citizenship education', 'civics', 'civic education' and 'political education' are some terms used to refer to curriculum programmes that may set out to achieve largely similar ends, including that of preparing children to function fully and appropriately as citizens. Other terms which have been used are 'law-related education', 'moral education', 'personal education', 'social studies', 'education for democracy' and, in the case of England and Wales, 'British Constitution' (Heater, 1991: 148; Oliver & Heater, 1994: 149). In Singapore, the term 'national education' has also been used (Goh Chok Tong, 1996a). The use of these terms is further complicated by the connotations sometimes associated with them.

Derek Heater notes, for instance, that 'civic education' has been viewed as 'an inculcation of such citizenly virtues as national loyalty, ready willingness to honour one's duties and deference to the Establishment'; in other words, the function of such education is to encourage the citizen to conform, not question (Heater, 1991: 150; Oliver & Heater, 1994: 149). Not surprisingly, therefore, terms such as 'civics', 'civic education' or 'citizenship education' are sometimes taken to refer to a conservative syllabus, often utilising a pedantic and dogmatic approach. In fact, there is still suspicion that 'citizenship education' might be used as a Trojan horse to smuggle in certain ideas, and a device to achieve certain political or ideological ends (Porter, 1993: 11).

On its part, 'political education' is a relatively new term which gained currency in the late 1960s. The notion of political education is best exemplified by Crick and Porter's *Programme for Political Education*, which highlighted the need to develop politically literate individuals who are aware of political disputes, and are predisposed to act effectively and in a manner respectful of others (Crick & Porter, 1978: 37-38). Political education, as they conceived it, is also characterised by the attempt to take a neutral approach. In place of efforts to inculcate loyalty, civic virtues and a particular ideology, it emphasised the teaching of the basic concepts which would give children a reasonable grasp of socio-political issues (Crick & Porter, 1978: 39).

However, the notion of political education has also aroused suspicion. On the one hand, it is criticised for producing 'demonstration fodder... (and) ill-considered reforming activism'; on the other hand, it has come under attack for attempting to 'neutralise the teaching of alternative values and systems' (Heater, 1990: 224).

Hence, the terms used to refer to educating for citizenship often come with their own connotations. In the present thesis, however, 'citizenship education' will be used simply to refer to the preparation of pupils for a future role as citizens in their

country. The position taken is that citizenship education necessarily involves political education, as citizens need to acquire the basic concepts needed to understand socio-political situations and issues, and to evaluate these and act accordingly.

Irrespective of the terms used, an important aspect of citizenship education concerns morality. An assumption in some programmes is that any effort at preparing children to be future citizens should include principles of morality, and even a carefully thought out moral education programme.

In the first instance, as was argued in the last chapter, there is a sense in which the term 'citizen' is a normative one: when used as an ideal, it can only be conferred on a person who thinks and acts in a morally appropriate manner. Hence, one reason why citizenship education must include moral education arises from the close relationship between moral and political evaluation and action. Patricia White argues, for instance, that concern about political matters is an extension of moral concerns:

conscientious recognition of moral value and claim commits one to applying those values and recognising those claims universally (White, 1977: 40)...

In any case, she argues, democratic government is an attempt to instantiate the moral values of a community in the general living arrangements (White, 1977: 40).

In other words, moral individuals should take an interest, not only in matters that affect themselves personally, but also in issues affecting others in the political community, as well as those concerning the policies and organisation of that community. At the same time, a democratic political system involves the institutionalisation of the community's values, thus making involvement in the political organisation of society an important expression of the individual's moral and democratic principles.

However, it is possible to overstate the need for political participation, and to justify one's lack of participation. There might, for instance, be little impetus or need for individual citizens to take an active role in the political arena if the government is functioning according to the accepted values and goals of the citizenry. There might also be individuals whose personal talents and inclinations are such that they prefer to concentrate their efforts in areas to which these are best suited. Such areas may have little to do with the arrangements of the political community, e.g. when a woman

devotes her life to taking care of the home and the family. Hence, in linking the need for political participation to morality, it is necessary to take the situation into consideration, e.g. the individual's particular circumstances, inclinations and ability, and whether the political situation demands such political action.

Having made that qualification, however, it must be said that White's argument, for the general need for moral beings to be concerned about events in the political arena, is a persuasive one. After all, it would be a morally dubious person who did not care about what happens in the political sphere, or the impact of these on other people, even if he or she might otherwise live according to his or her moral precepts.

In any case, individuals in modern democratic societies are not just moral beings, they are citizens as well. To describe a person as a citizen is to highlight his or her membership of a political community, and his or her contribution towards determining the policies and organisation of that community. Otherwise, any other term of reference might be used, e.g. a saint (a member of a moral and religious community who leads a morally laudable life), a consumer (a member of an economic community who interacts with the other members through the purchasing of goods and services), etc.. Each of these terms places the person in a particular context, and highlights the attributes associated with that context. A citizen is someone who functions in his or her political community using the avenues that are available to influence the political process. At the same time, he or she thinks and acts with reference to the interests and moral framework of that particular community.

The argument here is that, as a member of a community, the individual would have to act with reference to the shared understandings and values with which all in that society construe actions and events. After all, a citizen is never a citizen *per se*, but is necessarily a citizen *of* a particular country, and a member of a particular community. No action would have meaning except in the context of understandings held in common with fellow members of a community. With the exception of controversial issues, these actions are evaluated according to the values shared with those members.

This is not to say that individuals may not deviate from accepted values, or that there may not be differing interpretations of these; it does not mean that the good citizen is a conformist. Neither does it imply a thesis of cultural relativity in which the sole criteria of judgement are the extant values of the particular society to which one happens to belong. The way in which objections with regard to conformity and

cultural relativity can be countered will be elaborated on in later chapters. The point here is simply that there has to be reference to shared values and understandings: while total conformity without personal deliberation would make a mockery of morality, action is meaningless if taken without reference to shared values and understandings.

It can be seen, therefore, that political participation is an important expression of a person's morality. The individual's participation in the political sphere also calls on moral principles, with the consequence that reference has to be made to the shared values and understandings of the community. However, there is a question as to what these shared values might constitute in plural societies where there are different, sometimes conflicting, values and value systems. It would therefore not be surprising that there is a concern, in the documents and programmes of citizenship education in England and Wales, with the values which can legitimately be espoused. It will also become apparent, as the chapter progresses, that certain values and ideologies – and, with these, certain concerns – inform the conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education programmes.

3.3.2 Developments in citizenship education in England and Wales

This section provides an account of the developments in citizenship education as seen from official documents and citizenship education programmes in England and Wales. It will be seen that there has been a concern in recent years about the fact of plurality, and the appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches which should be used to handle this.

It was noted in Chapter 1 that there are different types of plurality. The Swann Report, published in 1985, highlights the cultural diversity in England and Wales resulting mainly from the immigration of Afro-Caribbeans and Asians, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s (Swann, 1985). The report is concerned with the need for educational policy to take into consideration the values and experiences of children from the different cultures.

It could also be noted that another type of cultural diversity which is applicable to England and Wales concerns the differences in values and shared

understandings arising as a consequence of regional or class affiliation (see Pring, 1992). The Londoner from the East End, for instance, would arguably find little in common with the 'establishment man'. Diversity of this kind needs to be taken into account.

Finally, as was noted in the last chapter, there is also the plurality arising from a broad moral diversity, i.e. from differences in moral values and world views. This factor is raised in two major documents dealing with citizenship education: *Curriculum Guidance 8: Education for Citizenship*, issued by the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1990), and *Encouraging Citizenship*, by the Speaker's Commission on Citizenship (HMSO, 1990). Apart from differences arising from cultural and social differences, a concern common to both documents is the way in which moral diversity should be dealt with in the classroom.

(i) *Curriculum Guidance 8: Education for Citizenship*

Curriculum Guidance 8 made citizenship education one of the cross-curricular themes of the national curriculum. The implicit belief was that the knowledge and skills relevant to citizenship could be spread over different subject areas. Its authors also believed that one of the essential components for citizenship education should concern the 'roles and relationships in a pluralist society' (original emphasis) (NCC, 1990: 5).

The recommendation of the report was that citizenship education should develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for exploring, making informed decisions about, and exercising responsibilities and rights in a democratic society (NCC, 1990: 2). Among the skills recommended were

- o communication skills, which are to do with arguing a case clearly, and detecting opinion and bias in evidence; ...
- o study skills, such as the planning, and completing of a project;
- o problem-solving skills, of defining problems and making choices in the light of evidence; and
- o personal and social skills, which are necessary in exercising democratic responsibilities and right.

It was also felt that pupils should acquire the attitudes essential to valuing democracy, and the duties, responsibilities and rights associated with these: e.g. independence of thought, a sense of fair play, a respect for different ways of life, beliefs, opinions and

ideas, a willingness to respect the legitimate interests of others, a respect for rational argument, and a concern for human rights.

It was further recommended that pupils be helped to 'develop a personal moral code and to explore values and beliefs' (NCC, 1990: 4). Shared values – such as 'concern for others, industry and effort, self-respect and self-discipline, as well as moral qualities such as honesty and truthfulness' – were to be promoted (NCC, 1990: 4). Unlike *Encouraging Citizenship, Curriculum Guidance 8* admits the need for shared values. However, these shared values refer more to generally accepted virtues and procedural values, rather than to substantive values.

There is also, in *Curriculum Guidance 8*, an emphasis on activities similar to those advocated in active citizenship. It is recommended, for instance, that pupils be given the opportunity to participate in decision making, and to participate in projects in the community, e.g. helping the elderly, the handicapped and the disadvantaged (NCC, 1990: 11-12).

(ii) *Encouraging Citizenship*

For the authors of *Encouraging Citizenship*, citizenship has to do with 'the perception and maintenance of an agreed framework of rules or guiding principles', rather than shared values (HMSO, 1990: 13). Members of a society constitute a community of fellow strangers because, no matter the differences, they share certain rules – such as the tenets of human rights – according to which they interact (HMSO, 1990: 13). What is shared, therefore, is a set of higher level principles or pre-determined rules that are regarded as being different in nature from 'values'

The distinction between guiding principles and shared values seems to resemble that between procedural and substantive values made by some theorists in citizenship education. The idea seems to be that the framework of rules functions as principles to guide interaction in a situation where there is diversity in substantive values. Hence, they are not substantive values as such; neither do they impinge on the substantive issue in question.

For the authors of *Encouraging Citizenship*, the 'agreed framework of rules or guiding principles' is found in the human rights which have been institutionalised in

both the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950. Following the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, *Encouraging Citizenship* reiterates the need to emphasise democratic values and human rights in preparing young people for life in a pluralistic democracy (HMSO, 1990: 15).

Like *Curriculum Guidance 8, Encouraging Citizenship* supports the idea of a participatory society, and advocates volunteer work, in the spirit of active citizenship.

Hence, there is in both documents a concern with plurality in terms of cultural, social and moral differences. There is also recognition that moral values and principles enter into citizenship education, and an attempt is made to identify the attitudes and values that might legitimately be promoted. The recommendation in the documents of the acquisition of certain skills and attitudes, such as tolerance and critical thought, reflects the concern that pupils should develop the skills and attitudes, needed for resolving issues, that were coherent with the principles of a democratic society, and necessary for its continued existence. The emphasis on 'guiding principles' or procedural values are seen as providing a solution to the thorny problem of substantive values. Similar concerns occupy the creators of the programmes for citizenship education, as shall be seen in the next section.

3.3.3 Citizenship education in England and Wales

In England and Wales, research on citizenship education has been conducted by a number of individuals and organisations. Among the individuals are Lawrence Stenhouse and Matthew Lipman, who have respectively been associated with the *Humanities Curriculum Project* and *Philosophy for Children*. The organisations include the following:

(i) The Politics Association

Set up in 1969 to 'provide a professional service for those engaged or interested in the teaching of political subjects' (The Politics Association Resources Centre. n.d.), the Politics Association was headed by Bernard Crick. The association developed the *Programme for Political Education* which is aimed at enhancing political literacy.

(ii) The Citizenship Foundation

The Citizenship Foundation set up in 1989 to encourage 'understanding of the rights and duties of citizenship and the workings of the political, social and legal systems of the democratic processes' (The Citizenship Foundation, n.d.(b); Rowe, 1993a). Two of its members, Don Rowe and Tony Thorpe, have developed materials for law-related education, including those for the *Law in Education Project*.

(iii) The Institute for Citizenship Studies

The Institute for Citizenship Studies was founded in 1992 by Bernard Weatherill following the publication of the report *Encouraging Citizenship* which he had commissioned as the Speaker of the House of Commons. One of the institute's projects resulted in a text meant for use in schools called *Democracy Then and Now*.

(iv) Centre for Citizenship Studies in Education, University of Leicester.

Set up in 1991 to advance the implementation of the proposals in *Encouraging Citizenship* (CCSE, n.d.), members of the Centre for Citizenship Studies in Education include Ken Fogelman and Janet Edwards. The centre has not developed a programme for citizenship education, although it has produced several books (Edwards, 1993; Fogelman, 1991a), and a teacher in-service training (INSET) pack, *Citizenship* (Edwards, 1994). In the latter, the focus is on the cross-curricular nature of citizenship education, and the material is meant to help teachers identify the issues relevant to citizenship in the respective curriculum subjects, and to develop ways in which these issues could be handled in the school and the classroom.

(v) Centre for Citizenship Development

Based at Anglia Polytechnic University, the Centre for Citizenship Development aims to 'stimulate debate and original thinking in the theory and practice of citizenship and its development' (CCD, n.d.). Apart from providing a forum for interdisciplinary research, it publishes research papers on citizenship development.

(vi) Centre for Values Education for Life

Headed by David Rowse, the Centre for Values Education for Life aims to provide 'a focus for relevant practical study, research and the provision of appropriate long and short courses on Values Education... of young people' (CVEL, n.d.(b)). It conducts courses, provides consultancy services and in-service training in areas related to values education.

(vii) National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

The NFER is involved in work in Personal and Social Education and Multicultural Education (Taylor, Monica, 1992: 7). It has set up a working party on the Citizen's Charter in relation to education, and disseminates information about activities in Values Education, including Citizenship Education.

(viii) The Norham Foundation

The foundation began life in the 19th Century as the Social Morality Council. Its key objective is to promote morality 'in every aspect of the life of the community'.(Taylor, Monica, 1994b: 81) It has established and assisted such journals as the *Journal of Moral Education*, and also supports projects such as a distance learning course in moral education, and curriculum development in personal and social education .

(ix) National Association for Values in Education and Training (NAVET)

Headed by William Robb, the association aims, among other things, to 'develop understanding and communication of the nature of values, and their application within education and training' (NAVET, n.d.). It publishes regular newsletters and discussion papers.

(x) The Centre for Alleviating Social Problems through Values Education (CAVE)

CAVE was founded in 1993 by William Robb to alleviate social problems through values education (Robb, 1994). CAVE works with researchers, educationists and parents to develop and implement programmes in values education.

(xi) The Gordon Cook Foundation

The foundation was set up in 1974 to promote citizenship and values in the United Kingdom. It does not undertake research, but funds research and development work by educationists and organisations (Gordon Cook Foundation, n.d.; Robb, 1991a: 37; Taylor, Monica, 1992: 3).

In addition, it would be pertinent to note that collaborative work has also been undertaken between institutions. An example is the EC TEMPUS 'Developing Schools for Democracy in Europe' (DSDE) Project. The project involves the collaboration of researchers at the University of Oxford (England), Masaryk University (the Czech Republic), the Jagiellonian University (Poland) and the Katholieke Universiteit (Belgium) (Sayer, 1995: 12). Research was conducted between 1992 and 1994. The project was based on the premise that the rapid decentralisation of systems and structures in Central Europe required radical change to educative processes; the nature of decision-making in and around schools was particularly crucial if the implementation of authoritarian systems or bureaucratic procedures was to be avoided. Among other things, the project attempted to develop a training programme that was appropriate to the devolution of responsibility in educational management across Europe (Sayer, 1995: 12).

While the research work done by the above organisations may have relevance to citizenship education, many have not produced programmes for citizenship education. The research of those organisations, and individuals, which have developed such programmes will be examined in this section. Five programmes will be presented. These span three decades of citizenship education in England and Wales.

Two programmes – the *Programme for Political Education* and the *Humanities Curriculum Project* – have been selected because of the thought and work that have gone into their development, and because of their influence on subsequent citizenship education programmes. For this reason, both will be included in this section although, strictly speaking, the former was conceived as a political education programme. While the latter did not deal explicitly with citizenship, Stenhouse did point out that 'the humanities' was the name which 'civics', 'personal relationships' and 'social studies' went by in England, all of which represent that 'sector of the curriculum in which the problems of handling value issues (were) most acute' (Stenhouse, 1970b: 105).

Two programmes are current ones produced by institutes that have been set up specifically to research and promote citizenship education in England and Wales. These are the *Law in Education Project* and *Democracy Then and Now*.

Matthew Lipman's *Philosophy for Children*, has been included for several reasons. First, Lipman's thought and methods have influenced the creators of the other citizenship education programmes, such as those of the *Law in Education Project* (The Citizenship Foundation, n.d.(a): 1). Second, *Philosophy for Children* has been introduced into England and Wales, as well as Singapore, and could arguably be exerting influence not only on the quality of future citizens, but also on citizenship education programmes in these countries.

All the programmes to be examined are directed at children ranging from 11 to 16 years; some do cater for a wider age, or provide supplementary components for younger or older children. Hence there are constants and, therefore, assumptions which make comparison of the programmes meaningful.

(i) *Programme for Political Education*

In 1974, the Politics Association launched a programme with a view to curriculum development and innovation in political education. The *Programme for Political Education* aimed to enhance political literacy, which was defined as

the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make a man or woman informed about politics; able to participate in public life and groups of all kinds, both occupational and voluntary; and to recognise and tolerate diversities of political and social value (Crick & Porter, 1978: 1).

To be politically literate, individuals needed to have some general knowledge of their society, including knowledge of the people, their history, and the economic and geographic factors which impinge on the society and its people (Crick & Porter, 1978: 45). They would also need to acquire notions of policy and policy objectives, and an ability to recognise how well policy objectives have been achieved, as well as to comprehend those of others (Crick & Porter, 1978: 39).

Where attitudes are concerned, Bernard Crick and Ian Lister believed that it would be wrong to define a politically literate person as someone who 'necessarily shares all the values of Western European liberalism' (Crick & Porter, 1978: 40ff.).

They held that, while all values should be 'interpreted in different social contexts', some are more 'conditioned' than others. The teacher should not therefore seek to influence substantive values; a 'frontal assault' was unlikely to be successful in any case. Instead, teachers should concentrate on procedural values such as 'freedom, toleration, fairness, respect for truth and for reasoning' (Crick & Porter, 1978: 41).

Crick and Porter emphasised two aspects of political education in particular: concepts and procedural values. As 'building blocks' with which individuals construct a picture of the world, concepts enabled people both to perceive and to communicate (Crick & Porter, 1978: 47). Crick and Porter therefore suggested that pupils should be introduced to basic or primary concepts from which other concepts are derived and on which theories, generalisations, explanations and moral judgements could be based (Crick & Porter, 1978: 49). The basic concepts included power, force, authority, order, natural rights, individuality, freedom, welfare, law, justice, representation and pressure. Pupils should also learn to use these concepts clearly and sensibly, and come to recognise their use by other people. The goal would be 'to improve the *usage* and *meaning* of concepts, not to judge the *truth* of propositions or assertions using them' (original emphasis) (Crick & Porter, 1978: 49). These concepts *qua* concepts are regarded as being value free; they are only 'value-charged' when used in political life (Crick & Porter, 1978: 63).

The second area that Crick and Porter emphasised concerned procedural values. These values included freedom, toleration, fairness, respect for truth and respect for reasoning (Crick & Porter, 1978: 64). Crick and Porter believed that these values were 'preconditions of political literacy or necessary assumptions of any political education which (was) not simply indoctrination or imposed socialisation' (Crick & Porter, 1978: 61). Hence, they would regard 'You should not steal' and 'You should not tell lies' as substantive values. However, 'Respect others' and 'Be tolerant of difference' would be considered procedural values since these inform the *procedure* of thought and debate, and do not impinge directly on the topic in question. Crick held that these procedural values were not liberal 'except in the broad humanistic sense' and that they were compatible with many different doctrines and social systems (Crick & Porter, 1978: 64).

The salient elements in the *Programme for Political Education* were therefore the emphasis on concepts and procedural values. As will be seen, there is also a similar emphasis on procedural values in Lawrence Stenhouse's *Humanities Curriculum Project*.

(ii) *Humanities Curriculum Project*

The *Humanities Curriculum Project* was set up in 1967 under the leadership of Lawrence Stenhouse, and continued into the early 1970s. The aim was to develop a pedagogical approach which would be relevant and responsive to the needs of the adolescent pupils who were beginning to lay the foundations of their own style, value positions and personality (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 4). At the same time, the project's designers believed that the nature of the humanities – viz., the arts, religion, history and the behavioural sciences – was such that personal beliefs and taste were of importance, and that this had implications for the authority of the teacher. The *Humanities Curriculum Project* was therefore devised 'to develop an understanding of social situations and human acts and of the controversial value issues which they raise' (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 1). It was also meant to extend the range of choice open to teachers by providing a new pedagogical approach.

The topics chosen for the project included war, education, the family, relations between the sexes, poverty, people and work, living in cities, law and order, and race relations. Race relations was subsequently dropped, mainly because of pressure from the teachers' unions arising from the controversial nature of the contents, and of the neutral stance in relation to these.

The idea was to handle human issues, such as those raised in these topics, in a manner that met the needs of both the teacher and pupil. Many of these issues were controversial as they divided students, parents and teachers. There was no agreement in society on the criteria for resolving these questions, a fact which prevented their being settled by evidence and experiment (see Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 6). In such a situation, it was recognised that pupils' views might legitimately differ from those of the teacher. This would need to be taken into account in the teaching strategy used.

From the point of view of the teachers, the fact that the issues were controversial placed them in a predicament. The problem would not be solved by the school laying down particular line; since it was impossible to achieve a consensus in a controversial issue, teachers who did not agree with the position adopted would be involved in 'systematic hypocrisy'. Encouraging teachers to express their opinion on the issue in question was not a solution either; teachers who did so could be accused of using their position of authority and privilege 'as a platform from which to propagate (their) own view' (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 7). Hence, there was the question as to how controversial issues should be handled in the classroom.

Another concern was of a pedagogical nature. Stenhouse and his team noted that modern adolescents were often cynical about school. They attributed this cynicism to

the tendency of schools to limit the extent to which students can shape their educational experience by their own choice, the endorsement by schools of styles of thinking, speaking, dressing and behaving which are merely expressions of social class or generational fashions, and the adoption of authoritarian patterns of control, that is the use of authority without sufficient sensitivity to the need to justify it to those affected by it (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 3).

The result was that the teaching methods used were ineffective in achieving educational aims, and in meeting the needs of the pupils. A different teaching strategy therefore needed to be devised.

The solution proposed by the *Humanities Curriculum Project* was for teachers to 'aspire to neutrality' in dealing with controversial issues; that is, teachers accept neutrality as a criterion by which to criticise their performance (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 7-8). Such an approach was not value-free in that any educational procedure necessarily involves certain values. In other words, teachers should be committed to values that could be justified in educational terms (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 8). Following R S Peters, the programme designers stated their belief that 'education' should rule out certain procedures of transmission if they lacked wittingness and voluntariness (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 9). This view of education implied certain standards 'fundamental educational values'- such as those of rationality, imaginativeness and sensitivity. It also meant respect for persons and a readiness to listen to the views of others (Stenhouse *et al.*, 1970: 9).

The outcome of these considerations was a teaching strategy, meant for use in controversial issues, that was based on discussion rather than instruction. In these discussions, teachers took on the role of a neutral chairman. However, the neutrality of teachers with regard to the issues being discussed did not mean that no values were involved. There were 'fundamental educational values' which should be upheld

Stenhouse's 'fundamental educational values' resemble Crick and Porter's 'procedural values'. Like the *Programme for Political Education*, therefore, the *Humanities Curriculum Project* highlighted the need for procedural values in the classroom. It also tried to come to grips with the issue of how controversial issues could be handled in the classroom. Controversial issues are inevitable in any plural

society, and political education is a necessary aspect of preparing children for their role as future citizens. Hence, Stenhouse's and Crick and Porter's recommendations have relevance for citizenship education. These two programmes will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 5. In the meantime, an examination of the current citizenship education programmes in England and Wales will reveal concerns similar to that of Stenhouse and Crick and Porter.

(iii) *Law in Education Project*

A recent attempt at citizenship education is the *Law in Education Project*. Started in 1984, the project was devised by Don Rowe and Tony Thorpe, both of whom are associated with the Citizenship Foundation. The *Law in Education Project* has developed a series of texts aimed at introducing children to the law, the issues related to it and the rights and duties it entails. The text directed at the 11–14 age range is called *Living with the Law*¹. It comprises three books: *The Family and the School*, *In the Community* and *Applying the Law* (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 5-7). Topics include the laws of the land, and legal and moral aspects of these, the due process of the law, and the nature of policing and punishing of crime. Hence, the *Law in Education Project* aims to inform pupils of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

It also aims to develop in them the skills and attitudes which would enable them to exercise these rights and responsibilities effectively. The skills include those of logical reasoning and of the use of evidence, as well as that of developing arguments. The attitudes include concern for justice and social responsibility, respect for the rights of others, and tolerance towards the values and beliefs of others (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 8). Rowe and Thorpe believe that group activity would lead not only to pupil involvement, but also to a promotion of these skills and attitudes (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 11). Following Lawrence Kohlberg, they theorise that discussion of moral dilemmas, if conducted in mixed ability groups, would most effectively help children to reach a more developed stage of moral reasoning, viz. that of 'rule creating' (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 16). As a result, the activities of the book are designed with group work in view.

¹Older children are catered for in the *Law in Education (14 - 16) Project*, also by the same team.

The development of 'critical and reflective thinking' is also considered to be important in citizenship education (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 10). For this reason, teachers are advised to use open questions to help pupils clarify their views, and examine and develop their beliefs

The teacher's role is that of facilitator and guide; they should stimulate interest, challenge assumptions, and help pupils draw conclusions (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 9). In dealing with controversial issues,

the teacher should avoid supporting one particular view and should ensure that a balance of opinion or beliefs is offered during the lesson. Pupils should be asked to support what they say with reasons and evidence, giving those who might disagree an opportunity for comment. If none arises, the teacher should provide an alternative point of view, as appropriate (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 10).

This approach is required under the *Education (No. 2) Act 1986* (Rowe & Thorpe, 1993c: 10). Also, as will be seen, the recommended role of the teacher in general, and the approach to controversial issues in particular, resembles that recommended in the *Humanities Curriculum Project*.

One of the main concerns in the *Law in Education Project* is as follows:

Younger people... encounter situations in which knowledge of their rights and duties would be beneficial for example, in consumer (sic), family, discrimination and employment. Because of their age and inexperience, young people are particularly prone to be exploited and victimised (Rowe, 1992d: 57).

This concern is a laudable one. In fairness to Rowe and Thorpe, it should be pointed out that they do highlight the importance of the legal framework to the democratic process (Rowe, 1992d: 58). Nevertheless, their conception of citizenship is too broad. It has been noted that 'citizen' highlights certain characteristics of the individual, viz. that to do with influencing the political process. Being conversant with the law (e.g. criminal or consumer law) is only marginally related to one's ability to participate in this process. Hence, although an understanding of the law could be relevant to citizenship, a law-related approach to citizenship education, as conceived by Rowe and Thorpe, casts the net too wide: it includes and emphasises only some elements, and not the central ones at that.

(iv) ***Democracy Then and Now***

Democracy Then and Now aims to help children learn about democracy as it was practised in ancient Athens, and as it is practised in England and Wales today. The idea is to draw from the past lessons for the practice of democracy in the present.

Aimed at 14 - 16 year olds, the text offers them the opportunity

- o to develop understanding and knowledge of the distinctive characteristics (of purpose, rules and organisation) of the Athenian model of democracy...
- o to grasp some of the key developments of democracy since that time
- o to practise... skills (of)...
 - reasoned argument
 - valuing and negotiating differences
 - taking decisions together
- o to learn about democratic behaviour through experience of the school as a community, and from the broader experience of the school as an institution playing a role in the wider community...
- o to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the first democracy in relation to the needs of our own time (Lloyd *et al.*, 1993: 1).

The text is designed for group activity and discussion. Activities include re-enactment of the Athenian experience, and putting democracy into practice. For instance, pupils are asked to take part in a public debate using the process of public discourse of the Athenians. They then discuss and reflect on the democratic process, e.g. whether the debate seemed fair, and whether it was right that individuals should be bound by decisions they argued against.

The theory underlying *Democracy Then and Now* is not explicitly stated. The central aim appears to be to introduce children to Athenian democracy and, in so doing, to the principles which had been its motivation and source. Hence, the approach is a conceptual one in that it introduces children to the notion of democracy and the concepts associated with it. By contrasting modern with ancient democracy, the belief seems to be that the developments in democratic thought and practice, and the principles underlying these, would be made apparent. As was noted in the case of the *Programme for Political Education*, a conceptual approach helps children identify the use of the relevant concepts by others, and enables them better to understand the socio-political issues to which these are applied. Also, the supposed neutrality of these concepts means that the problems associated with an approach that attempts to incorporate, or deal with substantive values, are avoided.

Democracy Then and Now emphasises the skills of reasoned argument and of negotiating differences. Hence, importance is given to participation as it is traditionally conceived; i.e. it is a participation aimed at influencing policy through argument in public debate. In using group discussion to help children develop these thinking and speaking skills, *Democracy Then and Now* bears resemblance to the other programmes which have been examined so far and also, as will be seen, to *Philosophy for Children*.

(v) *Philosophy for Children*

Philosophy for Children was developed in the early 1970s in the United States by Matthew Lipman (Fisher, 1993; Lipman *et al.*, 1977; Lipman, 1991; Nickerson *et al.*, 1985b; Whalley, 1991). Lipman had observed that children do naturally what philosophers carry out in a more disciplined and sustained fashion. He theorised that the use of a style of presentation in which philosophical questions would be contextualised in stories would engage children's interest and make these meaningful for them (Nickerson *et al.*, 1985b: 281).

Lipman accordingly developed a series of novels, each based on a main character². The idea is to use these stories to stimulate children to think about and discuss philosophical questions. For instance, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* deals with such topics as thoughts and mind, rules and freedoms, rights and responsibilities, and vices and virtues (Lipman, 1993d). Aspects of logic and thinking are also elucidated. These include inferences and assumptions, syllogisms, moral reasoning, 'if.. then' arguments, and value judgements.

In accordance with his notion of a community of inquiry, Lipman's approach is one in which children discuss their ideas with one another. A community of inquiry is one in which

²The *Philosophy for Children* novels include:

Novel	Age
<i>Pixie</i>	7+ to 9+;
<i>Kio and Gus</i>	7+ to 9+;
<i>Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery</i>	11+ to 12+;
<i>Tony: Reasoning in Science</i>	12+ to 13+;
<i>Lisa: Reasoning in Ethics</i>	13+ to 14+;
<i>Suki: Reasoning in Language Arts</i>	13+ to 14+; and
<i>Mark: Reasoning in Social Studies</i>	14+ to 16+.

(Nickerson *et al.*, 1985b; Sutcliffe, 1993; Whalley, 1991).

students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions (Lipman, 1991: 15-16).

For Lipman, the aim of a community of inquiry is to generate a '*product*, ...(which is) some kind of settlement or judgement, however partial and tentative this may be' (original emphasis) (Lipman, 1991: 229). Entering into such an inquiry is to follow, as a community, the argument where it leads. In so doing, it is hoped that individuals would acquire and develop cognitive skills (e.g. identifying assumptions, making generalisations, and finding examples), and practise the use of cognitive tools (e.g. reasons, criteria, concepts, rules and principles). The process of communal reasoning also offers opportunity for children to build on each other's ideas and suggest counter-examples or alternative hypotheses (Lipman, 1991: 229-243).

In both *Philosophy for Children* and the *Humanities Curriculum Project*, there is the notion of a community in which children can engage in the process of thinking and exploring ideas and, in so doing, benefit from each other's contributions. There is also the idea that an essential part of the process is the learning and practice of the value of respect for others.

Like Stenhouse, Lipman attempts to come to terms with the issue of substantive values, and the teacher's role in relation to it. He believes that the goal of education is to free children from 'unquestioning, uncritical mental habits in order that they may better develop the ability to think for themselves... and... to devise their own sets of beliefs about (the world)' (Lipman *et al.*, 1977: 62ff.). That goal cannot be achieved, he argues, if the teachers attempt to 'implant' their values in the mind of the child; in any case, children should be allowed to hold their views, even if these differ from those of the teacher, as long as they achieve 'a better understanding of what they think and why they think and feel and act the way they do, and.. how it might be to reason effectively' (Lipman *et al.*, 1977: 63).

Perhaps Lipman puts his case too strongly. The idea that all individuals have the right to develop and pursue their notion of the good is a characteristically liberal one, and would have limited application to countries like Singapore, for instance, which cannot be described as 'liberal'. As will be argued, communitarian arguments suggest that it is only with reference to the 'horizons of significance' of a community,

that moral reasoning takes place, and that it is possible at all³. If this is true, then individuals would have to be aware of, and make reference to, the 'horizons of significance' of their community.

In any case, there are situations in which children's substantive values do matter, e.g. if these are of a racist nature. Hence, children do not only need to reason effectively, or have a good understanding of what they think and why they think in that way; what they think does matter. In correcting wrong values, the teacher would have the support of the community where there is general agreement on many values and virtues. Stenhouse's work is helpful in this context. He specifies that it is in the area of controversial issues that the teacher would appropriately adopt neutrality as a pedagogical strategy.

A point of clarification should be made here. Neither Lipman nor Stenhouse suggests that the teacher should simply remain neutral on these matters, and leave decisions entirely to the child. The teacher does have a part to play in pointing out errors of reasoning, and suggesting alternative points of view. Most importantly, the teacher is the mediator of the achievements of a culture for the pupils. Stenhouse sees the teacher as the mediator between the child and the best that has been thought and said on the subject. These could include novels, plays, poetry, newspaper articles, readings in social science, statistical tables, etc. (Stenhouse, 1971: 157). This material represents the various facets of public debate on matters where there was no consensus, and forms the evidence on which pupils could base their judgement. In the case of Lipman, the teacher, who is assumed to be familiar with philosophical thought, is supposed to introduce that knowledge where appropriate to help pupils in their struggle for understanding (Lipman *et al.*, 1977: 60-61).

3.3.4 Documents and programmes of citizenship education in England and Wales: salient points

The conceptions and concerns of citizenship education found in the two major documents, *Curriculum Guidance 8* and *Encouraging Citizenship*, are reflected in various programmes in England and Wales. As has been shown, there is the recognition that citizens of plural, democratic societies need to be prepared for involvement in the political process. There is also the recognition that such citizens do not share a notion of the good life or, perhaps, even a set of substantive values

³See Chapters 5 and 6 for a discussion of 'horizons of significance'.

which could guide their deliberations and resolve differences. The emphasis on the acquisition of intellectual and social skills is an attempt to deal with this problem.

Also, pupils need to employ such skills in debate and in making judgements; these skills also enable them to come to a better understanding of their own and other people's views. In helping pupils learn to think and argue rationally, and in a manner tolerant and respectful of other people, the programmes are, in effect, preparing pupils for their future role as citizens in a manner and spirit appropriate to the democratic society to which they belong.

Curriculum Guidance 8 and the citizenship education programmes also identify a number of qualities relevant to citizenship in a democracy: independence of thought, respect for the processes of the law and the rights of others, respect for rational argument, and respect for different ways of life, beliefs and opinions. These qualities reflect certain value assumptions which can be attributed to the liberal tradition. There is the idea, for instance, that individuals have equal moral worth, and that the interests of these individuals should be taken account of in the decision-making process. In addition, there are also the tenets of human rights which the authors of *Encouraging Citizenship* regard as higher order principles. Hence, although world views may differ - as may substantive moral values - there are higher order principles which might be agreed on by all in the community.

Curriculum Guidance 8 does state that there are substantive values, and moral qualities, to be promoted. It considers, as substantive values, concern for others, industry and effort, self-respect and self-discipline; the moral qualities include honesty and truthfulness. These values are largely non-controversial: most would be regarded as procedural by Stenhouse, and the authors of *Encouraging Citizenship*⁴.

There is general acknowledgement that there are controversial issues on which there is no agreement. Among other things, the documents and programmes emphasise the importance of acquiring the relevant knowledge so that pupils may, using the evidence available, form their own moral judgements⁵. Hence, a common way of handling controversial issues is to allow and help pupils explore their values and beliefs, and develop a personal moral code. This approach is consistent with the liberal idea that individuals should form and pursue their notion of the good life. The

⁴See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the distinction between substantive and procedural values.

⁵See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the nature and use of evidence.

basic direction of the documents and programmes seems to be to help pupils acquire the knowledge, skills and procedural values that they would need to do this.

With regard to substantive values, two reasons are offered for the teacher not seeking to influence the pupils, or even making these known. The first is based on the principle that, where such values are controversial, teachers would in effect be assuming a moral authority which is not justified against a social context of disagreement. The second is a pedagogical one: even if teachers sought to influence the substantive values, it would be ineffective, particularly if this was done in a heavy handed manner. The two reasons are quite distinct - one being a matter of principle, and the other of pedagogical effectiveness - and should be kept distinct. The rationale for this will be made clear in Chapter 5.

So far, this section has examined the major documents concerning citizenship education in England and Wales. It has also presented a number of programmes available to schools. The next sub-section looks at citizenship education as it has been practised in schools.

3.3.5 Citizenship education as practised in schools

In 1989, Ken Fogelman conducted a study on citizenship education in schools in England and Wales. He found that 43 per cent of schools in the study had 'an agreed policy or curriculum document or written statement particularly about citizenship studies' (Fogelman, 1991c: 42).

According to the study, only 11 per cent of schools taught Citizenship as a separate subject. Many more schools, however, included it as a theme in other subject areas such as History, Geography and Humanities, Home Economics, English, Business Studies, Economics and Social Studies (Fogelman, 1991c: 43). Aspects of citizenship were also covered during the form time of tutorial groups, and in Personal and Social Education (Fogelman, 1991c: 44).

Half the schools had regular lessons on Citizenship or Community Studies throughout the year (Fogelman, 1991c: 44). These were often supplemented with community activities and service, e.g. visiting the elderly, and volunteering for environmental or fund-raising projects (Fogelman, 1991c: 37). Pupils were also

given the opportunity to gain practical experience of representation and participation in the decision making process. 97 per cent of schools had a school council elected with pupil members by the student body, and 54 per cent held mock political elections (Fogelman, 1991c: 45).

Fogelman's findings are not surprising, given the cross-curricular approach recommended by *Curriculum Guidance* 8, and its emphasis on active citizenship in the form of volunteer work. With regard to a cross-curricular approach, it may well be the case that knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to citizenship are found in different subjects in the curriculum. However, unless these elements are co-ordinated, and a concerted effort made to tie these to citizenship, citizenship education could become submerged under the various subjects, and forgotten. Indeed, a research project by Geoff Whitty conducted three years after Fogelman's study indicated that only a quarter of schools had written documents on citizenship education, compared to 43 per cent in 1989. Whitty suggests that the other demands of the national curriculum, implemented in 1989, may have 'forced schools to cut cross-curricular work which previously took place' (Abrams, 1993: 10).

3.4 Assumptions in the conceptions of citizenship

It was seen, both in the official documents and in the citizenship education programmes, that there is a concern in England and Wales with regard to the way in which moral plurality should be dealt with in citizenship education. The approach most often used is one which emphasises the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for individuals to make their own judgements on value issues, and for their participation in the political process. There is also a preference to focus on procedural rather than substantive values. As will be seen, this an approach to citizenship is the consequence of a confluence of various traditions of thought. It is these traditions that will now be examined.

3.4.1 Types of social philosophy

It has been suggested that the form that citizenship takes is influenced by the philosophical and value assumptions made which, in turn, are embedded in the types of social philosophy held. In England and Wales, these types of social philosophy include liberalism, libertarianism, conservatism and democracy.

(i) Liberalism

It was seen in the last chapter that some early statements of liberal thought in the modern era can be found in the American Declaration of Independence, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. These proclaimed all men equal, and acknowledged that they had certain inalienable rights, such as those to liberty, property and security.

Liberals are committed to individualism, which 'asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity' (Gray, 1986: x). The metaphysical and ontological bedrock of individualism is the belief that the individual is prior to the society (Vincent, 1993: 32). In addition, individuals are regarded as having the same moral status in that no one is considered more important than any other (Gray, 1986: x).

An outcome of this individualism and egalitarianism is that the needs and interests of the individual are taken to be sovereign (Vincent, 1993: 32). Individuals are seen as being entitled to their desires and interests, which they are in the best position to judge, and to see these fulfilled. Hence, tolerance is required for individuals, with respect to their conception and pursuit of the good life, both from other individuals and from the state. In political terms, individuals and their needs and preferences provide the benchmark by which the legitimacy and success of public policy are to be determined.

Two other distinctive elements of liberalism is that it is universalist, i.e. it affirms 'the moral unity of the human species and (accords) a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms' (Gray, 1986: x); it is also meliorist; i.e. there is a belief of 'the corrigibility and improvability of all social institutions and political arrangements' (Gray, 1986: x).

Whatever the case is, the position taken in liberal thought concerning plurality is that individuals have the freedom to conceive and pursue their notion of the good life. Not only is the state not in a position to devise a notion of the good, towards which its policies are to be directed, but also it is the individual and his or her preferences that provide the bases by which the legitimacy and success of policies are to be judged.

(ii) Libertarianism

Two forms of liberalism have emerged in the last few decades. One of these is contractarian liberalism in which an attempt is made to work out the principles underpinning the political arrangement of a society on the basis of a contract made between its members. The main proponent of contractarian liberalism is John Rawls, and his ideas will be discussed in Chapter 6.

On their part, libertarians tend to be suspicious of state intervention (Kymlicka, 1992a: 95-159). Robert Nozick, for instance, argues in favour of the minimal state and rejects any attempt to bring about distributive justice (Plant, 1992: 122ff.). He believes that any form of government intervention – outside of, perhaps, the need to protect natural rights – encroaches on the rights of individuals. To tax someone in order to redistribute wealth to another constitutes an indefensible incursion on the liberty of the one who is taxed.

Nozick belongs to one school of libertarianism. The most well-known advocate of the other school is F A Hayek. As was noted earlier, this school emphasises the role that the economic system plays in liberty. The argument is that individuals express their preferences in the way they allocate their financial resources. This manner of expression is an essential aspect of personal liberty and should not, as such, be interfered with. At the same time, the response of market forces to individual preferences constitutes the best way of allocating resources and goods and services. Hence, the workings of the free market allow for the freest expression of liberty by individuals, and for the desires and interests of individuals to be best met. For this reason, the preference is for the state to do as little as possible, so as to allow market forces to function.

Of the two forms of libertarianism, it is Hayek's that has influenced the Conservative Party in the last decade or so. This influence can be seen in the party's conception of the citizen as a consumer. The linking of the economic system and personal liberty has meant that consumer-related issues are given greater significance as these are regarded as impinging on the liberty of the citizen. The Tories have accordingly given emphasis to consumer-related issues, such as the quality of public or newly privatised services.

The point has been made, however, that the kinds of competencies and entitlements to do with the consumer are not essential to citizenship. Also, if

'citizenship' is to be used non-trivially, it has to be used with reference to certain characteristics necessary for functioning effectively in the political process, e.g. the capacity to understand and influence the political process.

(iii) Conservatism

To understand the Tory party's approach to citizenship, it might be helpful to note that its conception of citizenship is inspired by Conservative thought as well. Chief among the concepts associated with Conservatism is an organic view of society (Buck, 1975b: 25ff.). The social and political institutions of a country are regarded as 'the result of a slow and gradual growth of custom, tradition, practice and formal enactment' (Buck, 1975b: 26). The belief is that it is on the gradual accumulation of such institutions and practices that the stability of state and society is based.

A consequence of the belief in the organic evolution of society is 'an opposition to revolutionary change based on any abstract doctrine', such as the rights of man or socialism (Buck, 1975b: 26-27). Although change is recognised as being necessary and desirable, the view is that this should be achieved by 'gradual adjustment' (Buck, 1975b: 27).

Another consequence is the acceptance of the existence of class as being the result of the accumulation of rules, precedents, and experience (Buck, 1975b: 26). It has been noted that a two tier approach has been used in citizenship education in England. During the Victorian period, for instance, some children were trained to serve king (or queen) and country, while others were supposed to be obedient and submissive. There is still a remnant of the notion of 'a natural aristocracy', in which members of the educated classes are expected to provide leadership for the community (Buck, 1975b: 27).

The Tory party's social policy is also informed by Conservative traditions such as the diffusion of power, civic obligation and voluntary service (Hurd, 1988: 14). It is to these traditions that Douglas Hurd attributes the Conservative policy of encouraging active citizenship and, hence, the emphasis on personal responsibility.

If the assumptions and traditions which shape Conservative ideas and policies are the result of historical development in England and Wales, then these are, by and large, unique to these societies. This being the case, it would only be expected that

societies which have different assumptions and traditions would have different conceptions of the ideal citizen.

(iv) Democracy, participation and deliberation

It was seen in the last chapter that the notion of citizenship is closely allied to that of democracy. Derived from the Greek term '*demokratia*', democracy means 'rule by the people' (Gutmann, 1993c: 411). At its most basic, therefore, it refers to a political system in which the ruled have a role in determining or influencing who the rulers are to be, and the policy decisions made. Today, this usually involves the conducting of elections at regular intervals. Because of the equal moral worth of individuals, it is also believed the amount of political influence each person wields should be equal; this belief is embodied in the one-man-one-vote system.

Beyond this general level of agreement, however, there is controversy with regard to how democracy is to be defined; the adoption of one or the other of the possible definitions could make a difference to the kind of democracy adopted. At the same time, many modern democratic institutions - e.g. freedom of the press, civic institutions, and other institutional structures in which democratic principles are instantiated - do vary from country to country, and are derived in part from the ideology, traditions and beliefs of that society. Indeed, Amy Gutmann distinguishes between six different forms of democracy. Depending on its sources of influence, democracy can be Schumpeterian, populist, liberal, participatory, social or deliberative (Gutmann, 1996: 412-418). Hence, any particular interpretation of democracy simply constitutes one among a number of possible interpretations, and is influenced by the ideologies, traditions and values of a society. The Anglo-American model of democracy, for instance, is usually referred to as liberal democracy, highlighting the influence of liberal thought on it. •

It was noted in Chapter 2 that, in recent years, the contribution of the individual to the decision making process has taken the form of political participation. In Western liberal societies, individuals may contribute to local or national politics by writing to political representatives, working in unions, joining pressure groups, or organising campaigns and demonstrations. It has also been noted that the need for individuals to exert control over the environment in which they live and work is sometimes used to support arguments for the institutionalisation of democratic

practices in the work place and in schools. This often takes the form of consulting individuals, and involving them in the decision making process.

Given the perceived importance of participation in Western democracies, it is not surprising to find participation of one form or another in the documents and programmes on citizenship education in England and Wales. Importance is placed on participation in the traditional sense, viz. in the sense of influencing policy decisions. There is, accordingly, the provision of opportunities to develop the skills of reasoning and debate needed for such participation, both in the recommendations of the documents, and in the citizenship education programmes. Importance is also given to participation in the form of active citizenship. In this regard, there has been an emphasis on voluntary and community work in the documents, and a number of the programmes, examined.

The arguments of J R Lucas in favour of participation, as it is traditionally conceived, were briefly noted in the last chapter. It is worth examining his arguments in greater detail here (Lucas, 1976: 136ff.).

Lucas's first argument is grounded in the nature of community. For him,

participation is both a corollary and a cause of our speaking of communal decisions in the first person plural rather than the third... (A) society in which this is the case is more united and cohesive than one in which most people regard themselves simply as subjects, passively obedient to the powers-that-be, but not active supporters (Lucas, 1976: 142).

In other words, participation is a manifestation and an expression of belonging to a community. It engenders a sense of ownership over issues and decisions pertaining to these issues; and, because individuals who have taken part in a public debate would be better able to understand decisions reached, these stand a better chance of being carried out (Lucas, 1976: 141-142).

Lucas also makes the point that no state can look after the interests of its subjects (sic) well unless it knows what these are, and participation is the only source of information about their opinions and desires (Lucas, 1976: 144). In addition, participation is a guarantee against tyranny; even if individuals are not able to have a particular view accepted, they could still prevent the most adverse decisions from being taken (Lucas, 1976: 144-145).

Lucas's views, and those of others like him, have had influence in recent years. In Western liberal societies, there has been a conviction that participation is the way forward for democracy. However, as was noted, participation is sometimes interpreted quite differently from the view put forward by philosophers like Lucas. In active citizenship, participation is seen to take the form of community work, such as raising funds for charities, or doing voluntary work through hospitals and churches.

The notion of active citizenship raises the question as to whether the definition of 'political' as being primarily concerned with the political organisation of society, is too narrow. However, this does not appear to be the case, given the earlier argument that the emphasis on voluntary community work though laudable highlights areas which are not central to citizenship as such. Indeed, this kind of voluntary work is not what Lucas has in mind when he writes about participation. Indeed, if Lucas's arguments are persuasive, they are persuasive because they deal with participation in the context of the individual as a political being, as a *citizen*. The notion of participation as traditionally conceived will be explored in greater detail as the thesis progresses.

Another form of democracy that has received attention in recent years is deliberative democracy (Cohen, 1989; Manin, 1987; Miller, 1989, 1995a). This refers to 'the ideal of a political community in which decisions are reached through an open and uncoerced discussion of the issue at stake where the aim of all participants is to arrive at an agreed judgement' (Miller, 1995a: 96). This form of participation is closer to what thinkers like Lucas had in mind than the kind of active citizenship which has been proposed in England and Wales.

Deliberative democracy is sometimes justified on the grounds that, if a nation is to be self-determining, its members should aim to achieve consensus about national policies; and this, it is argued, should be achieved through an open dialogue in which all points of view are represented (Miller, 1995a: 150). Joshua Cohen emphasises the fact that, where laws and policies are based on conceptions of common good, an aim of public deliberation is to work out the detail of such conceptions (Cohen, 1989: 18).

Both Cohen and David Miller also take the position that public deliberation shapes the identity and interests of citizens (Cohen, 1989: 19). Miller argues, first, that it is rationally defensible to consider national identity as part of individual identity; second, that nations are ethical communities; and, third, that political self-determination demands that there should be an institutional structure to enable a people to decide matters collectively (Miller, 1995a: 10-11). Public deliberation is

both a way to make collective decisions to determine, and to shape, national identity. Also, the national identity and the sense of solidarity that result provide the basis for such institutional schemes as the provision of the welfare benefits for the less advantaged. The notion of deliberation will be discussed in greater detail as the thesis progresses.

A number of social and political philosophies were presented in this section, and the ideas and values which underlie the notion of citizenship, and the citizenship education programmes, were related to these. An approach often used in citizenship education is one which emphasises the acquisition and development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make informed decisions; there is also a preference to focus on procedural rather than substantive values. Apart from the importance is given to preparing children for political participation in the traditional sense, there has also been an emphasis on active citizenship.

3.5 Conclusion

The present chapter examined the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales as reflected in public statements and policies, and in citizenship education programmes available to schools. An account was provided of the conceptions of citizenship that have developed over the last hundred years. In the last two decades, there has been a return to a conception of citizenship that had currency in the Victorian period, one in which citizens were responsible for others in the community, and contributed their time and resources accordingly. Promoted together with active citizenship is the notion of the citizen as consumer. It was also observed that regional citizenship and world citizenship have gained currency in recent years.

In addition, there is a recognition that citizens in plural societies need to be prepared for involvement in the political process. However, such societies do not have a single notion of the good life, or a set of substantive values, which could guide deliberation and help resolve differences. The focus has accordingly been on the acquisition of the cognitive and social skills which would enable pupils to come to a better understanding of their own and other people's views, and which they would need to engage in debate and to make judgements in a manner appropriate to a plural, democratic society. Where controversial issues are concerned, a common way of

handling these is to recommend that pupils be helped to explore their values and beliefs, and to develop a personal moral code..

Pupils are also encouraged to acquire the knowledge, skills and procedural values that are needed to help them, not only to develop a personal moral code, but also to participate in a democratic political process. There is often an emphasis on the acquisition and application of procedural values, such as a respect for rational argument and for different beliefs and opinions. It was argued, however, that these values – e.g. that individuals have equal moral worth, and that they are entitled to conceive and pursue their notion of the good life – contain substantive value assumptions which are often associated with the liberal tradition of thought.

The penultimate section of the chapter presented a number of social and political philosophies: liberalism, libertarianism, Conservatism, and democracy, political participation and deliberation. It demonstrated the way in which these philosophies influence and shape the conceptions of citizenship and, hence, citizenship education in England and Wales.

Finally, it was noted that importance is given to preparing children for political participation in the traditional sense, viz. in the sense of influencing policy decisions. While there is emphasis on participation in the form of active citizenship, it was argued that such participation emphasises activities which are not central to citizenship as such.

The next chapter will examine the conceptions of citizenship, and the approach to citizenship education, in Singapore. These will be presented in the context of its social and political philosophies. The values and attitudes with regard to political participation will also be examined. The aim is to identify the value and philosophical assumptions in Singapore which are similar to, and different from, those in England and Wales.

Chapter 4

Conceptions of citizenship in Singapore

4.1 Introduction

It was observed in Chapter 1 that citizenship in Singapore has centred around two, sometimes related, themes. The first has to do with national identity and the related subject of shared values; the second concerns political participation.

At its independence, Singapore had all the accoutrement of a state. It had specialised agencies such as the police force and courts, and therefore had the capacity to be responsible for the maintenance of order (Gellner, 1993: 4). Whether Singapore could be described as a 'nation', however, was less straightforward. According to Ernest Gellner,

A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognise certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members (Gellner, 1993: 7).

While individuals belonging to the same nation need not share the same attributes, they share the same culture, or a 'system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating' (Gellner, 1993: 7). Indeed, the recognition of 'mutual rights and duties' assumes shared values and understandings, without which there would be no agreement on what these rights and duties constitute.

Similarly, a nation, for Anthony Smith, is 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members' (Smith, 1991: 14). In other words, a nation 'signifies a cultural and political bond, uniting in a single political community all who share an historic culture and homeland' (Smith, 1991: 14-15). Hence, for both Gellner and Smith, a shared culture is a criterion for a nation. The notion of a shared or common culture will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 7. In the meantime, 'shared culture' or 'common culture' will be used in the sense meant by Smith.

Where Singapore is concerned, it is questionable whether there was a shared or common culture at the time of independence and, hence, there are doubts as to whether a nation existed at that stage. The populace comprised an immigrant people, many of whom considered their country of birth as their homeland. Others had, in the years leading up to independence, looked towards Malaysia as the country to which they belonged. The sudden creation of an independent Singapore meant that a re-orientation was necessary. People who had been fellow Malaysians had now to be identified as the 'other' in contradistinction to Singaporeans.

Hence, the task of nation building which confronted the Singapore government after independence did not only involve the tasks of developing a viable economy, constructing the infrastructure, and housing the population; it also meant the building of a nation in the sense of providing the conditions conducive to the emergence of a people with a common culture, who would recognise each other as members of the same political entity.

The second theme of citizenship is concerned with the type of political participation appropriate to Singapore. As was seen in Chapter 1, the question of participation is the subject of an ongoing and controversial debate between the leaders of the country and the citizenry.

In the last chapter, the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales - as reflected in government policy and official pronouncements, and citizenship education programmes - were examined so as to identify the philosophical and value assumptions. This chapter performs a similar task in the context of Singapore. As will become apparent, government policy and school curriculum are closely linked as the latter is highly sensitive to the former.

4.2 Citizenship education in Singapore

4.2.1 Introduction

The education system in Singapore is highly centralised, and responsive to directives given by the Ministry of Education, and by the political leaders. At the same time, the purpose of the various citizenship education programmes has undergone modification over the years, emphasising to differing degrees the elements

of personal, moral, social and citizenship education. The different terms used to refer to the respective programmes have reflected their intended purpose. 'Civics' has been used at various points in the last three decades, and 'moral education' has been in use since the early 1980s. Whatever the variations in the emphasis of the different programmes, the element of moral education has always been present, as has that of preparing children for their future roles as citizens. Indeed, the ideal citizen is often described in moral terms. It could be inferred from this that moral education and citizenship education are integrated in the minds of the political leaders.

A difference in the approach to citizenship education in England and Wales, and Singapore, concerns the influence of the political leaders. In England and Wales, political leaders may devise conceptions of citizenship which may be reflected in the guidelines offered by independent bodies, such as the now defunct National Curriculum Council. These guidelines form the broad framework within which educationists work. Nonetheless, there is scope for initiative, experimentation and elaboration by educational theorists and curriculum developers. A consequence is that there may be a range of programmes from which schools may select for their use.

In contrast, Singapore's political leaders take a close interest in citizenship education programmes, and wield direct influence over these. For instance, two important reports on education were produced in the late 1970s, the *Report on the Ministry of Education 1978* (Goh Keng Swee *et al.*, 1979), and the *Report on Moral Education 1979* (Ong *et al.*, 1979). Both were undertaken by ministers; the former by Goh Keng Swee, then Deputy Prime Minister, and the latter by Ong Teng Cheong, then Minister for Communication. The Goh Report contains a preface by the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, in which he expresses his views on education in general, and citizenship education in particular. Hence, interest is taken in citizenship education by political leaders at a very high level.

As with policy development, curriculum design is highly centralised. Citizenship education is no exception. School text books are produced by the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS) which functions under the purview of the Ministry of Education. The involvement of the political leaders has gone as far as to influence the choice of curriculum developer. Goh Keng Swee, for instance, personally recommended a candidate to develop a moral education

programme. Robert Balhetchet was duly appointed, and subsequently produced *Being and Becoming*¹.

The centralisation of authority with regard to the school curriculum and curriculum development is part of a single-minded effort to build and mould a nation, and to ensure that the curriculum objectives and content are congruent with national goals. Hence, it is not surprising that the guidelines set down by the Ong Report are adhered to to this day. The CDIS team responsible for *Civics and Moral Education*, currently in use, acknowledge it as their reference point for the programme (Ho Soo Guang, personal communication).

Hence, the influence of policy makers on education, together with a common curriculum, mean that schools are highly responsive to the position taken by the political leaders and government bodies. Hence, the sense of strong political leadership, and of an integrated effort in nation building, experienced in the country as a whole, are felt no less in schools. This is not surprising since children, as the product of the education system, are expected to fit into the larger society, and to fulfil their role as citizens in an appropriate manner. Having set the context, this section next examines the development of citizenship education in Singapore.

4.2.2 Developments in education in Singapore related to citizenship education since 1959

Citizenship education in one form or another has existed in Singapore since the People's Action Party (PAP) took office. That the political leaders have always considered it an important aspect of education is clear from the attention given to it, and the many attempts over the years to improve it so as to meet perceived social and national needs.

Indeed, moral and citizenship education is considered so important, there is a co-ordinated and sustained effort throughout the curriculum to transmit relevant knowledge and desirable values. The content of History and Geography (or Social Studies) complement and supplement the civics and moral education programme. Apart from helping children understand historical events and themselves better, it is believed that History would enable them to learn useful lessons from the lives of

¹An account of government influence in the development of the Buddhist Studies syllabus can be found in Hill & Lian (1995: 204) and Kuah (1991: 34).

outstanding people (CDIS, 1994a: 3-5; Chew, Joy, 1988: 190ff.). There is a similar effort in English Language to transmit the knowledge and values associated with citizenship. Hence, English texts may give historical accounts of Singapore, e.g. Singapore during the Second World War and under Japanese occupation (CDIS, 1992d: 80-119); by including passages such as that on the family (CDIS, 1995: 36ff.), the texts also promote and reinforce the values found in *Civics and Moral Education*.

(i) *Ethics and Civics*

Between 1959 and 1966, citizenship education was taught as *Ethics* which had as its objective the inculcation of 'ethical values such as politeness, honesty, perseverance and kindness'. It also hoped to 'lay the foundation for character development in young children so that they would develop into self-respecting individuals and good citizens' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 2). In primary schools, the basic syllabus was supplemented by four volumes of stories which would illustrate 'right conduct'. There were also discussions and debates for pupils in secondary schools.

In 1967, the *Ethics* syllabus was revised and renamed *Civics*. The latter 'aimed at fostering in Singaporean pupils a sense of social and civic responsibility' (Chew, Joy, 1988: 72; Gopinathan, 1974: 4, 1988: 138), as well as 'a love for their country and its people' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 3). Coming two years after independence, the changes reflected the concern of the authorities to develop in children a sense of national identity. *Civics* retained the *Ethics* syllabus; the difference lay in the inclusion of values like patriotism, loyalty and civic consciousness (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 2).

Civics was made compulsory for all schoolchildren, and the syllabus was organised along six main themes: the individual, the family, the school, the community, the nation, and the world. It was to be taught in the mother tongue, which is generally deemed to be Mandarin, Malay and Tamil for Chinese, Malay and Indian pupils respectively (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 2ff.).

Citizenship education was not confined to the classroom. Formal lessons were supplemented by extra-curricular activities, particularly those of uniformed groups such as the National Cadet Corps, the National Police Cadet Corps, the Red Cross, and the Boy Scouts.

Hence, from the time the PAP took office, moral education and citizenship education have been viewed as an integrated activity; moral values and 'right conduct' were regarded as essential to being a good citizen. It could be noted that there has been an attempt to use the mother tongue in citizenship education since the 1960s. The position, that language is relevant to the teaching of moral and civic values, would be elaborated on and strengthened in subsequent years.

(ii) *Education for Living*

In 1973, the *Civics* syllabus for primary school underwent a revision, and emerged a year later as *Education for Living*. Developed for the purpose of social and moral education, it integrated *Civics* with History and Geography. These additional elements were deemed necessary to 'help pupils to understand and live under the changing conditions' (Chew, Joy, 1988: 72; Ong *et al.*, 1979: 2). *Education for Living* aimed to 'enable pupils to obtain a better understanding of how (Singapore) developed and of (its) geographical environment', as well as to 'help pupils to understand and appreciate the desirable elements of Eastern and Western traditions' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 3).

Like *Civics*, *Education for Living* was to be taught in the mother tongue. It was believed that 'Asian moral and social values, and the attitudes such as closeness in family ties, filial duties and loyalty (could) be conveyed and understood better in Asian languages', and that pupils would become more aware of their cultural roots and develop a stronger sense of nationhood 'if they knew their own language' (Gopinathan, 1991: 279).

Education for Living represented an experiment with the inclusion of History and Geography as part of citizenship education. With the Goh and Ong Reports², there was to be a reversal in policy, after which citizenship education would consist primarily of the moral and civic elements.

The insistence for moral and civic values to be taught in the mother tongue raises questions, first, as to whether there is a necessary link between language and values and, second, as to whether there is a conflict between attempts to build a nation and the fostering of ethnic culture and identity through an emphasis on ethnic values and languages. These, and related issues, will be examined in Chapter 8.

²See the next two parts of the present section for accounts of the Goh and Ong Reports.

(iii) ***Report on the Ministry of Education, 1979***

In the late 1970s, a team headed by Goh Keng Swee was commissioned to look into education in Singapore. An outcome of the report that was produced was the implementation of streaming which was to be done according to language and academic ability.

While the focus of the report was the academic performance of pupils, a section was devoted to citizenship education. It criticised *Education for Living* and *Civics* for including 'irrelevant' material. *Education for Living* was said to contain sections about community centres and government outpatient clinics which were 'of little value in inculcating moral beliefs in children' (Goh Keng Swee *et al.*, 1979: 1(5)); *Civics* taught children details of the Republic's constitution that even Members of Parliament did not know about. In view of this, the report recommended that children be taught 'simple ideas about what a democratic state is, how it differs from other systems of Government and what the rights and responsibilities of a democratic state are' (Goh *et al.*, 1979: 1(5)).

The Goh Report contains a significant pronouncement in its preface by Lee Kuan Yew on the nature of citizenship. Given Lee's influence, his views are worth quoting at length:.

What kind of man or woman does a child grow up to be after 10–12 years of schooling? Is he (sic) a worthy citizen, guided by decent moral precepts? ... (The) litmus test of a good education is whether it nurtures citizens who can live, work, contend and co-operate in a civilised way. Is he loyal and patriotic? Is he, when the need arises, a good soldier, ready to defend his country, and so protect his wife and children, and his fellow citizens? Is he filial, respectful to elders, law-abiding, humane, and responsible? Does he take care of his wife and children, and his parents? Is he a good neighbour and a trustworthy friend? Is he tolerant of Singaporeans of different races and religions? Is he clean, neat, punctual, and well-mannered? (Lee, 1979b: iv-v)

Hence, the ideal citizen is seen in moral terms, as an individual who would hold certain moral principles, and display certain virtues. The conception of citizenship is essentially passive; the emphasis is placed on individuals fulfilling their civic and moral principles and obligations; this contrasts with the notion in England and Wales of the assertive individual who is aware of his or her rights, and who is able, among other things, to take steps to ensure that these are respected.

Lee stressed the importance of providing children with the 'basic common norms of social behaviour, social values, and moral precepts' (Lee, 1979b: v). The Goh Report also expressed the belief that it was 'a commitment to a common set of values that (would) determine the degree to which people of recent migrant origin (would) be willing and able to defend their collective interest' (Goh *et al.*, 1979: 1(5)). It accordingly recommended that formal instruction in moral education be given to all classes in all streams.

Lee also expressed the view that the 'best features of (the) different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups' were to be retained:

The best of the East and West must be blended to advantage in the Singaporean. Confucianist ethics, Malay traditions, and the Hindu ethos must be combined with sceptical Western methods of scientific inquiry, the open discussion methods in the search for truth. We have to discard obscurantist and superstitious beliefs and practices of the East, as we have to reject the passing fads of the West. ...We must reinforce... traditional family ties found in all Asian societies. But we must excise the nepotism which usually grows out of this extended family net of mutual help (Lee, 1979b: v).

Lee's list of desirable values and virtues, seen earlier, appears to be designed to cover the 'traditional' values and practices of the respective ethnic groups, as well as values like rationality and objectivity which are essential to modernisation. Apart from the need to be selective and to discard 'traditional' values and practices which were no longer applicable or acceptable, there was also recognition of the importance of cultural values and tradition. The Goh Report correspondingly made the point that, while moral education would provide school children with a set of moral values, these were not sufficient to provide the 'cultural ballast' needed to withstand external influences. To overcome the dangers of 'deculturalisation', it recommended that children be taught 'the historical origins of their culture' (Goh *et al.*, 1979: 1(5)).

Absent from Lee's list of virtues, and the rest of the Goh Report, are the procedural values emphasised in England and Wales. However, it was seen in the last chapter that these values are important for social engagement and debate in a plural society, and that this fact is recognised by British educationists. Hence, there is arguably a need for greater emphasis of these values in Singapore, together with the substantive values which underlie them. This position will be developed in Chapter 8.

Together with its preface, the Goh Report contains some significant pronouncements on the PAP's conception of citizenship. On the one hand, Lee and Goh stress the need to teach a common set of values. On the other hand, there is strong emphasis on the importance of retaining ethnic language and culture. At best, it is unclear as to how the latter goal is related to the former. At worst, the two could be contradictory. These questions will be examined in greater detail as the thesis progresses. Whatever the case is, the fear of 'deculturalisation' expressed in the Goh Report remains a concern of the political leaders and, if anything, has become more pronounced in recent years.

(iv) *Report on Moral Education, 1979*

In 1978, a committee headed by Ong Teng Cheong was appointed to examine the existing moral education programmes, and to recommend ways to develop a programme that would suit the needs of Singapore (Ong Teng Cheong *et al.*, 1979: i). The Ong Report, produced the following year, was critical of *Education for Living* and *Civics* which were used in primary and secondary schools respectively.

Where the pedagogical approach was concerned, the two programmes were criticised for not having been designed to suit the intellectual and moral development of the children. *Education for Living* introduced concepts and values such as love for the school, and service and duty - which were considered too difficult for children at the lower primary level. *Civics* dealt with topics such as the constitution, legislation and international relations at lower secondary school level. These topics were also thought to be too advanced for young teenagers.

The *Civics* textbook was also thought to be 'factual and dogmatic': 'There were too many "do's" and "don'ts" without adequate explanation and illustration of the "why" and "how"' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 5). It also contained 'insufficient illustration of the desired moral values and attitudes through the use of stories based on the lives of great men in history and religion' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 5).

Given the criticism that there were 'too many "do's" and "don'ts"', it is perhaps ironic that the report recommended that rules of conduct were to be drawn up. Primary school children were to learn these by heart, and to observe them, 'as the starting point for moral and disciplinary training' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 10). The report also suggested that situations of moral conflict could be introduced in secondary

schools, while upper secondary pupils were to participate more actively in the programme through discussions, debates, forums and dramatisation (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 10).

With regard to substantive content, both *Education for Living* and *Civics* were considered to be too wide in their scope, and to have insufficient emphasis on moral concepts and values (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 4). To correct this, the Ong Report suggested the introduction of 'key issues such as good citizenry, the need for national service and the inculcation of desirable moral values' (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 4). The appropriate form of moral education for primary school pupils should take the form of stories. Illustrations of moral value were to be drawn from Chinese, Indian and Malay mythology, history and literature; material from the West and other Asian countries could also be incorporated where suitable (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 5).

This approach to citizenship education, which aims to inculcate 'Asian' moral concepts and values, has clear similarities with that of the Goh Report. The Ong Report also specified that the primary school programme was to be conducted in the mother tongue as it believed this to be more efficacious in the transmission of Asian values and traditions (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 10). Here, as in the Goh Report, there is an assumption of the necessary link between language and values.

The Ong Report identified a number of moral values and concepts to be included in citizenship education programmes. Among other things, children were to be taught

- 1 Personal Behaviour
 - (i) Habit formation
e.g. diligence, courtesy and thrift.
 - (ii) Character development
e.g. integrity, honour, the spirit of inquiry, obedience,
self-discipline, filial piety, respect for elders and
tolerance.

- 2 Social Responsibility
 - (i) Sense of belonging to the community
e.g. civic consciousness, respect for others, respect for
law and order, and group spirit.
 - (ii) Respect for cultural heritage
e.g. understanding and appreciation of one's cultural
heritage and beliefs, and those of others.

- 3 Loyalty to the country
 - (i) Love of country
e.g. sense of national identity, upholding the democratic
system, patriotism, and justice and equality.
 - (ii) Spirit of nation building

e.g. appreciation of the pioneer spirit of one's forefathers and of their contribution to nation building, and understanding the internal and external threats to Singapore's survival and prosperity (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 9)

Hence, moral education was seen as beginning with habit formation, such as the learning of rules of conduct (Ong *et al.*, 1979: 10). Presumably, the knowledge and virtues associated with citizenship, were to be built on the basic foundation of habit formation. This progression is consistent with the theory of moral development, such as that propounded by Lawrence Kohlberg, and supported by R S Peters (Peters, 1973: 33-72)³. However, as with the Goh Report, there is an absence of the skills of critical thought and of the procedural values considered so crucial to citizenship education in England and Wales.

The Ong Report led to the introduction of two new citizenship education programmes, *Being and Becoming* and *Good Citizens*.. Another outcome was the introduction of Religious Knowledge which, it was felt, would reinforce the teaching of moral values.

(v) Religious Knowledge

In 1982, a Religious Knowledge component was made compulsory for secondary school pupils. Pupils had to choose one of several options offered: Bible Knowledge, Islamic Religious Knowledge, Buddhist Studies, Hindu Studies, Sikh Studies, Confucian Ethics, and World Religions. The instructions were that Religious Knowledge was to be studied 'as a classroom subject', and that there was to be no attempt at conversion. The aim was 'to help students appreciate the origins and precepts of the religions which have influenced Singapore's cultures and thus give an understanding of the moral principles that have shaped society' (Gopinathan, 1988: 139).

Hence, a distinction was made between religious knowledge, and religious instruction; it was the former that was the objective of Religious Knowledge. The introduction of Religious Knowledge was an additional element in the government's attempt to stave off what it perceived to be moral decline, particularly an increasing individualistic tendency, among the young, and to provide individuals with 'cultural ballast'.

³The subject of moral development and moral learning will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

By the end of the decade, however, Religious Knowledge was all but abandoned when it was made a non-compulsory option in school. Given that school children may take eight or nine examinable subjects at 'O' level, the inevitable result was that few would volunteer to take Religious Knowledge⁴.

The policy was reversed because of a perception that there was heightened religious awareness in the period after the introduction of compulsory Religious Knowledge. In 1989, political leaders expressed concern over an 'increase in evangelical fervour and assertiveness and competition for converts' among the religious groups (Lee Hsien Loong, 1989b). Given the 'delicate' and 'fragile' nature of religious harmony, it was feared that relations among the respective groups could degenerate into misunderstanding and even conflict (ST, 1989g). There was also concern that religion and religious precepts could be given (what the political leaders regarded as) an inappropriate application in politics, leading to social or political action that would adversely affect national security (Hill & Lian, 1995: 206ff.; Lee Hsien Loong, 1989b; ST, 1990a, 1990b).

It is unclear whether the perceived increase in religious fervour could in fact be related to the introduction of Religious Knowledge in schools. Nonetheless, it was believed that religious education could result in such a phenomenon, and action was taken accordingly.

(vi) *Being and Becoming*

Devised by Robert Balhetchet, *Being and Becoming* was pilot tested in 1981, and introduced into a number of primary and secondary schools a year later. The programme adhered to the recommendations in the Ong Report in terms of the three elements of personal behaviour, social responsibility and loyalty to the country. It was 'guided by the philosophy that moral justification and behaviour must be guided by the "common good"' (Eng, 1989: 9).

The approach used in *Being and Becoming* was one that encouraged pupils to deliberate and reflect on value issues, either singly or in groups (CDIS, 1986a: 1). Children were to be taught the five stages for making 'responsible choice': recognising options, evaluating options, taking a decision, taking a stand, and living one's convictions (CDIS, 1986a: 2). As will be seen, there are similarities between

⁴Tan Tai Wei (1994: 70-71) makes a similar point.

these stages and those advocated in the values clarification approach⁵. There is also the use of exercises designed to help pupils gain a clearer understanding of their thoughts and feelings, and goals and values⁶.

The programme takes the self as the starting point, before moving on to the family, the school, the neighbourhood, the nation and the world. Eng Soo Peck believes this approach to be in accordance with psychological and sociological theories of how children relate to the world around them (Eng, 1989: 9). Eng's view was that, of the values education programmes up till then, *Being and Becoming* was the most comprehensive in terms of 'its enunciated philosophy, its postulations of a conceptual frame and the development of a basic organising scaffolding for treating moral concepts and the clear articulation of an approach in teaching a particular value leading to making a crucial decision vis-a-vis behaviour' (Eng, 1989: 8). Eng's views notwithstanding, a study saw a number of teachers claiming that some of the changes were for the worse as pupils became 'more argumentative and more critical of teachers' (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 5).

It could be argued that, at the time of the study, the programme was only in its second year, and that teachers could have felt inadequate using a method of teaching moral concepts and values which was new to them. There is evidence that they were unsure if they were teaching the subject in 'an acceptable way' (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 18). If so, the problem would have been compounded by the fact that pupils in Singapore were generally accustomed to a role of passive acceptance. It would therefore have been a challenge to get them to think critically, to develop a well-argued position on a moral issue, and to defend this in the classroom⁷.

However, the issue goes deeper than this. Eng observed that teachers were more comfortable with the didactic method (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 20), and that some felt that role-play and discussion were 'Western techniques' inappropriate to Singapore (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 31). Teachers also questioned the appropriateness of the values promoted in the programme. They felt that the programme was 'biased' in favour of the Western values system, and inappropriate to the local context.

Although the criticisms are directed largely at the programme's methodology, the assumption underlying these are significant. The reason teachers so strongly defend the didactic approach is arguably because of their confidence in the

⁵Gopinathan (1988: 138) has made a similar observation.

⁶See, for instances, the exercises in the *Being and Becoming* text (CDIS, 1994b).

⁷Eng Soo Peck *et al.*, (1982: 21) put forward a similar view.

correctness and appropriateness of the moral concepts and values, not only for themselves, but also for their pupils. Without this confidence, there would be little point in insisting on a dogmatic method of teaching these values. Hence, it is *because* of the confidence with which a particular set of values is held that the dogmatic approach is preferred.

Also, the value systems of teachers, irrespective of ethnicity, have as an important element, a respect for elders. Given this, and given the sense of confidence in the values held, it is not surprising that the teachers felt uncomfortable with a classroom situation in which their stature both as elders and as keepers and transmitters of traditional values was challenged by pupils. At least, that is how pupils' behaviour could be interpreted when they deliberated, questioned and contested the values and ideas put forward by the teacher. Hence, there is the question as to the manner in which substantive values should be taught in a society which values respect for elders.

It was seen in the last chapter that a deliberative approach is sometimes used in England and Wales in which pupils are encouraged to deliberate, debate and arrive at their own judgements. One form of the deliberative approach involves teacher neutrality.

As was suggested in the last chapter, such a deliberative approach can be advocated for two distinct reasons. One reason is pedagogical in nature. The argument is that a deliberative approach involving teacher neutrality is effective because pupils are persuaded of the correctness and appropriateness of a value or evaluation: because they have questioned the premises and evidence on which the value or evaluation is based, they would hold more strongly the conclusion reached.

The second reason is a substantive one arising out of a situation of moral plurality. Here, the deliberative approach is advocated because it is impossible, in the case of controversial issues, to justify teachers promoting one position over another. For both pedagogical and substantive reasons, therefore, the preference is to allow children to deliberate on the issue in question, and allow them to make up their own minds

The arguments in favour of a deliberative approach like pedagogical neutrality, proposed by English educationists, will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 5. As can be seen from the later citizenship education programmes, Singapore educationists are increasingly supportive of the use of deliberative

approaches, sometimes for the substantive reason, and often for the pedagogical reason. Eng's study also showed that 'a substantive number' of teachers supported the use of the deliberative approach, such as that found in *Being and Becoming* (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 18-19).

This positive attitude notwithstanding, there still remains an unresolved conflict between the confidence felt towards 'traditional values', and the use of deliberative approaches. In the former, it is held that certain 'traditional values' are right and appropriate for both teacher and pupil. The latter, however, recognises the existence of controversial issues, and is often grounded in the liberal belief that individuals should select and pursue their notion of the good life, and that children should make their own decisions particularly where controversial issues are concerned⁸. Hence, although the Ong Report advocated the incorporation of teaching strategies which encourage pupil deliberation and participation, there is the question as to how these strategies could be reconciled with a confidence in 'traditional' values. This and related issues will be explored in greater depth as the thesis progresses.

(vii) *Good Citizens* (original programme)

First developed in Chinese, the *Good Citizens* text comprises short narratives with moral themes. These passages describe approvingly and in story form such virtues as helpfulness, caring and providing support for one's parents, dedication, selflessness and patriotism⁹. Occasionally, topics related to citizenship are raised. The passage 'Polling Day', for instance, highlights the importance of voting, and the need to vote responsibly (CDIS, 1983a: 24-25).

S Gopinathan describes the Chinese *Good Citizens* texts as '(drawing) heavily for illustrative material from Chinese myths and legends' (Gopinathan, 1988: 138). There are, however, contemporary illustrations of the values and virtues which children are supposed to acquire (see, for instance, CDIS, 1983a, 1983b).

Good Citizens was to be taught in the mother tongue, by second language (or 'mother tongue') teachers, who are generally considered conservative in terms of their values and teaching style. The prescribed teacher-centred approach that was

⁸See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the conditions in which the teacher should respect the decision of the children where these differ from their own.

⁹See, for instance, the *Good Citizens* text (CDIS, 1983b).

prescribed was in keeping with the preferred prescriptive teaching style of these teachers (Gopinathan, 1988: 138). Indeed, Eng found that

Methods of instruction used by most of the teachers were mainly of the direct moralising and chalk-talk kind with some discussion and activities included. ...(There) was a tendency for teachers to 'tell' pupils (sic) so that the immediate outcomes of the lessons were limited to pupils' ability to know and understand the concepts, their ability to tell right from wrong and to strive to conform to the norms or expectations set (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 38).

Nonetheless, Eng also found that

Many teachers were aware that conflicts existed between the values taught in the school and those practised outside the school and that there was little guidance available to help them teach pupils deal with such conflict. The result was that pupils behaved or tried to behave according to the norms set in the school and probably practised a different set of values outside (Eng *et al.*, 1982: 38).

In other words, teachers realised that pupils were responding to the didactic approach by giving the 'accepted' answers in the classroom, but behaving differently outside it. There appears to be an implicit acknowledgement of the inadequacy of the approach used, both in terms of the effectiveness in transmitting values, and in meeting the children's needs. This problem will be examined in greater detail as the thesis progresses.

A decision has since been taken to revamp *Good Citizens* and *Being and Becoming*, and to replace these with the Civics and Moral Education syllabus¹⁰ designed for both primary and secondary schools. No official reason has been given for the decision. The section after the next one will examine the work done on the methodology currently in use in comparison to that used in the original *Good Citizens* programme and in *Being and Becoming*.

¹⁰It is necessary to make a distinction between the terms 'programme' and 'syllabus' here as the stand taken by the team in charge of *Civics and Moral Education* at the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore is that the changes have been one of modifications made to *Good Citizens* and *Being and Becoming* syllabuses, rather than a complete reworking of the two programmes (Chia Ban Tin, personal communication). It should also be noted that the Civics and Moral Education syllabus encompasses those of *Good Citizens* and *Civics and Moral Education*.

4.2.3 Effects of citizenship programmes

At this juncture, it would be useful to look at an empirical study conducted in the late 1980s of the effect of moral education in schools (Chew, Joy, 1988). Joy Chew conducted a study of a state school in Singapore in which she examined moral education as reflected in both the formal and the hidden curricula, and the effects on pupils. She observed pupils at work and play, and interviewed teachers, pupils (present and past) and parents.

Chew's ethnographic account of the school is one that many Singapore teachers would recognise. Among other things, she described the conflicting messages that children received. On the one hand, they were exhorted by teachers, and taught in civics and moral education lessons, the virtues of selflessness and of putting the community before the self. On the other hand, they were placed in a selective and highly competitive school system in which those who were more individualistic and, hence, more able to compete more effectively, tended to do better in examinations. Given these conflicting messages, it was inevitable that the children were faced with frequent dilemmas in terms of how they were to resolve conflicts of interest.

Added to this was the fact that the pupils approached problems, including personal ones, in a pragmatic way, frequently using a type of logic that linked means to ends. For instance, extra-curricular activities were pursued, not simply out of interest, but because of the contribution it would make to the pupils' understanding of a particular subject, or the head start it would give them at some later stage. Hence, the Computer Club in the school had a good following, while the uniformed groups, which were more demanding in terms of training and group loyalty, faced dwindling membership.

The pragmatic, instrumentalist outlook of the children is possibly an outcome of the need to cope in a competitive education system, and of the meritocratic system in Singapore in which the greatest rewards go to those who perform best. Whatever the case was, Chew suggested that, where conflicts arose, children were inclined to resolve these in the direction of self-interest.

Chew's conclusion would not surprise experienced teachers who are involved in citizenship education. Robert Balhetchet, the former director of *Being and Becoming* who is currently involved in designing and teaching a moral education

programme in a mission school, has expressed the difficulty he faces in persuading a generation of prudential, pragmatic children of the need for, and importance of, moral principles (Balhetchet, personal communication).

To recapitulate, this section has examined the development of citizenship education in Singapore, and reviewed an empirical study on the effects of citizenship education in schools, up to the late 1980s and early 1990s. The following sub-section presents an account of citizenship education as it appears in schools today.

4.2.4 Citizenship education as practised in schools in Singapore today

(i) *Good Citizens* (modified programme)

Under the new Civics and Moral Education syllabus, the citizenship education programme for primary schools retains the name of *Good Citizens*, while that for secondary school is called *Civics and Moral Education*. The content of the Civics and Moral Education syllabus was expanded to include the five Shared Values that have been accepted at a nation-wide level. Work was also done on the pedagogical approach used.

The Civics and Moral Education primary syllabus was revised according to the following guidelines:

- o To inculcate desired Asian moral values
 - o To develop skills for making sound moral decisions
 - o To instil an awareness of the need for consideration for others
 - o To generate an awareness of social responsibility
- (Ho Soo Guang, 1992: 8)

There is recognition that, for children who are faced with moral dilemmas and value conflicts in a rapidly changing society, the sole use of the didactic method was no longer appropriate. A variety of teaching approaches was deemed to be necessary, and four approaches were adopted (Ho Soo Guang, 1992: 7-8):

- 1 The Cultural Transmission Approach 'aims at transmitting moral knowledge and norms accumulated in a culture to pupils through direct instruction'. Moral values and concepts are directly taught through story telling, recitation,

role play and discussion. The approach is considered appropriate for children at the lower primary levels.

- 2 In the Consideration Approach, pupils learn to empathise with others, and to care for them. A trigger activity, such as the recounting of a story and the use of role-play, is used to help pupils to put themselves in the other people's shoes.
- 3 The Cognitive Developmental Approach is based on Lawrence Kohlberg's theory that children go through three levels, comprising six stages, of cognitive development. The idea is that teachers could use moral dilemmas to lead children to higher levels of reasoning.
- 4 In the Modified Values Clarification Approach, pupils are encouraged to go through five steps in order to arrive at sound moral judgements. This is a modification of values clarification process suggested by Louis Rath and Sidney Simon, and involves
 - o knowing the problems and recognising the options
 - o evaluating options
 - o considering consequences and taking a stand
 - o cherishing and affirming one's choice
 - o acting upon the choice taken
 (Ho Soo Guang, 1992: 7)

A second modification was also made to the original Values Clarification approach. It was argued that, given the age and experience of children of primary school age, pupils may have difficulty exercising independent judgement. In using the Modified Values Clarification Approach, therefore, teachers are to sum up the ideas expressed by the individual or the class, and to 'try to instil in pupils the values upheld by (Singapore) society' (Ho Soo Guang, 1992: 7). Hence, the Modified Values Clarification Approach would seem to combine the benefits of the values clarification approach viz. it encourages children to reflect, evaluate and decide on the most appropriate course of action while ensuring that the judgements made would be the 'right' ones.

However, there is a fundamental contradiction between the Values Clarification and the Modified Values Clarification approaches. The point of the Values Clarification approach is for pupils to engage in exercises that will help them identify and clarify their personal values. In the original approach, to value something is nothing less and nothing more than choosing freely from alternatives

after thoughtful consideration, and cherishing and acting on that choice. It is therefore inappropriate for the teacher to pass judgement on the values of the child¹¹. To simply change the role of the teacher, in the manner that the modified approach does, is to ignore the assumptions and values underlying the original approach. The latter makes assumptions associated with liberal thought, e.g. that individuals should select and pursue their notion of the good life, and that children should be encouraged to clarify their values so as to develop their own set of moral values. This is clearly at odds with the situation in Singapore where 'traditional' values are held with confidence, and where it is not (as) acceptable to select and pursue simply any notion of the good. The Modified Values Clarification Approach therefore represents the yoking together of two different, probably incompatible, ways of thinking.

Like the original *Good Citizens* texts, many of the new *Good Citizens* passages draw on ethnic myths and legends. Others have a contemporary setting, and there are also occasional references to other cultures and traditions, and to such figures as Abraham Lincoln and Anne Sullivan¹². These indicate recognition of the need to reflect universal values and ideas, and not just ethnic ones.

A passage that is also found in the new text is 'Polling Day' (CDIS, 1992a: 28-29). The moral remains the same, but several discussion questions have been added to invite pupil participation. Such questions may not, however, make great demands on the child in terms of stretching cognitive or moral judgement¹³. Of the questions for 'Polling Day', for instance, one is factual in nature, and the other two evaluative. Nonetheless, given that the passage unambiguously advocates the importance of voting and of voting responsibly, the child would feel that the 'right' answer is the position stated in the text, and respond accordingly.

In summary, four basic approaches have been developed and promoted as teaching tools in citizenship education. The particular approach used depends on the

¹¹See, for instance, Freiberg (1986) and Straughan, Roger (1982: 85ff).

¹²Abraham Lincoln is depicted as the American President who fought against slavery because of his belief in the equality of man, and Anne Sullivan as the teacher who, through her love and persistence, taught Helen Keller to speak and write.

¹³The three discussion questions for 'Polling Day' are:

- (i) If you have made plans to go on holiday, but the government organises an election, what should you do? Why?
 - (ii) During an election, one often sees the infirmed [*sic*] going to vote, helped by family members. Do you think they are right to do this? Why?
 - (iii) If you are a voter, but you have not received notification for the election, what should you do? Why?
- CDIS (1992a: 29).

appropriateness of the tool with respect to the objective of the lesson, and the maturity of the children. The point was made, however, that there are conceptual problems with at least one of the approaches.

(ii) *Civics and Moral Education*

Civics and Moral Education replaced *Being and Becoming* in secondary schools in 1992. Prior to its implementation, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced that political values like democracy and good government would be included in civics lessons. With regard to the kind of political knowledge that children should be taught, he said:

Every schoolboy or schoolgirl should grow up with a common understanding of the basic facts of political life – that Singapore is small, that it depends on exports to other countries to make a living, that it is through ceaseless endeavour and the pursuit of excellence that (Singapore) can do well and get ahead (ST, 1991d: 1).

In announcing the implementation of *Civics and Moral Education*, Education Minister Tony Tan spoke of the difficulty in finding a starting point from which the programme could be drafted (Ng Wei Joo, 1990). In lieu of this, the new programme would be based on *Being and Becoming*, and on the Shared Values which had been announced the previous year. It would cover topics like 'the various aspects of nation-building, awareness of shared values and an appreciation of Singapore's major religions and races' (Ng Wei Joo, 1990).

Like its predecessor, *Civics and Moral Education* is structured and presented as a progression from the individual, through the family and social group, to the nation. Hence, it begins with the individual achieving understanding of his or her moral, emotional, psychological, physical and social facets, and goes on to explore relationships with family and friends in topics such as marriage and parenthood.

A significant part of the Secondary Three syllabus is given to the different religions and festivals of the various communities in Singapore. Brief accounts are provided of the major systems of belief such as Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Taoism. There are also modules dealing with the notion of community spirit and being a good neighbour.

Issues related to citizenship are examined in both Secondary Three and Four in the *Civics and Moral Education* programme. The aim is 'to develop commitment to nation building' (CDIS, 1994e: 49). Topics include the Constitution of Singapore, and the fundamental liberties that it guarantees; the necessity and importance of the law; and participation in government, specifically in the electoral process. Pupils are also taught the major difficulties faced by Singapore since independence, as well as the 'issues of national concern' like population growth, racial and religious harmony, economic growth, and national security. Pupils are encouraged to think about the ways they can support and contribute to Total Defence¹⁴, and national campaigns¹⁵.

The inclusion of the Shared Values in the revised syllabus is to be expected considering the importance given to integrating national and school policy. Also, the use of *Being and Becoming* as a starting point is significant. After all, it had used a form of values clarification, and also provided opportunity for pupil participation in the form of group discussion. The basing of *Civics and Moral Education* on *Being and Becoming* implies an entrenchment in the move away from the dogmatic approach of the past.

The four approaches developed for *Good Citizens* were also to be used in *Civics and Moral Education*. Apart from the conceptual problems noted earlier, the adoption of the syllabus and methodology of *Being and Becoming* sits uncomfortably alongside the continued adoption and expansion of the conservative *Good Citizens* programme.

There is also the question as to whether the current programmes adequately prepare children for their future role as citizens. It was noted that children in Singapore can be inclined to be prudent and pragmatic, and that it can be difficult to persuade them of the importance of moral values. The diagnosis of the national leaders is that there has been moral decline which is caused by 'deculturalisation' and, specifically, 'Westernisation'. Consequently, there has been much emphasis on the acquisition of 'cultural ballast' through the learning of the culture and values of one's ethnic group.

¹⁴'Total Defence' is a concept of constant alertness in the defence of the country in terms of psychological, social, economic, civil and military preparedness.

¹⁵Two examples of national campaigns are the Courtesy Campaign and the Speak Mandarin Campaign.

However, as Chew's findings suggest, the children's prudence and pragmatism could stem from the highly competitive ethos in school, and a school system which rewards those who are more individualistic and more able effectively to compete against their peers. If so, the problem is not one of a loss of ethnic culture and values; it is one of the primacy of pragmatic considerations, and of the means-end logic this engenders. As will be argued, such pragmatic considerations could be the result of the importance given in Singapore to economic achievement.

There is also the question as to whether the needs of children in terms of their political education are adequately being met by the current citizenship education programmes. In *Civics and Moral Education*, for instance, moral and political socialisation is given greater emphasis than moral and political education. It could be pointed by way of example that, in the Secondary 4 module 'Becoming a Better Citizen', the Teacher's Guide lists in some detail, as it does for the rest of the syllabus, the important points that should be put across (see CDIS, 1992e: 57ff.). Among other things, pupils are to be led to realise that 'Singapore has achieved much despite the difficulties faced and its physical constraints¹⁶', that 'the good life they have can be disrupted', as well as the importance of population growth, racial and religious harmony, economic growth, total security and political leadership.

Hence, there is a greater concern is to put across a certain message - e.g. about the achievements of the country, and the circumstances in which these could be lost - than to help children acquire and develop the skills to think independently about social and political issues. In this context, it could be said that the individual's ability to think critically about issues affecting the country, and independently to make decisions concerning these, are important if they are to be citizens in the full sense of the term. For this, they need to be equipped to handle complex issues concerning morality and politics.

In the area of fostering cultural and religious appreciation, it was noted that brief accounts are provided in *Civics and Moral Education* of the major systems of beliefs in Singapore. These include descriptions of the founders and the main teachings of the major systems of belief. The syllabus also covers the meaning of major festivals and ceremonies. The values common to these religions and traditions, such as love, charity, service, respect for life, and discipline, are highlighted (MOE,

¹⁶'Physical restraints' is a term that is sometimes used to refer to aspects of the 'geopolitical realities'. The 'physical restraints' include the limitation of space in Singapore as a result of its small size and its lack of natural resources (see CDIS, 1992e: 60).

1991b: 41). Pupils are to learn to 'show respect for and appreciation of each other's traditions and practices' (MOE, 1991b: 42; see also CDIS, 1991b: 42).

There is a question, however, as to whether the brief accounts that are offered of the origins of the major religions, and of the reasons and meanings behind major festivals and life events, is sufficient to foster real understanding of these systems of belief. It could be argued that any study of the different religions must necessarily be brief given the pressure of the curriculum. That may well be true. However, the point is that basic information of this form, though helpful, is not sufficient. In any case, it is possible to acquire genuine understanding of the different systems of belief, and with some idea as to the complexity of these, even given time constraints. Such understanding can be achieved if children acquire knowledge of the assumptions and values that underlie religious beliefs and practices, and if they relate this knowledge to issues that confront them.

Though important, it is not enough, for instance, for children to know the dietary restrictions of the various religious groups. There are questions that arise when a group of friends have to decide which restaurant to go to. In such a situation, it may be tempting to regard certain members of the group as being 'a nuisance' unless there is an understanding of the considerations and values which underlie the dietary restriction, and an appreciation of the importance of these considerations and values to that group. Such understanding goes beyond knowledge of dietary restriction, e.g. that Muslims do not eat pork, and Hindus beef, that some Buddhists are vegetarians, and that Catholics do not eat meat on Fridays. The obtaining of the additional information required for such understanding need not be difficult or time consuming. However, it does require more than mere acquisition of facts: it means a sympathetic attempt to understand these systems of belief, and tying the understandings acquired to actual situations.

This requires a certain attitude, i.e. a desire to understand, the willingness to invest effort to find out about religious practices, and the generosity to cater to the needs of others. It also requires certain substantive values with regard to how one views other people. This, and the other ideas that have been briefly raised here, will be elaborated on as the thesis develops.

(iii) Other programmes

There are several other programmes in Singapore that are relevant to citizenship education in terms of the skills they teach. The *CoRT* (*Cognitive Research Trust*) and the *Dimensions of Learning* programmes are being pilot tested in a number of schools. Depending on the results, the idea appears to be to introduce these, or a critical thinking skills programme developed by the Ministry of Education, to all schools by the turn of the century. At the same time, *Philosophy for Children* has been introduced by a researcher at the National Institute of Education into several schools.

(i) *CoRT*

In recent years, there has been an awareness among the political leaders of the need to prepare schoolchildren for a world in which there is global economic competition and rapid changes in technology (ST, 1995a). Schools have therefore been encouraged to move away from a mastery of content, and emphasise instead learning and thinking skills which would help children think analytically and creatively. A shift in this direction has been the use of Edward de Bono's *CoRT* programme in secondary schools.

Introduced in schools in 1987, *CoRT* is designed to teach the 'tools' or techniques meant to encourage creative thinking. These tools are given easily remembered acronyms such as PMI, CAF, OPV and C&S which respectively remind pupils to think of all Plus, Minus and Interesting points, to Consider All Factors and Other People's Views, and to imagine the Consequence and Sequel of any plan (de Bono, 1985; MOE, 1988b). The ultimate aim is for pupils to acquire the 'fluent and appropriate use' of the tools (de Bono, 1985: 208).

(ii) *Dimensions of Learning*

It was announced in 1995 that Robert Marzano's *Dimensions of Learning* would be introduced in five secondary schools in a pilot project the following year. Like *CoRT*, *Dimensions of Learning* aims to help pupils become 'creative thinkers'. Creativity is defined as 'the ability to generate many unique yet appropriate responses to a problem for which there is no right answer' (ST, 1995d). The programme operates on the basis that there are five 'dimensions of learning' which describe how the mind works during the learning process. These are:

- 1 Positive attitudes and perception about learning
 - 2 Thinking involved in acquiring and integrating knowledge
 - 3 Thinking involved in extending and refining knowledge
 - 4 Thinking involved in using knowledge meaningfully
 - 5 Productive habits of mind
- (Marzano, 1992: 5-15).

(iii) *Philosophy for Children*

Matthew Lipman's *Philosophy for Children* was introduced in Singapore in 1992. The programme is currently used in one primary and two secondary schools. While the numbers are small, the schools from which these are drawn are spread across a spectrum; in terms of academic achievement, they would be considered to range from 'average' to 'good'¹⁷. At the same time, the programme's implementation and outcome have been subjected to systematic observation. The qualitative observations, and the quantitative findings could therefore be illuminative, and provide an insight into attitudes of Singapore schoolchildren, and the implications of these for citizenship education.

The researcher in charge of the programme, Lim Tock Keng, adopts the position that a community of inquiry is an appropriate arena in which children can learn to discuss philosophical issues 'for which there may be no right and wrong answers' (Lim, 1993). A 'process approach' is taken in which the teacher becomes the facilitator of the children's investigations (Lim & Koh, 1992).

In papers documenting the experience of *Philosophy for Children* in Singapore schools, Lim notes the initial difficulty in getting 'a real dialogue going', and in persuading pupils to follow a line of argument through and to listen to the ideas of their classmates (Lim, 1995: 92). Teachers involved in the programme also commented on the difficulty in forming a community of inquiry when children were used to looking for the 'correct' answer, and would not respond unless they were confident they knew what this was (Lim, 1995: 96).

Tests were periodically administered to monitor the effects of *Philosophy for Children* on the pupils. Tests of general reasoning indicated that children who did the

¹⁷The schools which have been involved in the project are: Pandan Primary School, Bedok South Secondary School, Henry Park Primary School, and Raffles Girls Secondary School. For the ranking of the secondary schools in terms of academic achievement, see ST (1996b: 12-15).

programme obtained higher scores in verbal and numerical ability than those in the control class (Lim, 1995: 96-99). Relative to the control group, however, the children had lower scores in the test for the 'Affiliation' component of the Self-Esteem Inventory (Lim, 1995: 96-100). This test measures 'the extent to which students help each other, get to know each other easily and enjoy working together', and Lim believes the results indicate that the children had not learned to work with each other as a co-operative group' (Lim, 1995: 99).

It could be said that the authorities and educationists recognise the need to foster creative thinking among schoolchildren. The reason is the pragmatic one: individuals need to be able to think creatively if Singapore is to have a workforce that is able to cope with fast changing technology and global competition. Hence, programmes have been introduced with the aim to helping children think creatively.

The habit of analytical and creative thinking once acquired, and thinking skills once learnt, are transferable, and could be applied to other areas of life, including those of morality and politics. The question has to be asked as to how an arguably conservative society would react to this.

Also, the difficulty in forming a community of inquiry, and the fact that the *Philosophy for Children* pupils obtained lower scores in the test for affiliation than those in the control group, could be significant. Lim does not venture to guess at the reasons for this, but there are a number of possible explanations.

First, as Lim herself points out, children in Singapore are habituated to expecting 'right' answers, and will often only attempt an answer if they believe they know what this is. They need therefore to be convinced that there are issues in which there is no one, right answer. It is important that they be convinced of this since controversial issues – issues on which society cannot agree – are a fact of life in a plural society.

A second reason for the difficulty in forming a community of enquiry could be the competitive ethos of Singapore society and schools which sometimes results in an unwillingness to share one's knowledge or ideas with one's peers lest one 'loses out' to them. However, a community of inquiry involves a radically different approach to the issue in question, particularly where controversial issues are concerned. For such issues, it is necessary for individuals to jointly engage in articulating their understandings and, in so doing, arrive at some conclusion. Citizenship education

programmes would therefore need to help pupils acquire and develop the beliefs and attitudes needed for this activity¹⁸.

Whatever the case is, teachers need to distinguish issues of morality on which there is general agreement (e.g. that it is wrong to kill or steal, or to discriminate on the basis of race or sex) from those for which it is not possible conclusively to demonstrate that one evaluation is superior to another (viz. controversial issues). The teacher's overall attitude with regard to moral issues could also affect the way pupils categorise moral question. Hence, teachers who believe themselves to have the right answers need to temper this outlook with the fact that people with different notions of the good life could legitimately make different evaluations; they should also make the effort to present the moral landscape with due complexity. This is necessary for children to be convinced that there are issues to which they have an important contribution to make, in terms of achieving their own understanding and judgement, and of helping others reach theirs.

It is also in realising the fact of moral plurality, and the attendant idea that others might have their legitimate albeit different judgements, that true tolerance is possible. Only then will there be a genuine respect for the views and contributions of one's peers, and the willingness to tolerate others and work with them to achieve common understanding; these are qualities which appear to be lacking in the pupils in Lim's study.

In summary, the present section traced the developments in the conception of citizenship in Singapore as seen in official documents and pronouncements, and in citizenship education programmes. There has been a concern to inculcate a sense of national identity, and to provide 'cultural ballast' by emphasising ethnic identity and values. However, there is a question as to whether these two aims are consistent.

While there is recognition of the need for some procedural values, such as that of respect for other people's beliefs, relatively little attention has been given to the procedural values. Given the importance of these for ethnic and religious harmony, and also for engaging in public discussion of social and political issues, there is the question as to whether greater emphasis should be placed on these values.

¹⁸This position will be developed in Chapters 7, 8 & 9.

The examination of the current approach to citizenship raises questions as to its effectiveness in transmitting values, and in meeting the children's real needs. Also, there could be a conflict between, on the one hand, a curriculum which advocates and emphasises the transmission of certain values, and the confidence that Singapore teachers have in their values, and the use, on the other hand, of deliberative approaches. There is therefore a need to re-examine both the attitude towards substantive values and the pedagogical approaches used.

Finally, accounts were given of attempts to teach creative thinking skills, and of the introduction of *Philosophy for Children*, in Singapore. The difficulty in developing a community of inquiry among Singapore children was noted. If, as will be argued, a community of inquiry is an important approach to controversial issues in a situation of moral plurality, then it is particularly important that this difficulty be overcome.

4.3 Assumptions in the conception of citizenship as reflected in official policy and pronouncements

This section examines the philosophical and value assumptions underlying the conception of citizenship that has been presented. The conception of citizenship is identified as belonging to the civic republican tradition. An account is given of the views of PAP, followed by a description of the social philosophies which inform its thinking.

4.3.1 The civic republican conception of citizenship in Singapore

It was noted in Chapter 2 that conceptions of citizenship fall into two broad traditions, the civic republican and the liberal individualist. The emphasis in Singapore on the duties of citizens, and the contributions they can make to the community and the country, means that the conception of citizenship in Singapore falls within the civic republican tradition. This view is supported by sociologists Michael Hill and Lian Kwen Fen who point out that, in the early years of independence for instance, the government appealed to the individual's sense of civic duty by referring to the 'crisis' in which Singapore found itself, and reminding

Singaporeans of the role that they should play in ensuring the country's survival (Hill & Lian, 1995: 244-245).

An important aspect of civic republicanism is the idea that citizens have duties to fulfil in terms of defining, establishing and sustaining a political community (Oldfield, 1990: 181). It was seen that, for Lee Kuan Yew, the ideal citizen is seen largely in terms of service to others. In addition, there have also been attempts to encourage the involvement of citizens on local and national issues, e.g. through feedback via the parapolitical institutions such as Community Centres and Citizens' Consultative Committees. However, as was noted in Chapter 1, the form of participation made possible by these organisations is of a limited kind; there is therefore the question as to whether this is extensive enough to be appropriate for citizens in democracy. The issue of political participation will be taken up later in this chapter.

4.3.2 The 'philosophy' of the People's Action Party

It was noted in Chapter 1 that, for the PAP, 'good government' is coterminous with 'strong government'; also, what constitutes good government depends on the values of a particular society. For instance, Lee Kuan Yew believes that, in Asia, good government refers to one which is 'honest, effective and efficient in protecting its people and allowing opportunities for all to advance themselves in a stable and orderly society where they can live a good life and raise their children to do better than themselves' (Lee, 1992a: 29-30).

It is not surprising, therefore, that the policies of the PAP have been driven by certain goals. Chan Heng Chee identifies these as 'the creation of a healthy, viable economy, the strengthening of state structures, and the promotion of a consensus on the core political values of society' (Chan, 1991: 158). For Chua Beng-Huat, vigorous economic development is the most important goal for the PAP (Chua, 1995a: 59).

In the early years of the PAP government, a significant part of the political discourse was devoted to democratic and socialist ideals. By 1961 however, the PAP had 'turned its back on doctrinaire socialism and embarked on a pragmatic programme of economic expansion, incentives for foreign investments and social reform' (Hill & Lian, 1995: 64). Today, while the PAP leadership might

acknowledge concepts like democracy and human rights to be 'worthwhile ideas', the position is that it is good government that should be the real objective of government (Lee Kuan Yew, 1992a: 32). There is also the view that the Anglo-American model of liberal democracy is unsuitable for an 'Asian' country like Singapore. Indeed, political apologists have tried to define and defend a version of 'Asian' democracy that is appropriate to its 'Asian' culture (e.g. Chan Heng Chee, 1993a). Within the last decade, the party has identified the value system in Singapore as being communitarian and - occasionally and more specifically - as Confucian (Goh Chok Tong, 1988).

4.3.3 Types of social philosophy

The PAP functions within a democratic framework. In addition, the 'philosophies' that inform the PAP's policies have variously been described as 'communitarian', 'Confucian' and 'pragmatic'. This sub-section examines these 'philosophies' in closer detail.

(i) Democracy, participation and deliberation

The concept of democracy has been discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Singapore has the structure of a parliamentary democracy in that free and fair elections are held at regular intervals in which Members of Parliament are elected. Indeed, Lee Kuan Yew's conception of democracy is one which is based on the 'one-man-one-vote principle for the election of people's representatives' (Josey, 1994: 70).

It might be argued, however, that if the one-man-one-vote principle were the primary or only criterion for democracy, the result would be a limited, even impoverished, version of democracy. Nonetheless, Lee has reservations about democracy, and is concerned about its limitations; this was particularly the case in the 1960s when Singapore was underdeveloped and citizens largely uneducated. His belief, expressed three decades ago, that 'Western-type parliamentary democracy (might) have to be adjusted to fit the needs and requirements of Asian people', would still apply today (Josey, 1994: 68-69; Lee Kuan Yew, 1992a).

Modifications have accordingly been made to the political system so that it would be more suited to the perceived needs of the country. For instance, the notion

of Group Representation Constituencies has been implemented in which political candidates run for election in teams of up to six in certain designated areas; of these, one has to belong to an ethnic minority group. This change was made ostensibly to ensure the representation of minority groups in government.

Apart from constitutional changes, the attitude of the PAP government to certain issues is noticeably different from that of liberal democratic governments. The question of press freedom is a case in point. There are more restrictions on the press in Singapore than in the West. These restrictions are supported by the arguments that there is a need to ensure the maintenance of the delicate ethnic and religious balance, and that the press in an 'Asian' society should reflect 'the values of consensus rather than confrontation, co-operation rather than conflict, and responsibility to the community and nation rather than concern for oneself' (Yeo Ning Hong, 1987: 26).

Indeed, Chan Heng Chee has questioned whether it is necessary for all democracies to be liberal ones, or to resemble Anglo-American models of democracy. Chan argues that there can be, and is, an Asian model of democracy which reflects the cultural heritage of the region. Examining the political system and political thought in Singapore, Japan, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan and China, she identifies characteristics common to these. The characteristics include:

1. A communitarian sense which teaches that the individual is important as part of a group or society rather than the notion that the individual is the centrepiece of democracy and society...
2. ...a greater acceptance of and respect for authority and hierarchy...
3. The (possibility that the) dominant party... can remain in power for two to three decades or more...
4. ...a centralized bureaucracy and a strong state...
(Chan, 1993a: 21-24)

The countries which display these characteristics do fulfil Schumpeter's definition of democracy in that leaders are selected in competitive elections (Chan, 1993a: 2).

Chan also points out that the Anglo-American models have been shaped not only by democracy, but also by liberal thought. She notes, without elaboration, that liberalism is the product of different processes from those which created democracy, and that it contains certain assumptions about human nature (Chan, 1993a: 7-8). Hence, her argument goes, there could be characteristics common to Asian countries

which could shape the political form, and result in differences in degree and kind, so that it may be possible to speak of an Asian variant of democracy. Chan's argument is congruent with the position taken by the political leaders, who maintain that it is communitarianism, rather than liberalism, which informs democracy in Singapore.

There are a number of response to Chan's argument. First, Amy Gutmann, following Robert Dahl, has pointed out the shortcomings of Schumpeter's procedural minimalism: it is possible for a government to be put into power which meet Schumpeter's criteria, and yet practise a form of despotism that cannot be described as 'democratic' (Gutmann, 1996: 412). This could happen if the group of people eligible to vote is small or narrowly defined (Gutmann, 1996c: 412), if elections are not entirely free and fair, or if voting is based on ignorance due to press censorship or all powerful government propaganda.

Second, liberalism *has* left its mark on modern democracy, and it is not correct entirely to separate the two. Andrew Vincent even though he denies that liberalism has some kind of 'intrinsic tie' with democracy acknowledges that the extension of the franchise as a basic right of property-owning citizens came about because of the influence of the liberal tradition (Vincent, 1993: 44-45). It might be claimed in Singapore that the sovereignty of the individual and of his or her interests is a liberal notion that has no application in the country; nonetheless, the right of individuals to profess and practise their religion, among other things, is protected by the Constitution. The implicit belief, therefore, is that no one is in a position to tell individuals what to believe or what notion of the good life they are to pursue; this is essentially a liberal tenet. Hence, liberal thought has had its effect on democratic thought and practices, even in Singapore; and it is necessary to identify what these are, instead of simply dismissing the liberal tradition as a possible source of influence.

Having said that, however, the argument still holds that a nation ought to develop a form of democracy that is appropriate to it, by allowing itself to be influenced by systems of ideas stemming from, or congruent with, its cultural makeup. This argument does not necessarily contradict the last one because liberal values could be part of a country's cultural makeup. Both arguments point to the need to achieve a more thorough understanding need of the values and ideas extant in a society. This idea will be elaborated on in Chapter 7

An essential aspect of a democratic system is that of participation in the political process. At the very least, citizens take part in electing their representatives at periodic intervals. In many countries, there are also opportunities on a more

regular basis to influence policy decisions at the levels of local and national government.

It has been noted that, since its early years in power, the PAP has encouraged citizens to contribute to the community. Parapolitical organisations provide avenues to give feedback on local and national issues. In the last decade, the second generation leaders have provided opportunities for greater public consultation by adding a number of channels to those in existence (Chua Beng-Huat, 1995a: 23-25; Rodan, 1992: 376, 1993b: 58). These include a Feedback Unit in the Ministry of Community Development, and Parliamentary Committees. A non-government think-tank, the Institute of Policy Studies, was also set up to involve professionals in discussions on public policy. While these channels do allow citizens to give feedback and suggestions to the government, they have been described as an attempt by the ruling party to 'direct' dissent and dissatisfaction through institutions that either the PAP controlled or had the potential to depoliticise policy debate (Rodan, 1993b: 58). As has been noted, these opportunities at best provide limited scope for participation, and views are expressed from the standpoint of petitioner, rather than a position of strength.

Hence, there is little disagreement with the argument that countries should develop a form of democracy appropriate to their culture. However, there is a question as to what this extant culture constitutes. Further, although feedback channels exist in Singapore, these are limited in scope. Given this, and given such restrictions as that on press freedom, it is questionable whether there is sufficient scope to articulate and develop this culture.

(ii) Communitarianism

Communitarianism was developed as a response to liberalism. It was seen in Chapter 2 that one school of thought in communitarianism focuses on ontological questions, while the other is more concerned with issues of advocacy (Taylor, Charles, 1989a: 159)¹⁹. Moral stands and policies are usually advocated on the basis of the ontological position taken. However, not all ideas described as 'communitarian' such as those advocated by the political leaders in Singapore – is the result of

¹⁹See Chapter 8 for a discussion of the distinction between the two forms of communitarianism.

reflection on ontological issues, although the positions taken might be similar to those that are made in this way.

Communitarianism as espoused by the political leadership in Singapore is influenced by George Lodge and Ezra Vogel, particularly in their practical analysis of the economic performance of several Asian nations (Lodge & Vogel, 1987). Lodge and Vogel observe that the ascendant economies of recent years have been those of East Asia which have community-based societies. In their book, they attribute the economic success of these societies to the fact that these have not adopted the individualistic, liberal thought of Western democracies, but retained a measure of traditional values, which include the subsuming of the interests of the individual to those of the community.

Singapore's national leaders would agree with the views expressed by Lodge and Vogel, and they would like to see transmitted and entrenched in the country the characteristics to which the success of East Asian economies are attributed. Referring to their book, Goh Chok Tong describes Singapore's 'national ethic' as being communitarian and, specifically, Confucian. He believes that the qualities of hard work, competitiveness and pragmatism, which have contributed to Singapore's economic success, are derived from communitarianism and the Confucian ethic (Goh Chok Tong, 1988).

Indeed, there has been an attempt to embody these 'communitarian principles' in the Shared Values. The value 'nation before community and society above self' is a clear instance where the interests of the community and the nation is placed above those of the individual. However, the PAP's conception of communitarianism is not well defined or developed. It is doubtful, for instance, whether hard work, competitiveness and pragmatism are features of communitarianism; these are certainly not unique to it. However, a central tenet of communitarianism is the placing of the interests of the community above those of the individual, and this is a position held by the national leaders and, supposedly, by Singapore society. It is, therefore, worth examining the notion of communitarianism in greater detail, together with the philosophical and value assumptions that communitarians use to support it; this will be done in Chapter 6.

There is also the question of what a communitarian democracy is. On his part, Chua Beng-Huat doubts that its proponents in Singapore have a clear idea what it looks like (Chua, 1995a: 200). This, of course, is not a reason to suppose that it has no application in Singapore. What is required is more thought in terms of what

communitarian democracy is or could be, examination of its underlying assumptions, and the provision of a plausible account of the role of citizens in such a democracy. For instance, Chua points out that communitarianism requires broadly defined 'consensus' (Chua, 1995a: 197). It could be said that, if democratic governments are to make policies according to the interests of the community, there must be some consensus as to what these are. In any case, the national leaders in Singapore are committed to achieving consensus in Singapore. Chapter 7 will attempt to give an account of how such a consensus could be reached, and of the role of citizens in this task.

(iii) Confucianism

It was noted that Goh Chok Tong believes the 'national ethic' of Singapore to be communitarian and Confucian. Occasionally, he seems to use the two terms interchangeably (Goh, 1988). At the very least, the political leaders appear to consider Confucianism a form of communitarianism in that, in the former as in the latter, the interests of the group are primary.

Apart from attributing Singapore's economic success to Confucian beliefs and values, the political leaders have also compared their role as rulers to that of the *junzi*, Confucian gentlemen who have 'a duty to do right for the people, and who have the trust of the population' (Chua Beng-Huat, 1995a: 35; GOS, 1991)²⁰. It is therefore worth examining Confucianism in the context of the claims made by the political leaders.

For Confucius, the rule of an Emperor is legitimised by the Mandate of Heaven. The belief is that there is a divine force ('Heaven') which is concerned about the welfare of the people; and that

the Emperor is set up expressly to promote that welfare. He rules in virtue of the Decree of Heaven and remains Emperor only so long as he fulfils that purpose (Lau, D C, 1982: 28).

Hence, the welfare of the people is the ultimate purpose of government, the promotion of which begins with the satisfaction of material needs (Lau, D C, 1982: 18). Emperors who do not fulfil the purpose of government will have their mandate

²⁰For accounts of the political leaders' attempt to promote Confucianism in Singapore, see Chua Beng-Huat (1995a: 156-162), and Hill & Lian (1995: 200-203).

withdrawn by Heaven, with the consequence that the people would be justified in overthrowing them.

In Confucian philosophy, the people should trust the ruler, and 'look up' to him (Lau, D C, 1982: 33). The relation of the ruler and the ruled is analogous to that between father and son. Hence, the good father makes the good ruler. By the same token, the ruled should cultivate the virtue of *xiao* (respectful love), which the son owes to the father, and which therefore the people owe to the ruler (Lau D C, 1982: 18). Also, Confucius believed the common man to be of limited intelligence. The people could be made to follow a path, but not to understand it; and, as they were incapable of securing their own welfare unaided, 'the ruler's supreme duty (was) to work on their behalf in bringing about what is good for them' (Lau, D C, 1982: 38). The form of government promulgated by Confucius was therefore paternalistic in conception.

Even from the brief, and necessarily incomplete, description of aspects of Confucian political thought, it is possible to see similarities with the thinking of Singapore's leaders. Indeed, John Clammer has described the Singapore government's conception of itself and its role as being Confucian (Clammer, 1985: 161). He believes that the government which is elected into office sees itself as possessing a 'mandate', akin to the 'Mandate of Heaven' enjoyed by the Chinese emperors. This mandate is withdrawn when the people refuse to support their political leaders in elections, and so remove them from power.

Chua Beng-Huat is of a similar view: in Singapore, the vote is interpreted as 'the mandate given by the electorate to the elected to govern in accordance with the latter's definition of 'national' interests' (Chua, 1995a: 73). Unlike Western democracies, therefore, Singapore's leaders do not see popular support in terms of an obligation to represent the views of the electorate, and to reflect these in national policy. Rather, they see it as providing them with a mandate to devise and implement policies which are in the best interests of the country.

Having elected the government, role of the people is to trust it to govern in their interests, and to give it their co-operation. According to Lee Hsien Loong, the people should have faith that 'the government has the welfare of the people at heart, and can be entrusted with the solution of the most far reaching problems of the people' (Lee, 1985: 40-41). He attributes the success of Singapore not only to the PAP's policies, but also to the 'strong ties between the leaders and the led' which has enabled the policies to work.

With respect to the arguments that Confucianism accounts for Singapore's economic success, Chua Beng-Huat points out that these do not satisfactorily explain the economic success of East Asian capitalism.

As Thailand and Malaysia start to join the ranks of the NIEs (Newly Industrialised Economies), the ring of truth of the thesis may quickly turn into a moment of aberration; as usual, the necessary explanation turns out to be more complex than any singular cause (Chua, 1995a: 166).

In any case, it is doubtful as to whether Singapore society is Confucian, even among the Chinese. Referring to the Chinese who migrated to Singapore, Chua argues that the educated Chinese were influenced by the 'modernist' movements in China which rejected Confucianism; in any case, many Chinese were peasants whose understanding of Confucianism was 'at best a distilled version of familialism' (Chua, 1995a: 28, 166). Hence, all that could be said is that some elements of Confucian culture can be found among the Chinese population, and that these are primarily concerned with family relations.

However, what the political leaders have proposed is Confucianism as a political ideology, i.e. it is used to govern relations between the individual and the state, rather simply being a form of moral ethic²¹. It is difficult to see how a political form of Confucianism could be justified if it is primarily a form of familial Confucianism that inheres among the Chinese. Even if it could be justified, a serious objection to Confucianism as a political ideology is that it is inconsistent with democracy. Confucian scholar Tu Wei-Ming believes it to be 'diametrically opposed to the democratic idea', and provides examples in China where it has historically degenerated into a 'coercive method of control' (Tu, 1984: 23, 27, 29, 90, 140). An equally strong objection is that a significant portion of the Singapore population is not Chinese or Confucian in outlook. Any attempt to conceptualise relations between the state, or the leadership, and citizens in Confucian terms would constitute the imposition of an alien system of thought and values on this group of people.

In any case, Confucian concepts have limited application in modern democracies. The notion of a 'mandate' is a case in point. The national leaders see electoral support as giving them a mandate analogous to the Mandate of Heaven. However, the notion of the Mandate of Heaven, and hence of political authority, is

²¹The distinction between Confucianism as a political ideology and as a moral ethic is made, for instance, by Tu Wei-Ming (1984: 23, 27, 33-34, 90 & 140).

supported by a metaphysical framework in which the notion of 'Heaven' is an important element. This metaphysical framework has little application in a secular government. In any case, the Singapore political system is one of parliamentary democracy, which is adopted from the British model in which individuals are elected to represent their constituencies in parliament. Hence, if anything, it is the philosophical and value assumptions made in the British model, which support the concepts and practices of its political system, that have greater relevance for Singapore.

Considerable attention was given by the political leaders to Confucianism in the early 1980s, and Confucian Ethics was introduced in schools as an option in Religious Knowledge. Religious Knowledge has since been made optional. The public rhetoric about Confucianism has also been somewhat muted, perhaps in view of the need to be sensitive to the feelings of the non-Chinese, who might feel alienated by the open promotion by political figures of a system of thought that they (the non-Chinese) do not embrace. The notion of a mandate, however, is still found in the discourse of the political leaders (see, for instance, ST, 1996c: 26).

(iv) Pragmatism

The 'philosophy' of pragmatism has been described by H K Wells as action without theoretical guidance and rooted in pragmatic experiences, spontaneity in the form of hunches, and the expediency of any means to certain ends (Clammer, 1985: 168). The label of pragmatism is applied by the PAP to itself. One account of the party's history, for instance, attributes its success to the

capacity to recognise hard facts and form its theory from them and not the other way around. (The party) is pragmatic (Vasil, 1992: 77).

More recently, this view has been reiterated by Lee Hsien Loong. In Singapore,

there are no ideological precepts, which constrain acceptable policies to be those which do not conflict with or challenge the orthodox political ideology (sic).. (We) choose policies which work, not those which fit in with our preconceptions... We cannot afford to be doctrinaire in our approach (Lee, 1985: 39).

The PAP's approach to politics therefore contrasts with that of parties which espouse particular ideologies, such as that of socialism, conservatism, liberalism, etc.. These parties are guided by a largely coherent body of concepts and ideas developed

to reflect a set of beliefs, values and assumptions. Andrew Vincent defines an ideology as

(a body) of concepts, values and symbols which incorporate conceptions of human nature and thus indicate what is possible or impossible for humans to achieve; critical reflections on the nature of human interaction; the values which humans ought either to reject or aspire to; and the correct technical arrangements for social, economic and political life which will meet the need and interests of human beings (Vincent, 1993: 16).

Whatever the case is, observers generally concur with the PAP's evaluation of its 'philosophy' (Chan & Evers, 1978; Clammer, 1985). Occasionally, this has even been described as an 'ideology of pragmatism' (Chan & Evers, 1978: 119). Since this description appears to be an oxymoron, the question arises as to whether pragmatism is indeed an ideology.

Certainly, the PAP's pragmatism is like an ideology in that it contains some of the elements specified in Vincent's definition. For instance, Chua Beng-Huat characterises the PAP's pragmatism as embodying 'a vigorous economic development orientation that emphasises science and technology and centralised rational public administration as the fundamental basis for industrialisation within a capitalist system' (Chua, 1995a: 59). There are therefore the elements of the goals which can be aspired to, the kind of social organisation necessary for this aspiration to be achieved, and the implied value of economic development. Like ideologies, pragmatism is also preached and practised: indeed, it has 'penetrated the consciousness of the population' to the extent that it has come to serve as 'the conceptual boundaries within which Singaporeans think through significant portions of their daily life' (Chua, 1995a: 68).

Where pragmatism differs from established ideologies is not that there is a lack of clear moral principles, or that it lacks values or conceptions of human nature. Rather, it is the placing of economic aims and concerns* (what Chua refers to as 'the privileging of the economic' (Chua, 1995a: 59)) above most other considerations. The result is an instrumental rationality which may hold that there could be desirable principles in theory, e.g. that of democracy, but which trivialises 'in principle' arguments, and admits only policies that 'work' in terms of economic goals (Chua, 1995a: 57, 62, 70, 73).

Hence, although pragmatism is ostensibly applied to the means to achieve an end, there is an end which is assumed. After all, there would be nothing to be pragmatic *about* if the ends were not already determined. However, the emphasis on

practical considerations mask the values and principles which underlie the end towards which these policies are directed. This end, as Chua has pointed out, is 'vigorous economic development'.

An end like economic development is one of the few goals on which a plural society can agree; and it is difficult to fault such a goal. After all, few will disagree that economic development, and the improvement in standard of living it brings, is a desirable objective. However, there is a question of whether this goal should be achieved at the expense of other considerations, e.g. respect for the individual, or environmental protection. The only way these other considerations can be identified is for Singaporeans to engage in the articulation and development of their values and shared understandings.

As it is, pragmatism and the goal of economic development have a hegemonic position in Singapore (Chua, 1995a: 44). They have become a widely accepted, even the primary, conceptual framework within which individuals think and work. Evidence of the acceptance of this conceptual framework can arguably be found in the prudent and instrumental rationality of schoolchildren. It was noted that this prudence and instrumental rationality is inappropriate in some spheres of life. Also noted was the difficulty in impressing on these children the need for moral principles and the importance of moral behaviour. What appears to be needed is a richer notion of the good life to complement the goal of economic development, against which a life that is not limited to achieving economic ends would have greater currency, and which would give a more secure place to the moral life.

Finally, there are the implications of pragmatism for the development of a national identity. Chan and Evers point out that pragmatism is an attempt by the PAP to create a 'non-ideological identity' (Chan & Evers, 1978: 119). By focusing the hearts and minds of the people on practical issues such as that of economic success, the PAP hopes to engender a sense of national identity and purpose while evading the pitfalls of ideologies as socialism and communism which it does not consider viable.

However, as Vincent points out, ideologies serve to 'integrate individuals, enabling them to cohere around certain aims' (Vincent, 1992: 16). If, as has been noted, pragmatism fulfils some of the functions of an ideology, the question must be asked as to whether purely pragmatic, economic considerations have the scope or richness to form a people's identity and to build a nation.

It is true that the PAP enjoys a high level of popular support; Singaporeans clearly recognise its achievements, particularly the country's economic success. However, the compelling element for pragmatism was necessity (see Chua, 1995a: 74). In other words, collective action, personal sacrifices or, even, the suspension of principles could be believed to be necessary in view of the exigencies of the situation. Chua Beng-Huat points out that, with affluence, the claim of 'necessity' no longer holds. This, coupled with higher levels of education, means that other considerations have become more compelling. There are aspirations, particularly among members of the middle class, for 'greater personal autonomy and less official regulation of their lives' (Rodan, 1992: 378-379); there is also a desire for more participation, and for their voices to be heard to a greater degree, in the public arena (see Chua Beng-Huat, 1995a:184).

The point is that for reasons of identifying shared understandings and aspirations, of a less limited notion of the good life, and of developing a national identity there is a need for Singaporeans to engage in the articulation and development of their values and shared understandings, including their notion of the good life. In other words, there is a need to work towards the development of a common culture. The notion of a common culture will be examined in Chapter 7.

To summarise, the practice in Singapore is unlike that in England and Wales where political philosophers, often with affiliations to a particular ideologies, theorise about political matters, and articulate the values and philosophical assumptions of that ideology. The PAP is not affiliated to a particular political ideology, such as that of socialism, liberalism, etc.; neither is there a systematic articulation of the values and philosophical assumptions that it makes.

An overriding concern is the economic survival and development of the country. A result is that 'in principle' arguments and practices, which are part of the normal functioning of politics in liberal democracies, tend to be trivialised. For instance, a vocal free press, vigorous debate among the public on policy issues, and campaigns by interest groups either for or against certain positions, are considered a misdirection of energy because these detract from strong government, and from the unified effort to achieve the country's economic goals.

The PAP is pragmatic in that it does not allow established ideologies, or principles, to interfere with the achievement of its goals. Nonetheless, Singapore is a

democracy, and this provides the framework in which political parties work. The form which this democracy takes – or should take – is an important question: a country has to develop a form of democracy appropriate to itself. The political leaders believe that this should be informed by communitarian and, perhaps, Confucian principles. However, there are questions as to whether Confucian concepts and principles have application in a democracy, and a multi-cultural society. As it stands, the notion of a communitarian democracy is vague, and more thought is needed as to what it could be, as well as to the role of the citizen in such a democracy.

If there is to be a communitarian democracy that genuinely reflects the interests of Singaporeans, there is a need for consensus as to what these constitute; there is arguably also a need for a richer conception of the good life that extends beyond purely economic considerations. In other words, what is required is the articulation and development of shared understanding, i.e. of a common culture.

4.4 Conclusion

The conception of citizenship in Singapore is one that belongs to the civic republican tradition. It is also a passive form of citizenship. The citizen's main role is to elect a party into power, and to allow it to govern in the interests of the country as a whole. Indeed, the characteristics that Lee Kuan Yew lists as being appropriate for citizens are essentially passive ones, with little emphasis on the qualities needed for political participation.

It will be argued, as the thesis progresses, that the nature of moral thought is such that there may be legitimate variations across cultures. Since political values are based in part on these morals, there will necessarily be variations in the conceptions of citizenship from society to society. The question is what would constitute legitimate values and assumptions that could support these conceptions of citizenship.

The current conception of citizenship, of the style of government and of the appropriate mode of political participation, is based on the PAP's notion of Singapore's 'Asian' culture. However, examination of the conception of citizenship, and of the social philosophies underlying it, reveal problems with this notion. The problem is that, in a plural society, values and assumptions cannot unilaterally be determined, e.g. by *fiat*, or by the 'perception' of an individual or a group: some other

means would need to be found if the values and goals to be adopted by a nation were to be legitimate and authentic.

An account of a defensible approach will be presented in Chapter 7. In the meantime, the next chapter will examine the arguments supporting a deliberative and, specifically, neutral approach in values education, and assess their relevance for Singapore.

Chapter 5 Pedagogical neutrality and citizenship education

5.1 Introduction

In the last two chapters, accounts were given of the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales, and in Singapore. Salient similarities and differences were noted of the approaches to citizenship, as well as the underlying value and philosophical assumptions. Chapters 5 and 6 will examine some of these assumptions in closer detail, concentrating especially on the arguments regarding pedagogical neutrality in citizenship education.

The present chapter begins with an examination of pedagogical neutrality which is used in a number of citizenship education programmes in England and Wales. It then elucidates the nature of moral thinking with the view to identifying the moral considerations, and hence the legitimate variations, in moral thought in different societies.

5.2 Pedagogical neutrality and citizenship education

It has been argued that moral education is an essential aspect of citizenship education. It was noted in Chapter 3 that citizenship education programmes in England and Wales tried to deal with the issue of how moral values should be handled in a plural society. Two highly regarded programmes are the *Programme for Political Education* and the *Humanities Curriculum Project*, and their approaches have influenced subsequent citizenship education programmes. Both attempted to devise approaches that were neutral relative to the substantive values of the issues in question.

5.2.1 Pedagogical neutrality: a recapitulation

It was seen in Chapter 3 that Bernard Crick and Alex Porter advocated an approach which circumvented the thorny issue of substantive values, dealing instead

with *procedural* values. As was noted, procedural values are 'not substantive values like various justifications of authority, like equality or types of justice'; they are values without which 'there cannot be any reasonable process or progress of study or practice of politics, other than simple indoctrination, which does not presuppose, however minimally, such values' (Crick & Porter, 1978: 64). In other words, they govern the *procedure* of study or practice, rather than the substantive values which impinge on the issue in question.

In addition, it was noted that, apart from procedural values, Crick and Porter believed basic concepts should also be taught because these are 'minimally necessary to construct simple conceptual and analytical frameworks' (Crick & Porter, 1978: 47). For them, the primary aim of teaching of these concepts was to improve the meaning and usage of these concepts.

In his *Humanities Curriculum Project*, Lawrence Stenhouse explored and developed a teaching style, which involved the teacher adopting a neutral stance, that could be used to handle controversial issues in the classroom. He referred to this as a teaching style rather than, say, a teaching strategy because it encompassed a number of strategies: the teacher sets a context favourable to discussion, protects divergence of view, introduces appropriate evidence, ensures the observance of the rules of discussion, summarises the discussion, etc. (Stenhouse, 1975a: 125; Stenhouse, 1980: 147). Whatever the strategies used, neutrality is the criterion against which the teacher's performance is judged; in other words, the teacher as *chairman* should not promote his or her own point of view (present author's emphasis) (Stenhouse, 1975a: 125).

Neutral teaching was developed as an approach to handle controversial issues in the classroom. Stenhouse, following Dorothy Fraser, defines a controversial issue as one which

involves a problem about which different individuals and groups urge conflicting courses of action. It is an issue for which society has not found a solution that can be universally or almost universally accepted. It is an issue of sufficient significance that each of the proposed ways of dealing with it is objectionable to some section of the citizenry and arouses protest... (Stenhouse, 1975a: 124)

On Stenhouse's view, the teacher has no authority in controversial value issues since such authority could not be justified on epistemological or political grounds (Stenhouse, 1983e: 123). Neutral teaching was intended for use in such controversial issues, and offered as an option to add to the range of teaching styles available to

teachers (Stenhouse, 1975a: 124). To this end, teachers act as neutral chairmen in discussions; they were to teach logic and to manage the social dynamics of the group although, as was seen in Chapter 3, their role was by no means limited to this (Stenhouse, 1983b: 84-85). In so doing, it was hoped, first, that teachers would eliminate, or at least minimise, the influence that they had as authority figures on the pupils' decisions (Stenhouse, 1983e: 121); and, second, that the approach would allow pupils to think for themselves and arrive at their own conclusions after having considered the arguments and evidence presented by others (Stenhouse, 1983e: 123).

Stenhouse did recognise that any evidence that could be brought to bear on controversial issues may not be purely and objectively factual:

All evidence contains some value element, even if only in the categories chosen for a statistical table. Most evidence is ambiguous, in the arts purposely so. The interpretation of evidence therefore involves judgements which are based on the intersection of the meaning contained in the symbol and the experience of the interpreter (Stenhouse, 1983d: 116).

What was important was that pupils learn to arrive at conclusions on the basis of evidence and argument, rather than mere opinion and prejudice. In bringing evidence to bear on an issue, they also learn to apply the 'fundamental educational values' needed for thinking and making decisions about moral issues.

Hence, Stenhouse and Crick emphasise in their respective programmes procedural values, or fundamental educational values. Where Stenhouse specified that the neutral approach was meant for handling controversial issues, the creators of the *Programme for Political Education*, the *Law in Education Project* and *Democracy Then and Now* make more global use of pedagogical neutrality.

Apart from procedural values, these programmes also stress the importance of acquiring certain concepts and thinking skills. The *Programme for Political Education* emphasises the study of basic political concepts so that pupils can better understand their use in context (Crick & Porter, 1978: 49). The *Programme for Political Education*, the *Law in Education Project* and *Democracy Then and Now* all aim to develop in pupils, and provide opportunity for them to practise, the skills of reasoning and argument, and the appropriate attitudes such as those of respecting others and respecting differences.

The creators of the *Law in Education Project* acknowledge that the programme was developed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Science (DES). These state that:

Pupils need to be equipped with the intellectual skills and knowledge which are necessary if our society's fundamental values are to be understood, critically appraised, developed and defended. Among the attitudes, knowledge and skills to be encouraged are a rational and analytical approach to evidence and argument, both in forming opinion and resolving differences; the ability to detect bias; awareness of the duties and rights of citizenship; respect for the law and for the rights of others, including the rights to hold their own opinions and to express them within the law; and an understanding of how the law is properly changed and developed (Rowe *et al.*, 1988: vi).

The DES guidelines therefore emphasise the acquisition of knowledge, including knowledge of the law, and of rational and analytical skills which could be applied to critical thought and debate about complex issues. The values mentioned, e.g. that of respecting the rights of individuals, including their right to their own opinion, are in line with Crick and Porter's procedural values and Stenhouse's fundamental educational values.

Significantly, the DES guidelines acknowledge that its recommended approach is necessary for society's 'fundamental values' to be understood and developed. In other words, there is recognition that there are substantive and important values underlying an ostensibly neutral approach. The relation between procedural and substantive values will be taken up later in this chapter.

The brief recapitulation of the citizenship education programmes reveals the concern of educationists in England and Wales regarding the handling of substantive values in the classroom. Given a diversity of values in a plural society, teachers are often wary of imposing their moral principles or opinions on pupils. There have consequently been efforts at devising approaches which are neutral in terms of substantive values.

5.2.2 Conditions supporting pedagogical neutrality

Philosophers like Richard Hare and John Wilson advocate an approach to moral education that emphasises the teaching of a procedure for moral thinking, rather than moral content. This approach is based on the belief that it is possible to

engage in moral thinking, and to reach moral conclusions through a rational procedure, without prior commitment to, or assumptions of, substantive moral values. This procedural approach will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

It could be said that the attitude of British educationists who are concerned about not 'imposing' personal views on pupils, and who, as a result, prefer a procedural approach to value issues, reflects a more general strand of thought in England and Wales. This attitude could be attributed to a liberal climate in which the transmission or inculcation of substantive values, especially with regard to controversial matters, is resisted or, at least, approached with caution. The climate is also one in which importance is accorded to the autonomy and individuality of the person, and to the idea of individuals conceiving and pursuing their notion of the good life; hence, it is a climate in which the development of autonomous individuals is seen as an appropriate educational goal¹.

It should be pointed out that even liberals would not, on the whole, ask teachers to refrain from putting forward substantive views and values in areas where this is appropriate. Examples of such areas would include issues where the law has, in taking the position it does, determined the position which people should support; these include a stand against racism, equal employment opportunities, and opposition to stealing and drug abuse. Such issues may be controversial in that there may be a substantial portion of the population which would hold opposing views e.g. that there is nothing objectionable about the use of 'soft' drugs whereas the law in the country might state otherwise. Hence, there are limits as to how far liberals would go in promoting the autonomy of individuals, or their right to determine and pursue their notion of the good life; certainly, the harm principle is not the only consideration even for liberals.

It should also be noted that there is a second, opposing strand of thought to liberalism in England and Wales. This is a conservative attitude which seeks to maintain the institutions and 'traditional' values which had a consensus and which, it is believed, should be promoted. The 'Back to Basics' policy in the 1990s of the Conservative Party however vague in conception is a reflection of this strand of thought.

¹Stenhouse, for instance, was of the view that the prime purpose of planned education was 'to induct the individual into culture in a way that his [*sic*] individuality and creativeness is enhanced' (see Stenhouse, 1967: 7). 'Individuality' and, it might be added, 'autonomy' arguably receive far less emphasis in non-liberal societies, particularly those which place the interests of the community above those of the individual. The concept of autonomy will be discussed in Chapter 6.

On the whole, however, the concern of educationists with regard to teachers imposing their values on children indicates the influence of liberal thought. In this regard, value is placed on individuals determining and pursuing their notion of the good life, and on the state remaining neutral to some degree with regard to competing notions of the good life. The task of the school is to prepare children accordingly, using a pedagogical approach appropriate to such a task. Hence, the neutral approach in handling value issues is possible in liberal societies because the school as a microcosm of society reflects the values in the larger community.

By the same token, however, a society which approves of a more interventionist approach by the state in matters of value could justify schools taking a more interventionist approach. It is conceivable that there may be more interventionist societies than England and Wales; it is also conceivable that the moral climate in these societies would be less tolerant of deviation from accepted norms. The accounts of Singapore in Chapters 1 and 4 would indicate that it is, in some ways, more like these societies than England and Wales. If so, it would be questionable as to whether teachers in Singapore ought to take an approach which encourage schoolchildren to formulate and pursue their notion of the good, whatever this might be. For example, it would be unacceptable to Muslim parents for a teacher to encourage their children to select and pursue any conception of the good life, even if this involves drinking, dressing immodestly, and going out unchaperoned with members of the opposite sex.

Hence, a relevant question is the role of the state in matters of value with respect to the citizenry. It has been argued that an education system is necessarily an institution in and, hence, of the society in which it operates. Hence, it should make reference to the values and understandings of that society, and the type of intervention that is justifiable on the part of the state in matters of value provides a guide with regard to the type of intervention permissible within the educational system.

The role of the state in the lives of individuals and, specifically, the notion of state neutrality, will be discussed in the next chapter. In the meantime, the various arguments marshalled for and against pedagogical neutrality will be examined.

5.3 Procedural values and substantive values

It was noted that an attempt to circumvent the problematic issue of substantive values has been to highlight the teaching of a procedure for thinking about and discussing moral issues. A question that arises is whether it is adequate to work only through procedure and procedural values, and to teach only these, in citizenship education.

5.3.1 Procedural values without substantive values?

In matters of value, it is questionable that one could make up one's mind equipped primarily with facts, procedures and procedural values, but without substantive values. As David Hume has argued, evaluative propositions cannot be derived from factual ones. In other words, relevant factual evidence and valid arguments alone are insufficient to enable an individual to arrive conclusively at a value judgement.

It could be noted that, apart possibly from philosophers such as Hare and Wilson, educationists in England and Wales do not claim that substantive values need not enter into consideration. Stenhouse, for instance, noted that (substantive) values enter into the interpretation of evidence as this is filtered through one's experiences. It could also be pointed out that experiences are in turn structured by the conceptual and moral framework available in one's culture. Therefore, it is possible, even inevitable, that a diversity of interpretations may be given to the same piece of evidence.

At the same time, it is implausible to expect individuals to produce their own values and principles without someone teaching them some values and principles to begin with, as well as the *idea* of following a rule. R S Peters points out that the first stage of moral development involves the 'acquisition of a basic cognitive and affective apparatus' (Peters, 1973: 23, 36ff.). In the area of rule following, for instance, rules have to be learned in order for young children to know what it is like to follow a rule (Peters, 1973: 59). Young children learn about what is right and wrong from concrete, specific examples, involving rules of behaviour.

(What) is being learnt is a *principle*, which provides unity to a number of previously disconnected experiences. This has to be 'seen' or grasped by the individual and it cannot be grasped as a principle unless

the individual is provided with experience of the items which it unifies... (Once) the child has grasped the principle, he (sic) knows how to go on, as Wittgenstein put it; there is no limit to the number of cases that he will see as falling under the principle (Peters, 1973: 37).

Peters points out by way of example that moral concepts, such as theft and borrowing, are complex social concepts. The child has to learn to distinguish borrowing from stealing. Peters suggests that it would be too much to expect children to learn all these concepts on their own, without others explaining for them the situations, or elucidating the 'complicated network of concepts which structure social life' (Peters, 1973: 63). Hence, there is a need to teach and explain to young children the moral concepts and principles for them to practise moral behaviour, and to be able make sense of moral behaviour at all. Peters marshals several other arguments in favour of teaching substantive values to children.

Individuals could not come to follow rules of behaviour autonomously if they had not first learnt to follow rules 'from the inside, as it were' (Peters, 1973: 59, 45-46). In any case, they need to have some content by way of substantive values and principles with which to practise moral behaviour in the first place (Peters, 1973: 59). This is a necessary condition since it is logically (and practically) impossible for individuals to act morally otherwise. Hence, it is essential in the case of young children to provide rules of behaviour, and to enforce these if necessary.

Peters's point about the need to teach substantive values and principles to children is reinforced by psychological studies of moral development in children like those of Piaget and Kohlberg. Piaget highlights the importance of rule-learning in the early stages of the moral development as a necessary condition for attaining moral autonomy in later life (Pring, 1984: 35-39). Kohlberg has found that it is necessary in the earliest stages of cognitive and moral development to teach as well as to enforce moral principles in order for it to be possible that these children become morally autonomous beings as adults (Kohlberg, 1976: 32-38; Pring, 1984: 40-42). Hence, the question is not so much *whether* one should teach substantive moral values, but *which* of these rules should be emphasised (Peters, 1973: 61) and, it may be added, *how* these should be taught.

The programmes in England and Wales which have been examined are designed for pupils from the early teens and above. At this age, pupils would have reached a state of intellectual and moral development so that they would be able to engage in discussion of controversial issues, and would also be able to arrive at their own decisions on moral issues. They would also have acquired basic moral concepts

and principles, so that it would be less essential to impart basic moral principles to them, something which would be important in the case of very young children. The question remains, however, as to whether there is a case for putting across substantive values in citizenship education for reasons other than conceptual and practical necessity to meet the needs of young children.

In *Ethics of Authenticity*, Charles Taylor advances an argument in favour of the conceptual necessity of a moral framework. Individuals, he argues, cannot give importance or significance to principles by their own volition; they cannot by themselves make a principle, an idea or a pursuit valuable just by thinking it so. What makes something valuable is an external framework, which he calls 'horizons of significance'²; this is the 'background of intelligibility' against which things take on importance (Taylor, Charles, 1991a: 37). 'Horizons of significance' therefore refers to the values and shared understandings in a society in the context of which moral concepts and action have meaning.

The framework, or 'horizons of significance', is external to the individual, but is not wholly independent of him or her. Individuals may, by interacting with it in a 'dialogical process', contribute to and influence it. Nonetheless, individuals still depend on this framework, and must make reference to it, in order to give moral significance to their principles and actions.

5.3.2 The distinction between procedural and substantive values

It should be noted that the neutral pedagogical approach is based on a distinction between procedural and substantive values. However, this distinction is one of function rather than substance. All values are substantive, even procedural ones, and procedural values such as rationality, sensitiveness, fairness and respect for truth, are all substantive ones. The distinction is not that procedural values are not substantive, but that these perform a particular function in debate: the values which impinge directly on the issue in question are called substantive ones, while that governing the *procedure* of the discussion are called 'procedural values'.

The distinction between substantive and procedural values is useful in that there is a difference in the way in which these are applied. However, it is important

²See Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of Taylor's concept of 'horizons of significance'.

to recognise that procedural values are ultimately substantive in nature. Indeed, the very procedure that is acceptable to any community, and hence the procedural values which are promoted, result from substantive values, even particular notions of the good. For instance, the procedural values supported by a vision in which faith and attainment of heavenly rewards are the ultimate good are likely to differ from those underpinned by one in which individuality and creativity is highly valued. In the former, the procedural values might include discipline in adhering to the prescribed way of life; in the latter, there is likely to be an emphasis on tolerance for different types of behaviour. In other words, procedural values rest upon substantive values, even particular notions of the good life.

In summary, the attempt to circumvent the problematic issue of substantive values has resulted in an emphasis, in England and Wales, on the teaching of procedure and procedural values. However, substantive values necessarily enter into moral judgement; factual evidence and logic are not sufficient. Young children need to learn moral concepts and principles through specific examples and rules. While this is not necessary in the case of teenagers, Taylor's argument of the conceptual necessity of a moral framework would justify reference to this framework by teachers in the general handling of moral issues in the classroom. Whether or not teachers should do so is more of a pedagogical, rather than a substantive, question. It is only becomes a substantive question in the case of controversial issues.

The point was also made that procedural values are ultimately substantive in nature, and are also underpinned by substantive values. In the next section, some finer points of Stenhouse's notion of teaching neutrality are examined, and the implications of the general use of pedagogical neutrality in citizenship education are discussed.

5.4 Neutrality as an approach to teaching value issues

When it was introduced, Stenhouse's neutral teaching style sparked off a debate in education circles. Much of it centred around the justifiability and desirability of the neutral approach from a moral point of view, and its psychological or practical possibility as a method.

One critic of neutral teaching was Mary Warnock. She argued that individuals ought to have, and to express, moral beliefs; hence, teachers could not remain neutral (Warnock, 1975: 111). Also, they should, in questions of value, indicate the direction in which the evidence pointed; after all,

what... pupils have to learn is not only, in an abstract way, what counts for evidence, but *how people draw conclusions from evidence* (original emphasis) (Warnock, 1975: 107).

Implicit in Warnock's criticism is the belief that neutrality implied that teachers should not have moral commitments. However, John Elliott has made the point that neutrality only made sense if teachers had these convictions (Elliott, 1973: 44). Neutrality was a position consciously taken up by individuals, and they could take it up only if they were morally committed in the first place; if they were not committed one way or the other, they would more accurately be described as being 'indifferent' or 'undecided', rather than 'neutral'.

At this juncture, Warnock could still say that teachers *ought* to take a stand on value issues to show pupils how to draw conclusions from evidence. Elliott, however, denied that neutral teaching entailed passivity and non-activity, or that teachers should be indifferent to questions of truth and falsity, or to rationality and irrationality, when value issues arose in the classroom (Elliott, 1973: 39-40). Neutrality applied to a person when 'he or she is *not helping or supporting A rather than B* (when A and B are in conflict)' (original emphasis) (Elliott, 1973: 42). Neutrality need not mean not helping either person, it could mean helping both A and B equally (Elliott, 1973: 43).

In other words, neutrality does not mean that teachers should not correct mistakes, such as those made in reasoning, by the pupils. What it means is that they refrain from giving their view, or demonstrating how they reach a conclusion, if the evidence does not incontrovertibly point to one conclusion rather than another (Elliott, 1973: 46). Hence, there is a good, substantive reason for taking a neutral approach in handling controversial issues in the classroom.

However, the reluctance to deal with substantive values in the programmes in England and Wales is not limited to controversial issues, but is sometimes more general in its effect. In this case, the substantive argument just made in favour of neutrality would not apply. If teachers did remain neutral, emphasising instead the teaching of a procedure and of procedural values, it would be on pedagogical

grounds. Indeed, pedagogical reasons which were also given to support the use of Stenhouse's neutral teaching approach would have relevance here.

An aim of neutrality is to encourage reflective discussion as opposed, say, to argumentative discussion. The latter 'is mainly concerned with the defence and criticism of judgements, and presupposes that a rational consensus *must* be possible' (original emphasis) (Elliott, 1973: 62). In contrast,

Reflective discussion is mainly concerned with *understanding* the evaluative points of view at stake in an issue; the standards disputants apply in their defence and criticism of judgements. This type of discussion does not proceed on the presupposition that consensus *must* be possible (original emphasis) (Elliott, 1973: 62).

In refraining from supporting one side rather than another, teachers help their pupils test the intelligibility of arguments by encouraging 'a *reflective* and complex consideration of the relationship between the reasons offered and the other sorts of reasons offered by people in our society as relevant to the act or situation in dispute' (present author's emphasis) (Elliott, 1973: 59)

It is important to note that teachers could, and should, intervene on procedural matters. They could help children to relate the positions they hold to relevant evidence and reasons by seeking from them the reasons for their opinions (Stenhouse, 1983f: 137-138). They could also demonstrate why some reasons raised have no connection with the sorts of things that are held as relevant reasons for value judgements by people in a society (Elliott, 1973: 59). In other words, the idea is to teach pupils how to make value judgements, and to judge the relevance of reasons to these judgements, by correcting procedural mistakes made. In so doing, the teacher does do what Warnock recommends, i.e. they teach pupils how to draw conclusions from evidence. This approach encourages the learning of a systematic procedure for thinking about value issues by focusing on that aspect of the discussion.

Hence, the neutral teaching style embodies strategies appropriate to discovery and inquiry learning (Stenhouse, 1980: 147), and enables pupils to achieve understanding of 'the nature and the implication of (their) point of view' (Stenhouse, 1983e: 123). It also frees pupils from 'dependence on authority to acceptance of the need to justify judgement by reasons' (Stenhouse, 1983f: 136-137). Pupils learn to work through evidence. Because this often contain some value element, they learn to deal with evidence in all its complexity, and to interpret this and so arrive at the best judgement they can. In seeking reasons for pupils' opinions, teacher neutrality is also

thought to be more effective than trying to convince them otherwise; from the viewpoint of pupils, being 'argued down by the teacher' (is) not to be convinced but to be defeated' (Stenhouse, 1983f: 138).

Hence, sound pedagogical reasons exist for using a procedural approach to values issues in the classroom. The question is what this procedure actually involves. While Stenhouse and Elliot are essentially educationists, John Wilson and Richard Hare have attempted to provide philosophical accounts supporting the position that there are procedures that can be followed, and taught, for thinking about value issues. On his part, Wilson believes that

we do, surely, have *some* idea of what counts as 'getting' better at these areas of human thought and life (viz. morals and religion); and hence something like a methodology or at least a set of attributes which are relevant to this area and which we want pupils to possess (original emphasis) (Wilson, 1975: 116) .

For Wilson, there is a methodology that can be followed in matters of value. To begin with, there is a set of 'components', qualities or attributes, that are logically necessary for the morally educated person. Wilson gives the components names beginning with the first few letters of classical Greek words. These include:

PHIL (HC)	Having the concept of a 'person'.
PHIL (CC)	Claiming to use this concept in an overriding, prescriptive and universalised (O, P and U) principle.
PHIL (RSF)(DO and PO)	Having feelings which support this principle, either of a 'duty-orientated' (DO) or a 'person-orientated' (PO) kind.
EMP(1)(Cs)	Being able, in practice, to identify emotions, etc. in oneself, when these are at a conscious level.
EMP(1)(Ucs)	Ditto, when the emotions are at an unconscious level.
EMP(2)(Cs)	Ditto, in other people, when at a conscious level.
EMP(2)(Ucs)	Ditto, when at an unconscious level.
GIG(1)(KF)	Knowing other ('hard') facts, relevant to moral decisions.
GIG(2)(VC)	'Knowing how' a 'skill' element in dealing with moral situations, as evinced in verbal communication with others.
GIG(2)(NVC)	Ditto, in non-verbal communication.
KRAT(1)(RA)	Being, in practice, 'relevantly alert' to (noticing) moral situations, and seeing them as such (describing them in terms of PHIL, etc. above).
KRAT(1)(TT)	Thinking thoroughly about such situations, and bringing them to bear whatever PHIL, EMP and GIG one has.
KRAT(1)(OPU)	As a result of the foregoing, making an overriding, prescriptive and universalised decision to act in others' interests.

KRAT(2) Being sufficiently wholehearted, free from unconscious counter-motivation, etc. to carry out (when able) the above decision in practice.
(Wilson *et al.*, 1969a: 192ff.; Wilson, 1990a: 130-131).

For Wilson, it is the appropriate and successful application of these moral components in concert that makes for moral thought and action. Hence, the skills or attributes 'should form the conceptual basis of moral education, and... could act as the ultimate tests of whether educational methods in this general field were successful' (Wilson *et al.*, 1969b: 448). The belief is that it is logically necessary that an individual who has these skills and attributes, and applies them, will think and act in a morally educated way.

Wilson favours the use of 'educational endeavours designed to improve these skills in children by (so to speak) direct frontal attacks'. His reason is that, if these 'direct' methods work, one would be more certain that they would work 'relevantly and to the right end' (Wilson *et al.*, 1969b: 448).

Wilson's position is that the procedural approach is closely linked to educational aims. After all,

to *teach* morals – again, remembering that we have something like a methodology – isn't primarily to *display* moral opinions, but rather to see how they measure up to the methodology (original emphasis) (Wilson, 1975: 117).

He does not state whether he believes there is one, correct conclusion that could be arrived at when one follows this method. Given that he believes in a particular set of components, and that there is a methodology that can be taught, the implication is that there are morally right and wrong answers which could be arrived at through the successful application of the moral components.

Like Wilson, Hare also holds that there is a determinate method for 'subjects which contain uneliminable questions of value' (Hare, 1976: 18). He believes that the method by which one could think about moral matters is analogous to the rules of a game (Hare, 1965: 89). As in a game, it is possible to decide the winner of a moral argument if all play by the same rules. The 'rules' which Hare believes should be followed in moral arguments include those of prescriptivity, universalisability, and attention towards inclinations.

Prescriptivity is the willingness to commit oneself to doing what one has decided what one ought to do; and universalisability refers to one's being prepared to prescribe for others in like circumstances any principle of action that one ought to perform (Hare, 1965: 89-90). 'Inclinations' relate to the preferences that human beings have, e.g. like not being starved or run over by a vehicle (Hare, 1965: 92-93, 97). Hare believes that if people play by the same rules in terms of what they mean by moral words like 'ought', and pay attention to the elements of prescriptivity, universalisability and inclinations, it is possible to eliminate sources of moral disagreement (Hare, 1965: 97).

In his emphasis on rationality and universalisability, Wilson's views resemble Hare's. 'PHIL (CC)', for instance, is the application of the concept of 'person' in an overriding, prescriptive and universalised way. The question is whether prescriptivity and universalisability can account for the moral element in morality.

It should be said that there is some point to the Hare's and Wilson's criteria of prescriptivity and universalisability. It would be a morally doubtful person, for instance, who acknowledges the rightness of a moral principle, or prescribes it for others, but not for himself or herself. Nonetheless, there is a question as to whether an approach to morality using form – and, hence, criteria such as prescriptivity and universalisability – without content is sufficient for one to arrive at moral principles. Given the following situation, for instance, Wilson's thinking would proceed as follows.

John and Chris are marooned on a desert island, and there is only one loaf of bread which John has. John would reason:

- P1 No one's needs are any less important than any other.
- P2 Chris's needs are no less important than mine.
- C I should share the loaf of bread with Chris.

Wilson would argue that the premises P1 and P2 can be logically derived, and would describe these as 'logical facts'; these are facts in that they describe the empirical world, and they are '*logical* facts' because they are facts which cannot be otherwise. He would maintain that C is a logical deduction from the premises: in other words, it is necessary logically to move from the premises to the conclusion (Wilson, personal communication).

Where the premises are concerned, it does seem logical to say that no one person's needs are any less important than those of any other person. However, such a premise would not appear 'logical' to, or be accepted by, a person who did not already share the John's moral notions, e.g. the equal moral worth of individuals, and a concern for others. After all, it is possible that moral persons might consider the needs of their loved ones to have priority, and, hence, be more important than those of other people. In other words, a moral element is already present in the premises.

The objection made above is related to another objection that can be made towards universal prescriptivism; that is the criticism of ethical formalism. After all, if a criterion that makes a principle moral is that it is universally applicable, then the point could be raised that nothing would distinguish trivial principles from moral ones. A principle such as 'Everyone should wear blue every alternate Sunday' would fulfil the criterion; yet it could hardly be described as a *moral* principle.

At this point, the two objections that have been made can be seen to converge. The need for an injection of some moral notion, and the element that would give a principle moral meaning, require reference to some source of moral meaning external to the form in which moral principles are stated.

What is necessary, therefore, are the horizons of significance which Taylor talks about. Hence, the shared understandings of a community do not only play an important role in forming the conceptual and moral framework of individuals; these are necessary if moral judgements made are to have moral meaning, or to be relevant to others in the community. The position taken by Taylor and other communitarians will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Another factor that needs to be considered is the diversity in terms of the moral principles and practices which exists; such differences, if legitimate, need to be accounted for. An explanation has to be given of judgements which may differ if these are not all to be simply labelled as being wrong. If there are legitimate variations, these have to be taken into consideration and catered for in any citizenship education programme. However, such variations are not accounted for in the criteria of prescriptivity and universalisability and, in the case of Hare, of inclinations. Hare sees this last criterion in terms of basic human needs, such as those related to physical survival; however, he does not account for other considerations of a moral nature, such as those of honour, virtue or goodness, which people may consider to be as important as survival, sometimes even more so.

Hare, it should be pointed out, does believe that young children at the heteronomous stage of development need to learn moral principles, at least as a preparation for moral autonomy (Hare, 1992f: 163); elsewhere he refers to these as 'firm intuitive principles' (Hare, 1992i: 209). In Wilson's case, these could constitute a form of 'GIG' which is relevant to moral decisions. In the next section, an account of moral thinking will be presented which attempts to identify the understandings and moral principles which are shared by a community, and which are relevant to moral evaluations made.

What Hare does support is the teaching of procedural values, which he calls 'methodological values' (Hare, 1976: 12-13). He does this because

there is a determinate method which has to be used in discussing and arguing about moral questions, such that, if you understand what a moral question is, you must know which arguments are legitimate...(Hare, 1976: 12-13).

As to whether the method will yield 'unique and determinate conclusions', he says,

in practice, if we explore the possible answers in the light of the facts and of an understanding of the questions, we are likely to reach agreement in any careful and fair and clear discussion... 'Yes', but with the proviso that in practice we shall never have gone on discussing long enough, or familiarized ourselves with all the relevant evidence (Hare, 1976: 12-13).

He attributes this inability to familiarise oneself with all the relevant evidence to the 'finitude of our grasp of the facts' (Hare, 1976: 19-20). However, as P D Walsh has pointed out, Hare is unclear as to whether there can be answers to moral questions: determinate answers are not necessarily right or good, and the force of the word 'unique' here is not clear (Walsh, 1976: 32).

To sum up, the procedural approach is sometimes used to circumvent the question of substantive values in a plural society by emphasising the teaching of procedure and procedural values. Stenhouse and Elliot rightly allow for variation in moral evaluation, but they do not identify the elements in moral thinking which account for this. While this is not their job as educationists, it is important from a philosophical point of view, to identify not only what these are, but also the conditions in which variations are legitimate. Wilson and Hare do attempt to provide an account of a procedural approach to morality and to moral education. However, their accounts do not account for variation in moral evaluation, and do not

satisfactorily explain why, in point of fact, the same evaluation may not be arrived at by all using their procedure.

Mary Warnock's view is that 'it is strictly impossible at one and the same time to say 'this is wrong' and 'but you need not think so' (Warnock, 1975: 110). Perhaps Warnock presents the matter too starkly. If factual evidence can be brought to bear on the issue in question, there is Hume's point that it is not possible to derive evaluative conclusions from factual propositions. If, on the other hand, the 'evidence' is not purely factual, then value judgements are built into it, and these may themselves be controversial.

Second, to say in controversial matters that 'x is wrong' is to misrepresent the situation as being more straightforward than it actually is. It assumes that there are shared criteria by which x is evaluated as being wrong. However, the point of an issue being controversial is that there are no shared criteria of evaluation. Perhaps insofar as it is possible to say 'x is wrong' at all, it has to be specified which *aspect* of x is wrong; and such a statement will only be valid if the aspect referred to in a moral statement is that which is universal or culture-free. The reason for this will become clearer when the nature of moral thinking is examined in the next section.

5.5 The nature of moral thinking

It has been argued that there is a general tendency in citizenship education programmes in England and Wales is to allow pupils to make up their own minds on moral and political questions, particularly if these are controversial. While the creators of these programmes may not necessarily object to the direct teaching of substantive values under appropriate circumstances, there is a cautious attitude with regard to influencing pupils in matters of value. •

This attitude stems partly from the importance attached to respecting others in terms of their values and views. It also stems from the implicit recognition: first, that there are differences in the way people decide on moral issues, so that rational argument is not a sufficient or conclusive way to lead others to an agreement with one's point of view; second, that these differences could take the form of basic disagreement in the values that enter into moral evaluation; and

third, that these values could be legitimately and fundamentally different from one's values.

Hence, rational argument is considered an insufficient condition for other people changing their views to fit with one's own.

Therefore, in spite of the moral philosophy of thinkers like Hare and Wilson, the fact remains that people fail to agree on value issues, and there is recognition that a purely procedural approach is not sufficient to settle moral dispute. An alternative explanation is needed as to why the procedural approach is not sufficient to resolve such disputes.

5.5.1 An alternative account of moral thinking

Value or moral evaluation involve the following components:

(i) The form of the argument

The form of argument refers to the logic involved in any argument. There are basic logical structures such as the syllogism, and rules like *modus tollens* or *reductio ad absurdum* which can be used to structure an argument. There are also basic rules of logic which should be obeyed if an argument is to be valid, e.g. not contradicting oneself, or avoiding circularity in one's argument. Flaws in the form of argument can be corrected by appeal to the laws of logic. It is to the form of argument that Stenhouse refers when he speaks of one of the roles of the neutral teacher as 'teaching logic'.

However, not all moral arguments will ostensibly take such logical forms. Often people have a preference for one option over another on the basis that they would like to emulate someone they consider a model of morality, or that such a person would do the same thing under the same circumstances. Some of these cases could if fully articulated be represented in a loose logical form. For instance, in the case of the individual who wishes to emulate a person whom he or she considers to be a model of morality, the argument could be presented as follows:

I want to be a good person like Mother Teresa;
 A good person like Mother Teresa would have done X under the
 circumstances;
 I will do X

Alternatively, there may be a 'sense' in which certain actions are abhorrent to oneself, given one's understanding of right and wrong. Although it may not be possible to represent this 'sense' even in a loose logical form, this could still be considered a form of argument as these could be valid, if inarticulate, ways of arriving at a moral judgement. It should potentially be possible to articulate this 'sense' in terms of some notion of the good, although this may not obtain in practice as individuals may not be articulate enough to do so. Patrick Devlin, for instance, regards the presence of a real feeling of reprobation and deeply felt disgust as 'a good indication that the bounds of toleration are being reached' in terms of what is morally acceptable (Devlin, 1990: 17). He gives, as an example of this, the feeling that many people have towards homosexuality.

It is arguably the case that, if one could articulate the underlying 'logic' in terms of a notion of the good, it could be possible to determine whether such a 'sense' is valid in terms of that good. The 'sense' of right and wrong is legitimate only if it is supported by a notion of the good which does not violate universal considerations such as that of basic human need³. Hence, 'my sense is that black people are inferior' would not be acceptable because apart from the fact that it is unlikely incontrovertibly to be supported by empirical evidence it is probable that the supporting notion of the good would violate some universal human need or desire (e.g. that of being respected or treated fairly).

(ii) Factual or empirical evidence

Factual evidence can be used to support one's argument. It can be shown to be relevant, or not, to the argument; it can also be verified in terms of its empirical correctness.

³These considerations will be elaborated on later in this section.

Indeed, a function of the neutral teacher is to demonstrate whether reasons offered by pupils for their point of view have any connection with the sorts of things held as relevant reasons for value judgements by people in a society (Elliott, 1973: 59), and one type of reason that can relevantly be offered is factual in nature. For instance, the fact that animals suffer in certain situations could be alluded to as a relevant factor in deciding the conditions in which they should be transported.

However, the fact that value judgements cannot be derived from factual evidence, and the acknowledgement within the *Humanities Curriculum Project* group that it is possible to draw different conclusions from factual evidence, indicate that other types of relevant reason may be used in moral evaluation. These may belong to any of the variable components of moral thinking which will be described later in this section.

(iii) Moral principles and considerations arising from, or associated with, universal human needs

Some moral principles and considerations are derived from, or associated with, basic human needs. For instance, Geoffrey Warnock characterises the 'human predicament' in terms of people having certain biological needs, wants and vulnerabilities; at the same time, they are also of 'limited sympathies', viz. they are maleficent, non-beneficent, unfair and deceptive. In this context, the object of morality is to 'contribute to betterment - or non-deterioration of the human predicament... by seeking to countervail "limited sympathies" and their potentially most damaging effects' (Warnock, Geoffrey, 1971: 16, 26, 71, 85-86).

The biological needs could include those to live and not to suffer. There are also other universal human needs, e.g. the psychological and emotional need to be recognised and respected. An individual would be considered morally dubious who acts or, indeed, omits an action so that the affected person suffers in terms of these needs. In other words, there are moral virtues and principles that are derived from, or associated with, limiting the damage individuals may inflict on others, and of ensuring that human needs are met.

For ease of reference, the three factors just described will be referred to as the invariable or universal moral components. The following components will be called the variable moral components.

(iv) Differences in value system

There could be different sets of values, or different emphases on different values, and these could be reflected in preferences for the way in which things are done. For instance, given a situation in which an offspring is discovered to be a drug addict, a parent in a Western society might turn him or her in to the police because deviant behaviour beyond a certain degree of seriousness is deemed to be appropriate for official institutions of justice and rehabilitation to deal with. A Chinese Confucian parent, on the other hand, might choose not to turn the child in. The reason is that 'face' would be saved, and the good name of the family or clan maintained.

Hence, the decision taken by Chinese Confucian parents could therefore be a result of their holding different values from Western liberal parents. Hence, the latter could deem that turning their child to the authorities is the right thing to do, while the former might feel morally obliged to do the opposite.

(v) Priority of values

Even if the same values were held, moral judgements may differ depending on the priority given to these values. In the above example, the Chinese Confucian parents may, like the Western liberal parents, uphold both the values of parental love and justice. In the case of the former, however, a reason for not turning their child in to the authorities could be that parental love is regarded as being prior to justice; this would preclude the 'betrayal' of the child to an agent external to the family unit⁴

⁴This does not necessarily mean that the child goes unpunished. In such a situation, it might be deemed appropriate that punishment and correction take place in the home.

(vi) Level of generality of moral principles

The level of generality of moral principles espoused by individuals, or promoted by their community, could determine the moral evaluations made. A community which offers very general principles, e.g. 'respect for one's elders' could leave greater leeway for interpretation, and hence more scope for the types of action permissible; however, precepts such as 'do not commit adultery' could be more specific in their prescription in terms of what is the correct thing to do, particularly if these are backed up by an elaborate body of theorising as to what 'adultery' consists of.

(vii) Particular cultural, historical, political or economic circumstances

Particular circumstances could determine the correctness, or otherwise, of an action. Even if there is general agreement on the sanctity of human life, this principle is usually modified in times of war when it is permitted to kill one's enemy in battle. At the same time, it is permitted, and *right*, to kill oneself in certain circumstances in some societies, e.g. *hara-kiri* is preferred by the Japanese to disgrace. Similarly, an individual or a society that is under threat whether this may be from a warlike neighbour or from economic factors may rightly think and act differently from an individual or a society which exists in conditions of peace and security. Hence, particular circumstances may legitimately lead to the adoption, modification or re-prioritisation of values.

The point made here does not imply that morality is contained within, or determined by, extant traditions or practical considerations. All that is being claimed is that these could legitimately contribute to, or provide valid reason for, the adoption or modification of moral principles.

Hence, the grounds given for an opinion based on the invariable moral components are universal and culture-free. An argument is either valid or it is not; for instance, a person cannot be allowed to assert 'x and not x'. Similarly, factual or empirical evidence can always be checked. In other words, there is a moral procedure insofar as there are rules of logic to be followed, and the possibility of one's factual

evidence to be checked and verified. There are also considerations to do with human needs which are universal.

However, there can be variation, and this may be accounted for by the variable moral components. The latter can, in turn, be attributed to the conception of the good held. The particular conception of the good could result in different values held, or different emphases on values, e.g. the Japanese preferring death to dishonour, and Moslems choosing modesty of dress over freedom of expression.

The difference between the account of the nature of moral thinking presented here and Wilson's account, for instance, is that the former admits of the possibility of variation which arise from the variable moral components. These variations are substantive in nature, not merely affective or motivational as in Wilson's categories of 'KRAT'. In other words, the differences are real, and do not merely result from the individual's inability to be committed, determined, alert, etc.

Such differences are possible between individuals, groups, and communities. The variable moral components account for different conclusion being reached even though a similar procedure or form of argument may be used. In so doing, the account of moral thinking that has been presented allows for greater complexity in terms of the considerations which lead to the moral judgement made. It also indicates the types of consideration apart from the form of argument and evidence - that need to be examined with regard to the validity of moral judgement. These include the differences in the value system, the priority of values, and the particular circumstances that obtain in a society at a given time.

It is now possible to return to Mary Warnock's question as to whether it is possible to hold that one's view is correct and consistently assert that others have a right to think otherwise. The answer must be 'yes' if, first, the variation in opinion can be accounted for in the variable moral components and, second, if the considerations drawn from the variable moral components to support the conclusion are correct and appropriate.

5.5.2 Answers to possible objections

Two related objections could be made here. The first is that what has been presented is a descriptive, sociological account of how moral decisions *are* made, and

that there is still the need to show why it is that moral reasoning *ought* to follow the form presented in this account. The second objection is that the account of moral thought presented above results in a form of cultural relativism in which, no matter how morally unacceptable a principle may be to members of an external culture, the latter cannot condemn it; they would have to accept that this is simply a consequence of the differences arising from the variable moral components. Surely, it could be argued, there are *some* concepts which are culture-free; a concept like justice, for instance, would be the same in any society.

(i) Objection 1: Committing a naturalistic fallacy

It is argued that certain moral components that enter into moral judgement are variable and depend in part on shared understandings, such as the moral concepts, the metaphysical framework and the social constructs in one's community. These horizons of significance confer significance and moral-ness on the principles and actions of members of a community. These need to be shared if the individual's principles and actions are to have moral significance, or be understood.

In other words, given a particular conceptual and moral framework, there are certain judgements which are understandable, even inevitable. This framework must therefore be taken into consideration if moral judgements are legitimately to be evaluated. For instance, it would not be legitimate for an English feminist to tell an African woman that female circumcision is morally wrong. Female circumcision is often criticised in Western liberal societies on the grounds that it mutilates the body⁵. However, mutilation occurs on a large scale in Western societies through cosmetic surgery and sterilisation. In the case of cosmetic surgery, the mutilation is accepted because the change is aesthetically pleasing to those in that culture; in the case of sterilisation, the mutilation results in individuals not being able to have children. These practices are accepted, even approved of, because they fit the values and conceptions of the good life in Western liberal societies, e.g. the value of looking young and beautiful, and of the freedom to enjoy sex without the 'disadvantage' of child-bearing and -rearing. However, if one accepts the premise that there are African societies which have a different conception of chastity and beauty from that currently

⁵Many other arguments have been put forward as reasons for banning female circumcision in some African communities, but it is the argument that female circumcision constitutes mutilation which is relevant to the point being made, and which is addressed here. The other objections involve the pain that is cause, the extent of 'mutilation', the domination of men over women in societies practising female circumcision, and the fact that young girls are subjected to the procedure. However, these are separate issues, and not entirely relevant to the main objection being dealt with here.

held in the West, then a good case could be made that female circumcision is as acceptable under those conditions as cosmetic surgery and sterilisation are in the West.

Hence, it is necessary to take the culturally variable moral components into consideration when evaluating the appropriateness of judgements made, and in providing an account of how morality ought to be taught. To do otherwise would be to risk applying standards alien to the shared understandings of a society; it would also not contribute towards helping children to make judgements and act in a manner appropriate to their community. If taking this position is to commit a form of naturalistic fallacy, then this must be done since, as Lawrence Kohlberg points out, 'any moral conception of what ought to be must rest on an adequate conception of what is' (Kohlberg, 1981b: 178).

(ii) Objection 2: Relativism

In the account of moral thinking presented, the presence of the variable moral components means that there could be variation in moral judgement, and that the appropriateness of these variations are relative to the particular form which these components take in a society. Therefore, it could be argued, the account of moral thinking supports a degree of relativism.

However, given that one's moral judgement is determined to a certain extent by the conceptual and moral framework of one's society, it is difficult to see how it is possible to take any other position. The argument will be developed in Chapter 6 that personal identity and moral orientation is parasitic upon the values and the developing shared understandings of the community into which individuals are initiated. It is for this reason that any appropriate conception of citizenship would have to take these societal variations into account.

Hence, if individuals wish to avoid the inappropriate application of one set of values or understandings to a society different from their own, they need to understand that society on its own terms. They need to develop an overarching set of concepts and values, in a process which Taylor would term a 'sharing' or 'merging' of the horizons of significance. Writing in the context of gender equality, Taylor says

If men and women are equal, it is not because they are different, but because overriding the difference are some properties, common or complementary, which are of value. They are beings capable of

reason, or love, or memory or dialogical recognition. ...Recognizing difference... requires a horizon of significance, in this case a shared one.

...(Developing) and nursing the commonalities between us become important... (Taylor, Charles, 1991a: 51-52)

Although Taylor does not elaborate on the process involved in the sharing or merging of the horizons of significance, this could mean identifying the substantive values which one has in agreement with another (Taylor, 1991a: 52). It might be added, this could also mean adopting the concepts and understanding which may not yet exist in the shared understandings in one's society but are consistent with these, as well as extrapolating from one's own understandings and re-articulating these in more general terms that could encompass the understandings of a different culture.

In the present century, for instance, there have been attempts in the international community to devise a set of agreed moral principles. These involve the rights of individuals, and take the form of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and the European Declaration of Human Rights. What is significant is the acceptance of the principles which has led many countries to sign these declarations. Hence, Taylor's horizons of significance would appear to apply not only at a group or national level, but at an international level as well. As a result, there are limits to deviations from what might be considered the international horizons of significance; if these limits are breached, the claims that the principles or actions of a community are moral are no longer meaningful. Given the possibility of developing overarching concepts and values, therefore, it could not be said that an extreme form of relativism is a necessary outcome of the position that there are variations in values and shared understandings.

It has been argued that there could be legitimate differences in moral evaluation. As has been noted, however, there are moral considerations which are to do with basic human needs which are universal. All human beings, want to survive, are averse to suffering, and desire to be recognised and respected by their peers. The fact of these basic human needs means the requirement for moral principles catering to these needs, no matter the culture. This ensures against extreme cultural relativism. It could never be the case, for instance, that the extermination of a people in the way that the Nazis attempted could be justified on the grounds of cultural difference. Such a position would violate moral principles based on the human need to live, and human aversion to suffering. In other words, the Nazi 'horizons of significance' if such existed would have to be considered against moral principles related to universal human needs and desires, and would be found wanting.

Also, the horizons of significance of any one community would also have to be considered against those of other communities, and of the greater international community, in a merging of horizons of significance. The need to do this stems from the possibility that in the absence of an agreed, universally accepted system of morality the current understandings of a society must always be tentative, and there should always be an openness to the possibility of error and improvement.

Another possible objection to the account of moral thinking presented is that there are culture-free concepts and values such as that of justice. However, even if culture-free concepts and values could be shown to exist, this does not eliminate the possibility of the variable moral components and, hence, variations in moral judgement. In any case, concepts and value do not exist independently, but exist and are operationalised in the context of other moral concepts and, even, within ideologies.

For instance, is it just for individuals to keep all their income for themselves, or for them to be taxed and for that wealth to be redistributed to those who, through no fault of their own, are in need? The individual who accepts the first option, and another who accepts the second, could share a broadly similar concept of justice, e.g. justice is being about fairness of distribution that is determined according to desert. At that general level, however, concepts are so vague that these cannot be put to much use. To use them, these have to be made more specific, and this may require an appeal to other moral concepts and values. Hence, the varying emphases on desert and redistribution have given rise to the notions of justice as desert, and of redistributive justice. In practice, both senses of justice are incompatible, and society has to prioritise one over the other if either is to be implemented at all. The point is that this prioritisation appeals to the other moral concepts, possibly to ideologies, that inform moral thinking. The same would apply to any moral concept.

In addition, a moral act has to be carried out in such a way that it is recognised as such in a particular community. In other words, societies have particular ways in which moral concepts can be cashed out, and moral acts to be recognised as such have to be carried out in that way. For example, respect for one's elders in Chinese communities is cashed out by using senior kinship terms to address one's elders, e.g. 'Uncle' or 'Auntie'. To call one's elder by his or her first name is to flout the accepted convention and would, in effect, be to show *disrespect*. Hence, even if some moral concepts were universal, these still need to be cashed out with reference to the

accepted conventions of a community in order to be recognised as such. Either way, culturally-based considerations have an important role to play.

(iii) The possibility of selecting values

There is another implication of the notion that one's moral judgement is influenced by the conceptual and moral framework of that society. It could be said that the nature of moral judgement is such that there is an inevitability about it. For example, one could hold that people matter and should not be made to suffer and, hence, that physical pain should not be inflicted on anyone, even as a punishment. Introduced to the notion of human rights, one would be compelled to accept these if one views these as embodying and supporting the notion that people matter, and believes that these would contribute towards the prevention or alleviation of suffering.

Similarly, if one adopts new values, this is done either as a consequence of values already held or, at least, because they are congruent with these. There is, therefore, something contradictory about the notion of making evaluations or adopting values for prudential reasons. To adopt or promote the value of selflessness on the basis, for instance, that this will best promote one's economic well-being, or that of one's community, would make selflessness cease to be a (moral) value in that particular instance.

The distinction made by Catholic theologians between material and formal sin might be helpful here. Material sin is 'the performance of an objective evil act', while formal sin is one in which the additional criterion is met of the presence of 'all the conditions necessary to subjective imputability' (McGuinness, 1967: 241). Individuals without a properly formed conscience may speak uncharitably about another. Such persons would be considered to have committed a material sin, but not a formal sin. Their particular circumstances mean that they might not entirely be acting voluntarily, or with full knowledge, or they might not have fully intended the consequences. Their culpability is therefore not as serious as it would be for a person with a properly developed conscience. In other words, certain conditions need to be present for culpability properly to be ascribed, e.g. voluntariness, full knowledge and intentionality.

In the same way, individuals may carry out what would normally be described as a charitable act for an ulterior, prudential purpose; e.g. they may give a large sum

of money to charity because this would bring publicity for them, and to their company. Without the intention to be charitable however, it is questionable as to how far, or even whether, the action is indeed charitable. In other words, the action may be one of material charity, but not of formal charity.

Hence, in advocating the adoption of values for prudential reasons, one may be criticised on two bases. First, prudential reasons are not appropriate grounds for adopting values; and second, prudential reasons offered to individuals for acting on those values involves their systematic engagement in material, but not formal, versions of those values.

A possible objection could be that the argument presented appears to contradict the position taken earlier, viz. that there are moral principles which ultimately arise in considerations like those of universal human needs. If there are ultimate considerations which give rise to moral principles, then it would seem inconsistent to say that there cannot be ulterior, prudential reasons for a moral act, or for adopting a moral principle.

The position that has been taken is indeed that universal human needs and desires are legitimate considerations in moral matters, and that moral principles may arise from these. This stands to reason as morality is concerned with things that are important, and it is this that makes the difference between morality and ethical formalism. Nonetheless, it is also possible consistently to assert that ulterior, prudential reasons for carrying out 'moral' actions or adopting 'moral' principles detract from the morality of those actions or principles. The claim here is that the nature of moral thought demands that, for an action to be moral, it should be carried out with the intention of fulfilling a moral principle. In other words, if one gives money away to the needy, that action is charitable only if one does it because it is *right*, and because one *intends* to be charitable.

Hence, when individuals carry out a moral act or adopt a moral principle, there is an element of choice insofar as they are acting in accordance with their will. However, there is also an element of inevitability in that given that one supports a certain notion of the good life, and holds certain values one is bound to make that choice. It was seen in Chapter 1 that the position taken by Singapore's political leaders is that it is possible and desirable to choose values and promote these on the basis of some ulterior criterion, such as that of enhancing the country's economic performance. If the argument just presented is correct, such an approach would be suspect.

To summarise, an account was provided of the nature of moral thinking; this was seen as comprising three invariable moral components and four variable ones. The existence of the latter means that there can be legitimate variations in judgement made. It is necessary, therefore, to take these components into consideration to avoid applying standards different from, and inappropriate to, those which enter into making a judgement.

Three further claims were made. First, one should base how moral reasoning *ought* to take place in part on how it *does* in fact take place. If this is to commit a form of naturalistic fallacy, then this is inevitable because a moral conception of what should has to be based on an adequate conception of what is. Second, the account of moral thinking presented need not necessarily result in extreme relativism. There is the possibility, for instance, of sharing or merging horizons of significance. Also, some moral values are ultimately derived from universal, basic human needs and desires. Finally, it was argued that the nature of moral judgement and of adopting values is such that there is an element of inevitability about it. Hence, the suggestion that it is possible and desirable to choose values on the basis of some ulterior, prudential criteria is suspect.

5.6 Conclusion

The chapter began with the observation that, given the fact of plurality in England and Wales, there has been a wariness among educationists of teachers 'imposing' their moral principles and opinions on pupils. Attempts have therefore been made to devise approaches to citizenship education which are neutral in substantive terms. Such approaches are particularly appropriate in a liberal climate in which, it is believed, the state should remain neutral, and individuals should devise and pursue their notion of the good. By the same token, however, a society which approves of a more interventionist approach by the state in matters of value could justify schools taking a more interventionist approach.

It was also pointed out that Taylor's argument for the conceptual necessity of a conceptual moral framework could legitimise reference by teachers to this framework in the case of non-controversial issues. However, a number of pedagogical considerations were suggested that justified teachers refraining from this, even where it were legitimate to do so.

The issue was then raised as to the nature of the procedure that could be followed in a procedural approach to moral education. An examination of Hare's and Wilson's arguments indicate that their accounts do not adequately account for variation in moral evaluation, or explain why the same evaluation is not arrived at by all using their procedure.

An account was then presented of the nature of moral thinking that could account for such variation. Apart from identifying the universal moral components, it demonstrated the manner in which variations in moral judgements could be legitimate. In other words, such judgements need not be arbitrary or subjective even though they may vary. It was argued that, if these moral judgements were validly made, it would be possible for others to see how these are inevitable, or at least understandable, provided one evaluated the judgement from the inside, as it were, using the values and understandings that went into making that judgement. To preempt criticisms of relativism, arguments were then presented as to the possibility of merging horizons of significance, and the importance in the absence of an agreed and universally accepted system of morality of regarding the current values and understandings of a society to be tentative, and open to improvement and correction.

Hence, genuine understanding of individuals and their culture will only come from knowledge of their shared values and understandings, i.e. knowledge of the variable moral components of that culture. This has implications for the kind of citizenship education programme appropriate to a plural society. The need to merge horizons of significance, and to consider the values and understandings to be tentative and ameliorative, also has implications for the teacher's attitude towards issues of value, as well as the attitudes which children should be encouraged to develop.

One important concept that has arisen is that of the role of the state. The next chapter will examine the question as to whether it is defensible for states to espouse a form of state perfectionism, i.e. the implementation and promotion of ideals of the good life as a legitimate matter for governmental action (Raz, 1990: 110).

Chapter 6

State neutrality or state perfectionism?

6.1 Introduction

It was seen in the last chapter that there may be both substantive and pedagogical reasons for the use of a neutral approach in the classroom. The first apply specifically to controversial issues, and while the second are not restricted to these. Whatever the reason, a neutral approach is possible or appropriate primarily in a climate where the autonomy of individuals, and their right to select and pursue their notion of the good life, have wide acceptance.

In recent years, liberalism has taken the forms of libertarianism and contractarian liberalism. The school of libertarianism represented by F A Hayek has had influence on Western liberal governments in the last decade or so. The effect of this school of thought on the conception of citizenship was examined in Chapter 3. On his part, John Rawls has in his contractarian liberalism constructed a theory detailing the principles and shape of a system in which the state remains neutral with respect to its members' notion of the good. His views have been criticised by thinkers known collectively as 'communitarians'. Rawls's views, and communitarian criticism of these, will be examined in this chapter, as will an alternative liberal view put forward by Joseph Raz.

Finally, the implications of the debate between Rawls and the communitarians with respect to the role of the state will be explicated.

6.2 The liberal argument for state neutrality

The notion of state neutrality is usually associated with liberal thought. A brief account of liberalism was provided in Chapter 3; liberalism was also touched on in the context of the liberal individualist tradition of citizenship. This section will look more specifically at the liberal arguments for state neutrality which, as will be seen, is usually based on an appeal to liberty or autonomy, or both.

The implications of state neutrality for the handling of values in a plural society, and associated questions, such as the notion of autonomy, its characteristics

and the conditions for its appropriateness, and its relevance to the Singapore context, will also be examined.

6.2.1 Liberalism and the concept of liberty

J S Mill, in his essay 'On Liberty', put forward several arguments in favour of what Isaiah Berlin has called a negative sense of liberty. Even if individuals engaged in activities that harm themselves, the state should not use force to prevent them from indulging in these, as long as no one else is harmed. For Mill,

(The) only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his (sic) will, is to prevent harm to others. ...In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute (Mill, 1979: 135).

Restrictions on the state was justified in terms of liberty; for Mill, the only freedom which deserved the name was that of pursuing one's own good in one's own way (Mill, 1979: 138).

Apart from being a good in itself, liberty was also necessary to achieve other goods. For instance, freedom of expression was necessary because truth would suffer if this were restricted or prevented: truth could not emerge if prevailing falsehoods were not corrected. Even if what emerged were false, truth would benefit from the collision with falsehood because these truths would then be held with greater clarity and conviction (Mill, 1979: 142-143).

In any case, no original ideas would emerge without freedom of expression, and mankind would suffer as a consequence. Mill argued that original ideas prevented human life from stagnating; it was people of originality and genius who could produce these ideas, and genius could only live and thrive in an atmosphere of freedom (Mill, 1979: 193-194).

The kind of liberty that Mill argued for is a negative one in that individuals are said to be free to the degree to which their actions are not prevented by others (Mill, 1979: 121-122). Berlin suggests that there is a positive sense of liberty, one that is concerned with the area of control.

For Berlin, a conception of liberty purely in terms of negative freedom, is inadequate. Even if there were no ban on an activity, one would still not be free to

carry it out if one lacked the means to do so; one would therefore be as unfree as if there had been a ban on the activity (Berlin, 1969b: 122-123). Negative freedom therefore does not ensure positive freedom, which is the freedom of individuals to exercise control over their own lives, and to make choices and act according to their own reasons and purposes (Berlin, 1969b: 131).

Berlin defines positive liberty in terms of self-mastery and self-directedness (Berlin, 1969b: 131-134). Individuals are free insofar as they are autonomous, i.e. insofar as they are not fettered by anything that obeys forces which are beyond their control (Berlin, 1969b: 136). As Berlin points out, 'positive freedom' is therefore grounded in the Kantian notion that human beings are, potentially, autonomous beings: 'authors of values, of ends in themselves, the ultimate authority of which consists... in the fact that they have willed freely' (Berlin, 1969b: 136).

Hence, negative freedom needs to be complemented by positive freedom which takes into consideration the conditions necessary for individuals to exercise control over their lives. Present in Kant, and incipient in Mill, is the notion of autonomy. This will be examined in the next part of the section.

6.2.2 Autonomy: its characteristics and the conditions for its appropriateness

It was seen that liberty is not only associated with the view that individuals should be free from state interference, but also with the position that individuals should be autonomous in terms of their capacity to select and pursue their notion of the good life. In other words, liberty is associated with the notion of autonomy. Mill did not, of course, use the term 'autonomy' in the sense it is used today under the influence of Kant's philosophy. Nonetheless, his notion of the pursuit of 'one's own good in one's own way' can be seen as an early formulation of the present day concept of 'autonomy'.

For Kant, autonomy of the will referred to the property the will had of being a law to itself (Kant, 1993: 101). He regarded the autonomy of the will as being a necessary condition for the validity of moral judgements. Kant associated reason and the will with the intelligible world, i.e. things in themselves, as opposed to the world of appearance. If reason or practical reason was to function at all, these must be free in that they should be the source of their principles, and not determined by external

influences. Rational agents should therefore be able to regard themselves as being capable of acting on their own rational principles and, hence, to regard their will as their own (Paton, 1993: 40). Moral law decided on such a basis would be valid because it springs from one's own will, i.e. one's intelligible and, hence, *real* self.

In his categorical imperative, Kant stated that one should act only on that maxim through which one could at the same time will that it should become a universal law (Kant, 1993: 84). In the categorical imperative, therefore, there are the elements of reason being the source of its own principles, and the will being a law to itself.

Kantians justify autonomy in terms of the 'essence of man (sic)', which involves the belief that human beings are authors of their own ends (Berlin, 1969b: 136). To manipulate someone towards goals they have not conceived is to deny this essence; to make individuals do something they have not willed or consented to is to force them in the name of some value higher than themselves (Berlin, 1969b: 137). For Kantians, there is no justification for either.

As will be seen, Berlin upholds autonomy in the form of freedom from coercion because he believes this to be necessary for individuals to be recognised as independent human beings, and for their capacity to determine their lives in accordance with their purposes. On his part, Raz takes the view that, in Western societies, autonomy is conceived as an essential aspect of well-being. Raz's view will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Autonomy has been advocated as an educational ideal by educationists in the West. Sometimes, the acceptability and importance of this ideal are regarded as being self-evident so that these are assumed, rather than argued for. Of those who explicitly discuss the concept of and need for autonomy, some retain an element of the Kantian notion of self-legislation where moral laws are concerned. For R S Downie and Elizabeth Telfer, for instance, an autonomous person is one who 'has the ability by his (sic) own moral legislation to create moral obligation which is valid for him' (Downie & Telfer, 1971: 296).

At the very least, it is believed, individuals should themselves be responsible for their moral thinking: their thoughts on morality should be their own, and they should act according to rules they have accepted for themselves (Dearden, 1975c: 59-60; Downie & Telfer, 1971; Peters, 1978: 197). For R F Dearden, for instance, an autonomous person is one who 'has a mind of his (sic) own' (Dearden, 1975d: 7).

Such persons would be able independently to conceive their own policies and goals and, by choosing among alternatives, exhibit that choice as the deliberate outcome of their own ideas and purposes (Dearden, 1975d: 7).

However, the philosopher Joseph Raz believes a distinction should be made between autonomy and the conditions for it. He regards the state of the individual, such as the capacity for rational thought and action, to be a condition for autonomy (Raz, 1990: 204). The availability of a sufficient range of acceptable options is another condition for autonomy (Raz, 1990: 205, 372-373); this, as will be seen, will have implications for the role of the state. For Raz, therefore, the autonomous life is discerned not so much by the ability of the individual, or by what the life consists of, but by 'how it came to be' (Raz, 1990: 371).

It is important to note that there are in fact, two aspects of autonomy. There is, first, *autonomy of judgement* which refers to the ability of individuals independently to make evaluations and arrive at decisions. One particular form of autonomy of judgement is moral self-legislation, which refers to personal choice in forming or selecting the moral values and goals that govern one's life. The form of autonomy usually discussed by, argued for, by Western philosophers and educationists is often autonomy of judgement, and sometimes involves moral self-legislation. Second, there is the aspect of the ability to act in accordance with their principles¹. Individuals who display such *autonomy of action* do not only know what they should do, but they are also able to carry this out.

The point should be made that the two aspects of autonomy admit of degree. The degree of autonomy in one aspect is independent of the degree of autonomy in the other. If autonomy of judgement concerns the ability of individuals independently to conceive their goals and to act accordingly, then it is possible for individuals to be more or less autonomous (Raz, 1990: 154ff.). Some individuals are less easily swayed by others in forming their own views and goals, and those with strong wills are better able than others to remain faithful to their principles. At the same time, it should be noted that a commonly used model of autonomy is that of autonomy of judgement; however, individuals who are able firmly to adhere to their principles may be said to have a high degree of autonomy of action.

Autonomy of action applies in all circumstances; individuals are generally required to act according to their principles. It could be argued, however, that

¹These terms are used by Gerald Dworkin (1995: 41).

autonomy of judgement has greater application in situations of heterogeneity, e.g. in plural societies where the opportunity, and need, to make choices become important. It is conceivable that there may be individuals who live in a homogeneous society, with little or no contact with outsiders, who have accepted and affirmed the values of that society, and who constantly act according to these values. Unless these values offend against universal considerations such as those related to the 'human predicament', these individuals can be said to be autonomous in the way that is required in that situation². In other words, the appropriateness of autonomy of judgement varies depending on the type of society the individual is in.

Even in Western liberal societies where the value and importance of autonomy are often taken for granted, philosophers sometimes find it necessary to contextualise the need for, and the value of, autonomy. Raz, for instance, points out that the ideal of personal autonomy is a conception of individual well-being that is suited to Western industrialised societies. He justifies its suitability by reference to the particular conditions of the industrial age which is characterised by fast changing technology and free movement of labour. These conditions 'call for an ability to cope with changing technological, economic and social conditions, for an ability to adjust, to acquire new skills, to move from one subculture to another, to come to terms with new scientific and moral views' (Raz, 1990: 369-370).

The availability of options makes possible the affirmation of extant values, the abandonment and modification of one's values, and the adoption of external values. At the same time, individuals need to make decisions regarding how to lead their lives, and to make choices throughout their lives with regard to their values.

Of course, even in such conditions, individuals could simply be *told* by a patriarch what options to pursue. However, Raz's point is that these conditions which make for the availability of options and the possibility of choice are particularly suited to the ideal and pursuit of personal autonomy (Raz, 1990: 369-371). It could also be said that the qualities associated with autonomy would be useful to individuals, enabling them independently to make judgement, and to ensure an internally coherent set of values.

John White points out that the need for autonomy also arises because of the complexity of today's societies: different moral rules may prescribe different courses

²See Chapter 5 for account of Geoffrey Warnock's notion of the 'human predicament', and the role of morality in meeting the needs and vulnerabilities of human beings that arise from this predicament.

of action, and conflicts may arise between interests (White, John, 1982: 93). In conflict situations like these,

(The individual) has to move to a more reflective level. This entails clarity about rules and facts involved in his (sic) situation which are relevant to the judgement he will finally have to make. And judgement is inescapable here. Beyond a certain point there are no rules to guide him: he will have to weigh the different courses of action open to him and come down... on one side or the other (White, 1982: 93).

In a situation of moral plurality, however, the moral problems that arise could be more profound than simply those of differences in social mores and conflicts of interest. Moral issues could arise from inconsistencies between values, between different world views, or within a particular world view. At the same time, there are no moral experts to whom one could turn for definitive answers to moral questions, or to questions regarding the good life. Hence, individuals need to be able to assess the various world views or forms of life, and to come to rational, coherent decisions regarding these; and they need to be prepared for this task.

In any case, it will be seen that an essential aspect of identity is concerned with values. If so, autonomy is necessary for individuals to make coherent decisions regarding their lives and their world views, i.e. it is necessary with regard to their personal identity. It is also important in the context of evolving a national identity. As will be argued, this is best done through public deliberation, and individuals would need a degree of autonomy to participate in such a process.

It need hardly be added that the fact of democracy also calls for individuals to be autonomous. Democratic ideals and processes give citizens influence over the political process. An assumption is that citizens would independently vote as they see fit, having thought through the various issues and the platforms of the respective political parties. Apart from a free press and the absence of manipulation and coercion, political education is commonly regarded as essential to enable individuals to exercise their vote autonomously and responsibly. Hence, in any society where there is a system of democracy, autonomy is a necessary goal in education.

The question could be asked as to whether personal autonomy, which involves autonomy of judgement, should incorporate moral self-legislation. It should be pointed out that the Kantian idea of moral self-legislation is absent from some forms of moral thought. In Confucian philosophy, for example, the received values of the society e.g. those of filial piety, respect for one's elders, and so on are taken as a

given, and expected to be accepted as valid moral law. Action in accordance with these is regarded as moral by those who embrace Confucianism.

Even in Confucian societies, however, a degree of autonomy has to be present for moral responsibility to be ascribed to individuals, and moral worth to their actions. After all, individuals cannot bear moral responsibility for principles they have not assented to, or actions they have been forced to perform. Terrorists who bomb a shopping centre from personal conviction of the merit of a cause are morally responsible for their action, while Patty Hearst, who participates in terrorist activities because she has been brainwashed with regard to the rightness of that cause, is not or not *as* - morally responsible.

Nonetheless, the point still remains that the element is absent in Confucian thought of moral self-legislation. There is no similar undertaking, for instance, to apply scepticism to existing moral principles, and attempt to justify or construct a system of moral principles using rationality, on the basis of the autonomy of the will or a similar concept.

The reasonableness of the demand that individuals should conceive their moral principles to be deemed autonomous is questionable. Gerald Dworkin has pointed out that, if moral autonomy demands originality in terms of creating or inventing moral principles, then this is impossible on both empirical and conceptual grounds (Dworkin, 1995: 36). Dworkin argues that this view denies one's history, i.e. the fact that one is born in a given environment, and is deeply influenced by family, peers, culture, etc.. In vein similar to Charles Taylor's 'horizons of significance', he points out that there are also logical difficulties since moral principles have a social character, and the fact of invention by oneself does not make them moral.

Dearden, like Raz, takes the position that autonomy arises, not in the originality of principles, but in the process in which the principles and choices come about (Dearden, 1975d: 8). Apart from being capable of independent judgement, autonomous individuals must have reflected at some point on their principles (Dearden, 1975d: 8-9). For Dearden, therefore, it would be sufficient for individuals to be considered autonomous if they had, at some point, reflected on their principles, and accepted these as their own.

The Kantian idea of moral self-legislation, and the Confucian approach of an almost unquestioning acceptance of societal values, lie at opposite ends of the spectrum. However, as was argued, autonomy admits of degree, and its

appropriateness depends in part on the conditions that obtain in a society. It depends, first, on the type of society, e.g. the degree of heterogeneity, and the level of industrialisation; second, on the value accorded to autonomy by the society; and third, on the degree of difference that that society can tolerate, morally, politically, economically or psychologically, given the social and cultural context. Hence, the kind of autonomy, particularly one that emphasises autonomy of judgement, that is suitable in a Western liberal society may not be suitable for Malay Muslims living in a conservative *kampung* (village) community with few options by way of notions of the good life. For such people, it would arguably be sufficient if they had reflected on and, where appropriate, affirmed the values of their community, and internalised these.

Apart from the degree of autonomy, the Kantian and Confucian approaches to morality also lie at opposite ends of the spectrum with respect to whether moral concepts and values are individual or societal in their origination. It has been argued that it is unreasonable to take either the position that individuals should conceive their own moral principles, or the position that they are initiated into the moral principles of a community which they have to accept.

In the reference to Dworkin's view that moral principles have a social character, it was noted that this view resembles Taylor's 'horizons of significance'. For both, social values and understandings form a framework which make possible, inform, limit, and give meaning to the individual's values and understandings. At the same time, Taylor's approach to morality avoids the pitfall either of claiming that moral principles are purely individual in nature, or that these are entirely societal in nature.

Taylor's approach is not so much to demarcate the areas of purview: '*This area is a given, and is decided by society; that is for individuals to decide*'. Rather, his position is that there is a process at work: on the one hand, individuals are initiated into values and understandings which have come to exist communally whether this is a result of tradition or collective decision; on the other hand, people (particularly those in liberal societies) individually engage in the task of seeking and working out their principles against this background of values and understandings; and the two processes impinge on each other. Taylor refers to this as a dialogical process in which individuals develop their own opinions, outlook and stances to things in dialogue with, sometimes in a struggle against, the identities which one's significant others want to recognise in one (Taylor, Charles, 1991a: 33). For Taylor, this is a continuing, endless process.

It could be added that this process could be consciously undertaken. Indeed, in the situation of a young nation that is building an identity, there is a strong argument for a conscious undertaking of the dialogical process. In such a process, individuals consciously seek and work out their principles against the background of societal values and understandings; in so doing, they help deepen and develop societal understandings, create a consensus on the principles that can guide policy decision and interaction in a plural society and, hence, work towards greater coherence between the set of principles that guide public interaction, and their own system of morality.

To summarise, the concept of liberty is closely linked with that of autonomy. For liberals, liberty is espoused as a good and an end in itself, as well as for the positive outcomes it engenders. Autonomy is also accorded great value in liberal thought. It was noted that there are two aspects of autonomy. Whereas autonomy of action applies in all circumstance, the need for autonomy of judgement and the degree to which it is appropriate, is context dependent.

In Western liberal societies, the form of autonomy that is emphasised is that of autonomy of judgement, and it sometimes takes the form of moral self-legislation. However, there are conceptual and empirical limits to which individuals are able freely to choose their values or ends. Taylor's notion of the horizons of significance explains the conceptual impossibility of moral self-legislation as absolutely conceived. It also makes an argument for a more complex approach to morality, one in which individuals work out their values and goals against a backdrop of values and concepts which give meaning to their decisions and actions.

6.2.3 The relevance of autonomy to the Singapore context

With regard to Singapore, it could be said that the conditions for the appropriateness of autonomy of judgement given by Raz and White would apply to the island-state today. A rapidly industrialising country with a changing economic base, its people are exposed to a range of career and lifestyle choices which were not previously available. Industrialisation and modernisation have also had their impact on the traditions and practices of its constituent communities. Among other things, high rise housing has largely replaced the *kampungs* in the last few decades, and nuclear families have superseded the practice of extended families living under one

roof. As a consequence, there is a need for Singaporeans, not simply to choose, but to work out the values and goals that are relevant to guiding their lives.

At the same time, Singapore has adopted a democratic political system, and its citizens need to be prepared for their role in a democracy. At the very least, they need to be able independently to make evaluations and take decisions, so as to be able to function as responsible citizens.

In addition, a situation of cultural, religious and moral plurality obtains in Singapore. The country is the meeting point of a number of different ethnic and religious groups. A public moral system comprising moral principles and understandings which can be shared by all, and which can guide policy decisions and guide interaction, needs to be developed. This does not merely need to take account of the values of the constituent groups; it also needs to respond to influences from outside the country. At the same time, individuals need to come to terms with all these values and ideas in order to develop a personal conceptual and moral framework that takes account of these factors, and that is coherent and meaningful, not only internally, but also in the context of their immediate communities, as well as the developing public moral system.

The process of evolving a coherent moral system appropriate to Singapore is also relevant for the formation of national identity which is an important task for a young nation. It would be helpful at this juncture to examine the notion of identity, and see how this is linked to that of values.

According to Charles Taylor, the answer to the question 'Who am I?' depends largely on the question of what the individual believes in, and what his or her orientation is.

Who am I? ... (This) can't necessarily be answered by giving name and genealogy. What does answer this question for us is an understanding of what is of crucial importance to us. To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try and determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. (Taylor, 1989b: 27).

There is a sense in which 'Who are *you*?' may be answered by reference to a person's name and idiosyncratic characteristics, and to his or her affiliations, e.g. family background, country of origin, nature and place of work, etc.. However, to

answer the question 'Who am I?' by giving the name and idiosyncratic characteristics would be ludicrous. This question is not meant to elicit the superficial identity or situation of a person; these are already known. It is a question of greater profundity. Indeed, there is, in the phrase 'being true to oneself', an integration of the notion of the self with that of living according to one's principles. In being true to oneself, the acts of being authentic and of living in accordance with one's principles are yoked together.

Since the horizons of significance of a community give meaning to one's life and choices, answering the question 'Who am I?' has to take place within the context of these horizons. 'Community' could refer to the ethnic group, the religious group, the nation, and so on, in which the individual is situated; these are groups into which individuals have been initiated, and which provide their conceptual and moral framework. Therefore talk of personal identity has to include talk of the elements that constitute personal identity, viz. the culture shared with others at the ethnic, religious, national levels, etc..

'Community' is used in contradistinction to 'lifestyle enclaves' or 'associations' which one is able to join and leave at will (Taylor, Charles, 1989b: 508). Membership at a country club would be an example of joining a lifestyle enclave. Even if there were regular companions whom one meets at the country club, and even if one's views were influenced by these companions, there is always the option of resigning from the club, and finding new companions elsewhere. In contrast, communities are groups into which one has been initiated. What one is — one's understandings, metaphysical and conceptual framework, and values — is drawn, at least in part, from the metaphysical and conceptual framework and the values of these communities. Even if one came to reject these communities, it is impossible voluntarily to overhaul in its entirety the framework and understandings that constitute the self.

'Conceptual framework' refers to moral concepts through which one views the world and interprets events. These include the understandings that make possible distinctions between moral terms, such as that between stealing and borrowing (Peters, 1973: 63). The metaphysical framework provides the beliefs and values that make meaningful and give reason for a particular way of life. It includes a moral system which may address ultimate questions such as the purpose of life or the notion of the good; it may also include myths of a founder, enlightenment or salvation, and a belief in a supernatural reality.

If values are an essential aspect of identity, then the evolution of a moral system for Singapore is necessary for the development of a national identity. In this, the qualities associated with autonomy which are important for enabling individuals to cope with a fast changing society, to function as responsible citizens in a democracy, and to undertake the task of evolving a system of morality, are also important for the development of a national identity.

Hence, the qualities associated with autonomy of judgement, which have wide acceptance in the West, have relevance for Singapore as well. However, as will be argued in Chapters 8 and 9, the significance of plurality for Singapore with regard to moral and citizenship education has not been sufficiently recognised in the city-state.

6.3 Rawls's theory of justice

Autonomy of judgement involves the idea that individuals should be free to conceive and pursue their notion of the good. This has sometimes been interpreted to mean that the state should be neutral with respect to the individual's notion of the good. In recent times, John Rawls has put forward an account of state neutrality which is based on a theory of justice; the latter is supposed to be derived without knowledge of particular conceptions of the good or, presumably, the values associated with these.

Rawls is concerned in his theory with social justice. This pertains to the basic structure of society, or 'the way in which the major social institutions (e.g. the political constitution and principle economic and social arrangements) distribute fundamental rights and duties, and determine the division of advantages from social co-operation' (Rawls, 1990: 7). This basic structure is important because, apart from defining the rights and duties of individuals, it greatly influences their prospects in life (Rawls, 1990: 7). Rawls's project is to derive principles of justice which would apply to the basic structure of society, and to do this in a fair manner (Rawls, 1990: 17, 61). He also wishes to connect the theory of justice with that of rational choice, and he does this by bringing in the notion of a social contract. The task, therefore, is to determine the principles of justice that individuals would rationally adopt if these were the object of an original agreement (Rawls, 1990: 11, 17).

To derive the principles of justice, Rawls considers it necessary for individuals to exclude 'the knowledge of those contingencies which sets men (sic) at

odds and allows them to be guided by their prejudices' (Rawls, 1990: 19). He refers to the exclusion of such knowledge as the 'veil of ignorance', and to the state of ignorance as 'the original position' (Rawls, 1990: 19). As the outcome from an agreement made in the original position is 'not conditioned by arbitrary contingencies or the relative balance of social forces', Rawls believes that any agreements reached would be fair (Rawls, 1990: 120).

Individuals in the original position are assumed to be ignorant of particular facts. These include their place in society, class position, social status, fortune in terms of natural assets and abilities, intelligence and strength, conception of the good, or plan of life; neither do they know the particular circumstances of their society, or the contingencies which may set them in opposition (Rawls, 1990: 137).

Given these conditions, Rawls believes that rational individuals will choose two principles of justice.

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.

Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all (Rawls, 1990: 60).

The first principle includes such basic liberties as political liberty, liberty of conscience and freedom of thought, freedom of the person and the right to hold property, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure (Rawls, 1990: 61). An implication of the first principle is that everyone is 'assured an equal liberty to pursue whatever plan of life he (sic) pleases as long as it does not violate what justice demands' (Rawls, 1990: 94).

Rawls's position is anti-perfectionist: it denies that persons have to be attributed a prior acceptance of some duty, such as that to develop individuals of a certain style; it also denies that the coercive apparatus of the state should be used to win for certain persons 'a greater liberty or larger distributive shares on the grounds that their activities are of more intrinsic value' (Rawls, 1990: 328-329). Ethical principles chosen behind the veil of ignorance exhibit certain characteristics: they are general in form and universal in application and, for Rawls, can publicly be recognised as a final court of appeal for ordering the conflicting claims of a moral person (Rawls, 1990: 135).

It could be noted that Rawls's approach to justice is procedural rather than substantive. His is a procedure, albeit a hypothetical one, which is used to determine

the basic principles of justice. Nonetheless, the presentation of his theory of justice as being procedural and as making minimal assumptions, is misleading because there are substantive beliefs underlying it. There is the belief, for instance, in the priority of justice which is regarded as 'the most important virtue of institutions' (Rawls, 1990: 6).

It is difficult to dispute with Rawls's position that there is a basic concept of justice which people have in common, even if they have different particular conceptions of justice. For instance, few would disagree that institutions are just when no arbitrary distinctions are made between persons in assigning them their basic rights and duties (Rawls, 1990: 5). What is disputable is Rawls's contention that justice is the most basic virtue of institutions, or that it is more important relative to the other virtues (Rawls, 1990: 3ff.).

It is conceivable that some societies could regard other virtues as being as important as justice, or even more so. It is held in traditional Conservative thought, for instance, that class and privilege, which have come about as a consequence of the evolution and accumulation of practices and traditions over many years, have value, either in themselves, or in contributing to the stability of the society (Buck, 1975b: 26ff.). Conservatives may therefore seek to preserve class and privilege, even though this may be viewed by many as being unjust. The point is that it is not self-evident that justice is the most basic, or most important, virtue of institutions.

In opting for justice, therefore, Rawls's hypothetical participants in the original contract have some notion of the good, and it is a notion that involves justice being the basic virtue of institutions. At the same time, the participants also *care* about justice. Given the freedom to choose, they choose just principles rather than those which, say, would serve their interests regardless of those of others. This means that they hold substantive values including, among other things, the idea that justice is important, that other individuals are equal in importance to oneself, that they should not be made to suffer unjust distributions of rights and goods even if one were in a position to bring this about, and so on.

Other objections have been brought by communitarian thinkers against Rawls's theory of justice. These will be examined in the next section.

6.4 Communitarian criticism of Rawls's theory of justice

Rawls's thesis has been subjected to criticism from communitarians such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer. These thinkers base their views on a communally oriented conception of the person, i.e. a conception of human beings as 'integrally related to the communities of culture and language that they create, maintain and inhabit' (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 162).

(i) The contractarian conception of the antecedently individuated self

In Rawls's theory of justice, individuals come together to form a hypothetical contract, and choose the principles of justice according to which they could live. According to Sandel, this involves the conception of the individual as an 'antecedently individuated self' (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 40ff.). Only individuals whose identities are fixed in advance would be able freely to choose their principles and ends from behind the veil of ignorance. Indeed, Rawls himself states that 'the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it' (Rawls, 1990: 560).

Communitarians, however, believe that individuals are limited in terms of their freedom to choose their principles and conception of the good. They argue that the self is not voluntaristic in the way that Rawls makes it out to be, but is constituted. Sandel provides several for this (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 50ff.).

For instance, choice is not the only way that individuals have of relating to their ends; they may come to affirm or discover their ends through a process of self-discovery and self-understanding. The implication here is that these ends could already be present so that it is a matter of discovering and affirming these.

In any case, if the self were fixed in advance of its choice of ends, then these ends could never be integrated with it. However, changes in one's ends - e.g. in one's goals or vocation - do affect one's identity. In reality, hence, one's choice of ends *can* be integrated with one's self.

There is reason to believe, therefore, that the self is constituted by his or her ends, and so he or she is not radically free to select their principles and notion of the good in the way Rawls suggests. It was earlier argued, following Taylor, that

individuals need to be initiated into the moral and conceptual understandings in society, and to make reference to these, for their lives and choices to have meaning and significance, and for them to make sense of moral behaviour at all. This argument that the self is formed by the understandings and ends that are available in one's community reinforces Sandel's notion of the constituted self.

Against Sandel's objections, Rawls could claim that his theory of justice is merely a hypothetical device used to derive certain principles. However, Sandel's objections do raise valid questions as to the manner in which such individuals are hypothetically to choose. If his arguments are right, then individuals are not radically free in their ability to devise or choose their principles and ends. Also, the elements that constitute the self, and which affect one's choices, need to be identified. Indeed, as was earlier noted, Rawls himself appears to be making substantive assumptions in his theory of justice, while not acknowledging them as such.

(ii) Claim of universalisability of the theory

Liberals maintain that their claims apply universally. Rawls's theory of justice is no different. It involves an abstraction from particularity, and is thought to apply to any society regardless of its background. Indeed, he states that his principles of justice apply universally³.

Communitarians believe, however, that Rawls has failed to attend to cultural particularity, 'to the ways in which different cultures embody different values and different social forms and institutions, and to the consequences these differences might have for political theory' (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 19). As Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift observe, it may not necessarily be the case that all individuals, regardless of their cultural background and self-understandings, have an interest in securing a capacity to make their own choices in the way Rawls assumes (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 20).

It was earlier seen that there are conditions which are more suited to autonomy than others. Rawls himself admits that, below a certain level of economic subsistence, and where social conditions do not allow the establishment of basic

³For Rawls, all ethical principles – including that of justice – which are chosen behind the veil of ignorance exhibit characteristics associated with conceptions of right. These are sets of principles, general in form and universal in application (Rawls, 1990: 135).

liberties, individuals could be willing to exchange liberty for an improvement in economic well-being (Rawls, 1990: 542). This stands to reason, even where autonomy is valued, since economic conditions are essential to the exercise of autonomy: autonomy is not a possible or realistic goal in dire economic circumstances. It may also be the case that increased prosperity is correlated with an increased capacity to think for oneself as a result of better education, and with increased concern with autonomy arising from greater availability of choice.

Further, it has been argued that there may be legitimate differences in the variable moral components⁴. If so, it would be important to take into account the values and shared understandings of a society in formulating a theory of justice or any moral theory. It has also been argued that moral concepts exist in the context of, and are interpreted with reference to, other moral concepts. Hence, the latter necessarily impinge on the interpretation of the former.

The point is that individuals have constituted selves, a fact which both influences and limits their choices. In any case, as has been suggested, liberal theories such as Rawls's are not value-neutral. Rawls's account of justice emphasises autonomy of judgement which, for him, is acting according to principles that one has chosen as a free and rational being (Rawls, 1990: 252, 516). Against this, it could be argued there may be societies (of which Singapore is, arguably, one) where such notions as autonomy of judgement are not held to be as important. Political stability, economic well-being and social cohesion are among a number of other goals which could be considered to be at least as important as autonomy, if not more so.

Also, there are the values which are implicit in the motivation of individuals who want to take up the veil of ignorance and enter into a contract with their fellow men. Apart from a disinterested rationality, Rawls assumes that they would win for themselves the highest index of primary social goods (e.g. rights and liberties) without imposing injuries on, or gaining relative to, others (Rawls, 1990: 144). As has been suggested, such individuals already possess a respect for others, and their dignity, rights and well-being. Though not limited to it, these values are characteristic of liberal thought.

It could also be pointed out that such values are also of a comprehensive nature. By Rawls's definition, comprehensive moral conceptions are 'conceptions of what are valuable in human life, ideals of personal virtue and character, and the like,

⁴See Chapter 5.

that are to inform one's conduct (Rawls, 1987: 3n)⁵. A value such as the respect for the person which would motivate one to obtain primary social goods without imposing injuries on others fits this definition of a comprehensive moral conception.

Hence, Rawls makes substantive liberal assumptions in his theory of justice which undermine his claim of universalisability for the theory. Further, given the role of the variable moral components in moral thinking, the lack of consideration given to particularity casts doubt on the validity of his theory and its applicability to cultures where liberal values are not the norm.

(iii) Liberal anti-perfectionism

For Rawls, individuals selecting the principles of justice should do so in ignorance of particular kinds of knowledge, including notions of the good. This same ignorance should apply although not as strictly in designing constitutions and basic social arrangements, and in deciding laws and policies (Rawls, 1990: 328-329). In other words, the state should be neutral with respect to the possible conceptions of the good.

However, communitarians argue that the community 'provides the cultural resources in terms of which individuals come to understand themselves and the value of different ways of life' (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 31). This point was illustrated in Taylor's notion of the 'horizons of significance'. Communitarians also believe that 'some valuable ways simply would not survive unless they were promoted by the state' (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 31). Mulhall and Swift give the example of forms of the culture, such as opera, which would die away without state support (Mulhall & Swift, 1993: 31-32). Joseph Raz, a liberal, holds similar views; these will be examined in the next section.

From the brief examination of communitarian reaction to Rawls's theory of justice, it can be seen that the criticisms aimed at elements in his theory could be applied to liberalism in general. These criticisms point out:

First, that the self is not antecedently individuated; nor is it as radically free to choose its ends, as Rawls's theory might imply. Also, there are grounds for believing that the

⁵See the next section for a discussion of the notion of comprehensive goals.

notion of a constituted self is not only more accurate, but it also takes into account the attachments that form the self and inform choices.

Second, Rawls's theory makes substantive value assumptions which contain comprehensive 'moral conceptions', with the result that it may not be applicable to societies which lack those 'moral conceptions', or attach less significance to these. It is questionable, therefore, as to whether his theory is universalisable. In any case, given the account of the nature of moral thinking presented in the last chapter, there is a need to take cultural particularity into consideration; and this liberal theories such as Rawls's do not do.

Third, whereas Rawls recommends state neutrality, a preliminary case was made for the importance of the community with respect to maintaining and providing cultural resources, and of the state with regard to preserving valuable forms of life.

A theme is emerging in communitarian criticism of Rawls's theory that will gather significance as the chapter progresses. It concerns the question of whether the state should remain neutral with respect to conceptions of the good. It might first be useful, however, to recapitulate the liberal arguments against state perfectionism, or paternalism as it is sometimes called⁶. One of the strongest arguments has been advanced by Isaiah Berlin.

In 'Two Concepts of Liberty', Berlin argues against the sort of view in which individuals freely surrender their lives to society, and benefit in return. In such a society, it would be possible to coerce individuals to be free by making them do what their irrational self does not want to do by arguing that that is what their rational and true self would do (Berlin, 1969b: 148). Berlin considers this sort of paternalism despotic. The self, he argues, is determined in large part by what one thinks and feels. Hence,

(paternalism) is an insult to my conception of myself as a human being, determined to make my own life in accordance with my own (not necessarily rational or benevolent) purposes, and, above all, entitled to be recognised as such by others. For if I am not so recognised, then I may fail to recognise, I may doubt, my own claim to be a fully independent human being (Berlin, 1969b: 157)

Berlin also criticises the beliefs, which he believes to be implicit in any form of paternalism, that the ends of rational beings fit into a single harmonious pattern

⁶Joseph Raz, for instances, uses the two terms, 'perfectionism' and 'paternalism', interchangeably.

which some individuals discern more clearly than others, and that all conflicts are the result of irrationality and can, in principle, be avoided (Berlin, 1969b: 154). In the first place, he says, the most basic desire of individuals is for recognition and understanding of the other members of their society (Berlin, 1969b: 154-157). However, the imposition of authority on an individual is a denial of this desire for recognition, and results in it being unsatisfied.

Second, there is no 'final solution' in terms of resolving incommensurable values (Berlin, 1969b: 167ff.). For Berlin, values cannot be graded on a scale to determine which is the highest. Such a concept of freedom represents morality as a mechanical exercise which denies the notion that human beings are free agents (Berlin, 1969b: 171). Neither is it the case that there is an ultimate, all-reconciling synthesis. Berlin believes such a notion to be inhumane because it deprives individuals of the option of choosing between ultimate values, which is a necessary part of their being self-transforming beings (Berlin, 1969b: 171). Hence, for him, freedom is an end in itself (Berlin, 1969b: 169); it also allows individuals to 'choose ends without claiming eternal validity for them' (Berlin, 1969b: 172).

In a situation of plurality, the only position that can rationally be taken is Berlin's, viz. that there is no 'final solution' of incommensurable values. Berlin, however, excludes the possibility that one's conception of oneself as a human being could involve being forced to do what one's supposedly real or rational self would do. Since he rejects paternalism, he also excludes the possibility of allowing some external entity, such as a religious teacher or the state, to make decisions for oneself.

However, it is not obvious that such a conception of the self is impossible or undesirable. It is conceivable, for instance, that individuals with strong temptations and poor self-control might ask forcibly to be restrained if they are tempted to do what they would not *really* wish to do. In such a situation, this would in fact be consistent with helping such individuals exercise their autonomy, and necessary to the recognition of these individuals as self-determining human beings, to so restrain them⁷.

Berlin also excludes the possibility of individuals freely surrendering their lives to an external entity so as to achieve some goal. Gerald Dworkin has argued that a conception of autonomy that insists on substantive independence - which is the refusal to conduct one's life according to the prescription of another person or an

⁷A similar point is made by Gerald Dworkin (1995: 15-16).

institution is not a conception that has a claim to one's respect as an ideal (Dworkin, 1995: 21ff.). Such a conception of autonomy would make autonomy inconsistent with such notions as loyalty, commitment, benevolence and love, all of which necessarily place restrictions on one's actions. In pursuing these virtues, individuals need to restrict their freedom. If they do, they do so voluntarily, and those who restrict their freedom for this reason should not be regarded as lacking autonomy. In fact, they are autonomous persons *because* they are willing and able to give up certain freedoms to live according to the virtues they uphold.

If Dworkin's argument is right - and individuals may allow their freedom to be restricted in order to uphold certain virtues or achieve certain goods and still be considered as autonomous - then there is no reason to suppose that individuals should not voluntarily restrict their freedom for other purposes, such as that of the welfare of others, the greater good of the community, or one's own benefit.

It is acceptable in liberal societies during times of war for individuals to sacrifice their freedom and autonomy to the armed forces for the duration of the war. This sacrifice is necessary during war time to combine resource and to co-ordinate efforts so as to defeat the enemy. Sacrifice of freedom and autonomy is therefore necessary in the face of threat or danger. Individuals have little choice if they are to regain or retain their freedom in the long term. Nonetheless, there is still the element of consent in sacrificing their freedom and autonomy for a good.

There could be cases where the sacrifice of the exercise of personal autonomy is of a more voluntary nature. Dominican monks in liberal societies submit themselves to the Rule of their order, and to obedience to the Prior of their community, because that is part of their conception of living a spiritual life. Alternatively, citizens of some of the democratically elected but 'autocratic' governments of the economically successful East Asian countries may arguably prefer social stability or economic security and prosperity offered by their governments to a greater degree of personal autonomy.

It should be noted, however, that in all the examples above, there should be a limit to the sacrifice of freedom and autonomy. In the first example, the individual's autonomy might be restricted in that, as a soldier, he has limited control in terms of exercising his judgement, and carrying these out, on a day to day basis. However, there is an important sense in which he has autonomy, and in which his 'non-autonomous' soldier's life serves this higher autonomy. The soldier is autonomous in that his actions are consistent with his higher goals, e.g. freedom for his country and

people, and the ability of these people to live autonomously in the long term. In other words, individuals such as the soldier do retain their autonomy in an important sense.

In the second example, the monk always has a choice to leave the monastery, and regain, as it were, his autonomy in his daily life. Similarly, the citizen of the East Asian countries have the option – theoretically, at any rate – of removing the current government from power, and replacing it with one that allows for greater freedom and personal autonomy.

It could be said in response to Rawls, therefore, that it is by no means obvious that human beings would not, beyond a certain level of economic welfare, continue to exchange their autonomy for some other good. It could perhaps be taken as non-controversial that individuals in any country would like to lead lives they regard as happy or flourishing or meaningful, in accordance with their notion of the good. Given this, it is conceivable that some individuals may put other values – e.g. personal financial security or prosperity, or the fulfilling of one's notion of the spiritual life – above that of personal autonomy. They might therefore be willing to sacrifice their freedom and autonomy, at least in part, for the sake of attaining that good. To exclude this possibility is to limit the individual's capacity to be self-determining.

The only possible exception is Mill's example of giving or selling oneself into slavery. Such a decision could not be reversed, and one could not thereafter be free – or, it might be added, autonomous – again (Mill, 1979: 235ff.). Hence, Mill believed that one does not have the freedom to be unfree. Alternatively, it could be said, even if one had that freedom, one should not exercise it.

Hence, the sacrifice of liberty and autonomy could be consistent not only with achieving one's virtues and goals, but also with autonomy in an important sense. However, this would only apply if certain conditions hold: first, one's higher level principles and goals – the principles according to which other lower level principles and goals are derived – are still in one's control; second, the area of control that is given up concerns the lower level goals, and third, where personal freedoms are sacrificed, this is done conditionally, and there is the possibility of revoking that sacrifice.

It is also in keeping with one's autonomy in an important sense to sacrifice a degree of freedom and autonomy for a good. Individuals might therefore willingly place their freedom and autonomy in the hands of some other person or institution if

this is judged able to achieve that good. In any case, as will be seen in the next section, there are good reasons for state perfectionism even from a liberal point of view.

6.5 Raz's thesis of perfectionism

Raz begins his argument for state perfectionism by examining the doctrine of political neutrality. Anti-perfectionism, he points out, could take the form of neutrality between ideals, i.e. governments should be even-handed between available forms of morality (Raz, 1990: 135). It could also take the form of the exclusion of ideals, i.e.

government action should be blind to all ideals of the good life, (and) implementation and promotion of ideals of the good life, though worthy in itself, is not a legitimate object of governmental action (Raz, 1990: 136).

When liberals argue for anti-perfectionism, they could mean the doctrine of neutrality, or the exclusion ideals, or both.

Raz acknowledges the importance of the concern of liberals with regard to respecting the individual's rights, and of their disquiet with respect to the state coercing individuals to fulfil a particular conception of the good. However, he is unusual among liberals in that he supports state perfectionism. He bases his position on the importance of personal autonomy, and the duty of the state to protect this autonomy.

Raz notes that, in Western industrial societies, the ideal of personal autonomy has acquired considerable popularity as a conception of individual well-being (Raz, 1990: 369). An important aspect of well-being is the successful pursuit of one's comprehensive goals; these, for Raz, are the significant and pervasive goals in one's life, which have importance for one (Raz, 1990: 293, 308-309). Comprehensive goals depend on the social forms practised in a society, viz. the 'shared beliefs, folklore, high culture, collectively shared metaphors and imagination, and so on' of that society (Raz, 1990: 311). Raz gives the following example: if one's comprehensive goal is to practise as a doctor, that goal depends on a 'general recognition of a medical practice, its social organisation, its status in society, its conventions about which matters are addressed to doctors, ...and its conventions about the suitable relations between doctors and their patients' (Raz, 1990: 310-311). In the absence of such

understandings, it would not be possible to have medical practice as a goal, or to carry out this goal.

Given the importance of personal autonomy to individual well-being in Western societies, and given the dependence of comprehensive goals on social forms, governments have a duty to 'provide the conditions of autonomy for people who lack them' (Raz, 1990: 415). For instance, governments should promote the autonomy of individuals by preventing people from acting in such a way as to diminish another's autonomy; they should also ensure that individuals take actions which are required to improve peoples' options and opportunities (Raz, 1990: 415-416). This is necessary, Raz argues, because failure to improve another's situation could be tantamount to causing harm.

In addition, what should be available should not be just any option or opportunity, but morally acceptable ones. After all, choice from among unacceptable options would be no choice at all, and individuals would not be able properly to exercise their autonomy given such options. In any case, the autonomous life is valuable only if it is spent in the pursuit of acceptable and valuable projects and relationships (Raz, 1990: 417). Since social forms make comprehensive goals available to individuals, it is important that these be maintained and supported. If governments have a duty to promote autonomy of citizens, then they have a right and duty to maintain social forms, and to create morally valuable opportunities from which individuals might choose (Raz, 1990: 417).

Although a liberal, Raz's argument is reminiscent of those presented by communitarians who hold that the values, goals and the very identity of individuals are in part dependent on the resources available in society. Hence, communitarians would argue that it is as important to protect such resources as it is to protect individual rights, if not more so. The difference is that Raz bases his argument on the basic value of autonomy, whereas the communitarian position – as argued for by Taylor, for instance – is that cultural resources such as conceptual and moral frameworks are necessary for a significant and meaningful life to be possible at all. Irrespective of whether autonomy is valued, cultural resources such as shared understandings and social forms need to be protected. The question is whether this should be a task for the state.

Communitarians, and liberals like Raz, differ as to the level at which social resources are to be protected: some believe it to be the state, others the community. While Raz believes that the task should be undertaken by the state, Amitai Etzioni is

of the view that the community – at the level of the family and group – should do as much as possible, and only leave to the state the tasks that cannot reasonably be carried out at the family and group levels (Etzioni, 1994: 7; see also Etzioni, 1993).

While it is not always necessary for the state to intervene to protect social forms, there are instances where only the state can do this effectively, if at all. For example, education could be abandoned, and a common core of knowledge lost, if it were entirely left to individuals to make their own decisions. The state is in a position to ensure against this by making education compulsory, and by ensuring that a common curriculum is taught. Given the importance of education and the forms of knowledge to a society, it is difficult to justify the state not taking action, and allowing these to be abandoned or lost.

Despite strong arguments, however, state perfectionism is something liberals are suspicious of. For Rawls, perfectionism is only justifiable under particular circumstances: apart from economic deprivation, it is only under conditions of the loss or absence of reason or will that paternalism may be invoked to help individuals achieve their 'more permanent aims and preference' (Rawls, 1990: 250). However, Raz's argument for a perfectionist state is without the assumption that there is economic deprivation, or that individuals are unable to act as rational or moral agents. In other words, his argument would apply irrespective of economic prosperity or the competence of individuals.

Nonetheless, it could be argued that Raz's arguments are particularly applicable in societies where a degree of autonomy is appropriate. These are societies which are democratic, and are undergoing rapid industrialisation, and in which value and importance are accorded to personal autonomy. There is therefore the question as to how relevant his arguments are to societies which may not value autonomy so highly.

In such a situation, it could be said that the communitarian argument for the importance of 'horizons of significance', and the relevance of these to one's ability to make meaningful choices, is not dependent on autonomy being highly valued. In other words, social forms are necessary for individual to live meaningful lives, regardless of whether their society is liberal and gives priority to autonomy.

In any case, it has been argued that state perfectionism is defensible, even necessary, if certain forms of life are to be protected. If policy decisions are to be made in a perfectionist society, and if this is to be done without unnecessarily

violating the autonomy of individuals, an important question is how these policies are to be determined. There is, perhaps, an understandable apprehension that decisions taken on people's behalf might not in fact be those that they would have made. If so, there is the further question as to what sanctions these individuals would have against such decisions. This issue of how substantive values and conceptions of the good ought to be identified, on which state policy and action could legitimately be based, will be taken up in the next chapter.

6.6 Conclusion

The chapter began with an examination of the arguments for state neutrality, a number of which were based on appeals to liberty or autonomy. For liberals, freedom and autonomy are espoused as goods and ends in themselves, as well as for the positive outcomes that they engender. They also hold that individuals should not only be free from state interference in their lives, they should select and pursue their notion of the good life.

A distinction was made between autonomy of judgement and autonomy of action. It is the former that is often emphasised in Western liberal societies. This sometimes takes the form of personal moral self-legislation. However, Taylor's notion of the horizons of significance casts doubts on the intelligibility of trying to form one's own values without reference to the background of concepts and values from which one's principles and actions acquire their meaning.

It was argued that, whereas autonomy of action is applicable in any circumstance, the relevance of autonomy of judgement is more context-dependent, e.g. where individuals need to cope with changes, and periodically make significant decisions concerning their lives. The facts of democracy and plurality also make demands on the ability of individuals to exercise independent judgement. These conditions, which call for autonomy of judgement, are present in Singapore. In addition, the evolution of a coherent moral system appropriate to the country is particularly important as morality is an essential aspect of identity, and there is a need in Singapore to develop a national identity. Hence, autonomy of judgement can and should be a goal in education.

Chapter 6 then went on to examine Rawls's attempt to put forward a version of state neutrality which is based on a theory of justice. It was argued, however, that for

Rawls's hypothetical participants to choose justice, they would need to hold certain substantive values which are, in turn, based on some notion of the good.

Furthermore, Sandel has pointed to the questionable assumption of the antecedently individuated self in the theory of justice. The universalisability of the theory in the face of Rawls's substantive liberal assumptions, and in view of the nature of moral thinking, was also questioned. Several arguments were also advanced against Rawls's position of anti-perfectionism. First, if autonomy is valued in a society, then governments should protect citizens' autonomy by maintaining the social forms that make its exercise possible. Second, the communitarian argument that a society's conceptual and moral frameworks are necessary for the individuals to make meaningful choices indicate that there are legitimate grounds for the state to protect these cultural resources.

It was further argued that the conception of autonomy as substantive independence is inconsistent with notions like loyalty, commitment, benevolence and love. It is also conceivable that other goods might be held to be as important as freedom and autonomy, or even more so. Such goods could include social harmony, economic security, or the fulfilment of one's notion of the spiritual life. There are instances, therefore, where the surrender of one's freedom and autonomy could contribute to attaining one's notion of the good and, indeed, one's autonomy in an important sense.

In the next chapter, the notion of a common culture will be introduced as a defensible way in which policies could be determined in a plural, democratic society.

Chapter 7

The development of a common culture

7.1 Introduction

It was argued in the last chapter that a case could be made for state perfectionism in a plural, democratic society and, indeed, that protection of social forms is important for a meaningful moral life and for autonomy to be possible. In this chapter, the concept of a common culture will be suggested as a defensible means by which policies in a plural, democratic society could be determined without infringing on the autonomy of individuals in an important sense. The notion of culture, and of the transmission of culture, will also be examined.

7.2 Culture, common culture, and the primordialist-instrumentalist divide

A distinction is usually made between two conceptions of culture. One is a descriptive, anthropological characterisation of culture as a total way of life; the other is a normative or evaluative view of culture, in which reference is usually made to artefacts such as the arts, the sciences and philosophy (Entwistle, 1979: 109). As Harold Entwistle points out, the descriptive conception of culture is inadequate for the educationist because education is not mere socialisation, but a 'narrower concept picking out that aspect of socialisation which is deliberately conceived towards improvement of the individual or group (Entwistle, 1979: 110-111).

On his part, Denis Lawton begins by taking a descriptive approach. Culture is 'everything that is created by human beings themselves: tools and technology, language and literature, music and art, science and mathematics, attitudes and values - in effect, the whole way of life of a society'; it includes 'the sum total of the knowledge, attitudes and habitual behaviour patterns shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society (Lawton, 1991: 17).

However, mindful that it is practically impossible and, it could be added, undesirable to transmit everything in culture, Lawton too points to the need for selection. This, he believes, should be done on the bases of excellence and priority (Lawton, 1975a: 132). Writing in the context of the class divide in England and

Wales, he argues that it is the task of schools to forge and transmit a common culture through the curriculum (Lawton, 1975a: 130-131, 140ff.). Since the curriculum is necessarily a selection of culture, such a selection should comprise the best that has been thought and said. Common culture is therefore an extract of culture. In education, it forms the basis of the curriculum, and its constituent elements are chosen because these are or can be shared, and because they meet the criteria of excellence and priority.

Lawton believes that those aspects of culture should be included in the curriculum which are necessary to enable individuals to function in industrialised, democratic societies (Lawton, 1988: 34-35). These include mathematics, the sciences, the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the political, economic and social structure of one's country in relations to others. There should also be 'a strong aesthetic element' as man is 'essentially a creative animal'. These are aspects of culture which Lawton believes should be made available to every child because, despite differences among different groups, these are 'the basic kinds of values which are respected and kind of knowledge which are important for all members of the society' (Lawton, 1988: 36).

For Lawton, common culture includes fundamental principles, i.e. the shared values and aspirations which are held by many in the community irrespective of political alliance (Lawton, 1992: 109-110). Such principles include 'beliefs in democracy, justice (or at least fair play), technology, rationality and morality which are more important than ideological differences' (Lawton, 1992: 112). These principles provide the basis on which a consensus could be formed in the face of ideological differences¹.

Where Singapore is concerned, schoolchildren are already exposed to a common curriculum. For instance, children are taught languages like English and their 'mother tongue', as well as Science, History and Geography². Apart from Civics and Moral Education, there are also art lessons. Hence, if 'common culture' is used to mean common forms of knowledge, which are embodied in a common curriculum, this can be said to be well established in Singapore.

¹It should be pointed out that Lawton was writing in the context of education theory and educational policy decision making, but there is no reason why his notion of common culture cannot be stated in more general terms.

²'Social Studies', which comprises History and Geography, is offered in some streams in place of these two subjects.

What has been identified in this thesis as a relevant issue in the context of Singapore is the aspect of common culture that is related to social interaction, particularly policy decision making and the development of a national culture and identity. This concerns the shared values, understandings and aspirations of Singaporeans. Anthony Smith describes this aspect of common culture as 'a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together in their homeland' (Smith, 1991: 11). He also points out that, in the Western model of national identity at least, nations are seen as 'culture communities, whose members (are) united, if not made homogeneous, by common historical memories, myths, symbols and traditions' (Smith, 1991: 11). Hence, a political community would have 'at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for all the members of the community' (Smith, 1991: 9).

A nation in the true sense of the term, therefore, shares a common culture. This comprises, not only the knowledge and artefacts of its people, but also common understandings and aspirations which bind them together, and which provide the bases on which they interact. The question of how common culture is to be determined will be raised in a later section. In the meantime, the notions of the primordialist and instrumentalist conceptions of culture, and their use in Singapore, need to be examined.

According to Anthony Smith, there are two possible ways to view culture with regard to its malleability. There is, on the one hand, the primordialist attitude which is concerned with 'fixity of cultural patterns'; on the other hand, there is the instrumentalist view, in which it is considered that culture and ethnic sentiment are malleable, and can be manipulated for ulterior ends (Smith, 1991: 25).

Geoffrey Benjamin points out that, in Singapore, ethnicity is regarded as 'an unchangeable and irreducible fact of life which individuals and state must come to grips with' (Benjamin, 1976: 130). It has been seen that, for the political leaders, access to 'traditional' values can be gained through the mythology of that culture, and the study of 'traditional' systems of thought such as Confucianism. The political leaders also believe that ethnic culture is an essential aspect of individuals, the loss of which would cause them to be 'deculturalised'. Hence, their attitude towards ethnic culture is primordialist: ethnic culture is regarded as being essential and fundamental to the individual and, as such, cannot be changed.

Alongside this primordialist attitude are also found views that point to the need for the respective ethnic groups to evaluate their values and traditions with the

aim to retaining certain elements and discarding others. The cultural values which are deemed appropriate for retention and promotion are those which account for the economic success of the individual and the country. These include thrift, the willingness to work hard, self-discipline, regard for education, and concern for family stability (Clammer, 1985: 23; Goh Chok Tong, 1988). Hence, while there is not an elaborated account of the criteria on which traditional values and practices should be evaluated, criteria - where offered - are usually of an instrumental nature.

Hence, the approach of the political leaders to ethnic culture that is both primordialist and instrumentalist. The two views are incompatible, even contradictory. One supports the notion of an idealised, immutable culture, while the other promotes cultural change on the basis of utility.

In Smith's view, neither the primordialist nor the instrumental position is tenable.

Any realistic account of ethnic identity and ethno-genesis must... eschew the polar extremes of the primordialist-instrumentalist debate... Collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions contained by each generation about the collective destiny of given cultural units of population (Smith, 1991: 25).

Hence, any attempt to conceptualise ethnic culture in terms of an ideal form is a mistake, as culture by its nature evolves and develops. In practical terms, such an approach is inadequate. Individuals in a plural society need to deal with differences in terms of moral values. Emphasis on the maintenance of cultural heritage does not address the question of how they are to handle competing, even incommensurate, values and goods. Neither does the approach take into account the fact that individuals have to cope with pressures impinging on that culture, or address the question as to how - if at all - they can manage change.

Hence, an approach to identity based on the assumption of an ideal culture is not appropriate in a situation of plurality and change. Also, it was argued in Chapter 5 that there is an inevitability about moral judgement so that an approach which chooses values and promotes these on the basis of some ulterior, instrumental criteria is suspect. The solution would have to lie in recognising

first, that culture is a living, changing phenomenon, and that changes can be managed, although there are limits to which this can be done; and

second, that determining the moral principles according to which one should live has - at least in part - to involve addressing the big questions such as what the good life is, or what it is to be human, etc..

Given the above, and given that in a plural society values and assumptions cannot unilaterally be determined, e.g. by *fiat*, or by the 'perception' of an individual or a group, it will be argued that an important aspect of establishing a national, common culture on which social interaction could be based must involve the engagement of the nation in articulating the values and understandings of the constituent groups, and that of the national community; this would constitute an effort to develop a coherent set of understandings which would embody national identity, and which policy decisions could legitimately be based on.

To summarise, in a society that is divided - whether this is in terms of class, ethnicity or religion - a common culture is particularly important to bind people together. This should comprise a set of understandings, aspirations, sentiments and ideas which all can share.

It was observed the political leaders' approach to ethnic culture exhibits both primordialist and instrumentalist views. Such an approach is internally inconsistency. In any case, culture is a living phenomenon, and should be treated as such. The next section will explore the notion of a common culture in greater detail, and the way in which this should be developed.

7.3 Developing a common culture

This section explores Rawls's notion of an overlapping consensus with respect to the possibility of its application to developing a common culture. Taylor's criticisms of this notion will also be examined, and the idea of a rich, elaborated common consensus suggested as the basis of a common culture.

7.3.1 Rawls's 'thin' theory of an overlapping consensus

In 'The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus', John Rawls attempts to devise a conception of justice that meets the condition of plurality on which interaction in a liberal society could be based (Rawls, 1987). It could be said that, if justice is a fundamental concept governing human interaction, then it would be an important element of common culture and form the basis for it.

Rawls describes his conception of justice as a political one. While it is a moral conception of justice, it is one which has been 'worked out for a specific kind of subject, namely, for political, social and economic institutions' (Rawls, 1987: 3). Such a conception of justice is neither general nor comprehensive; it does not apply to 'a wide range of subjects of appraisal (in the limit of all subjects universally)', nor does it include 'conceptions of what is of value in human life, ideals of personal virtue and character, and the like, that are to inform much of our conduct (in the limit of our life as a whole)' (Rawls, 1987: 3n, 6). Since such a conception of justice is 'not to be seen as derived from any general or comprehensive doctrine' (Rawls 1987: 5), Rawls considers it to be appropriate in plural democracies.

Rawls develops the notion of an overlapping consensus which can be used to determine such a conception of justice (Rawls, 1987: 4). An overlapping consensus refers to the agreement arrived at by a group of people despite their different comprehensive goals. Such a consensus is possible because individuals may arrive at the same conclusions e.g. their political conceptions and the attendant principles, standards and ideals where their comprehensive doctrines intersect or converge (Rawls, 1987: 9). The notion of an overlapping consensus therefore allows for moral agreement on 'conceptions of society and of citizens as persons, as well as principles of justice, and an account of the co-operative virtues through which those principles are embodied in human character and expressed in public life' (Rawls, 1987: 11).

The formulation of a political conception of justice is guided by free public reason; this comprises common sense, and the procedures and conclusions of science when these are not controversial (Rawls, 1987: 8). It is also guided by 'fundamental intuitive ideas' which are latent in the public political culture of a democratic society (Rawls, 1987: 5-6). Rawls believes that members of democratic societies are 'intuitively familiar' with a tradition of democratic thought. This, together with a democratic society's main institutions and the accepted forms of their interpretation, provide a resource of 'implicitly shared fundamental ideas and principles' (Rawls,

1987: 7). These fundamental intuitive ideas are not religious, philosophical ideas, and should not be taken as such.

In what appears to be an expansion on his notion of intuition, Rawls speaks of the premises that people agree as true, or as reasonable, for the purpose of reaching a working agreement on the fundamentals of a political conception of a moral concept (Rawls, 1987: 6). Fundamental intuitive ideas include the notion of a political society as a fair system of social co-operation between citizens; and citizens are regarded, not only as free and equal persons, but also as moral beings with a capacity for social co-operation. Rawls believes that it is possible, from these intuitive assumptions, to come to an agreement on a political conception such as that of justice.

7.3.2 Building on Taylor's 'thick' theory

Charles Taylor agrees that Rawls's conclusions about justice derived in the manner he proposes are indeed acceptable because these fit with one's intuitions. He argues, however, that if these intuitions were to be spelt out, a 'thick' theory of the good would be arrived at (Taylor, 1989b: 89). By this he means the involvement of 'strong' evaluation which calls on standards independent of the individual to discriminate between right and wrong, and higher or lower; it also means the involvement of such questions as how one's life should be led, and the kind of life that is worth living (Taylor, 1989b: 4, 14). If Taylor is right, then Rawls necessarily draws on a 'thick' theory of the good to derive his conception of justice.

Rawls could object that this is precisely the sort of question that should not be raised. Answers to such questions have to make reference to comprehensive doctrines and goods, and this would be inappropriate in the political arena of a plural society. However, social and political issues affecting all in a society do raise for individuals questions with respect to deeper questions, questions concerning comprehensive beliefs and goals. To bar such questions from being raised is to prevent people from articulating and addressing in public debate issues of importance and profundity (Sandel, 1994: 1172ff., 1789ff.). It would also mean that individuals would not be able to make reference to considerations which do in fact impinge on their judgements, and legitimately so.

Another objection could be that arguments which refer to comprehensive beliefs and goods e.g. 'Because it is God's will' or 'Because the Koran says so'

would make public debate impossible because such considerations make assumptions that others cannot share. However, if a person's views are ultimately based on reasons of this sort, then these have to be admitted to. This would not only be honest, it would also provide grounds for legitimate differences of opinion should these arise.

Hence, one's deepest commitments and conceptions of the good are both relevant and important to practical reasoning. As Taylor puts it:

My perspective is defined by the moral intuitions I have, by what I am morally moved by. If I abstract from this, I become incapable of understanding any moral argument at all. You will only convince me by changing my reading of my moral experience, and in particular my reading of my life story...(Taylor, 1989b: 73)

Rather than attempt to abstract oneself from one's moral commitments, Taylor proposes another form of practical reasoning, viz. reasoning in transitions.

(This) aims to establish, not that some position is correct absolutely, but rather that some position is superior to some other. ...We show one of these comparative claims to be well founded when we can show that the *move* from A to B constitutes a gain epistemically. This is something we do when we show, for instance, that we get from A to B by identifying and resolving a contradiction in A or a confusion which A relied on, or by acknowledging the importance of some factor which A screened out (original emphasis) (Taylor, 1989b: 72).

Taylor gives as examples of reasoning in transitions the instances when he comes to see that he has been confused about the relation of resentment and love, or that there is a depth to love that is conferred by time. This kind of insights enable individuals to make sense of their lives in a better and more profound way than the previous understanding had.

It is true that comprehensive notions of the good would not provide common ground for the discussion of issues in a plural society.[•] However, the process of articulating these comprehensive notions make for honesty, and for a reasoning in transitions. It also enables individuals to clarify, and others to understand, their notions of important conceptions and issues. Explaining the religious reasons for a prohibition on torture particularly if that religion has a well-articulated and well-developed philosophy and theology might provide a foil for, or give inspiration to, others to articulate and develop their substantive views on the subject; at the very least, others would come to understand the reasons individuals have for their views. Hence, reference to comprehensive notions could yield insights on profound

questions which do concern individuals - what it is to be human, or to be a good person, or to lead a meaningful life.

It could be asked how the approaches taken by Rawls and Taylor actually differ. After all, both speak in terms of 'intuitions' when it comes to the question of how issues are to be decided.

It should be pointed out that Rawls does not ignore the importance of traditions of thought:

We are beneficiaries of three centuries of democratic thought and developing constitutional practice; and we can presume not only some public understanding of, but public allegiance to, democratic ideals and values as realised in existing political institutions (Rawls, 1987: 2).

Rawls also recognises that it may not be possible to avoid comprehensive doctrines entirely (Rawls, 1987: 8). His solution is to 'reduce relying on their more specific details, or their more disputed features', and also to assert 'the least' (i.e. as little as possible), and in the least controversial form (Rawls, 1987: 8).

It is unclear what Rawls means by 'the procedures of science', or the relevance of these to developing a conception of justice; and calling on 'intuition' and 'common sense' is unhelpful. To Jimmy, a National Front member who believes 'intuitively' that black people are inferior, the only reply Rawls can make to him is that these intuitions are not correct because they do not accord with democratic values which are fundamental to Anglo-American societies. Without articulating these intuitions in detail, and without appealing to the comprehensive goals that underlie these intuitions, it would be difficult to demonstrate to Jimmy the error of his intuitions, apart from simply asserting that his intuitions differ from one's own intuitions and, perhaps, those of others as well.

Taylor, however, provides an account of what it is to attempt to articulate one's intuitions; this involves articulating one's notion of the good. The latter cannot be equated with the giving of an 'external' or basic reason. Rather, it is an attempt to describe what underlies one's ethical choice, leanings and intuitions; it is to set out what one has a dim grasp of when one sees that A is right, or X is wrong, or Y is valuable and worth preserving (Taylor, 1989b: 77).

The object of these attempts at articulation are the 'qualitative discriminations' in one's ethical life.

Prearticulately, they function as an orienting sense of what is important, valuable, or commanding, which emerges in our particulate intuitions about how we should act, feel, respond, on different occasions, and on which we draw when we deliberate about ethical matters. Articulating these intuitions is setting out the moral point of the actions and feelings our intuitions enjoins on us, or invite us to, or present as admirable (Taylor, 1989b: 77-78).

Hence, the answer to Jimmy would better be couched not simply in terms of intuition in the sense Rawls means it, but also in terms of the notion of the good that underlies this. It might mean, for instance, articulating one's own conception of the individual, and his or her moral worth and dignity, as well as that of Jimmy. It would then be possible to discuss and evaluate how far Jimmy's notion of the good cohere with those which are acceptable in a democratic society.

Taylor's approach also allows for an evaluation of the quality and moral implications of the conceptions of individuals. While Jimmy may not necessarily agree with one's comprehensive notions, it would be possible to compare the two with the aim to seeing which would afford the greater epistemic gain, or would better resolve contradictions or confusions. At the same time, the articulation of notions of the good might bring about a shift in understanding.

An example of a shift in understanding is the way in which the attitude towards blacks has changed. People gradually came to realise that blacks were human, that they had feelings, and were capable of suffering, like any one else. Hence, it became morally unacceptable to own them as property, or to inflict cruel punishment on them. This understanding did not always obtain. As late as 1957, in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case, a Supreme Court judge in the United States passed a judgement that a black man belonged to a 'subordinate and inferior class of beings' and, as such, was not eligible to the rights of a citizen, and could be bought and sold (Taney, 1994: 141). Hence, the view that blacks were fully human, and should be treated accordingly, represented a shift in understanding of what it was to be human, and how one ought to treat another human being. In this instance, it involved the expansion of the category of humans to include blacks.

In the twentieth century, there have arguably been a similar shift in understanding with regard to the role of women. A significant development in this regard has been the granting of suffrage to them. Yet another example is the

conception and spread of democratic institutions and human rights, to the extent that these have become part of a universal language. Few today would disagree with these understandings, and those who do usually feel the need to justify the deviance. All these changes arguably stem from an increasingly sense of the importance of the individual, and the consequent need to reduce suffering as far as possible (Taylor, Charles, 1989b: 12-14).

It could be asked as to whether these new understandings actually represent advances; after all, some current understandings might be proved wrong in future. This might well be true. However, there is no external point at which situated human beings can objectively judge whether the current moral understandings are right. If these understandings cohere with one's moral principles and sensibilities, and if they better enable one to make sense of one's situation, then those understandings are superior to previous ones. Nonetheless, they are open to change, and should be changed if better understandings emerge.

Hence, comprehension and consensus with regard to moral concepts and understandings, as well as shifts in these, are effected by attempts to articulate one's understandings and the assumptions underlying these. This being the case, participation in the derivation of such a consensus should be open to all in a society in order to ensure that the understandings of all are represented.

It could be said that a consensus is important in a plural, democratic society. However, there are problems with an overlapping consensus that involves minimal reference to general and comprehensive goods. The demand of minimality does not provide for sufficient elaboration to know the authenticity of agreement, viz. whether there is genuine, profound agreement, or whether the consensus is a contingent overlap. Neither does it indicate whether the agreement would continue if circumstances should change, nor provide for an elaborated and rich understanding of values where agreement exists.

An important part of the process of arriving at a common consensus involves articulating one's intuitions, and developing shared understandings; such a process may require reference to comprehensive goals and ends. Also, any consensus reached in this way might be of a substantive, even comprehensive, nature.

Policy decisions – including perfectionist goals – could legitimately be based on a common culture formed as a result of such a consensus. However, if a common

consensus is to be genuine and stable, it needs to be of a rich and elaborated form. A contingent coincidence of principles does not guarantee authenticity or stability of agreement. Hence, the more well elaborated the shared understandings are, and the greater the degree of agreement, the more well-grounded and stable the agreement

To summarise, common culture refers to the shared understanding held by a group of people. It includes, among other things, the sum of knowledge, the institutions and conventions, and the aspirations, attitudes and values shared by a group of people. Since a national culture is constituted, and expressed, by such shared understandings, a common culture is important to the development of a national culture and identity. These shared values and understanding are also important in a perfectionist society as they form the basis for, and make legitimate, the goals and direction of a community.

A common culture requires not merely an overlapping consensus, but an elaborated one. Anthony Smith believes that the fuller and richer the ethno-history of a nation, the more convincing becomes its claim, and the deeper the chord it can strike in the hearts of the nation's members (Smith, 1991: 161). In the context of Singapore, where the basis of the nation is a national common culture rather than constituent ethnic cultures, and where there is a need to develop this common culture, a similar point can be made: the richer that common culture is, the stronger the resonance this will have in the individual's life, and greater the possibility of identification with it.

Later in this chapter, the notion will be introduced of a community of educated people with respect to developing a consensus which may form the basis of a common culture. Before that, however, the link between language and culture needs examination.

7.4 Language and culture

It has been noted that the policy in Singapore regarding primary citizenship education programmes is that these should be conducted in the pupil's 'mother tongue'. The assumption is that the use of the language associated with a particular culture would best convey the concepts of that culture. There is also the belief that

knowledge of the mother tongue gives children greater awareness of their cultural roots, and fosters a stronger sense of nationhood (Gopinathan, 1991: 279).

The question must be asked, however, as to whether it is necessary for cultural concepts and values to be transmitted in the language associated with that culture. Admittedly, a language may well embody a particular way of conceiving the world, and may have concepts and terms which are difficult to translate. Benjamin Whorf has suggested, for instance, that the language of a culture embodies and perpetuates a certain world view, and determines the perception, thought and action of its users (Argyle, 1973: 79). The oft quoted example is that English has only one word for 'snow' whereas Eskimo has different words for different kinds of 'snow'. The finer distinctions made in Eskimo, the argument goes, enable its speakers to perceive aspects of the environment which others may not notice, and to communicate about these more easily (Currie, 1983: 406).

However, as Michael Argyle suggests, it could be that distinctions are made in a culture because, and when, it is important to do so. In other words, it is not necessarily nor always the case that language determines perception; it may be the other way around. In any case, even if a language only has a small number of words for a certain phenomenon, it is still possible to make finer distinctions - 'it just takes more words' (Argyle, 1973: 80).

In other words, cultural concepts and values can be translated with their sense largely intact if this is done with sufficient explanation. Also, the meaning of these could be made clearer by examples of their use in context. For instance, there is no equivalent of the Chinese word *xin* in English. The word 'heart' is the closest translation, but does not capture the sense that *xin* is also the seat for thought. For this reason, the term is sometimes translated in English as 'heart-mind'. This gives the idea of a yoking together of what is known in English as 'heart' and 'mind'.

Further, the use of a concept in its context also helps to convey its meaning. Singapore children sometimes use the (English) phrase 'I think in my heart' to convey both the meaning of *xin* as the seat of thought, and the emotive aspect of that thought (as well as the sense of privacy of thought). Hence, although there may be no direct equivalents in another language, there is no reason why the meaning of concepts and values cannot be made apparent in other languages. This can be done not only by using definitions and explanations, but also through the contextualised use of the term. Context could therefore provides not only the connotation of the term, but part of the denotative meaning as well.

Hence, it is unnecessary to use the language associated with a particular culture to initiate children into its concepts and values. It could be also added that, if it is the contextual use of concepts that is important, then an effective way to do this would be through the arts, e.g. in novels, dramas, poetry. It goes without saying that these concepts could also be directly articulated and explicated in discussion and debate.

7.5 Public deliberation and a community of educated people

It has been argued that members of a political community should engage in articulating the shared understandings with the view to developing an elaborated common consensus. This engagement in articulating and developing shared understandings is much like the notion of public deliberation that has been proposed by David Miller and Joshua Cohen, among others.

Indeed, David Miller has defended the use of public deliberation to develop national culture and identity. He begins with the idea that public culture, viz. 'the set of ideas about the character of the community which also helps to fix responsibilities', is partly a product of political debate (Miller, 1995a: 68). He points out that the development of national identity in a plural society involves in part different groups competing to 'imprint' the common identity with their particular image. This being the case, the identity that can justifiably be regarded as authentic is one which involves input from all sections of the community (Miller, 1995a: 40).

Hence, an important aspect of this input is a public debate in which all should participate. Miller makes the further point that there is particular need in young nations to conduct explicit public debate about the character of national identity. He alludes, for instance, to the fact that the United States, a relative young nation, has a long history of nation building and that there exists, as a result, 'a much clearer sense of what it means to make people into Americans' (Miller, 1995a: 178-179). The same, it could be said, would apply to a young nation like Singapore.

Cohen's contribution to developing the concept of public deliberation has been to detail the characteristics of ideal deliberative procedure (Cohen, 1989: 22-23). Deliberation is *free* in that participants have the liberty not only to engage in the debate as they see fit, but also to act from (i.e. comply with) the results of

deliberation. It is *reasoned* in that participants should give reasons in advancing, supporting or criticising proposals. It involves parties who are *equal*; and it aims to arrive at a rationally motivated consensus, i.e. one in which reasons are provided that are persuasive to all.

On his part, Richard Pring has, in his notion of a community of educated people, developed the idea of a people, engaged in a process of articulating and developing their shared understandings. He takes a community of educated people to be one in which people 'share similar interests and doubts and... can explore together the enquiries through which one tries but always fails to resolve those doubts' (Pring, 1995a: 126). He points out that, while serious reflection, moral deliberation and the exploration of values and beliefs may be deeply personal, these are conducted within public traditions and can be helped by being introduced to these traditions. Such traditions include, among other things, poetry, novels, dance, media presentation, the arts, historical accounts, social interpretation and theological analysis (Pring, 1995a: 128), and represent the objectification of the thought and reflection that has gone on before one.

Pring's view is that the conducting of thinking, reflection and exploration within a group serves two important functions. The first is that the sharing and scrutiny of others in the community helps, refines and supports one's personal efforts, and contributes to one's personal enrichment. It could be added that, since the self is defined in part through one's interaction with others, one's identity is also redefined in the process. The second function is that, in a context of the moral uncertainty which is a result of plurality, the practice of thinking and deliberating in the light of traditions, and in concert with others, makes possible greater confidence in the provisional conclusions that are arrived at.

Pring rightly highlights the role of such traditions, as history and the arts in the public reflection, deliberation and exploration of values and beliefs. In addition, as was earlier noted, the arts is a means to articulate and develop, in contextualised form, the meaning of cultural concepts and values which have no direct translation, or which may as yet be ineffable. However, while such traditions can play an important role in developing a common culture, these are not intended to and should not replace public deliberation by way of direct discussions of important issues. This could take different forms: e.g. communicating one's views to the media; publishing articles in the press; participating in special interest groups or professional organisations which may take an interest in, and publicise considered views on certain issues; etc.. In education, for instance, bodies such as a general teaching council or a

central advisory committee comprising representatives from the different constituents, i.e. teachers, parents, employers, the government, etc. – could provide avenues for reflection on educational issues.

However, the scope of public deliberation is currently limited by the restrictions in Singapore on the kinds of issues that may be raised, the persons who may do this, as well as the manner in which views may be expressed. While some restraints are necessary if public deliberation is to be fruitful or, indeed, to be possible, these should be developed as a result of deliberation. In other words, if the procedures and procedural values are to be relevant and authentic, they should develop from the substantive values formed as a result of deliberation.

Whether it is through public discussion or the arts, it is essential that the 'intimations' of the understandings of a community be articulated and explored if an elaborated and thick common culture is to develop. The notion of public deliberation, and its relevance to Singapore and to citizenship education, will be examined in the next two chapters.

7.6 Conclusion

Hence, a common culture is important in a plural society because it comprises a set of understandings that can be shared by all. This commonality provides grounds for policy decisions, including perfectionist goals; it allows for the development of a nationality identity, and enables individuals to see each other as fellow members of a political community. All of these are relevant to Singapore, and important for it.

To begin with, however, the conception of culture in Singapore needs to be modified. Culture should be seen as a living, changing phenomenon, rather than in the primordialist and instrumentalist terms as is currently the case.

The notion of a common consensus that was introduced is in keeping with the recognition of culture as a living phenomenon. The developing of a common consensus is also a way in which state perfectionism can be made consistent with democratic values and ideals. If such a consensus is to be authentic and stable, and if it is to support policy decisions, it needs to be of a rich and elaborated form.

At the same time, it may be necessary for individuals to refer to their comprehensive goods and doctrines in public deliberation. This would be an honest approach; it would also enable others to identify the assumptions made, and understand legitimate differences in views. The articulation of comprehensive goals also makes possible a more profound understanding of one's moral stand; in addition, it allows for the developing of shared understandings with regard to what the good life is, and how people should relate to each other. This is particularly important in a nation where a common, national culture and identity need to be developed. The articulation of one's 'qualitative discriminations' could also deepen one's own moral understandings, and effect shifts in these.

Finally, the notion of public deliberation, by way of the engagement of a community of educated people in exploring the issues concerning their society, was introduced as a means to develop a consensus that would form the basis of a common culture. In the next chapter, the conclusions drawn in this and earlier chapters will be related to Singapore. The relevance of these for the notion of citizenship, and for the development of national identity, will also be explicated.

Chapter 8

Singapore: Issues

8.1 Introduction

To recapitulate, the main themes of citizenship in Singapore have been identified as those of identity and political participation. It was argued that, while the conception of citizenship depends in part on the shared understandings of a society, and its social, political and economic conditions, certain universals apply in any plural democratic society. There has to be the presence of certain values sometimes associated with liberal thought, such as respect for the dignity of individuals, and the fact that their concerns *matter*, not only to other individuals, but also to the state.

The fact of plurality and of a democratic system also means that individuals need to have a degree of autonomy in making decisions, not only about their own lives, but also with regard to how they wield their influence in the political arena.

The emphasis in citizenship education in England and Wales has been on procedural values and thinking skills, whereas the approach in Singapore has been to stress the need to transmit certain values, including those of the child's ethnic culture. The question arose, therefore, as to whether schoolchildren were developing a basic degree of autonomy, or otherwise being adequately prepared, for their future role as citizens in a plural, democratic society.

A deliberative approach which involved the use of pedagogical neutrality has been used in England and Wales as a way to deal with value issues - particularly controversial ones - in the classroom. It was observed that pedagogical neutrality was justified by - and, hence particularly appropriate in the context of - the wider belief in liberal societies that the state should, as far as possible, be neutral with respect to general and comprehensive goods. Where Singapore is concerned, however, there is arguably a stronger sense that certain values should be espoused. There is also a greater inclination - both on the part of one's family and community, and the state - to take an interest in the choices of individuals. In working towards an appropriate conception of citizenship, it is to take such differences into account. It is also necessary to take into consideration the legitimate variations in values and shared understandings that obtain in a society.

The arguments put forward by the communitarians and Joseph Raz make a good case for the need to protect social forms and other cultural resources and for state perfectionism. Hence, it was argued, it is possible to sacrifice aspects of one's freedom and autonomy, and still retain one's autonomy in an important sense. The idea of a community of educated people engaged in the articulation and discussion of matters of value was then suggested as a defensible way in which the goods and goals could be determined which would guide decision making in a situation of state perfectionism. Such public deliberation would also contribute to the evolution of a set of shared understandings which would constitute a common culture, and form the core of an authentic national identity.

These, then, were the arguments presented in the first seven chapters. The present chapter relates the arguments to citizenship in Singapore, while the next chapter explicates the specific implications for citizenship education and teacher training in Singapore. This chapter begins with an analysis of the notion of identity in Singapore, and the related concepts of ethnic and national identity. The notion of 'Asian' values is explored, together with its implication for a common culture and for the conception of citizenship in Singapore. The extant values in Singapore, and the claim that Singapore is a communitarian society, will also be examined. Finally, the relation between identity and participation is elucidated and, with this, the lessons that can be drawn for the development of a common culture and national identity in Singapore.

8.2 Issues of identity

The present section explores the issues associated with personal identity that were raised in Chapter 1, and examined in greater detail in Chapter 6. In particular, there is the question of the relation of personal identity to ethnic and national identity.

It was observed that the political leaders place great importance on ethnic identity as a contributing factor to personal identity. This emphasis reflects a belief that ethnic culture plays a large, if not the main, role in an individual's personal identity, and that ethnic culture is the primary source of the individual's values. Added to this is the belief that the values of one's ethnic culture is best transmitted by the language associated with that culture.

There is good reason to give importance to ethnic culture where personal identity is concerned. It was seen in Chapter 6 that the answer to the question 'Who am I?' rests largely on the individual's moral orientation. This, in turn, calls on the 'frames of reference', or 'horizons of significance', within which the actions and the deepest commitments of individuals have meaning. Talk of personal identity has therefore to make reference to the 'frames of reference' of a community. In a plural society, these 'frames of reference' draw on the understandings of the different communities to which individuals belong, e.g. the family, the ethnic group, the religious group, the nation, etc.. Orientation in terms of one's ethnic framework, and the identification with that culture, contribute to one's sense of rootedness and self and, hence, to one's sense of well-being and confidence (Smith, 1995: 131). In a plural society, 'frames of reference' also draw on the understandings shared by all regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation.

A number of points, however, could be made in relation to the conception of personal and ethnic identity in Singapore. In Singapore, the emphasis on the importance of ethnic culture to personal identity takes the form of learning 'ethnic values' through the language and folk tales of that ethnic tradition, and appears to rest on the assumption of a stable ethnic tradition. This assumption was questioned in the last chapter where arguments were presented for a conception of culture as an organic phenomenon. For the present purpose, it would be pertinent simply to note that this ethnic tradition is specifically identified as that of Confucianism for the Chinese.

It was noted in Chapter 4 that the qualities commonly associated with the Chinese such as thrift, the willingness to work hard and the respect for elders, are sometimes attributed to Confucianism (Goh Chok Tong, 1988). However, many, if not most, of the original Chinese immigrants were not of 'high' culture; they were mainly labourers and artisans (Clammer, 1985: 11-12). All that could be said is that, insofar as metaphysical concepts and values of the Chinese are similar to those found in Confucianism, the former could be attributed to the latter. However, the values and virtues advocated by the average Chinese are those which have been handed down through the generations, with little by way of the theorising of Confucian thought, and the context and completeness that this might confer.

Also, as was seen in Chapter 1, many Chinese who identify themselves as 'Confucian' also describe themselves as subscribing to Taoism, Buddhism and 'ancestor worship'. For many Chinese, therefore, Confucian philosophy is informed by other systems of belief as well. Even if it were the case that the values and

traditions of the Chinese were essentially Confucian, the point has been made that there is no such thing as a 'pure' culture since all culture evolves and changes.

It could also be said, with regard to the approach in Singapore to culture and identity, that there is currently an over-emphasis on ethnic culture. Ethnic identity is but one of the elements that make up personal identity, the other elements being those associated with the other communities to which the individual also belongs. If one constituent element of identity is given great emphasis, then this could be developed at the expense of the others. After all, to see oneself primarily as being Chinese is to see all non-Chinese as the 'other'. This is not a *necessary* concomitant of ethnic identity, but is a likely outcome unless the other elements of personal identity, such as Singaporeanness for instance, are equally well developed. Indeed, Goh Chok Tong has himself commented on the tendency of the various ethnic groups to be concerned with issues pertaining to that community, such as those of language and culture, to the exclusion of national concerns (Chua Mui Hoong, 1993).

An overdevelopment of the ethnic element of personal identity has other implications for Singapore as well, particularly with regard to its status as a nation-state. Anthony Smith believes that the legitimacy of the nation-state depends in part on the differentiation of one nation-state from another.

To be legitimate... a nation-state must show that its citizens are sharply differentiated from 'foreigners', but equally undifferentiated from each other internally, as far as is possible. In other words legitimisation in a world of 'nation-states' requires a measure of internal homogenisation; geo-political demarcations now take priority over other differences (Smith, 1991: 169).

Hence, the legitimacy of a nation-state depends in part on the ability of its people to see themselves as a people with shared understandings and interests. These shared understandings and interests bind a people together, and set them apart from other peoples.

In any case, the development of a national identity has been identified as being particularly important in a young nation like Singapore. This is an issue which concerns the political leaders who believe that individuals should see themselves and their compatriots as Singaporeans, and feel a sense of belonging and loyalty to their country and countrymen. The political leaders have on occasion lamented the lack of loyalty to the country when, in the late 1980s for instance, it was found that a significant number of educated Singaporeans were emigrating to other countries (Chua Beng-Huat, 1996b: 14). The political leaders have also commented on the

political apathy of Singaporeans, in terms of their lack of interest and participation in national or political matters, and in the difficulty that the People's Action Party (PAP) has in encouraging capable young people to serve the country through a political career (STWE, 1995d).

Chan Heng Chee has documented the contrast between political activism of the 1950s and the level of political participation after the PAP came to power (Chan, 1976: 39ff.). Chan points to the use by the PAP of surveillance by the Internal Security Department, and detention without trial, as having discouraged, prevented and reduced all political organisations opposing the ruling party; she also notes that the political culture which has developed is one which 'discourages conflict, confrontation and bargaining, emphasises stability, low-risk (sic) and petition' (Chan, 1976: 42-43).

The perception of Singaporeans concerning the kinds of views allowed by the government might also be revealing. Young Singaporeans have been reported as expressing the view that the government 'would come down hard on them if they went out of line', and that it (the government) 'might not be doing enough to assure those who spoke up that they would not be punished for airing their views' (Tan Sai Siong, 1993). Indeed, one thread of discussion between 1994 and 1995 in the 'soc.culture.singapore' internet newsgroup dealt with the question of whether the government was monitoring the discussion, and whether action that would be taken against those who were too critical of it (Singapore Electronic Forum, 1995).

Hence, what might appear to be a lack of interest could be in fact be a prudential response in view of the uncertainty as to the kinds of views which may be expressed concerning social, political and other 'sensitive' issues. It is possible, however, that some cases of a lack of interest in social and political affairs could be because of genuine apathy. Such apathy might well be the consequence of the self-regarding individualism that will be discussed later in this chapter. It could be pointed out in this regard that an important aspect of motivating interest and involvement in social and political issues is a sense of identification with the problems that affect the country, and those who are affected by these problems. In other words, it has to do with the degree to which individuals identify with the political community (Smith, 1991: 9). Hence, the interest taken in social and political matters has to do with the individual's sense of national identity.

Efforts have been made to encourage the development of a national identity, and to foster a sense of national identity, among Singaporeans. As was noted in

Chapter 1, the policy of integrated schools has been implemented to enable children of different backgrounds to interact. School textbooks have also been written with an emphasis on common historical experience and national sentiment, and a set of Shared Values has been incorporated into the Civics and Moral Education syllabus. Hence, there has been effort on the part of the government to articulate the substance, including the values, that go into making a national identity, and to foster a sense of national identity.

However, some policies that have been introduced in recent years could have undermined the attempt to foster the sense of national identity. There has, for instance, been an emphasis on ethnic culture, particularly Chinese culture and language. Apart from the greater inclination of the ruling party to make more open references to the ethnic and religious affiliations of the various groups, Hussein Mutalib points to the rise of 'Chineseness' of Singapore in recent years as seen, for instance, in the promotion of Chinese language and culture and 'Confucian' values by the national leaders (Mutalib, 1992a).

Where citizenship education is concerned, a policy that could work against the fostering of a sense of national identity is that of teaching *Good Citizens*, the primary school programme, in the 'mother tongue'. Logistically, this involves the segregation of children of different ethnic groups for the lesson. A consequence is that a formal opportunity is lost in which children could, in a guided classroom situation, interact with children of other ethnic and religious affiliations and, in the process, acquire a concrete understanding of the different belief and assumptions made by others. Children therefore lose the opportunity to come to the realisation, through experience in actual situations, that there are legitimate bases for differences in judgements made, as well as the chance to explore the values that they do have in common. This is a pity since even assuming that children should be taught their 'ethnic values' it is arguably unnecessary to teach such values in the language associated with that ethnic culture. An opportunity is also lost in which children could establish through discussion what values they have in common, and begin the process of elaborating on and developing these together.

If nothing else, therefore, the emphasis on ethnic - and, specifically, Chinese - culture and identity might have resulted in a degree of political alienation among the minority ethnic groups. Mutalib notes, for instance, the level of political alienation that exists within the Malay community (Mutalib, 1992a: 84-87). If he is correct, and if his observation reflects the experience of the other minority groups, then there are

doubts as to the appropriateness of current government policy for fostering a sense of national identity. Indeed, the emphasis on ethnic culture would appear to be counter-productive in this respect. For a genuinely tolerant multi-cultural society to be possible, individuals need to acquire a genuine and more profound understanding of legitimate differences in value assumptions than has hitherto been envisaged. At the same time, opportunities need to be created so that members of a plural, democratic society might develop, and be initiated into, a set of values and understandings that would provide the common grounds for interaction and decision making.

8.3 Values in Singapore

It has been noted that the Shared Values were introduced to articulate and advance a set of values which would inform interaction between individuals, and between the state and the individual. Indeed, if values are an essential aspect of identity, as has been argued, then a set of values shared by all Singaporeans would be an important aspect of a common culture; it would also be crucial to engendering in Singaporeans a sense of themselves as a people. The Shared Values were also meant to reflect the 'Asianness' of the people. The giving of priority to the community instead of the individual, for instance, is seen as a value which distinguishes an Asian community like Singapore from other societies.

The present section examines the various issues related to values and the development of a common culture. These include the notion of 'Asian' values, and the question as to whether values in Singapore are communitarian. A subsection will also be devoted to the elements of liberalism in Singapore.

8.3.1 'Asian' values

The notion of 'Asian' values has been criticised by Ho Wing Meng, among others. The basis for 'Asian' values appears to be the belief that 'for every independent nation there exists a specific set of values, goals and principles (that is, so-called national values) which is unique and exclusive to the nation concerned' (Ho Wing Meng, 1989: 674). Ho argues, however, that there is nothing unique about the values that have sometimes been described as 'Asian'. It could be said, for example, that the value of respecting one's elders can be found in Western societies, and is

hence not limited to Asian cultures. It would not, therefore, be correct to claim these values as being uniquely 'Asian'.

Certainly, it is necessary to be careful as to how the notion of 'Asian' values is conceived. There might, arguably, be some values which do not obtain in all societies. For instance, the kind of warlike aggression that was reportedly a value of the ancient Romans is not found in many Western societies today. Nonetheless, the point remains that many of the values espoused by the political leaders which are supposed to reflect the Asianness of Singapore culture, e.g. respect for elders, are not unique to Singapore or Asian societies. Hence, if the term 'Asian values' were used to mean 'uniqueness', i.e. in contradistinction to 'Western values', then an implication is that such values are unique to Asian society. It is this use of the term that Ho is rightly criticising here¹.

However, the use of the term in this sense is not the only one that is possible. It has been argued that values are an essential aspect of identity. The set of values in a community could enable its members to distinguish themselves from other communities. In this, shared values could be *distinctive* of a group, rather than unique to it². In other words, a set of values, and their ranking in terms of importance, could express the values held in high regard by a community which its members see as characterising themselves, and which they wish to see transmitted to future generations.

Indeed, David Miller points out that distinct national cultures do exist; in fact, a common culture of this sort gives its bearers, among other things, 'a sense of where they belong... (and) a background against which... individual choices about how to live can be made'. In the New World, for example, qualities of resourcefulness and mutual aid are sometimes regarded as constituting the national character (Miller, 1995a: 25-26, 85-86). It need hardly be added that such qualities are by no means limited to the New World.

It would therefore be too hasty to dismiss the notion of 'Asian' values on the basis that the term is used, as it sometimes is in Singapore, to indicate uniqueness. 'Asian values' could be used to refer to the values distinctive of a society at a particular time. In this sense of the term, a society would be 'Asian' insofar as it

¹Other criticisms of the conception of 'Asian values' have been made by John Clammer (1985: 23-24).

²A similar point has also been made by Ho Wing Meng (1989: 674).

displays particular combination of values and attitudes that is recognised as characterising that society.

The question is how it is to be decided what values should be passed on. At the same time, there is a certain coldness about systematically searching out a number of commonly held values, and stating these blandly, as in the Shared Values. Such a list is bland and 'cold' because it arguably lacks the complexity and depth that can come when contextualised, and with use. Hence, it is questionable as to the degree to which the Shared Values can be said to be a genuine expression of values of a people.

In any case, the Shared Values are supposed to be interpreted in the light of the individual's religious framework. However, even where there is agreement when the values are blandly stated, there is the question of how stable this agreement is once these are concretised and interpreted in different religious frameworks. In the Primary 5 *Good Citizens* syllabus, for instance, the concept of co-operation is translated in the Malay text as *gotong royong*: this is the mutual help that assists the accomplishment of large tasks, e.g. ploughing, or organising special occasions (CDIS, 1992c). In the Chinese text, it is embodied in the fable of a herd of wild cattle which succeeds in warding off a lion; this fable illustrates the strength in unity that results from co-operative efforts (CDIS, 1992b). In these examples, the connotation of 'co-operation' is quite different, ranging from neighbourly help to concerted, co-ordinated efforts against an external enemy. It is entirely conceivable that, depending on the illustration used and its interpretation, the denotation of a moral term could similarly vary.

If agreement on shared values is to be stable and applicable in actual and complex situations, there has to be an elaborated conception of these values. For this to be possible, there needs to be public deliberation with regard to these values, and related issues of concern. The notion of community of educated people needs therefore to be applied in the Singapore context, and effort made to encourage the development of a common culture.

At the moment, references to some value matters and issues of concern in public might be regarded to be undesirable by the political leaders, given the perceived 'sensitivity' of ethnicity and religion. However, even if it were the case that this fear is justifiable, there should be efforts to lay the ground for such references to be possible in future. Indeed, if this fear were justifiable, it would be because the respect for individuals and for their beliefs, and the attendant value of tolerance, have not been sufficiently established in Singapore. At the very least, therefore, effort

should be made to ensure that values, attitudes and dispositions of this nature - which are commonly associated with liberal thought - are securely entrenched.

8.3.2 Communitarian or liberal values?

The values in Singapore have been characterised as being Asian; these have also been described as being communitarian. The belief that Singapore society is communitarian presumably arises from the fact that members of the constituent communities show a willingness to subsume personal interests to those of the community. Two questions that need to be addressed are whether the observation that the constituent communities are communitarian in their outlook is correct and, if so, whether the observation is true of Singapore society as a whole.

The form of communitarianism that the national leaders adhere to is one of 'advocacy'. In other words, the leaders are concerned about the moral stand or policy that should be adopted, rather than exploring the questions of 'ontological' communitarianism (see Taylor, Charles, 1989a: 159). Apart from the belief that the cultures of the constituent groups generally place the interests of the group above those of the individual, communitarian values are also considered to be conducive to social harmony and economic development.

To use Hegel's terms, the morality and values that are advocated are those which are already present in society (*Sittlichkeit*), as opposed to those which are not yet present and which should be brought into being (*Moralität*.) These values, it is believed, are gradually being lost as a consequence of external influences, particularly from the West. Hence, there is a perceived need to inculcate these values in young Singaporeans.

It could be questioned, however, as to whether it is accurate to presume a *Sittlichkeit* type situation, and assume that certain communitarian values are already present. As will be demonstrated, the situation in Singapore is quite a complex one where moral values are concerned.

There is some evidence that group or family interests are important in the cultures in Singapore. There is a saying among the Chinese, for instance, that the sacrifice of the 'small self' (the individual) makes for the completion or perfection of the 'greater self' (the society) (*xi sheng xiao wo, wan cheng da wo*). Here, the

sacrifice of personal interests is seen as contributing to the overall good of society. Whatever the metaphysical implications of the identification of the person with society, there is a similar sense in the writings of communitarian philosophers that there is an intimate link between the self and society, and that what is advantageous for society - and, particularly, for the maintenance of social forms and cultural resources - is also beneficial to its members.

It is arguably the case that, in Singapore, members of a family generally feel a sense of responsibility for each other, so there is a willingness to make sacrifices to support one another should the need arise as a result of unemployment or illness. The claim here is not that everyone in Singapore would act these principles, but that the notion of support and sacrifice for members of one's family is an ideal that would generally be upheld.

However, apart from examples such as this, it is unclear exactly what constitutes 'communitarianism', and the extent to which values can be said to be communitarian, in Singapore. At the same time, it could be said that - while it is not a liberal society - elements of liberalism may be found in Singapore. Individualism, which is a component of liberal thought, is present in two forms.

One form is concerned with the notion of the equal moral worth of individuals. The presence of this form of individualism should not be surprising given that Singapore is open to ideas originating in the West. The fact that a democratic system of government has been adopted is also a contributing factor. After all, the development of modern democracy has its inspiration in the recognition of the equal moral worth of individuals and, hence, the according of a vote to each citizen; i.e. there is a belief that, no matter the individual's wealth or social status, he or she is entitled to an equal amount of political influence as a consequence of the equal moral worth shared with other citizens.

At the same time, the individual matters in liberal thought in terms of his or her needs and wants. As Charles Taylor points out, it is a characteristic of liberalism that the individual's needs and fulfilment are regarded as being of significance and that, hence, that suffering should be ameliorated as far as possible, if not eliminated (Taylor, 1989b: 12-14). To some extent, this is a principle that is accepted in Singapore. It is significant, for instance, that in the final version of the Shared Values that was adopted, the principle of 'regard and community support for the individual' was added to highlight the importance of individual rights, and the need for this to be

respected (GOS, 1991: 6). Theoretically, at any rate, there is recognition that the individual matters, as do his or her needs and desires.

A concrete way in which this respect for the dignity and the needs of the individual is operationalised has been in the recognised right of the individuals to select and practise their religion. Unlike neighbouring Malaysia, for instance, there are no attempts to pass laws that would make it an offence to renounce a particular religion (ST, 1996d). In other words, the state is strictly secular and, unless there is reason to act otherwise, remains neutral where systems of belief are concerned. Hence, there is in Singapore the presence of values and approaches which are usually associated with the liberal tradition, including a degree of respect for individuals, and their right to pursue their notion of the good life, and the separation of comprehensive goods and doctrines from politics.

Having said that, it could also be noted that there are certain notions of the good life acceptable or increasingly acceptable in Western countries which are frowned upon in Singapore. These include any lifestyle that is contrary to the preservation of 'traditional moral and family values' (Ibrahim, 1994b). To discourage single parenthood, for instance, unmarried mothers are not allowed to buy directly from the Housing and Development Board, the provider of public housing in Singapore (Ibrahim, 1994b). While measures such as this cannot prevent a person from choosing a particular lifestyle, it might make it more difficult to do so. Hence, the degree of freedom that individuals in Singapore have in choosing and pursuing their notion of the good life are, arguably, narrower than it is in some countries.

Nonetheless, liberal values associated with individualism are present in the population at large. Increasingly, there is a sense in Singapore of a desire for greater freedom for the individual. This is manifested in terms of a desire for greater liberalisation where the media is concerned, and for greater freedom of expression (see, for instance, Chua Beng-Huat, 1995a: 96; Chua Mui Hoong, 1995b, 1995c; Rodan, 1992). This desire is a natural consequence of the concept of individualism in liberal thought. Where individualism initially gave rise to the notion of the equal moral worth of individuals which was manifested in equal voting power being accorded to each individual, it is now interpreted in terms of the influence of individuals, not only in exercising the vote, but on the political process as well.

Individualism in Singapore also takes the form of a 'self-regarding individualism'. It is reflected in the competitive spirit that is becoming increasingly common in Singapore society. There is even a word for it, 'kiasuism', which is often

used to describe a character trait of Singaporeans. To be 'kiasu' is to be afraid of 'losing out' to other people (Chan, David, 1994; Mutalib, 1992a: 83). It may take relatively harmless forms of 'keeping up with the Joneses', of over-preparation for any event, or of being calculating in what one chooses to do. Kiasuism can also take unethical forms, and involve such acts as the hiding of books in libraries so that other people, regarded as possible competitors with oneself, would not have access to these.

'Kiasu' competitiveness which results in self-regarding or, even, selfish behaviour is a consequence of a selective and highly competitive education system, where many vie for a relatively small number of places in desired streams in school, and in higher education. This competitiveness extends to working life where individuals are rewarded on the basis of their performance, and in which they are often anxious to do well economically. A system of meritocracy is not, of course, a sufficient condition for self-regarding or selfish behaviour. In Singapore, the competitiveness engendered by meritocracy is combined with a spirit of pragmatism in which economic achievement is strongly promoted and valued.

The promotion of economic success as a national and personal goal in Singapore is a natural consequence of the fact that economic achievement is one of the few non-contentious goals that members of a plural society can agree on. This goal is even included in the Pledge which schoolchildren recite daily during assembly: 'We... pledge.. to build a democratic society... so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for our nation'. However, the vigorous promotion of economic success and the values associated with it, particularly in the absence of well articulated and equally well promoted alternative goals and values, can mean the hegemony of economic goals and values, even in spheres of life where these are inappropriate.

8.3.3 An element of Rawlsian liberalism?

It has been suggested that elements of individualism are present in Singapore. One is a liberal individualism in which members of a society are accorded equal moral worth and, as a result, there is a general belief they should pursue their notion of the good in the way they see fit. The second is a self-regarding individualism which is, arguably, a consequence of the competitiveness and pragmatism of Singapore society. Apart from these, it could be said that the government's policy of excluding religious precepts from public debate is reminiscent

of Rawlsian liberalism which excludes, as far as possible, references to comprehensive goods and doctrines.

In 1990, an act was passed in parliament restricting the application of religious beliefs in certain spheres (GOS, 1989; MITA, 1992). The purpose of the *Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act* was to pre-empt situations in which racial and ethnic tensions could be aroused over religious issues. Apart from the perceived need to prevent 'aggressive proselytising' on the part of evangelical Christians, and the involvement of religious groups and individuals in political matters, the act reflected the belief that religion and politics should be kept separate. Among other things, it precludes the introduction of religious beliefs and principles into public debate. The rationale for the act is that

If one religious group enters the political arena, others will follow suit to protect their own interests. Political parties will then also become involved, advocating or implementing policies favouring one religion or another. This will lead to inter-religious rivalry and tensions, the end result of which will be conflict and political instability. It is therefore not desirable for religious groups in a multi-racial society like Singapore to involve themselves in politics (MITA, 1992: 5).

The point of keeping religion out of politics is therefore to prevent the application in politics of religious beliefs and principles which are controversial, and which may arouse religious or ethnic tensions. No distinction is made, however, between the involvement of religious individuals in politics on the one hand, and the involvement of religious groups on the other. Like the position taken by Rawls, therefore, the official view in Singapore is that religious precepts should be 'bracketed out' from public discourse³.

The same arguments made in response to Rawls in Chapter 6 would apply here. The exclusion of comprehensive doctrines and conceptions of the good from discussions concerning public policy limit and impoverish public discourse. Also, because it does not allow for the free articulation and exchange of ideas including those which may directly influence a person's views it does not make for understanding another's views, or for shifts in understanding; nor does it encourage the development of a common culture.

³'Bracketed out' is a term used by Michael Sandel (1994: 1776).

To summarise, it has been argued there is an important sense in which the term 'Asian' values may legitimately be used, and that is when it is used to signify the values which are characteristic of a community. In Singapore, 'Asian' values are often presented as being communitarian in nature. Insofar as individuals generally uphold the value of placing the interests of the group above those of the individual, there is some resemblance between the values in Singapore and those of 'advocacy' communitarianism.

It was pointed out, however, that liberal individualism is present in Singapore which, in general, supports the right of individuals to pursue their notion of the good; there is also a competitive, self-regarding individualism. It was also suggested that there is a Rawlsian insistence that comprehensive goods and doctrines be bracketed off from public debate. It could therefore be asked as to how 'communitarian' Singapore society really is; certainly, some of the phenomena just described are not entirely consistent with liberal principles. Care therefore needs to be taken in characterising the values and ideologies in Singapore so as not to risk oversimplification.

Hence, while there is a legitimate use of the notion of 'Asian' values, it is not clear exactly what these consist of in Singapore. As part of a developing culture, there needs to be an ongoing process of articulating these values, and coming to a greater understanding of what these are. How this can be done will be taken up in the next section.

8.4 Developing a common culture in Singapore

It was argued in Chapter 6 that the more elements there are in a common culture, and the more developed these elements are, the greater the scope for identifying with that culture, and with those that share it. There are several important reasons as to why a common culture should be developed in Singapore.

The first reason revolves around the development of national identity. Irrespective of whether Singaporeans can be described as a nation in original sense of the term, the fact is that Singapore does exist as a political entity; its members are recognised internationally as members of that entity, and - to a greater or lesser extent - its members see themselves as such. Also, the development of a sense of national identity is identified, rightly, as a particular need in Singapore. That being the case,

the most appropriate course would be to allow and encourage a morally defensible national culture and identity to develop.

The second reason for the importance of developing a common culture is a practical one. It was argued in Chapter 6 that individuals might legitimately choose to sacrifice a degree of their freedom and autonomy for other goods, e.g. for the sake of economic progress, or for autonomy in important sense. This could involve, among other things, the state taking a perfectionist stance, and making decisions on behalf of the populace. However, if state perfectionism is to be consistent with autonomy in an important sense, policy decisions have to be based on genuine understandings of individuals, possibly even on their shared notions of the good. In other words, these policies must be based on a common culture.

A third reason could be added that is an extension of the second. As part of a common culture, Singaporeans might wish to develop a form of democracy that is appropriate to it. In this, it might wish to allow democratic ideas to be informed by ideas stemming from, or congruent with, its cultural makeup. The democratic system came to Singapore with self-government and, subsequently, independence, after a century and a half of colonisation. As Michael Oakeshott would put it, it was the transplantation of democracy without the context of all its intimations (Oakeshott, 1992: 228-229). To articulate the 'intimations' of its own culture and democracy, there is a need in Singapore to clarify its values and basic ideas.

For the reasons offered, therefore, there is a need in Singapore to articulate and develop a common culture. This, in turn, requires public deliberation, and the participation of the citizenry. In Singapore, however, there has not been a systematic effort in terms of articulating the assumptions and understandings that underlie policy decisions to the degree that is found in some Western democracies.

In many Western democracies, for instance, philosophical work is carried out by academics who articulate and analyse the understandings in society, and provide arguments regarding the validity of these understandings. This kind of work is rarely fully accepted and implemented in a society. Neither the philosophy of John Rawls nor that of libertarians like F A Hayek has been found in its pure or complete form in any society. However, work of this nature both reflects and provides the support for particular sets of beliefs and understandings. This is true regardless of whether politicians and ordinary people, adhering to or advocating these beliefs, understand the arguments that support these. In contrast to the role of academics in Western democracies, there is little by way of respect for intellectuals in Singapore, who are

not accorded a legitimate place in politics (Chan Heng Chee, cited by Chua Beng-Huat (1995a: 30)).

There is also, in Western democracies, the engagement of ordinary people in public debate. Freedom of the press and of expression are an essential aspect of this engagement. There is also the presence of civic groups which reflect the interests and concerns of their members, and of the populace in general.

Where consultation in Singapore is concerned, one of the 'foremost leaders of the second generation' of the PAP has been reported as saying they (the second generation leaders) have to 'be seen' to be consulting the people; the reason is that, unlike the former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, they do not have the established credibility as performers. The unidentified individual is quoted as saying:

I don't believe that consultation with the people is a very productive exercise. People, even with education, tend to be irrational. ...Therefore, once our credibility was (sic) established we would not be overly worried about consultation for the sake of consultation (Vasil, 1992: 213).

The view expressed seems to imply that consultation is simply a measure to pacify the people until such time that the present leadership is able to gain such a track record as to reach a stage where they could rule with the trust of the people, without needing to appear consultative. If the speaker's attitude typifies that of the second generation leadership of the PAP, then there is a question as to the degree to which the feedback and participation of the citizenry are valued.

Nonetheless, as was noted in Chapter 1, there has been a provision of feedback channels such as the parapolitical organisations. It was observed, however, that views submitted through such channels are done from the standpoint of a petitioner, rather than a position of strength.

A number of other official channels have been provided to allow for participation. In the area of education, for instance, there was an attempt in Singapore in the early 1980s to set up a Schools Council; the idea was to encourage principals and teachers to discuss educational policies, and voice their opinions with regard to these (Tan, June, 1981c). The Schools Council has since been dropped, and a Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Education set up. The latter is comprised of Members of Parliament belonging to the PAP, while the 'resource panel' comprises appointed professionals (MOE, n.d. (1996)).

The degree of influence of such bodies as the GPC for Education on national policies is difficult to ascertain. For instance, one of the GPC's recommendations in 1989 was that religious knowledge be made optional in schools (ST, 1989h); a decision was taken accordingly in the same year. At the time, however, the PAP was concerned about religious revivalism and activism and, given the situation, had doubts as to the wisdom of compulsory Religious Knowledge in schools (Gopinathan, 1995: 23; Hill & Lian, 1995: 210ff.). In other words, Religious Knowledge might have been made optional anyway, regardless of the GPC's recommendations. Hence, while provisions have been made for feedback, there are questions as to the amount of influence this feedback has on public policy.

At the same time, there is a belief on the part of the national leaders that only the top 3 to 5 per cent of society could handle a 'free-for-all' marketplace of ideas (Sim, 1995). Against this, it should be pointed out that *all* adult citizens of Singapore are entitled to vote in elections. This being the case, they should all be able to discern the different arguments put to them by the various political parties. It is difficult to see how citizens can be expected to do this without access to - and hence opportunity to reflect on - all the relevant information, or the different arguments, that might be brought to bear on the issue in question. In any case, *all* citizens need to have a sense of ownership in the evaluations and values in Singapore, if a genuine identity is to develop.

It has also been noted that, where political participation is concerned, there is a degree of uncertainty as to what can or cannot be said in the public arena, and the manner in which views may be expressed. There is concern, for instance, that views which deviate from those of the national leaders could be interpreted as being disrespectful of them. It is often said, with respect to criticism and debate, that the values of Singaporeans are such that they respect their elders and superiors, and generally prefer to seek consensus rather than contention. This being the case, the argument goes, it is contrary to 'Asian' values to criticise one another, particularly where elders and superiors are concerned. There is also the notion of 'face' which individuals might lose if they are criticised.

In this regard, the issue is not so much that criticism is inappropriate, but rather one of finding ways to make criticisms that is appropriate to Singapore society. In fact, there is a sense in which the evolution of such ways has already started. There is, for instance, a different approach to the expressing of critical views in the Singapore media than that in Anglo-American societies. Where Singapore is concerned, the tone is more moderate even where disagreement is being expressed.

Often the mere presence of opinions, or arguments, of dissent within a commentary is significant, and is recognised as such by an informed audience, even where the piece ends by supporting the official government position. The point is that, if progress is to be possible, the emphasis should not so much be on the question of whether criticisms should be made, but to develop ways of making criticisms that is congruent with the values and conventions of Singapore society.

A positive development in Singapore, where the development of a common culture is concerned, has been the growing body of work in the arts, which reflects and explore the themes which are relevant to Singapore society and its people. For instance, there are plays by such playwrights as Kuo Pao Kun, and the stories of writers like Catherine Lim. However, the range of subject matter which can be explored and the manner in which this is done are subject to restrictions. In 1995, a minister, George Yeo, reiterated the official position that all scripts involving the performing arts had to be vetted before approval could be given for performance; and ethnicity, language and religion were described as 'danger zones' for those in the performing arts as these were considered sensitive areas (Oorjitham, 1995).

Admittedly, there has been a policy in recent years for the National Arts Council to give approval to certain performing groups with a 'good track record'; these groups are then excused from the requirement of having their scripts vetted (Oorjitham, 1995). However, it is possible that the groups which enjoy this status will exercise self-censorship for fear of losing it.

A degree of self-censorship is not necessarily a bad thing. In a country where certain issues such as that of ethnicity and religions are 'sensitive', there are limits to what can be said, beyond which it would be irresponsible. However, a high degree of self-censorship is undesirable if this means that issues of importance are never represented or discussed in public. Indeed, public reflection and discussion might redefine the boundaries as to what constitutes offensiveness. If matters of importance are not explored, then opportunity will be limited for public reflection on such issues, or for effecting shifts in understanding.

At the same time, as was noted in Chapter 1, the right to influence the political agenda is currently restricted to politicians; at the same time, certain categories of people such as journalists, novelists, short-story writers and theatre groups are specifically excluded from attempting to do so. However, it has been argued that the literary and dramatic arts have a role to play in articulating the shared understandings

that constitute national identity. The current position would have the effect of limiting the role of the arts in this context.

To take stock of the points that have been made so far, it has been argued that there are important reasons in Singapore to develop an elaborated and rich common culture. At the same time, the notion of public deliberation was suggested as a means by which this could be accomplished. Politicians, academics, and those involved in the literary and dramatic arts have a role to play in contributing to articulating and exploring shared values and understandings; the same would apply to any individuals who are well-placed to contribute to the developing of a common culture by virtue of their particular talent or position or talent.

At the same time, the involvement of the citizenry in general is essential. First, the value of the individual is a basic principle of a democracy, and this means that the views of citizens should be heard. Second, unless legitimate views and sentiments are taken account of and, where appropriate, reflected in public policy, it is doubtful as to whether citizens could feel a sense of ownership with regard to these policies or, indeed, whether a genuine common culture could develop.

However, there are concerns as to whether the discussion of certain issues, whether this is done by individuals or by those involved in the literary and dramatic arts, might lead to tensions, even violence, if handled insensitively. There is also a concern that only a very small, educated elite can handle a 'free-for-all' marketplace of ideas.

It is a matter of judgement as to when Singaporeans will be ready to debate with openness and tolerance questions of importance, including those which are 'sensitive'. Until that time comes, the possibility of developing an elaborated and complex set of shared understandings and, with that, of developing a national identity will be limited. At the same time, censorship, the withholding of ideas and the exclusion of certain topics from discussion do not constitute permanent solutions: these do not in any way help individuals to deal with views which are different from their own; nor do they help them to understand others from the inside, as it were. Whatever the case is, it is necessary to create the conditions for that eventuality to arrive.

The aim should therefore be to educate children so that they would be able intellectually and psychologically to cope with a range of views, including those

which might be different from their own. This involves helping them recognise others as fellow human beings, who matter, who are worthy of respect, and whose deeply-held views are also worthy of respect. As was noted, these are values that are often associated with liberal thought, but such values are consistent with democratic ideals, of which the equal moral worth of individuals is a cornerstone; such values are also necessary for genuine tolerance.

Tolerance is also aided by the awareness that there can be legitimate reasons for different values and evaluations, and knowledge of the beliefs of others. Hence, children need to acquire some understanding of the beliefs of other children, and the way in which these impinge on their judgements and actions.

Apart from the knowledge and values just mentioned to do with understanding others, there are also the knowledge and skills concerned with understanding social, political and economic issues. The idea should be to equip all future citizens with what they need to understand and to evaluate important issues, and to participate in the political process; this includes the moral and political concepts necessary to cope with a diversity of ideas.

The implications of the above arguments for citizenship education in Singapore will be elaborated in the next chapter.

8.5 Conclusion

It was argued that there is, in Singapore, the danger of an over-emphasis on ethnic culture and identity. Ethnic values are seen as 'ballast' for the individual, and ethnic language the conduit through which these values are transmitted. There is good reason to give importance to ethnic culture which is, after all, an important element of personal identity. However, the development of a national identity has been acknowledged as being important for a young nation like Singapore, and it is possible that ethnic culture and identity can be developed at the expense of this.

In any case, it was argued in Chapter 7 that it is possible to learn moral concepts and values in a language different from that associated with those concepts and values. Therefore, children need not, and should not, be segregated according to their 'mother tongues, for citizenship education lessons. Integrated classes would ensure against moral concepts and values being given different connotations, even

denotations, as a result of interpretation through different fables and world views. It would provide children with the opportunity to learn about each other's values and assumptions in a guided classroom situation. Not only would it help children establish what values they have in common, they could also begin the process of elaborating on and developing these together. As part of a more balanced conception of citizenship, therefore, this process would give importance, alongside that already given to ethnic culture, to the development of a common, national culture.

There has sometimes been a temptation among critics to dismiss the notion of 'Asian' values on the grounds that the values which are upheld are not unique to the region. It was argued that this would be over hasty, and that there was a sense in which 'Asian' values can be used to signify the values and virtues which are characteristic of a group. Such 'Asian' values may, therefore, legitimately constitute a common culture, or an aspect of it.

In addition, 'Asian' values have been described as communitarian. However, while the constituent groups may generally place the interests of the community above those of the individual, a degree of liberal individualism and self-regarding individualism can also be found in Singapore. There is a lack of clarity, therefore, as to what 'Asian' values consist of. It was suggested that as part of developing a common culture, there needs to be an ongoing process of articulating these values, and coming to a greater understanding of what these are.

In other words, 'identity' and 'participation', which have been identified as the main themes of citizenship in Singapore, are in fact linked. There is a need to develop a common culture, of which 'Asian' values may be a component, that could form the basis of a national identity. Participation by citizens in public deliberation of issues of importance would contribute to the development of a common culture; it would also engender a sense of ownership of the outcome of the process, be it the evaluations leading to policy decisions, the form of democracy that evolves, or the shared understandings which develop. At the same time, the values which emerge could legitimately form the basis of perfectionist goals.

It was observed, however, that current restrictions in terms of what topics can be raised, who may raise those topics, and the manner in which comments may be made are not conducive to the development of a common culture. Some of these restrictions may be based on legitimate fears, e.g. that unrestrained discussion of 'sensitive' topics may cause inter-group tensions, or that only a small portion of the population is able to deal with a diversity of ideas. If such fears are well-grounded,

then there is cause to doubt that such values of tolerance, and the respect for individuals and their rights, are sufficiently well-entrenched in Singapore; apart from these values, there is also the need to ensure that individuals be equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand social and political issues, and to participate in the political arena. These should therefore be addressed in citizenship education.

Chapter 9

Lessons for citizenship education in Singapore

9.1 Introduction

In Chapter 8, the issues that had been raised in the preceding chapters were related to Singapore. The proposal was to replace the primordialist and instrumentalist conception of ethnic culture, currently in use, with one that is organic. It was suggested that the engagement of a community of educated people in public deliberation could be a morally and philosophically defensible way in which a common culture and, hence, national identity could be developed.

The arguments that have been put forward have implications in terms of the demands made on citizens. Citizens have not only to be prepared to meet the demands of citizenship in democratic societies, they also need to be prepared for the demands made on them that arise from the fact of plurality. However, the extant values and ethos in Singapore present problems that will need to be faced if children are to be adequately prepared for their future role as citizens.

Apart from explicating the implications of the arguments that have been made with regard to citizenship education in Singapore, this chapter will suggest ways forward with regard to these problems.

9.2 Lessons for citizenship education in Singapore

It has been argued that the fact of democracy and plurality make certain demands on citizens. At the same time, a particular model has been offered in this thesis of political participation in a plural, democratic society. This section elucidates the main lessons with respect to citizenship education in Singapore. These lessons stem from the demands of democracy and plurality on individuals; they are drawn in part from the citizenship education programmes in England and Wales, and the way these programmes have attempted to meet the needs of children with respect to such demands. The lessons pertain to the knowledge and values that need to be acquired, and the skills that need to be developed, and also to the pedagogical approaches which are appropriate both in terms of being effective, and of being morally and philosophically defensible - under the circumstances.

It has been noted that there has been an emphasis in the citizenship education programmes in England and Wales on the acquisition and development of the skills involved in thinking logically and critically, and on the procedural values deemed necessary to engage in group discussions on value issues. At the same time, many of these programmes use approaches, such as group discussion, which involve pupil participation.

One of the main considerations for the use of pupil participation is of a pedagogical nature. Group discussion is used, for instance, because it involves children, and gets them to think. Also, if children discuss an issue with their peers, they would be working with those at a similar stage in terms of cognitive and moral development. They would therefore not feel overwhelmed by the other participants, as they might if these participants were considerably more mature than themselves, and would hence be more motivated to express and develop their own views. In addition, the 'match' in terms of cognitive and moral development means a greater likelihood of children benefiting from the efforts and experiences of others like themselves.

The children's active involvement also means that they would be exercising the skills and values which they are supposed to acquire and develop, and that they would feel a sense of ownership for any evaluation or decision arrived at. In any case, the initiation of children into collective deliberation, and the exercise of the procedural values that this requires, is appropriate because they would, as adults, have to work together to achieve societal ends according to democratic principles.

With regard to procedural values, it could be noted that these are officially advocated by the political leaders in Singapore, and in documents regarding education and moral education. Compared to the citizenship education programmes in England and Wales, however, there is relatively little emphasis on these in Singapore. There is also little recognition of the substantive values which underlie the procedural values. In any case, substantive values as the equal worth of the individual and the dignity of the person are acknowledged to be desirable by the ruling PAP, but regarded as utopian and unrealistic beside such considerations as economic progress and practical results (Chua Beng-Huat, 1995a: 57, 70). In fact, the one-man-one-vote system, a practice which embodies the idea of the equal moral worth of individuals in a democracy, has even been questioned (Fernandez, 1995; STWE, 1994a).

The point is that there is arguably a want, in public discourse and in public consciousness, of the procedural and substantive values necessary for the engagement

of a people in discussing value issues. Hence, concerted effort needs to be made in Singapore in terms of initiating schoolchildren into the procedural values required for political participation in general, and public deliberation in particular. Both the procedural values, and the substantive values which underpin these, need to be dealt with in citizenship programmes in a more overt way. The way in which this should be done will be addressed later in this chapter.

Where values in general are concerned, it was noted in Chapter 4 of the difficulty in Singapore in impressing on children the need for, and importance of, moral principles. It was argued that this problem may not so much stem from the loss of a high and pure ethnic culture, but from the hegemony of economic goals and considerations, particularly in spheres where these are inappropriate, and from the means-end logic this engenders. If so, the answer would lie in the development of values and goals which could supplement economic goals and considerations. Hence, provision could be made in citizenship education programmes for this. It could also be noted that the introduction and entrenchment of the values which have been suggested (viz. the substantive values that underlie the procedural values) would provide a basis for seeing people and their goals in ways other than the economic and the instrumental.

Several good pedagogical reasons were given for the use of deliberative approaches in citizenship education programmes which involve pupil participation. However, children need to be provided with incentive to take part in, and contribute to, collective deliberation. For this, teachers need to give them the space both to explore their ideas. This could involve withholding their views so as not to pre-empt the children's reflection and formation of ideas.

In substantive terms, however, the use of such approaches as pedagogical neutrality would only be appropriate and acceptable in cases where issues are considered controversial. It would not be appropriate, for instance, if accepted values, such as the respect for and deference to one's elders, were examined using approaches which could result in these being challenged and undermined. However, it is not clear as to what issues can be described as being controversial in Singapore. All there is is the official position that there are a number of 'sensitive' issues related to ethnic culture and religion and that, in general, these should not be openly discussed in public.

It could be the case that there may be more controversial issues than the 'sensitive' ones that have been identified. For instance, questions pertaining to moral, social or political matters might be, or become, controversial if these were subjected to open discussion and debate. For instance, if Goh Chok Tong's and Catherine Lim's views are representative of those of portions of the citizenry, the exchange between them in 1994 would indicate disagreement with regard to the type of issues which can be discussed, and the manner in which this should be done. The task of determining whether or not an issue is a controversial one is not for an educationist, a philosopher or a politician. It has to be based on the reflections and the developing understandings of a society as a whole. Since controversial issues are usually 'sensitive' and 'difficult', these can only be identified if 'sensitive' and 'difficult' issues may be discussed in public.

Hence, if it can be established that an issue is controversial, then teachers should recognise that children may have premises different from their own and, hence, that they may make judgements which legitimately differ from theirs. In such cases, teachers have to adopt a stance of neutrality.

Whatever the case is, there should be as much importance attached to the process of deliberation, as there is to the outcome. Not all topics are controversial ones in which children could legitimately arrive at conclusions different from those of the teacher. In any case, to get to the point where they could arrive at such legitimate conclusions, they would have had to have been initiated into rules governing moral thinking, e.g. the various forms of argument, and the types of evidence that might be brought to bear on moral issues. Therefore, while many moral questions might be 'closed' in that these are not controversial in that society, the teacher might for the pedagogical reason of encouraging children to learn the processes involved in moral thinking and to exercise independence of judgement - encourage them to explore their own reasoning and conclusions.

It could be objected that children might lack the incentive to do this if they believe that there is a 'right' answer which the teacher will uphold. This problem might partially be dealt with if teachers value, and teach children to value, the process of moral thinking, as well as the criteria that should be used in moral evaluation, as being as important as the conclusion. This involves, in part, the teacher giving children credit for engaging in the process of reflective thought, and for the aspects of thinking which they do get right.

It was seen in Chapter 3 that the *Programme for Political Education* in England and Wales attempted to introduce concepts that would be relevant to the child's understanding and evaluation of social and political issues. Where Singapore is concerned, however, it could be said that provision has not adequately been made for the teaching and analysis of the moral and political concepts which are needed for an understanding of social and political issues. Where concepts, such as representation, the law, rights, etc. - are found in the syllabus, they are presented in an embodied form.

For instance, in the section 'Responsibilities of Living in a Democracy' for Secondary 3 pupils that is concerned with voting and representation, topics include the criteria that a person must fulfil in order to stand for election, and the types of Members of Parliament that exist in Singapore (viz. Single-member Constituency Members of Parliament, Group Representation Constituency Members of Parliament, Non-Constituency Members of Parliament and Nominated Members of Parliament) (see CDIS, 1994e: 85, 94-97). However, the notion of representation itself is not discussed. In other words, moral and political concepts, where found, take the particular form in which these are embodied, or have been interpreted, in Singapore. Hence, there is little by way of an attempt at a disinterested examination of what these concepts mean prior to their embodiment in particular laws or practices, or the consideration of other possible forms which these could take.

However, it is important for individuals to have an understanding of these concepts *qua* concepts if they are to be able to adopt a disinterested attitude to social and political issues which is necessary for reflective thought. It should be pointed out that, contrary to Crick and Porter, such concepts are not value-free (Crick & Porter, 1978: 63). As has been argued, the meaning of a concept is logically connected with the set of concepts found within a particular social and cultural tradition. Indeed, the very choice of the concepts to be taught - the inclusion, for instance, of such concepts as rights, individuality and welfare - reflects certain substantive commitments. Nonetheless, while it is important to recognise the substantive commitments and underlying concepts, and their selection, an attempt could still be made to help children acquire these concepts as concepts. After all, there are limits to how far the meaning of a concept can be stretched, and it is possible to learn about the different assumptions and understandings which may apply to a concept.

Given the student activism of the 1950s, and the desire for social and political stability, there might be a concern in Singapore about 'politicising' the student population; there is, hence, a wariness of introducing any elements into the

curriculum which could result in this. However, the observation has not infrequently been made in public that Singaporeans are politically apathetic; if correct, this would mean there is little likelihood of student activism today. In any case, the acquisition of the concepts necessary to understand social and political issues, and of the assumptions and understandings of these concepts which obtain in Singapore and other societies, could only make for clearer understanding and analysis of these issues by future citizens.

Hence, there is a need to place more emphasis on the acquisition of the concepts, and the procedural and substantive values, needed for participation in a plural, democratic society. At the same time, teachers need to make an effort to ensure that their attitude and pedagogical strategies encourage pupil participation in collective deliberation so as to enable the application of the concepts and values acquired.

9.3 Citizenship education: Current concerns in Singapore

Whatever the recommendations made in this thesis, however, social realities need to be borne in mind. The view in Singapore is that its people is not ready to discuss controversial matters in public, even where these are acknowledged to exist. The political realities in Singapore also have to be faced; this includes the fact that the political leaders have a strong influence over the curriculum in schools. While this thesis has made a case for change, it is unlikely that such change will be quick in coming. Although Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's avowed policy is that of a 'more open, consensual, consultative' government, the indication from his time in office thus far is that change will be gradual and controlled. It is therefore unlikely that the recommendations made in the present thesis will be taken up by the Ministry of Education, despite the fact that these have been based on philosophical and moral arguments, and have also taken into consideration Singapore's cultural, social, political and economic circumstances.

In any case, the concerns of the political leaders in 1996 with regard to citizenship education – or, in the term they use, national education – is that Singaporeans, including schoolchildren, know 'very little' about Singapore's history. In the view of the political leaders, the response made by Singaporeans to a hypothetical proposal that year of a re-merger with Malaysia was 'mild' compared to

the vehement objections of Malaysians; Singaporeans were also 'less clear' about the reasons for wishing to retain their country's independence, and failed in this regard to identify the 'basic fundamental ideals' of Singapore such as those of respect for the law, and of equal opportunity for all regardless of race, language and religion (ST, 1996e). At the same time, a poll by a tabloid and a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education also indicated that Singaporeans were ignorant of their country's history (Goh Chok Tong, 1996a; ST, 1996f).

Since the identification of this 'problem', a number of suggestions have been made with regard to national education. These include the introduction of a package comprising 'educational television programmes, heritage tours, study trips to neighbouring countries and new resource materials on national issues' (Mathi, 1996d); they also include showing video accounts of the historical periods in question, giving children project work which involve them talking to their parents and grandparents about the war, and having retired history teachers who had lived through the relevant period return to schools to teach children about the past (Kaur, 1996; ST, 1996f). A high level committee has also been set up to look into developing national education for schools that would engender 'a shared sense of nationhood, (and) an understanding of how (Singapore's) past is relevant to (its) present and future' (Goh Chok Tong, 1996a).

Many of the suggestions that have been made so far are rather superficial in terms of content and pedagogy. All schoolchildren study Singapore history at the upper primary and lower secondary levels, either in 'History' or 'Social Studies'. There needs, in the first place, to be a properly constructed study to ascertain, first, the level of ignorance with regard to the history of Singapore, and the lack which needs to be made up; and, second, the cause for the ineffectiveness of the current teaching of History and Social Studies. In the absence of such a study, it is impossible to identify with any degree of certainty the changes which are necessary, and the effectiveness of these changes relative to the need.

In the meantime, it could be noted that Goh has highlighted the importance in national education of the development of a sense of nationhood. Since it has already been argued for in some detail, the point could just be made here that the development of a common culture which forms the basis of a genuine national identity, and the sense of ownership of policy decisions, requires the participation of citizens in public deliberation of issues of importance.

Whatever the case may be, it is difficult to make recommendations to improve the current approach to citizenship education because its flaw is a conceptual one. There is, on the one hand, a degree of confidence and certitude with regard to the appropriateness of certain values, which may be used to justify their dogmatic transmission. On the other hand, there is the need to develop thinking individuals prepared for their future role in a society which is plural and democratic, and which is rapidly developing.

An example of the conflict in these aims was the introduction for pedagogical reasons of deliberative approaches into citizenship education programmes. There was, at the same time, a reluctance to accept the inevitable consequences of these approaches, such as the possibility that children might arrive at evaluations which are different from those of the teacher, or of society in general. As was argued in Chapter 4, there has been a failure to come to grips with contradictory aims, and the attempt to achieve these aims has resulted in an inadequately conceived programme containing inconsistent elements, as exemplified by the Modified Values Clarification Approach.

The then Education Minister Tony Tan admitted the lack of a considered, theoretical basis for *Civics and Moral Education* when, in announcing its inauguration, he spoke of the difficulty in finding a starting point from which citizenship education programmes could be drafted. Civics and moral education, he said, had to reflect the aspirations, attitudes, and prevailing way of life of a people. In a multi-racial and multi-religious society like Singapore, however, no one religious or philosophical tradition could be used as a starting point (ST, 1991d). In lieu of this, the Education Ministry chose to base *Civics and Moral Education* on the earlier *Being and Becoming* programme, and on the Shared Values.

Hence, the real and crucial issue, which was skirted around in conceptualising *Civics and Moral Education*, was that of conceptualising and devising a citizenship education programme that was defensible given the fact of plurality, and that met the demands this made on citizens. If an attempt had been made to confront this issue, the conclusion reached would be akin to that which has been presented in this thesis. The flaw in *Civics and Moral Education*, being one of conceptualisation, is therefore fundamental.

Also, as was noted in Chapter 4, the function of both the new *Good Citizens* programme and *Civics and Moral Education* is more that of moral and political socialisation than moral and political education. While it may be argued that a degree of socialisation is necessary if individuals are to be able to think and act in a way that

is appropriate in their society and – in the case of Singapore – ensures its survival, an equal emphasis on moral and political *education* would better prepare them to understand and evaluate social and political issues, and to participate in the political process.

Given the points that have been made, and given the unlikelihood that radical change will be made to the programme in the foreseeable future, one way to prepare children for their future role as citizens in a plural democratic society, and pave the way for future change, would be to add a programme which would supplement *Good Citizens* and *Civics and Moral Education*. First, however, it would be helpful to look into the questions raised in Chapter 5 on the subject of the handling controversial issues in the classroom and teacher neutrality, and discuss this in relation to the provision of a supplementary programme to *Good Citizens* and *Civics and Moral Education*.

9.3.1 A supplementary programme to *Good Citizens* and *Civics and Moral Education*

It has been identified that an important need for children in Singapore is the acquisition and development of the knowledge, cognitive skills and procedural and substantive needed to reflect on social and political issues, and to participate in collective deliberation. Two programmes which have done much work on collective deliberation are the *Humanities Curriculum Project* and *Philosophy for Children*.

It has been noted the arguments put forward by Lawrence Stenhouse for his programme have application in Singapore. In Singapore, as in other plural societies, there are issues on which society cannot agree; neither are there accepted criteria for resolving them. On such issues, teachers are justified in remaining neutral with regard to the substantive positions they take on these issues, and in allowing children space to explore the issue in question and to make up their own minds in the light of the appropriate evidence, and their values and assumptions. At the same time, the use of teacher neutrality has pedagogical benefits in terms of encouraging reflective discussion, freeing pupils from their dependence on the teacher's authority, and encouraging them to accept the need to give reasons for their judgements.

However, as has been noted, there are relatively few issues in Singapore that are acknowledged to be controversial; and where these are acknowledged,

restrictions are placed on their discussion in public. Hence, teachers may not be able to point to shared understandings to identify certain topics as being controversial. Given this, given the restrictions on the discussion of controversial issues, and given the possibility that Singapore children might not have the requisite procedural and substantial values to engage in the discussion of such issues, it would not be appropriate to suggest the introduction of controversial issues into the classroom.

Nonetheless, there are still lessons that can be drawn from Stenhouse's *Humanities Curriculum Project*. His project was developed on the basis of the idea of inquiry conducted in a classroom community. As was noted in Chapter 3, this notion of a community of inquiry can also be found in Matthew Lipman's *Philosophy for Children*. In both programme, therefore, there is the idea of a community in which children can engage in the processes of thinking and exploring ideas as a group. In so doing, they benefit from each other's contributions with regard to the evaluations that they may arrive at; in the process, they also exercise the procedural values and develop the cognitive skills which are necessary for reflective thought and collective deliberation.

It was also pointed out in Chapter 3 that Lipman and Stenhouse both believe that the teacher has an important role to play, even where controversial matters are involved. For Stenhouse, the teacher should point out errors in reasoning, and suggest alternative points of view to the one held by the child. On his part, Lipman includes in his programme a syllabus systematically teaching the rules of logic and forms of reasoning. He also includes concepts and questions - e.g. those of education, vices and virtues, and rights and responsibilities (Lipman, 1993d) - so that the rational thought that is taught is not restricted purely to logic. Both Stenhouse and Lipman see the teacher as the mediator of the achievements of a culture for the pupils, introducing to children the best that has been thought and written on a subject. However, since Lipman's programme does not deal explicitly with controversial issues, and emphasises instead the initiation of children into logical forms, his would be more appropriate for Singapore of the two programmes.

It could also be noted that there is a coherence between Richard Pring's notion of a community of educated people and Lipman's idea of a community of inquiry. If the notion of a community of educated people provides a justifiable and desirable approach to developing a common culture in plural and democratic societies, then the place to begin preparing children for this in schools is by initiating them into a community of inquiry.

It should be said that a *Philosophy for Children* text like *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* does not provide the concepts which, it has been argued, are essential to the child's understanding and evaluation of social and political events. This is hardly surprising as, strictly speaking, *Philosophy for Children* has not been conceived as a citizenship education programme. However, it is possible to source out, and incorporate into the programme, stories which introduce and explore social and political concepts.

A second modification would need to be made to the *Philosophy for Children* programme. The procedural values, which are found in such techniques as turn-taking, are implicit in the programme rather than explicitly dealt with. Like many citizenship education programmes in England and Wales, these values are assumed. However, it is only possible to consider these as being *procedural* if the substantive values that underpin these are assumed and accepted by the individuals involved. It is arguably the case that such assumptions cannot be made in Singapore. Hence, there is a need to convince Singapore children of the procedural values and the associated substantive values.

In this, it would be necessary to make explicit these values, so that children would have the opportunity to discuss, reflect on and come to grips with these. The position here is not that an overt promotion of these values is the best, or only, way to persuade children of, and initiate them into, these. In pedagogical terms, the embodiment of such values in the way teachers act would probably be more effective than 'preaching' these values. What is being said is that these values are not so widely accepted as to be simply assumed in Singapore society; it is also unclear as to the degree to which the *concept* of these values exist there. Hence, it is necessary to articulate such values, and make a case for them if necessary. The aim is that the conscious espousal of these values, and the conscious attempt to apply these, would eventually lead to the internalisation and unconscious practice of these.

There are also a number of problems, indicated by Lim Tock Keng's studies on *Philosophy for Children* in Singapore, which need to be addressed. First, Lim observed that some children were reluctant to participate in discussions even when they could follow what was being said, and when they might have had ideas to contribute; they also appeared to be unpersuaded that there were issues for which there were no right and wrong answers (Lim, 1994b: 33, 1995: 89). Second, her findings suggest that the children in the programme 'had not learned to work with each other as a co-operative group during the (*Philosophy for Children*) session (sic)' (Lim, 1995: 99).

There is a need, therefore, to convince children, not only of the controversial status of certain issues, but also of the importance of their personal effort in developing their own understandings, as well as the understandings of the group. In addition, they have to be encouraged to engage in this process.

To summarise, it was proposed that *Philosophy for Children* would be an appropriate supplementary programme to prepare children for their role as future citizens in a plural, democratic society, including participation in public deliberation. To help them acquire the requisite procedural values, these and the substantive values which underpin them need to be articulated and made explicit. Children also need to be persuaded that there are controversial issue for which there is no one 'right' or 'wrong' answer, and of the importance of their own role in developing their understanding of these issues, as well as the understandings of their peers. The implications of these for teacher training will be elucidated in the next section.

9.3.2 Implications for teacher training in Singapore

In the components of the teacher training programme at the National Institute of Education in Singapore that can broadly be classified under 'philosophy of education', the current practice is to introduce student teachers to the aims of education, 'stressing the intrinsic aim of promoting knowledge and understanding in the growth of human experience, while not neglecting the instrumental aim of "socialisation"' (Tan Tai Wei, personal communication). Another topic is the 'proper maintenance of authority in both the subject teaching and social discipline areas of school life, distinguishing them from authoritarian abuse of power by school authority' (Tan Tai Wei, personal communication). Time permitting, questions concerning punishment and its possible pedagogic use are discussed, as is 'the nature of knowledge *vis a vis* the liberal education curriculum' (Tan Tai Wei, personal communication).

While the above topics are relevant for teachers, and are rightly included in the teaching training programme, the question needs to be asked as to whether there has been an adequate attempt to deal with the complex issues in moral and citizenship education that arise from plurality. It was observed in Chapter 4 that a proportion of citizenship education teachers in Singapore were confident of their values and traditions, and preferred a dogmatic manner of transmitting those values. The

implicit belief is that children should, in the end, adopt the values which they (the teachers) consider to be right. Even if individual teachers were not confident and dogmatic in the way described, they would still be bound by the sentiments and guidelines of the political leaders, as well as the Ministry of Education and curriculum developers, to put across 'accepted' viewpoints. It was for this reason that the Modified Values Clarification Approach was created. This situation is incongruent with the implications of a plural, democratic society, and the associated demands made on individual, that have been argued for in this thesis, particularly where controversial issues are concerned.

Student teachers therefore need to learn to distinguish between controversial and non-controversial issues. In the case of the former, they need to allow children beyond a certain level of maturity to arrive at their own evaluations according to legitimately held assumptions and beliefs.

To begin with, however, student teachers need to be convinced of the implications of a plural, democratic society that has been set out in this thesis. They need to be apprised of the arguments that support the following positions.

- (1) In a plural society, there are no general and comprehensive goods agreed by all which can be referred to in order to resolve issues of controversy, and the values which underpin democracy disallow the imposition of the goods of one group on other groups.
- (2) A good case can be made in favour of the adoption by the state of substantive, even comprehensive, goals for pursuit by the nation as a whole.
- (3) There is a need in Singapore to develop a common culture based on an elaborated common consensus, as well as a sense of national identity.
- (4) Given the three points made above, the morally defensible way of deriving and identifying shared values, understandings and goals is through the public deliberation of a community of educated people.

The thesis that has just been reiterated in summary holds several implications for teacher education.

First, the confidence of student teachers in the correctness of their values and beliefs must be tempered with the realisation that there are legitimate differences of

views, and that there is therefore a need to understand, and be tolerant of, views which differ from their own. This involves, in part, seeing themselves as fellow enquirers, and accepting the idea that their views may respectfully be challenged in the classroom.

If student teachers are to deal with the fact of being challenged by children without feeling threatened, they must themselves have developed a certain independence of thought, and an ability to defend their ideas and values in a rational and reasonable manner. This involves, in part, the acquisition of the cognitive skills and tools necessary for this task. They would need, for instance, to acquire the rules of formal and informal logic.

In order for student teachers to encourage collective deliberation, and see this carried out in the right spirit, they need to have acquired the concepts and attitudes needed for this. In this, it might be helpful to articulate in the teacher training programme the procedural values, as well as the substantive values underlying these.

Student teachers also need to understand the nature of moral thinking, and the grounds for legitimate variation of opinion, so that they would be better placed to correct mistakes in moral reasoning. To ensure that evaluations are validly made in the context of the child's values and assumptions, they would need to have a fairly sophisticated grasp of the metaphysical framework, and the philosophical and value assumptions, of the respective systems of beliefs. They also need to be introduced to the different moral theories which would help them understand the diversity in approaches to moral thought.

It is also important to pre-empt a situation in which student teachers are only oriented to the religions and systems of beliefs that happen to be present in Singapore. They need therefore to be introduced to systems of belief and ideologies that are found outside Singapore, including the value systems that underlie the adoption of certain principles by the world community (e.g. the United Nations). The hope is that teachers will, in their own minds, work towards a 'merging of horizons' not only among the value systems of the various communities in Singapore, but also between those of Singapore and the rest of the world. In so doing, they could initiate their pupils into this process of the 'merging of horizons' as well.

Finally, if student teachers are to help children understand and evaluate social and political issues, they would need to acquire knowledge of the history and contemporary politics of Singapore. They would also need to be introduced to such

basic political concepts as power, authority, natural rights, individuality, freedom, law, justice and representation, etc..

Hence, there are important elements that need to be included in the teacher training programme in Singapore. These elements are necessary to prepare teachers to deal with the complexities involved in moral evaluation in a plural society, and to enable them guide pupils to do so as well. These include:

- (1) awareness of the arguments concerning the implications of a plural, democratic society, and the inevitable conclusion that the morally defensible way of dealing with controversial issues and for identifying shared values, understandings and goals for Singapore, is through public deliberation;
- (2) knowledge of
 - (i) the forms of argument relevant to moral reasoning,
 - (ii) the different moral theories that would help them understand the diversity in approaches to moral thought,
 - (iii) the values and systems of belief in and outside Singapore,
 - (iv) the history and contemporary politics of Singapore, and
 - (v) basic political concepts;
- (3) the initiation of teachers into the procedural values, and the substantive values underlying these;
- (4) learning to relate to pupils on a different basis, moving from a position in which the teacher is the moral expert to one in which he or she is a fellow enquirer, particularly where controversial issues are concerned.

9.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the arguments of the preceding chapters were related to citizenship education in Singapore, and the implications for teacher training were elucidated. It was noted that the fact of democracy makes certain demands on individuals; they need to be able to understand social and political issues, to arrive at their own evaluations, and to exercise judgement in influencing the political process.

This task is made complex by the fact of plurality which means that there are no general and comprehensive goods to which people could refer to resolve disagreements. Plurality may therefore make additional demands on individuals because they may need to participate in public deliberation on social, political and value issues. Hence, citizenship education needs to prepare individuals for the demands of living in a plural, democratic society.

Where citizenship education in Singapore is concerned, it was noted that the current Civics and Moral Education programmes were aimed more at moral and political socialisation than moral and political education. In any case, the flaw in the programmes that was identified is a conceptual one. For this reason, it was difficult to make recommendations to improve these programmes. What could be done was to introduce a supplementary programme that would enable children to acquire and develop the appropriate procedural and substantive values, and cognitive skills and tools, necessary for collective deliberation. It was suggested that Matthew Lipman's *Philosophy for Education* could, with some modifications, function as such a supplementary programme.

With regard to the current Civics and Moral Education programmes, it was suggested that the real issue i.e. that of conceptualising and devising a citizenship education programme that was defensible given the fact of plurality, and that met the demands made by democracy and plurality on citizens, had not been faced. If an attempt had been made to confront this issue, the conclusion reached would have been akin to that which has been presented in this thesis.

Hence, it is essential that student teachers be persuaded of the arguments presented in this thesis. If student teachers were so persuaded, there would be implications with regard to their pedagogical approach to civics and moral education. Among other things, they would temper their confidence in the correctness of their values and beliefs with the realisation that there are legitimate differences of view, and see themselves as fellow enquirers in the classroom. For this, they need to acquire the requisite knowledge, the cognitive skills and tools, and procedural and substantive values.

It was suggested at the outset of the thesis that there are two main themes concerning citizenship in Singapore that of identity and that of participation. It has been argued that these two themes are in fact intimately linked. An integral aspect of identity concerns values. In a plural society, the morally and philosophically

defensible means of arriving at the values which constitute national identity is through public deliberation. In other words, it requires the participation of the citizenry. At the same time, participation also engenders a sense of ownership over the evaluations arrived at, and the values and understandings which develop. An aim of education should therefore be to prepare children for this task of participation as future citizens in a plural and democratic society. What this means is that there has to be a more radical rethinking of the values and assumptions underlying citizenship education than has hitherto been attempted in Singapore.

Conclusion

An account was given in the first chapter of the cultural, social, political, and economic background against which citizenship in Singapore was to be examined. Singapore is a multicultural and multiethnic society which has a relatively short history as a nation.

Two main themes were identified of citizenship in Singapore. One theme is concerned with identity. There is a need to develop a sense of national identity in members of a young nation. Also, the political leaders believe that ethnic identity is essential to personal identity, and that it is important to promote the former for this reason.

The second theme concerns the kind of political participation appropriate for citizens. The view of the political leaders is that for reasons of culture and social stability there should be limits with regard to the kinds of topic which could be discussed in the public arena, the people who may raise these topics, and the manner in which discussion of such topics should be carried out.

Chapter 2 traced the development of citizenship through the centuries. It was noted that the notion of citizenship is closely allied with that of the citizen's sovereignty and, hence, with his or her influence over the selection and process of government. Conceptions of citizenship do vary depending on the particular historical circumstances, and the extant ideas and values; such variations are necessary, given that a citizen is inevitably a citizen *of* a particular country. However, the notion of citizenship is not infinitely elastic; it is possible to set parameters to the discussion on citizenship. One parameter is the assumption of a democratic form of government; another is that the context of the discussion is one of plurality.

Given this, a number of statements could be made about the nature of citizenship in countries where these parameters apply. Citizens, who have influence over the political process, need to have a degree of freedom and autonomy. They also need the knowledge and skills, as well as a sense of morality, that are required to make judgements which are both considered, and appropriate to their community.

Current debates on citizenship fall along two divides, that between liberalism and communitarianism, and that between the elitist and participatory forms of

democracy. The way citizenship is conceived may vary depending on the position taken with regard to the liberal-communitarian and the participatory-elitist debates. In addition, there are a number of contingent factors that need to be taken account of in conceptualising citizenship. These include the historical development of a society, and its cultural values and traditions.

Chapter 3 examined the conceptions of citizenship in England and Wales as reflected in public statements and official documents, and in citizenship education programmes available to schools. 'Active citizenship', which has been promoted in recent years, views citizens as being responsible for others in the community, and as contributing their time and resources accordingly. The notions of the citizen as consumer, and of 'regional citizenship' and 'world citizenship' have also gained currency in recent years.

In general, there is a recognition that citizens need to be prepared for involvement in the political process. In plural societies, however, there is no one notion of the good life, or set of substantive values, which can guide deliberations and resolve differences. The focus in England and Wales has accordingly been on the acquisition of the cognitive and social skills which would enable pupils to come to a better understanding of their own and other people's views, and which they would need to engage in debate and to make judgements. There is also an emphasis on acquisition of the knowledge, skills and procedural values that are needed to help pupils develop a personal moral code, and participate in a democratic political process. It was noted that the procedural values contain substantive value assumptions which are often associated with the liberal tradition of thought.

It was observed in Chapter 4 that the conception of citizenship in Singapore takes a rather passive form. In the view of the political leaders, the citizen's main role is to elect a party into power, and to co-operate with it to govern in the interests of the country as a whole. The conception of citizenship, and the associated notions of the style of government and the mode of political participation that are appropriate, are informed by the People Action Party's notion of Singapore's 'Asian' values. In a plural society, however, values and understandings cannot unilaterally be determined, e.g. by *fiat*, or by the 'perception' of an individual or group; some other means would need to be found if the values, goals and conceptions, such as that of citizenship, that is to be adopted by a nation is to be legitimate and authentic.

It was observed in Chapter 5 that, given the fact of plurality in England and Wales, there has been a wariness among educationists of teachers 'imposing' their

moral principles and opinions on pupils. Attempts have therefore been made to devise approaches to citizenship education which are neutral in substantive terms. Such approaches are particularly appropriate in a liberal climate in which, it is believed, the state should remain neutral, and individuals should devise and pursue their notion of the good.

The question was also raised as to the nature of the procedure that could be followed in a procedural approach to moral education. An examination of Richard Hare's and John Wilson's arguments indicated that their accounts of morality, which underlie this approach, do not adequately account for variation in moral evaluation, or explain why the same evaluation is not arrived at by those using their procedure.

An account was then presented of the nature of moral thinking that could account for such variation. Apart from identifying the universal moral components, it demonstrated the manner in which variations in moral judgements could be legitimate. In other words, such judgements need not be arbitrary or subjective even though they may vary. To pre-empt criticisms of relativism, arguments were then presented as to the possibility of merging horizons of significance, and the importance in the absence of an agreed and universally accepted system of morality of regarding the current values and understandings of a society to be tentative, and open to correction and improvement.

Chapter 6 examined the arguments for state neutrality, a number of which were based on appeals to liberty or autonomy. A distinction was made between autonomy of judgement and autonomy of action. It is the former that is often emphasised in Western liberal societies. This sometimes takes the form of personal moral self-legislation. However, Charles Taylor's notion of the horizons of significance casts doubts on the intelligibility of trying to form one's own values without reference to the background of concepts and values from which one's principles and actions acquire their meaning.

Whereas autonomy of action is applicable in any circumstance, the relevance of autonomy of judgement is more context-dependent, e.g. where individuals need to cope with changes, and periodically make significant decisions concerning their lives. The facts of democracy and plurality also make demands on the ability of individuals to exercise independent judgement. These conditions are present in Singapore. In addition, the evolution of a coherent moral system appropriate to the country is particularly important as moral values are an essential aspect of identity, and there is a

need in Singapore to develop a national identity. Hence, autonomy of judgement can and should be a goal in education.

While there has been greater awareness in Singapore of the need to promote procedural values and thinking skills, much importance is still accorded to moral instruction with respect to inculcating 'ethnic' values and the Shared Values. The latter can be said to comprise a 'thin' version of an overlapping consensus. What is needed is for the balance to be redressed, and greater emphasis given, not only to procedural values and thinking skills, but also to initiating children into the process of developing a 'thick' or elaborated form of shared values and understandings.

It was suggested in Chapter 7 that a common culture is important in a plural society because it comprises a set of understandings that can be shared by all. This commonality provides the grounds for policy decisions, particularly where state perfectionism is espoused; it also allows for the development of a national identity. A common consensus was suggested as the basis on which such a common culture could be developed.

Developing this common consensus requires public deliberation, and the engagement of a community of educated people, in exploring the values and issues concerning their society. Reference to the individuals' comprehensive goods and doctrines in such discussions is also important. Not only would this be honest, it would also enable others to identify the assumptions made, and understand legitimate differences in views. The articulation of one's 'qualitative discriminations' could also deepen one's own moral understandings, and effect shifts in these.

In Chapter 8, the conclusions drawn in the earlier chapters were related to Singapore. There is, in Singapore, the danger of an over-emphasis on ethnic culture and identity. While there is good reason to give importance to ethnic culture which is, after all, an important element of personal identity, the development of a national identity has been acknowledged as being important for Singapore.

If, as has been argued, it is possible to learn moral concepts and values in a language different from that associated with those concepts and values, children need not, and should not, be segregated according to their 'mother tongues' for citizenship education lessons. Integrated classes would ensure against moral concepts and values being given different connotations, even denotations, as a result of interpretation through different fables and world views. Children would also be provided with the opportunity to learn about each other's values and assumptions in a guided classroom

situation. Not only would this help them establish what values they have in common, they could also begin the process of elaborating on and developing such values together.

It was also argued that the articulation of a common culture, of which 'Asian' values may be a legitimate and important component, is an integral aspect of developing a national identity. At the same time, the values which emerge could legitimately form the basis of perfectionist goals.

However, current restrictions on the discussion of public issues is not conducive to the development of a common culture. Some of these restrictions may be based on legitimate fears, e.g. that unrestrained discussion of 'sensitive' topics may cause inter-group tension. If so, there is cause to doubt that such values as those of tolerance, and the respect for individuals and their rights, are sufficiently well-entrenched in Singapore. More, therefore, has to be done in citizenship education with respect to this.

In the final chapter, the arguments of the preceding chapters were related to citizenship education in Singapore. Singapore citizens, like those in other plural democratic societies, need to be able to understand social and political issues, to arrive at their own evaluations, and to exercise judgement in influencing the political process. This task is made complex by the fact of plurality which means that there are no general and comprehensive goods to which they could refer to resolve disagreements. Plurality may therefore make additional demands on individuals because they may need to participate in public deliberation on social, political and value issues. Hence, citizenship education needs to prepare Singaporeans for the demands of living in a plural, democratic society.

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