Title	Moral education in a plural society: A Singapore case study
Author(s)	S. Gopinathan
Source	*International Review of Education, 26*(2), 171-185
Published by	Springer

Moral Education in a Plural Society: A Singapore Case-study

S. Gopinathan

Institute of Education

December 1979

MORAL EDUCATION IN A PLURAL SOCIETY: A SINGAPORE CASE STUDY

S. GOPINATHAN

It will be readily agreed that there has been a recent upsurge of interest in the role of the school system in inculcating a code of values that will enable school leavers to live socially and morally responsible lives. Contemporary writings on the subject and the enthusiasms of its proponents sound as if this concern is a newly discovered goal of education. This, of course, is not so. Education has always concerned itself with the issue of values to be transmitted. Whether this has been little more than to socialize pupils into the conventional morality of their societies or whether, following the Sociatic injunction that that an unexamined life is not worth living, educational effort has been directed into readiness for the making of choices, of questioning common usage and re-defining the notions of obedience and responsibility, no effort worthy of the name of education has ignored this aspect. Often the school taught values almost unconsciously, by the behaviours it rewarded and proscribed, by its everyday routines but at other times it has made specific curriculum provisions, in subjects like Ethics, Civics, Current Affairs, Character Education, etc.

What is perhaps new is the vastly changed and varied social framework that education has to deal with today. The old certainties are no more, or perhaps command with less authority. In such industrial democracies as the United States, major political, economic and social changes pose new dilemmas. For instance, the war in Vietnam, the avoidance of draft and a call to civil disobedience by respected individuals forced a reassessment of such notions of loyalty to nation

and individual responsibility; the emergence of transnational corporations controlling vast financial resources with the power and will to destabilize end even overthrow governments, raised questions of business morality and public accountability; the morality of capital punishment, the controversy over abortion and euthanasia these and many other issues have forced the schools to attend to the problems of moral education in an explicit fashion. Hence the current popularity of the values clarification movement and the emphasis on individual decision making and an exploration of the grounds for personal preference in the United States (Silver, 1976).

A related problem, that of agreeing upon and instilling a common core of shared values expresses itself in societies that have different social and cultural features. In more tradition bound societies the major destabilising factor has been the rapid push to industrialization and modernization. Caught up with the stresses in social and personal life that the new processes bring there has been, in nations like Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia, a revival of the power of religion of a fundamentalist kind. The strictures of Islam, its view of an ordered political and social system with answers to problems grounded in an authoretative text, the Koran, appeals to those yearning for a simpler, surer, better understood code of behaviour.

At the other end of the scale are societies like Korea and Japan which have remained essentially stable, been able to modernize, to take on and improve on Western economic models and processes without losing their fundamental cultural identity. And yet even in these countries moral education has not been untouched by controversy. One of the first tasks of American occupation forces in Japan was to ban "Shushin" the Japanese code for moral education, Japanese history and geography which they held responsible for the militaristic and ultra-nationalistic propaganda that saturated Japanese education. Though the previous code was seen as emphasising blind obedience to a central authority, the Emperor, over individual preference and decision making, Japan's current programme continues to stress group cohesion and loyalty (Clarke, 1979). Similarly, in Korea and Taiwan which share with Japan a common Confucian heritage the emphasis on national solidarity is a strong feature of the moral education programme.

What of a plural and divided nation like Malaysia? Slightly more than two decades old as an independent nation Malaysia faces an immense task of integrating its Chinese and Indian minorities and of re-structuring the economy to give the Malays a majority share in the national wealth. Malaysia has chosen to ground its cultural character in a sole national language, Malay, Islam as the national religion

and the retention of Malay traditional political and social institutions to emphasise the Malayness of the nation. The choice of such a value system in the face of a high degree of plurality has already resulted in a measure of alienation among Malaysia's minorities.

Thus it may be concluded that even while political and social systems are widely different and expectations of individual conduct differ, the concern with moral education is well nigh universal. Whether such education is conceived of as essential for full individual development or, as in most Asian societies, primarily a mechanism for preserving social cohesion it is a problem of major importance in education.

The Socio-Political Framework in Singapore

Singapore's programmes for moral and civics education are best understood in the context of her special political and social framework for while the list of virtues to be incalculated - respect, tolerance, patriotism, respect for law and order, and the like - are no different from those to be found in similar programmes elsewhere the issues and dilemmas are quite unique. It would appear that the view taken of moral education in Singapore is that the problem is essentially one of bringing about social integration and concensus. There would be broad agreement in Singapore with the Durkheiman view that the schools are the guardians of national character to

be used for the inculcation of common moral sentiments on the basis of a secular rather than a religious inspired morality.

While Singapore is not quite Furnivall's plural society, rapid urbanization and a bilingual school policy having erased ethnic enclaves and mutual linguistic ignorance, nevertheless it continues to be a society divided by race, language and religion. Singapore has an ethnic Chinese majority, a unique feature in Southeast Asian society. In 1977 the Chinese made up 76.2% of the population, the Malays 15%, the Indians 6.8% and 2.0% others. Singapore has four official languages, English, Chinese, Tamil and Malay, the last named being also the national language. The major thrust of government policy since 1965 when Singapore became independent has been, while affirming the value of multi-culturalism, to build linking bridges. Traditional linkages like mixed marriages, shared religion especially Christianity, have been supplemented by the popularity of English medium education which has resulted in English emerging as a lingua franca between the various races. Since the English school admits pupils of all races the school system, once heavily segregated in terms of language and race, is now largely de-segregated. A massive re-housing programme started in 1969 - close to 70% of Singaporeans live now in multi-storied government subsidised housing - has all but destroyed ethnic enclaves and the equally dramatic transformation of the economy from a entrepot one to one based on manufacturing, service and financial facilities has largely removed the link between economic specialization and race.

In many other ways too Singapore is atypical of Southeast Asia. It is an island nation, of high population density (3,787 persons per square kilometre), heavily urbanized and with no backward rural sector. It has not quite lost its migrant mentality since a part of the adult population was born outside Singapore and this group's social institutions like clan associations and preference for dialect speech, not to mention a strong commercial morality that valued strong government as essential for business activity still exert influence. In this scheme of values individual preferences and responsibility was quite willingly subordinated to government leadership. It is too a global city for it is a major tourist and communication centre, open to and indeed positively receptive to "valuable" modernizing influences.

It is unique also in the type of government it has. It has a cohesive and committed political leadership, extremely articulate and willing and capable of taking unpopular decisions and sticking to them. While the trappings of Western-style democracy remain, the population has been largely de-politicised in the belief that political argument, debate and opposition is destabilising and detracts from the more pressing issues of economic growth. (Chan 1976) In the view of Singapore's Foreign Minister, "..... if Third World societies are not to relapse into anarchy as modernization gathers pace, more and not less authority and discipline are necessary." (Rajaratnam, 1977). Constant reference is made to other developing societies in Asia

- "broken-backed states" which are contrasted with states like Korea, Japan and Taiwan, the latter obviously seen as worthy of emulation for their political stability, cohesiveness and dedication to economic growth. This combination of strong government with economic growth as a prime national goal has led to great reliance on management techniques, a belief in the systems approach as the best way to solve complex problems (illustrated in the Report on the Ministry of Education 1978, a study of Singapore's educational problems conducted by a team of systems engineers). A reliance on manipulation is also seen in the constant use of "incentives and disincentives" administrative, financial, social to support policies ranging from family planning to the use of Mandarin. It might appear that given the potential for conflict inherent in any plural society and Singapore's undoubted record of political stability and economic progress that Singapore's leadership have found workable solutions but only the future will tell what price has been paid for this stability.

Given the nature and goals of the political leadership, the type of society aimed at and the values that are prescribed to help achieve this fit logically enough. The government is emphatic that not only should Singapore avoid the model of poorly run, corrupt, developing societies in Asia and Africa but that it should also avoid the excesses of the industrial West - West Germany is an honourable exception - which are seen as hedonistic, weak-willed, societies where the rights of the

individual have been favoured to such an extent that they threaten social and political cohesion. The goal is a distinctive Singapore society, worth the preserving. In a seminal analysis of the Singapore society to be, the Prime Minister in 1972 said that if Singapore failed to preserve indigeneous languages and culture "we will become completely deculturalised and lost. If we become like some societies speaking pidgin English mindlessly aping the Americans or British with no basic values or culture of their own then frankly I do not believe this is a society or nation worth the building, let alone defending" - .... It is basic we understand ourselves; what we are, where we came from, what life is or should be about and what we want to do .... Only when we first know our traditional values can we be quite clear that the Western world is a different system, a different voltage, structured for purposes different from ours" (Lee, 1972).

This analysis, and the promotion of a set of values seen as guaranteeing social cohesion, was restated in the years that followed. Two reasons were given for the greater urgency. Rapid urbanization and industrialization was seen as breaking down traditional norms and the influence of such institutions as the family. A senior government official stated "The traditional role of the parents and home in shaping the moral development of children has unfortunately weakened in modern societies [due to] modernization and urbanization .... Young people today are growing

up in an age of religious skepticism, moral confusion and almost universal uncertainty because of the questioning of traditional values and beliefs (Chai, 1977). It also became clear that parental preference was shifting strongly towards education in the medium of English. Since transnational companies played a major part in Singapore's economic transformation, English had rapidly became the language of greatest economic significance. The government feared that this switch, without a balancing emphasis on indigeneous language and culture would create "rootless Singaporeans". The government found an easy symbol of what was going wrong with Western societies and what must not be allowed to take root in Singepore in the ubiquitous long-haired hippie. There was genuine fear that this youth sub-culture of alienation, hedonistic self-expression fed by drugs and the rock music revolution was attractive and therefore potentially corruptive of Singapore youth - in the words of one official "the philosophy of patched-up jeans and patched-up souls" was not the model to emulate. Official characterization of the attitudes of Singapore's youths - materialistic, unwilling to sacrifice, to put nation before self, even unfilial - suggested that corruption had already taken root.

In his 1972 speech the Prime Minister had sketched the values Singaporeans should adopt. Indeed he explained Singapore's successes as being due "to the hard framework of basic cultural values and the tightly-knit Asian family system". Over the years

such words and phrases as "hard working, disciplined, confident and self-reliant, collective will and character, qualities of industry, perseverance and resilience, thrift, honesty, self-sacrifice and regard for others, have collectively come to stand for a set of desirable values, uniquely Asian in origin which needed preservation and strengthening in Singapore society. The family came to be regarded as a core unit of a stable society and the government took administrative measures (income tax relief for instance, for supporting parents) to strengthen family cohesiveness. As one newspaper editorial put it these values would give the Singaporean roots "to hold him steady as his life travels the paths of the English language, American technology, Swiss expertise and Japanese business acumen". In characterizing these values as Asian the government, perhaps in an effort to simplify the choices for its citizens, was following the type of contrasts it had offered between various types of societies. It is also not unreasonable to suppose that it was using the ethnic variable, pride in indigeneous culture and language, as a means of mobilization in support of government policy. As we shall see later such characterization overly simplifed the complex problems posed for a plural society that wanted at one and the same time to preserve its unique ethnic features and to affirm its pluralism while at the same time seeking a value consensus to which the young may commit themselves.

Two other observations may be made of the way in which values are viewed from an analysis of government statements. Again, the Prime Minister's words best sum up the view. Speaking of the bilingual policy he said "it is not just learning the language. With the language goes the fables and proverbs. It is the learning of a whole value system, a whole philosophy of life, that can maintain the fabric of our society intact" (Lee, 1972). This view that language and cultural transmission are inextricably linked has created major problems in the schools' task of inculcating values. In 1974 the Ministry of Education introduced a syllabus named Education for Living intended to promote among elementary level pupils an appreciation of their Asian cultural heritage. Because of the insistence that this syllabus be taught in the mother tongue of the pupils (Mandarin, Malay and Tamil are designated as such) in the English medium schools this resulted in classrooms segregated on racial lines, an unacceptable situation where a common core of values was to be imparted. A further shortcoming was that classes were taught by language teachers who were quite unprepared for the complexities of teaching a moral education syllabus and many of the lessons ended up, not unexpectedly, as language lessons.

The second clear characterization that may be made is the almost completely utilitarian view taken of moral education in Singapore schools. Without exception the stress is on how useful the set of prescribed values would be to the nation, how the

individual needs these values to be a useful member of his society and how adherence to these values guarantees survival for him and his nation. The acting Minister for Culture recently characterized culture as an important intangible factor of production, something needed to make Singapore's unprecedented economic success complete. Nothing is heard in the Singapore context of the humanizing effect of moral education for the individual, its integral place in a conception of education as a liberating and self-fulfilling process. Niblett (1963) in speaking of the principles of moral education spoke of the need for "a greater encouragement of initiative and of taking of responsibility" as a major consideration; in the Singapore context of a directive, social-oriented moral education programme this important aspect of individual need for moral education is missing.

The School Environment

Even a brief examination of the features of the Singapore school system will reveal quickly many features relevant to an examination of moral education in Singapore schools today. As with many other British colonies, English medium education was begun largely through the efforts of Christian missions. Early grants-in-aid were given to the London Missionary Society, and the Roman Catholic Mission for educational purposes. The Protestant missionaries were the pioneers of the western type of education in Singapore (Doraisamy 1969). The schools that were

then founded were attractive not only because they offered instruction in English, the colonial language, then as now the language of opportunity but also because they imparted religious instruction; ironically, this was the very reason that the Malays, whom the British authorities favoured as deserving of government-supported education, shunned these schools. Today, mission schools like St Andrews, St Joseph's Institution, Methodist Girls' School, Anglo-Chinese School are in great demand not only for the general excellence of their academic programme but in a school system gone secular to avoid problems over religious instruction, these schools were seen to uphold a scheme of defined and acceptable values. These schools had continued to provide religious instruction outside curriculum time. As with the Christian community, so with the others. The Malays whose social and cultural structure has been dominated by adherence to Islam provided for religious instruction outside the formal school system; even today there are more than ten "madrasahs" or schools whose curriculum and school ethos is religion-oriented. In much smaller and informal ways the Hindus and Sikhs have continued to provide religious instruction for their communities. Thus religious plurality, a fact of life in a multi-ethnic society and more importantly a clearly acceptable and important source of traditional values and mores continued to be maintained by the various communities. Following the recommendations of the Report on Morel Education, 1979 the Government has now reversed an earlier decision and will now allow

Bible Knowledge and Islamic Knowledge to be taught as school subjects and offered as such in major examinations. Even with this change, however, it is fair to claim that the government has not faced the problems and potentialities of religious instruction in a multi-religious society squarely. In the current discussion on moral education there has been no analysis, for instance, of the value of studying comparative religion within the school system. The origin and features of major religious are included in the history texts but most accounts are superficial and even misleading. These accounts provide little to enhance understanding and acceptance. No one has yet asked if the acceptance of Bible Knowledge and Islamic Knowledge was the best way of going about the task of religious instruction in a multi-religious society. Already other religious groups are asking that the teaching of their religious faiths be allowed in the schools. It is also difficult to see how the proposal to teach "cultural history", as a way of enhancing ethnicity and identity can be effectively done without reference to religion.

When we view Chinese-medium schools a different perspective appears. It must be noted that British education policy generally left the migrant groups, the Chinese and the Indians, to provide education for themselves. The Chinese with commercial wealth and numbers, responded by providing a system complete with a university and technical college. Feelings of discrimination by

the British authorities fuelled Chinese pride in their school system, with the latter further strengthened by the traditional feelings of Middle Kingdom cultural superiority over the barbaric West. Thus there prevailed a notion in pre-war Chinese schools of the cultural and educational superiority of the type of education provided. The school ethos, the respect for scholarship exemplified by respect for teachers/elders, the teaching style which emphasised the teachers' authority and in which difficult and painstaking mastery of script and text were virtues and finally the very language of instruction, seen as uniquely rich in proverb and idiom, et every turn illustrating and providing insight into a cohesive and culturally rich society - these features were seen as valuable, even indispensible in being Chinese. This view has now been given prominence and respectability by the Prime Minister. In keeping with his view of different types of societies and the value of certain languages for certain purposes he has characterized the products of English medium schooling as individualistic, irresponsible, materialistic, with weak social commitment, decadent and with poor qualities of self-discipline and endurance.

Such characterization is questionable. It is wrong in fact for English medium education has thrown up many leaders in politics, business and trade unionism who continue to dominate life in Singapore today. Further, it appears to be based on a view of culture as a neatly packaged set of characteristics;

one has only to note the failure to see the contradictions in the view that while a language like Chinese and the other mother tongues must be learnt to avoid de-culturalization it is possible to learn Engl ish for its 'scientific qualities' - it is seen as the language of reason and analysis, representative of an enquiring mode of perception - and yet remain culturally unaffected by the mastery of English. Such views have important educational consequences. The arguments for compulsory school bilingualism and the manner in which languages are taught are based on this view of the significance of language and culture. The government has moved to establish nine "super schools" to be attended by ethnic Chinese pupils in an effort to retain the "valuable" traditional character of Chinese schools, a move that checked the movement towards the final elimination of schools segregated on the basis of race and language. Such policies seem likely to perpetuate and further strengthen perception of ethnic uniqueness and difference and make the acceptance of a common core of values much harder to achieve.

The Report on Moral Education, 1979

In 1979 the Government released the Report on Moral Education, 1979. In the Report on the Ministry of Education 1979, critical references were made to the Education for Living and Civics syllabus then used for moral and civic education. The Report was curtly dismissive of efforts to teach the features of the Constitution, social services etc. Neither report has made reference however to a rather unique textbook project, the

Primary History Project which indicated an appreciation on the part of government of the uses of history. This project was overseen by the History Department of the University of Singapore, the first time a university department had been so involved in a school curriculum project but not surprising since the head of the department was then a Member for Parliament. It aimed "to tell the story of the various migrant races that settled in our island and of ourselves, their descendants ... in an attempt to provide e different perspective of our history..." Emphasis was laid throughout the texts on the "prototype Singaporean", the migrant who through the virtues of hardwork and perseverance prospered and thus contributed to Singapore's success.

The omission of a detailed consideration of the type, basis and value of civic education necessary in a newly emerging society is puzzling. Politics is omnipresent in Singapore life and society and the government has often enough talked about the great importance of strong government and responsible citizenship in Singapore's survival. Besides even in a country like Great Britain with strong liberal traditions in education political education has been recommended as necessary as in Political Education and Political Literacy in the Hansard Society report. In Singapore concern has been expressed of the apathetic attitude of students towards politics and at least one Member for Parliament had urged the need for political education in

the schools and indeed a proposal to form political clubs had been made. One possible explanation that comes to mind is that, as was the case of religious instruction in the school system the undoubted problems and complexities that would be posed by the introduction of civic/political education has been avoided by taking refuge in safe generalities. The Report on Moral Education is content merely to list under Love of Country the following: sense of national identity and commitment, protection and upholding of the democratic system, defence of our country, patriotism, loyalty, justice and equality.

The Report on Moral Education 1979 significant in that it was written by a group of parliamentarians and likely to form the basis of the school-based moral education programme in the 1980's must however be judged a poor document. Its principal flaw - and this it shares with various official statements on the Singapore society to be, of the cultural and political personality that will characterize the Singaporean - is that it fails to provide a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of Singapore's multi-cultural society and the implications of various in-school and out-of-school policies. The committee apparently examined moral education programmes in various countries like USSR, Taiwan and Japan and apart from providing detailed appendices, no conclusion or comment is made in the text of the relevance of such comparisons or indeed the choice of countries examined.

Many of the government's views on culture and society which are predicated on the values it propounds as being necessary and useful have to be inferred from an examination of its cultural policies. It would appear that the government seeks the retention, encouragement and further development of ethnic identities and cultures; cultural norms are seen as inherent in the expression of identity end while there is an occasional suggestion that there are values common to Chinese, Indian and Malay cultures this notion has not been fully developed. In much recent discussion it is the values of the Chinese community that have been given prominence as in the action taken to preserve Chinese schools and the argument that one could not be Chinese if one could not speak Mandarin. There appears also to be a belief that common school experiences, service in the armed forces, the spread of urbanization and industrialization, the spread of a common non-native language like English and its cultural concomitants of rationality scientific spirit, etc., will provide another set of values, - 'meritocracy' is often used to sum up this set of values - which it is hoped will be commonly shared and co-exist with ethnic values (Gopinathan, 1979).

It has been pointed out (Clammer, 1979) that the sharp contrasts the government views as existing between Eastern and Western values are grossly overstated. While it is certainly possible that cultural tradition and historical circumstances

might have accentuated some values and dampened others, such values as filial piety, group spirit, cohesive family life, effort and discipline are certainly not unknown in Western societies. The propogation of the view of a decadent declining West while at the same time importing Western technology, sending Singapore's brightest students overseas, creating a consumer-oriented society and preaching the virtues of a free-enterprise system are, to say the least, inconsistent. As Clammer has pointed out there has been a failure to make a distinction between the values of modernization and those of Westernization; such concepts as meritocracy are not uniquely Western, anymore than love of parents is Eastern. They are concepts that are historically contingent with the rise of industrial society in the West.

The notion of an Asian cultural tradition and how such a tradition may be used in an acceptable manner in the schools needs close and careful analysis that has not so far been forth-coming. In choosing to use the ethnic variable and to draw upon the considerable potential of ethnic pride as a mobilising and motivating factor it is necessary to be mindful of the context in which such energies are being released. Mention was made earlier of the segregation caused by the insistence on teaching the civic and moral education programme in the mother tongue and the decision to prevent the phasing out of schools that served the majority Chinese community - with nothing being done with regard to

Malay or Tamil medium schools. There is a real danger that the drive towards a cohesive society sharing a supra-ethnic set of values is being hindered by the emphasis on cultural heritage unique to the various communities. The present Minister for Education has recommended that schools teach the distinctive cultural histories of each of the major groups in the language of the respective groups. This could lead to unwarranted cultural assertiveness and a lack of empathy for other cultures (G Benjamin 1976; Gopinathan 1976). A case can be made out for diluting and blurring the edges and differences between the various groups particularly when the sizes of the Malay and Indian minorities are such as to create worry and apprehension.

The Report on Moral Education, 1979 must be judged weak, even naive in other respects. Much of the document is devoted to pointing out the supposed weaknesses of existing programmes but since the Report itself fails to provide a framework within which the adequacies and inadequacies may be judged and one in which the Report's proposals may be examined this criticism is of little help in improving the teaching of moral education in Singapore schools. Its terms of reference take as granted the notion that Chinese medium schools foster group cohesion though the Report, while denying that methods of moral instruction are responsible, says nevertheless without further explanation that 'this was due to the school environment, curriculum and an "underdog feeling". Ironically, in a discussion of moral

education in mission schools in which one might reasonably expect some consideration of the place of religious instruction, the Report judges that "the better quality of the students and a more congenial school environment, coupled with better home support (all non-curriculum factors) as being important. And yet it recommends that the Ministry of Education review its policy to allow mission schools greater flexibility in implementing their religious instruction programmes.

The committee's grasp of the complexities of teaching morals within the school system is also shown to be poor. It makes the recommendation that only at the upper secondary level that the use of the first language (most likely English) be allowed since at this level, the committee feels, pupils can be expected to be responsive and participate in discussion. The Report thus implies that pupils at lower levels are incapable of discussion, need no initiation into discussion of appropriate moral issues and by virtue of physical matruity would be capable of discussion and analysis later. Further, in ignoring the usefulness of content teaching in civics it seems unmindful of the fact that responsible acting out of moral decisions, and responsible citizenship is not likely in a situation of ignorance of social services, political institutions and the like.

Three further recommendations made by the Report need to be critically reviewed. The committee while making the

valuable observation that moral instruction may be effected in a variety of ways and encouraging the use of clubs like Civics, Rotary and Interact for moral instruction inexplicably wants these, useful because they are informally structured, allowing for co-operation and leadership away from the competitive atmosphere of the classroom, conducted in a more formal manner. Indeed, it makes the further extreme suggestion that feedback on the effectiveness of the moral education programme be tested by including questions related to moral issues in language examination papers. As for teachers it recommends a specially selected group of moral education teachers be trained to teach only the moral education syllabus. It fails to examine the difficulties in selection of individuals deemed worthy of teaching the subject, the consequences of such selection on other teachers in the school; indeed it appears to see moral instruction not as something involving the whole school but as a subject, formally taught and examined.

Conclusions

When one looks at the discussion of moral education issues in Singapore today one cannot fail to be struck by the urgency and earnestness which characterizes debate. In common with many other Asian nations aiming for stability and growth without losing 'national character' Singapore too places great faith in the education system. Unlike other countries, however which are fortunate to have a homogeneous cultural tradition the complexities of managing moral education in a plural context bedevil Singapore's

educators. The very richness of the cultural tradition here imposes the task of selection, and subsequent justification, of the core values to be taught; both the values and the manner of teaching, touching as the latter does upon the schools relationships with the home and, in particular, religious institutions, come under close scrutiny. In addition there is the need to win the benefits modernization and to implant notions of loyalty and sacrifice while retaining the best virtues of the migrant mentality.

The challenges, then, are formidable but the judgement on current efforts in moral education must be that it is an inadequate response. The authorities seem unable to utilise in full measure the potential of a rich and varied cultural tradition to enrich moral education in the nation's schools. The overriding concern to ensure political stability and the need to be sensitive to ethnic sensibilities has produced a cautious reliance on generalities when the need, given the youthful nature of the population and the uncertainties of life in the latter half of the twentieth century, is surely for a more forthright acceptance of the challenge. A re-assessment of current moral education ventures is necessary but a useful one will have to await greater clarity in the analysis of Singapore culture and its goals.

REFERENCES

SILVER, M. : Values Education. Washington : National Education Association 1976.

CLARKE, P. : "Watered Down Moral Education". Straits Times October 12, 1979, p. 18.

CHAN HENG CHEE : "The Political System and Social Change". In HASSAN, R. (Ed.) : Singapore: Society in Transition. Singapore : Oxford University Press 1976. pp. 30-31.

RAJARATNAM, S. : "Asian Values and Modernization". In SEAH CHEE-MEOW (Ed.): Asian Values and Modernization. Singapore : Singapore University Press 1977 pp. 100.

LEE KUAN YEW : "Traditional Values and National Identity". The Mirror Vol. 8 (1972) No. 47 pp. 1, 4, 5.

CHAI CHONG YEE : "The Challenge for Education". The Mirror Vol. 13 (1977) No. 32, pp. 1, 8.

LEE KUAN YEW : Op. cit.

NIBLETT W.R. : "Some Problems in Moral Education Today" In Niblett W.R. (Ed.) Moral Education in a Changing Society. London : Faber and Faber Ltd. 1963. pp. 30.

DORAISAMY T.R. (Ed.) : 150 Years of Education in Singapore. Singapore: TTC Publications Board. 1969.

GOPINATHAN, S. : "Singapore's Language Policies : Strategies for a Plural Society". Southeast Asian Affairs 1979. Singapore : Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd. for Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1979.

CLAMMER, J. : "Asian Values in a Changing World". (Book Review) Contemporary Southeast Asia, Vol. 1 (1979) No. 1 pp. 109 - 113.

BENJAMIN, G. : "The Cultural Logic of Singapore's 'Multi-racialism'" In HASSAN R. (Ed.) Singapore : Society in Transition. Singapore : Oxford University Press, 1976.

GOPINATHAN, S. : "Towards a National Educational System" In HASSAN R. (Ed.) Singapore : Society in Transition. Singapore : Oxford University Press. 1976.