PART I

Educational aims and rights in pluralist liberal democracies

CHAPTER ONE

Education in Liberal Democratic Societies

I. Introduction

As no idea or series of ideas exist in isolation, it is important to establish a context in which to ground this investigation. The central issue in this thesis concerns the extent to which the BCE form of educational philosophy can be considered valid within a pluralist liberal democracy. In order for such an investigation to take place some notion of what constitutes validity must first be explored as well as reasons given for why such an understanding of validity is legitimate. This chapter gives a brief account of some major developments in the history of formal education in New South Wales. These indicate that formal education in Australia, and New South Wales in particular, is currently based on ideas demonstrative of pluralist liberal democratic ideology. Following this some consideration is given to defining pluralism as a social ideal and the implications this has for formal education. A number of necessary criteria are then developed by which it is possible to evaluate models of education. Thus the validity (or otherwise) of educational models within pluralist liberal democracies can be evaluated by the extent to which they meet these criteria.

II. The rise of liberal democratic ideas in Australian education

From its early foundations, organised education in New South Wales reflected two strong ideas that the government assume ultimate responsibility for education and that the education provided should meet

designated needs of the entire society. It is therefore not surprising that early aims of education in the colony emphasised moral and religious pursuits along with the 'fostering of political loyalty to established authority' (Barcan 1963, p.29). With the steady development and expansion of the colony came the expansion of state funded schools such that by 'the end of 1814 there were about 15 government elementary schools' (Barcan 1963, p.28). With the arrival of T.H.Scott and the establishment of the Church and Schools Corporation there was an attempt made to bring the control of education under the official responsibility of the Established Church. The idea was quite clear: the Corporation would have oversight of education (and this was understood as predominantly a religious matter) in a manner suitable to the Anglican outlook of Scott. However, as there was much sectarian opposition to the concept of an Established Church in the colony, the original vision of the Corporation was never fully realised and it dissolved in 1833.

When Governor Bourke arrived he brought a more liberal approach to both religion and education. He advocated State funding for both Anglican and Roman Catholic elementary schools on the basis that education served the needs of the whole colony and not merely the needs of the Anglican denomination (Austin 1961, p.32). However, he also recommended the introduction of a system of State regulated schools similar to the Irish National Schools. These schools would provide an education that would 'bring together children of all sects for a general, literary education which, while Christian in spirit, was undenominational' (Austin 1961, p.33). Although unable to implement his plan, Bourke introduced some fundamental ideas that were to find fruition for 30 years later: that the State should exercise greater responsibility for education and that denominational concerns should be secondary to general moral and religious concerns. In 1836 the Legislative Council passed the Church Act which provided State aid to the four major denominational groups, the Anglicans, the Roman

Catholics, the Presbyterians and the Methodists. In doing so, Bourke ensured that the Anglican Church would not become the Established Church but that all denominations would contribute to the moral and religious welfare of the colonial community. Thus in the early stages of the colony's development it seems evident that at least one role of government was to ensure that all religious groups actively contributed to the general welfare of the entire community.

The next major development was the significant growth in state control of education coupled with a gradual relinquishing of responsibility for education by many of the denominations. Under Governor Fitzroy the four denominational systems were complemented by a national system of schools. These schools were primarily intended to provide education in rural areas where denominational schools were not present. The State provided funds for all five systems and these were administered through the Denominational Schools Board and the Board of National Education. The Board of National Education, following the criticisms of William Wilkins, set about to improve the quality of teaching and improve teacher training and, along with Henry Parkes, Wilkins argued that the duplication of educational systems was economically draining, inefficient, produced poor results and was potentially divisive (Austin 1961, pp.110-113, 119). Parkes and Wilkins focused the educational reform agenda on the benefits rationalisation and centralisation would provide. These included economic benefits flowing from a streamlining of administration, increased efficiency gains through the establishment of uniform educational standards in all elementary schools receiving funding, better conditions and recognition for teachers and an improved curriculum deemed more appropriate for the times (Barcan 1963, pp.127-138). These ideas found expression in the Industrial Schools Act, the Reformatory Schools Act and the Public Schools Act, all passed in 1866 during the coalition government of James Martin and Henry Parkes. In effect, these

Acts shifted educational power away from denominational schooling by allowing the state to link its reform measures to funding.

Politically, the Acts were well received amongst the denominations, with the strong exception being the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Pius IX issued a decree in which he denounced 'state monopoly in education' as well as 'the ideas of progress, rationalism and liberalism' (Barcan 1963, p.134). Apart from this rather exceptional response, most denominational bodies made the transition to the new curriculum reforms quite smoothly. This was largely due to the retention of special privilege for the role of religion and religious education in the curriculum; according to the provisions of the Public Schools Act, the Certified Denominational School (those implementing the state based curriculum and therefore eligible for state funding) were permitted to employ 'Teachers of the same Religious Denomination' and 'Religious Instruction shall be left entirely under the control of the Heads of the Denomination to which any [Certified Denominational] School may belong' (Public Schools Act, 1866, quoted in Barcan 1963, p.139). For the children of those families who could not attend a denominational school, the Act provided for 'general religious instruction as distinct from dogmatical or polemical theology' (Public Schools Act, 1866, quoted in Barcan 1963, p.140). Under such circumstances, it seems that many parents opted to have their children educated in the Council of Education schools rather than continue in denominational schools. This would indicate that the emphasis on religious education which existed during early colonial days had begun to lessen.

During the 1870's debate amongst denominationalists regarding state aid in education continued unabated. Some of the non-conformist denominations strongly supported an end to state aid of denominational schools provided they were still permitted to teach religious instruction classes (Barcan 1963, p.147); the Roman Catholic denomination, however,

still bitterly opposed the moves to secularise education. The debate came to a climax with the passing of the Public Instruction Act of 1880 in which provision was made for the establishment of a Department of Public Instruction to oversee all matters related to education in New South Wales. Along with the introduction of compulsory attendance and lower fees, the most significant change was the end of state aid to denominational schooling from 1882. This established once and for all the Department of Public Instruction's public schools as the primary educational provider in New South Wales. Importantly, it retained provision for visiting denominational clergy to give separate denominational religious instruction but also made provision for non-denominational religious education lessons to be taught by teachers employed by the Department (Barcan 1963, p.167). With these changes, power to direct education had been wrested from the churches and handed decisively to the state.

Many of the arguments for a secular education emphasised the pluralist liberal nature of Australian society (Austin 1961, pp.179-193) and the development of curriculum material since this time reflects such a position. Three themes have been present in curriculum development for over one hundred years, although some have exercised greater influence than others at various times: firstly, that the curriculum should help students become valuable members of our liberal democratic society and upholds its ideals; secondly, the knowledge and skills required to prepare students as citizens are in a constant state of change; thirdly, Australia is culturally pluralistic and education should take such a situation into consideration.

As the nation developed, so too did an understanding of the role and purpose of education. The appointment of Peter Board as Director of Education in New South Wales in 1905 brought a new emphasis in the curriculum: humanity. Board placed greater emphasis on literature and history in both his primary and secondary reforms and his *Courses of Study for*

High Schools stated that 'in addition to vocational preparation, the schools were to encourage "well educated citizenship"' (Barcan 1963, p.211). Following on from criticisms made in the Knibbs-Turner Reports of 1904, Board emphasised both the practical aims of education as well as the social. The reforms of Board were far reaching and their effects resonated through New South Wales education for the next fifty years.

Whilst there have been many variations on this theme since the time of Board, this has remained the predominant ideology up until the present. Indeed, it has strengthened even further with the influx of post-World War II migrants. At a regulatory level, educational ideology is committed to liberal democratic ideas, preparation of students to take their place in such a society and, even more so, an understanding and respect for members of other faiths and ethnic backgrounds (New South Wales Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools 1989, p.20).

These ideas have continued to form the basis of many recent regulations governing education in New South Wales. In two studies (Roff 1987; Manefield 1989) of the *Aims of Secondary Education in New South Wales* (1973) and the *Aims of Primary Education in New South Wales* (1977) it was found that the prevailing ideology was liberal democracy, a view already suggested by Simpson (1985) when considering the appropriateness of the statements for the mid-1980's. In 1986, The Education Commission of New South Wales released *Towards a Youth Policy* in which it was recognised that young people need 'to be aware of their rights and social responsibilities' (p.6). By 1989, the reform program of the New South Wales Government was clearly founded on the principles of liberalism and the democratic state as evidenced in their White Paper, *Excellence and Equity*. In this document, the Government rejected a utilitarian or purely vocational approach to education in favour of an education that aimed to :

> develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context. (p.12)

To assist Department of Education Schools better understand what these attitudes and values were, and following Recommendation 75 of *Excellence and Equity*, the Department of Education produced a revised version of *The Values We Teach* in 1991. In this document, an entire section (p.8) was devoted to explicating the democratic and liberal values that are meant to be inculcated in all Government schools, including:

> * being committed to the rights and responsibilities of living in a democracy,
> * supporting the institutions which enhance individual liberty,
> * developing pride in being Australian and sharing in our rich and diverse heritage,
> * showing respect for the rights and property of others,
> * being committed to social justice and equal opportunity,
> * rejecting racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice,
> * actively pursuing the peaceful and just resolution of conflict.

At the Federal level, clear expression of goals for education policy came through the Commonwealth Schools Commission's (1987) report on secondary education, *In the National Interest*. The Commission (1987, p.27) stated very clearly that, in their opinion, Australian education must work for:

> the moral and cultural preparation of young people for life as citizens in a democratic society, and the defence and continued development of a democratic way of life and democratic institutions.

The Commission (1987, p.29) also made clear their belief that school systems should be teaching the values associated with liberal democratic ideals such as:

> honesty; respect for persons; understanding of, and respect for the rule of law; the rights and responsibilities of political

> participation; tolerance of different ways of life; abhorrence of racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice; and the general importance of equality, including the equality of persons.

The Commission's (1987, p.32) recommendation to the then Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, was that the following outcomes should be achieved by all students in Australia:

> * competence in the basic skills needed for communication, learning and daily living
> * knowledge of the main structures, features and ideas of the society in which we live
> * confidence in one's self-worth and right to be involved and respected
> * experience in working with others, in creative activity and decision-making.

That both State and Federal governments assume responsibility for education in Australia is beyond dispute. Yet this is only one aspect of the above discussion. This necessarily brief overview of significant developments in New South Wales education demonstrates that the changing nature of education has reflected societal changes.

From being a colonial outpost through to developing its own identity and on to becoming a modern industrialised, technologically advanced multicultural nation, the needs of Australian society have greatly changed. It is obvious then that the demands placed on formal education in such a society must also change. Australia is now considered not just a liberal democracy, but one which actively pursues a policy of pluralism. As such, an emphasis on the principles of pluralism within the context of a liberal democracy should now be considered fundamental to the educational endeavours of schools in such a social climate. The reasons for why this is so are developed in the next section.

III. Pluralism in Liberal Democracies

Australia is recognised as a liberal democratic society that has adopted a pluralist policy. Crittenden (1981; 1982; 1988) has written extensively on educational issues in pluralist societies within an Australian context. Central to his work is the operation of education within a pluralist context; in *Cultural Pluralism and Common Curriculum* (1982) he has attempted an analysis of different understandings attached to the word, "pluralism", prior to a philosophical inquiry concerning a common curriculum for such a society. His analysis has importance for this particular study in that it is concerned with the philosophical ideals of pluralism as they relate to educational practice in Australia. Although Crittenden's (1982, p.10) purpose is significantly different to the central concern of this thesis ('In considering such a [common] curriculum one needs to know about the actual state of pluralism in that society'), his discussion of pluralism acts as a base for developing criteria by which it is possible to assess the validity of models of education (and particularly the BCE model) in a pluralist society. [3]

Crittenden (1982, p.11) begins with the idea that:

> pluralism is a doctrine about the limitation of the central authority of the state and of the political community in relation to other communities that make up a society.

This definition focuses on three key elements that are helpful in the present consideration of the validity of BCE within a pluralist liberal democracy.

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[3] This is not to suggest that pluralist liberal democracy is necessarily the most suitable form of political organisation and ideology. There have been many criticisms of pluralist liberal democratic ideology and the prevailing models of education found therein, particularly from the perspective of how political power and capitalist economic market forces operate within such an environment to perpetuate oppression. Furthermore, many of these writers have made criticism concerning emphasis on individualism in liberal ideas of education at the expense of the wider community. See Goodman, P., 1971, *Compulsory Miseducation*, Penguin Harmmondsworth, Middlesex; Freire, P., 1973, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, New York: Seabury Press; Harris, K., 1977, *Education and Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Aronowitz,S., & H.Giroux, 1985, *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debates over Schooling*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Giroux, H., 1985, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press; Aronowitz, S., & H.Giroux, 1991, *Postmodern Education: politics, culture and social criticism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

First, it emphasises that pluralism is concerned with political authority, specifically, the relationship between the centralised state authority and the smaller constituent parts, or sub-groups, that comprise the state. Second, it implies questions as to what is the nature of such a relationship. Third, it draws attention to relationships between the various sub-groups that comprise a pluralist society. A closer study of these three concepts shows that the pluralist society is not one in which each constituent part is permitted to develop and practise its own philosophy without reference to broader society as a whole. Rather, there exists a framework of beliefs, values and behaviours that are valid for the broader pluralist society. This has relevance for our consideration of BCE as a valid and legitimate educational model in a pluralist society. Once the framework is understood, it can be used as a basis for developing legitimate criteria against which BCE (and other alternative models of education within a pluralist society) may be assessed.

Crittenden (1982, p.25) argues that the 'most hospitable context for the values on which pluralism is based' is a political democracy. One major reason for this is that he believes political democracies are founded (at least in the theoretical sense) on the ideals of freedom and equality (Crittenden 1982, p.26; 1988, p.186). As such, political democracies provide an environment where different cultural and political values are permitted (freedom) and where an attitude of tolerance ensures that each view is respected, even if it is not adopted by all members of the society (equality). In such an environment, cultural and political diversity is not only possible, it is to be encouraged. Yet not all views can be permitted. Crittenden (1982, p.22) argues strongly against political ideologies in which the freedom and equality of other members cannot be guaranteed. Political ideologies that have exploitation of some form as part of their belief do not share the ideals of freedom and equality (ideals that are based on the assumption that human beings are intrinsically valuable) that are prerequisite in Crittenden's view of pluralism.

As such, it is quite appropriate they are not tolerated, for they violate the very ideas on which the plural st society that enabled their existence is based. Thus in whatever form political democracy appears, the role of the central political authority within it must be to ensure freedom and equality for constituent sub-groups whilst limiting any ideas that are contrary to those upon which pluralism itself is based. It is therefore reasonable to argue that 'all groups in a pluralist society can reasonably be expected to uphold the general values of democracy' (Crittenden 1982, p.26). Wringe (1995, pp.288-289) has also argued the same idea in considering the issue of educational rights in multicultural communities.

The second issue that arises out of Crittenden's definition concerns the nature of the relationship between the central political authority and the constituent political sub-groups. If expressed in the form of a question, the idea is as follows: Given that the ideals of freedom and equality are to be safeguarded, how is the central political authority best able to fulfill this role? There are two main approaches, according to Crittenden. In the first approach, the role of the centralised government is to act as arbiter between the competing claims of various interest groups. These interest groups make claims concerning the right to have their views expressed and beliefs practised without legal and/or political discrimination. The political government has the task of balancing competing claims and, if necessary, may use its political force to 'ensure that one or a few interest groups do not become inordinately powerful (Crittenden 1982, p.14). The second approach views the role of centralised political authority as being the facilitator of compromise. Where there can be little chance for interest groups to realise all their ideals, the government is able to ensure that at least some of each group's objectives are realised (Crittenden 1982, p.14). Two points are obvious: one, the objectives that are realised must be appropriate within the framework of pluralism itself, and, two, an interest group must realise that

not all of its ideals may be realised within such a society. Crittenden implies that the second approach is the one most favoured in the contemporary political environment. As Australia still operates predominately as a two party political system, the second approach manifests itself through election policies and speeches in which one party seeks to demonstrate how it can satisfy the greatest number of interest groups and their ideals. The success or failure of the government to realise the compromised ideals will result in whether or not continued political support from diverse interest groups is given, a point illustrated by analysis of recent policy moves in Australia (Marginson 1993, p.211).

Irrespective of which approach is in fact adopted, the implications for sub-groups within the pluralist society are the same. Each group must accept that the role of central political authority is to ensure the principles of pluralism which enable each group to exist are practically applied. In the first approach, this translates into political action to stop the acquisition of too much power by a minority of interest groups or by resisting the political influence of groups whose beliefs are contrary to pluralist ideals. In the second approach, the acceptance of compromise means that a particular group must accept such a situation but may work within political mechanisms to seek further changes in future.[4] Either situation has relevance for educational models to be developed and implemented in a pluralist society. Those who advance models must be prepared for restrictions by centralised authority if the ideals of the model are deemed to undermine pluralist liberal democratic ideals. Alternatively, they must be prepared to compromise on some areas, recognising they exist as one part only within a larger social and political community.

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[4] In this situation, Crittenden warns that centralised government must ensure that, whilst working to secure political gain, particular sub-groups do not assume too much political power as in the first approach. To achieve such gains means the diversity which is demanded by pluralism will diminish, thus such a situation is counter-productive to pluralism as a social ideal (Crittenden 1982, p.22).

This second element of Crittenden's definition relates directly to the third element, that of the relationships between the various community sub-groups. Here Crittenden introduces a further aspect of pluralism, that of cultural pluralism. In relation to political pluralism, he focuses on the idea that various groups may form various associations purely for political purposes, be they short term or long term (Crittenden 1982, pp.13-15). These types of relationships are fundamentally different, however, from those of a cultural nature. In the cultural element of pluralism, Crittenden (1982, p.32) suggests that various cultural sub-groups need to participate in what he terms 'a common culture, one that characterises the society as a whole'; that is, there needs to be common cultural forms and modes of expression to which each cultural sub-group must commit irrespective of its cultural background. In doing so, each group also introduces its own cultural perspective into the community and therefore contributes to the continued evolution of the broader pluralist community. Without a sense of commonality, and the need for cultural groups to commit to that commonality, Crittenden (1982, p.31) argues such 'a tendency undermines the existence of a common inclusive society'. The same sentiments are expressed by Aspin (1983) who claims that educational institutions that do not support the ideals on which pluralism is based do not deserve public support. It seems obvious that any minority educational group (such as those advocating BCE) must understand it operates within a philosophical model committed to common social and political ideals. These ideals support a suitable environment within which political and social co-existence can be established and maintained. Part of the difficulty for such groups exists when those ideals may not align with their own ideals (Macedo 1995, pp.225-227); it is at this point that the greatest tension exists. This particular issue is at the heart of this thesis and is dealt with in Section III where BCE is critiqued as an alternative model of education for pluralist societies.

Crittenden's views on pluralism, then, have been useful in forming some idea as to how pluralism may be understood as a social ideal. The idea that different groups within society are permitted to hold their particular views and values (provided their substantive ideas are not contrary to democracy and freedom itself) is a basic liberal concept. The need to tolerate those with different views is also a necessary requirement for liberal democracy to function effectively. Together, it is argued, these form foundations upon which liberal democracy is built (see White 1973; Wilson 1990; McLaughlin 1995).

Three ideas have thus emerged as having special significance to this study. Firstly, there must be the acceptance by members of the pluralist society that a plurality of (valid) ideas is necessary. Crittenden (1982, p.38) identifies this as an important ideal for which to strive, one that he calls 'a proper balance between unity and diversity'. Secondly, there must be toleration for alternative ideas and values provided they can maintain commitment to the central ideals of pluralism. Thirdly, there seems to exist some notion of the common good upon which pluralist society rests: Grimmitt (1994, p.135) states it as both '(a) common or core values and (b) norms or rules of conduct shared by the vast majority of individuals and groups'. The extent to which it may be possible to educate for pluralism and liberal democracy is the subject of the following section.

IV. Educational ideals for pluralism and liberal democracy

Debate over the aims of education throughout the centuries has had one overarching theme: education is meant to prepare young people to take their position as citizens of society. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, it can be seen that what society expects of its citizens varies a great deal. Irrespective of where one begins and ends, a study of philosophers and educational theorists reveals many views on the purposes of education. For

example, education for Plato (in Bowen & Hobson 1987) is altogether different from the ideas of Paolo Freire (1972) and for entirely different reasons. Both argue, however, that their respective philosophies of education aim to help the young enter society appropriately prepared to participate in their respective societies; Plato's gold, silver, iron and bronze young men are educated according to the "ruling" or "ruled over" roles they will fulfil in society (Bowen & Hobson 1987, pp.35-38), whereas Freire's oppressed are educated to be liberated from social oppression brought about by educational inequality. Consider the thoughts of Makarenko, a Soviet educator who saw that education must derive 'from our social needs....from the aims and tasks of our revolution, from the aims and problems of our struggle' (quoted in Bowen & Hobson 1987, p.229); or perhaps the view of Dewey that 'in directing the activities of the young, society determines its own future in determining that of the young' (quoted in Bowen & Hobson 1987, p.173). It is thus reasonable to assume that any prevailing social ideology will exercise great importance within the educational experiences of the citizens and citizens-to-be of any particular state. So far in this chapter it has been noted, first, that formal education in Australia, and New South Wales in particular, demonstrates a commitment to pluralist liberal democratic ideals and, second that ideals such as toleration, freedom, and commitment to the principles on which pluralist liberal democracies are founded should be upheld by all members of such a society.

Given these factors, it is reasonable to suggest that formal education in pluralist liberal democracies like Australia ought to educate for these ideals at the very least. If this is the case, what is needed in order to educate for commitment to such ideals? This question seeks to identify characteristics of education in a pluralist liberal democracy that would be considered fundamental to educational models. In considering this question, this section

seeks to suggest an appropriate set of criteria by which education in pluralist liberal democracies may be assessed.

What then must be taught to students who will become citizens of a pluralist liberal democratic society? It will always be necessary for education to provide skilled workers, whether those skills be numeracy and literacy, technological competence, computer literacy or some other form of training deemed socially necessary at the time. Yet these needs will be forever changing and will need to be adapted depending on the needs of society at any one time. For example, recent debate on competency based training, outcomes based education and dual accreditation (Employment and Skills Formation Council 1992) would indicate that economic conditions strongly affect recent thinking on educational planning (Kidson 1993), a theme also evident in recent educational reform moves in New South Wales (New South Wales Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, 1989)[5]. Whilst it may be right and proper to pursue these types of social preparation they do not necessarily ensure that students will understand what it means to participate in a pluralist liberal democratic society. It does not follow that vocational skill preparation produces appropriate social values, particularly those associated with pluralist liberal democracies. For example, it may be possible that school leavers will be literate and numerate (i.e., prepared for a vocation, or further skills training) but intolerant of those outside their own social and/or cultural group. Their lack of understanding and tolerance may lead to workplace friction based on nothing more than ignorance of valid alternative world views or lifestyles. Again, social tension and unrest may be brought about by the failure of one group, or groups, to respect the (philosophically) legitimate expression of religious belief, despite all parties concerned being computer literate. It is insufficient to educate for skills and knowledge

[5] This is a curious development given the emphasis on many liberal ideals also evident in the same reforms. See Chap I, Section II above.

without the values upon which our society is based. If a society is democratic, liberal and pluralist in nature, these must also be taught to ensure each new generation, and those from without who seek citizenship within that society, uphold and adopt these ideas as appropriate and operate within the bounds of the ideals themselves. Education in the pluralist liberal democracy must therefore actively seek to instill its ideals.

Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983) use the concept of 'orientation' to discuss different approaches to curriculum. The use of such a word emphasises the perspective, or world view, that impacts upon the way educators view their task. According to Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (p.10), the orientations cover broad:

> topics which describe the view taken...to knowledge, desired student outcomes, the student's learning role, learning theory, the teacher's role, the teacher-student relationship, assessment, classroom organisation, control, school decision-making, broad curriculum organisation (eg timetabling), teaching spaces (architecture) and resources, the role of parents, the community and school-community liaison, society, process of curriculum change, the roles of consultants.

The different orientations represent different 'points of view about how the game of education is to be played' (p.8), or what Hill (1991, p.79) calls a 'perspective from which to view the whole curriculum rationale'. In her introductory remarks concerning the definition of curriculum, Grundy (1987) claims that curriculum 'is not an abstract concept which has some existence outside and prior to human experience. Rather, it is a way of organizing (sic) a set of human educational experiences' (Grundy 1987, p.5; cf. Stenhouse 1975, Chap 2). Taken together, the views of Kemmis, Cole and Suggett, Hill and Grundy suggest that curriculum orientation encompasses broad, constructed views of the world. I intend to use the term, world view, with an adaptation of these concepts in mind. Therefore, to paraphrase Grundy, a world view is a constructed, organised set of principles designed to provide meaning to

human experience. In this sense it encompasses what knowledge is and how something is known, what is the meaning and purpose of life, what is right and wrong, what is valuable and beautiful, and what, if anything, will happen when I die. A world view, then, is a philosophical system, consciously or subconsciously understood, that helps an adherent interpret their past, present and future existence and experiences. It becomes, then, the basis for determining answers to epistemological, ontological, axiological, aesthetic and teleological questions.

I would like to suggest four ideals that the orientation of any educational model should meet and reasons why they should be considered necessary to education in a pluralist liberal democracy. They are:

i. a commitment to the ideals of pluralist liberal democracy;

ii. a critical investigation of a personal world view;

iii. an investigation of a ternative world views;

iv. active teaching for tolerance towards alternative world views.

It must be clearly stated that these criteria do not represent a list of content topics or methodological suggestions but an overall orientation, or perspective, to the educational enterprise within a pluralist liberal democracy.

i. a commitment to the ideals of pluralist liberal democracy.

It is reasonable to argue that principles of pluralist liberal democracy should inform the curriculum of a pluralist liberal democratic society on the basis that each society should seek to reproduce within each generation (as well as those who voluntarily choose to become citizens of that society) those ideals which form the basis of that society. The nature of the ideals on which pluralist liberal democracy exists works to ensure its political survival and strength. In the pluralist liberal democracy, there are a number of basic ideals that exist; respect for all persons irrespective of race, creed or political belief, the freedom to pursue some concept of the "good life" as well as

tolerance towards those who choose differing concepts, freedom of political association, and the role of the state in working to provide a political environment where these ideals may flourish. These ideals permit each member of the society to hold particular private views, to pursue an individual "good" while remaining committed to the wider political sphere in which the conditions of freedom for the pursuit of the "good" are maintained. Therefore, every individual and group can feel secure that they are valued members of the wider society. However, as has already been noted (cf. Chap 1, Section III), there are a number of constraints placed upon individuals and sub-groups within pluralist liberal democracies: while it is important to allow diverse concepts of the "good" to exist, the state is permitted not to support groups who hold views that may involve beliefs contrary to the nature of pluralist liberal democracy itself, such as discrimination against particular racial, religious or social groups.

The nature of pluralist liberal democracy also presents a paradox: that all members (individuals or groups) are entitled to pursue their own "good", and their right to do so must be defended, but they are not permitted to use improper means to gain support for their views. To do so is a violation of one of the fundamental principles of liberalism, freedom. Where action violates physical, emotional or psychological freedom, such action may not be deemed as appropriate for a liberal society. The problem is further compounded in a pluralist society where many of the cultural sub-groups that constitute that society have varying understandings of freedom. For example, some social groups do not permit their women to be seen in public without suitable head-dress: some see this as an act of freedom regarding the legitimate practise of religious devotion, whilst others would argue that it is not freedom if there is no choice on the part of the women. Again, some would argue that voluntary union association is an important political freedom while others argue for compulsory unionism as a safeguard against

unfair employers; one group appeals to the freedom to associate, the other appeals to the freedom not to associate. Both appeal to the same concept: freedom. The difference lies in the understanding each group attaches to the word. This difficulty is not easily resolved. However, where there are obvious transgressions of freedom, the state may act to rectify the situation. For example, it may not be proper to garnishee an employee for the purposes of collecting voluntary union dues, but it may be appropriate to do so to collect an outstanding debt on a loan in default.[6] Students must be helped to understand they are part of such a complex society. Education from a perspective that recognises such complexity will better enable students to participate in and make a contribution to that society.

Pluralist liberal democracy is a public political arrangement demanding the involvement of its citizens. Citizens of such a society agree to certain publicly acceptable and examinable ideas and practices that enable them to coexist, despite their personal differences regarding the notion of the "good". Members elect governments to oversee the practice of these ideals and to regulate for action that helps in this matter and against action that would restrict such practice However, the authority of an elected government is not absolute, and the citizens must be the ones for whom government operates. The extent to which a government will please most of the population most of the time will determine the extent to which a government will retain political power. In a real sense, then, each individual is responsible to take an interest in the operation of government to avoid the state moving beyond what are its legitimate functions. Laski (1989) has argued that the judgments of the state must themselves be subject to the judgment of the people and must be judged according to right conduct. Because of this, the citizens must be aware of what may be considered "right

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[6] This is, of course, assuming the conditions under which the loan was constituted were fair and just. It may be argued that coercion into an unjust loan arrangement does not morally justify the garnishee even though the process is legally justified.

conduct" and must therefore have an understanding of how to discriminate between right and not right conduct. It must be carefully noted that this discrimination concerns the protection of the environment within which each citizen is able to pursue their own concept of the "good", not a judgment of what constitutes the "good".

Education that is committed to the ideals of pluralist liberal democracy must therefore help students to understand and value the political nature of such a society, to recognise the difference between public political arrangements and private world view stances, to see the necessity for involvement in the political nature of society, and to value the need to discriminate on the basis of right political conduct.

ii. a critical investigation of a personal world view.

This particular element required for models of education in pluralist liberal democracies derives more from liberalism than from pluralism or democracy. It is based on the strong belief that individuals are entitled to hold their own personal concept of the "good life". However, it is also based on the assumption that the way in which beliefs are held has considerable importance. It is concerned with how a person might come to hold a particular belief and the methods involved in persuading someone to hold such a belief or perhaps change belief(s). In this sense, then, it is concerned with how beliefs may be justified in a public sense between individuals or groups who hold diverse concepts of the "good life". Within the liberal tradition, it can be identified as the notion of critical rational autonomy.

A critical investigation of a personal world view must be central to the educational experience in the pluralist liberal democracy for the following reasons. Firstly, any world view has particular assumptions inherent within its system. To fail to critically investigate these assumptions is to accept unquestioningly a belief or series of beliefs on the basis of some other authority figure (parents, teachers, academics, political leaders, the Church,

etc.). Such an approach lies outside the intention of the liberal ideal in which philosophical, political, religious or moral authority must be approached with caution. This is not to imply that philosophical, political, religious or moral authorities are blindly leading people along paths that are not true, just or right; rather, it is a recognition that reliance on an authority *qua* authority does not necessarily help develop rational autonomy. Secondly, each individual or group within society ought to be able to give reasons for why their particular concept of the "good life" should be tolerated. A critical investigation of a world view would seek to provide reasons that are capable of being argued and accepted in the public domain. Thirdly, pluralist liberal democracies are complex societies, and no individual or group can isolate themselves from public society and then appeal to arguments for the right to freedom of belief and tolerance whilst not admitting their beliefs for public scrutiny. Crittenden (1988) argues that groups who reject critical rationality as an important assumption of the liberal ideal may be tolerated in such a society but may not themselves then appeal to other elements of the philosophical framework of liberalism for protection.

Many holding religiously based world views may object to such a criterion being a necessary part of education on the basis that it will lead to a loss of faith. However, it does not follow that critical investigation of a personal world view will necessarily result in such a loss. It many instances, this may be the case, and the reasons for this are many and varied. It may be that a student finds few satisfactory legitimate reasons for holding to a particular belief, or it may be that with closer scrutiny the belief is found to be held on questionable evidence. It may be that the world view belief system does not match with the present experience of the student. Indeed, under such circumstances it may be quite appropriate for a student to abandon their world view. Additionally, it may be argued that if there are few, if any, reasons for the valid acceptance of a particular world view then it may be that

such a world view is incompatible with pluralist liberal democratic societies. However, assuming that the world view is in fact legitimate publicly acceptable world view, there are many potentially positive results from such an investigation. Adherents to a particular world view may become more confident of the public validity of their own world view. They may become more competent in publicly defending the validity of their world view. They may discover more coherent explanations for why they hold such a belief. They may enable others to appreciate that the validity of their world view is based on more than untested and incontestable authority statements, if in fact this is the case. This objection will be countered more fully in Chapter 4.

iii. an investigation of alternative world views

In Section III above it was argued that pluralist liberal democracies are essentially public political arrangements whereby various sub-groups within the society agree to co-exist In order to do so there must first be a recognition that alternative world views exist. By its very nature, pluralist society contains a diversity of world views. Pluralist societies are complex entities where many (often opposing) world views co-exist. Therefore education in a pluralist liberal democracy must begin with the recognition that many world views co-exist within such a society. Any educational model that does not recognise this has serious shortcomings; it is not possible to consider such models valid for pluralist liberal democracies.

However, it is not sufficient to note merely that other world views exist almost, as it were, from a safe distance. The investigation of alternative world views aims to bring students to a recognition of the validity[7] of alternative world views and a respect for alternative world views. Recognition of validity and respect for alternative world views ought to be essential components of any educational model within a society that permits

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[7] Any discussion here of validity assumes that various world views are not in contravention of basic liberal principles as outlined in Section III of the present Chapter; validity in this context is not addressing the status of truth claims of a world view.

alternative world views to exist. It is the nature of pluralist societies that enables sub-groups to pursue their particular version of the "good life" and therefore it ought to be part of an educational model to demonstrate that valid alternatives exist and that any version of the "good life" held by one particular group is not necessarily representative of society broadly. Furthermore, it is not sufficient merely to recognise that alternatives exist but that they are *valid* alternatives. In the context of pluralist liberal democratic societies, validity must be determined by the extent to which a world view is compatible with general liberal ideals such as respect for others, toleration, and a commitment to political and social co-existence.

Recognition of the validity of alternative world views should hopefully lead to a respect for those committed to world views different from one's own. It is not, however, to be assumed that this will automatically happen. Macedo (1995) argues that respect for those who hold differing beliefs is something that needs constant reinforcement. He also makes the point that respect is something mutual; those who hold to a particular world view ought not to be disparaged on account of doing so, nor ought one world view be promoted at the expense of others. This would be contrary to the basic principle of freedom to pursue the good life on which liberal democratic societies are based.

iv. active teaching for tolerance towards alternative world views

If all that has been outlined is considered necessary for education in a pluralist liberal democracy, it follows that tolerance for alternative world views will be a necessary element of such an education. But what does it mean to tolerate a different world view? It must include both the recognition of the validity of the world view as well as respect for those who adhere to such a view but does not entail commitment to the world view itself.

If an alternative world view is found to be valid, it follows that it is worthy of recognition within a pluralist society. If it is recognised as valid it

follows that it must be respected. It is not the case that a world view can be deemed valid yet not worthy of respect otherwise on what basis has it been deemed valid? By virtue of its validity it is worthy of respect, as are the adherents of such a world view. It is not necessary for someone to be committed to a particular world view in order to respect it or those who adhere to such a view. The theist can recognise and respect the fact that the non-theist does not accept the theist's claims for the evidence of a theistic being without suffering a loss of faith. Similarly, the non-theist can respect the theist's belief that the order of nature indicates the existence of a theistic being without personally accepting such a position. The difference between the two positions is one of belief; the evidence is the same, i.e., the presence of order in nature, but the interpretation given to such evidence is completely different. If then it is possible to respect an alternative valid world view without necessarily being committed to it, then it is possible to tolerate alternative world views. Teaching for this must be the task of education in the pluralist liberal democracy

It is also necessary that teaching for tolerance of alternative world views be active, as it cannot be assumed that students will come to tolerate alternative world views easily. This is on account of the nature of belief inherent in a world view. Many world views have deep beliefs, that is, beliefs that are deeply held and are therefore intrinsically linked to the identity of the believer. This is particularly so in the case of religious belief, but is no less so when related to various non-theistic beliefs such as scientism, socialism, or humanism (Laura and Leahy 1989). It is not easy, then, for students to be asked to respect and tolerate world views which are possibly an extreme opposite to their own world view, but it is necessary if social and political co-existence are to be developed within those who become citizens of a pluralist liberal democracy. Tolerance of alternative world views is crucial

to pluralist liberal democracy and any educational model that does not seek to actively address it must be considered suspect.

The development of these four criteria enable various models of education within a pluralist liberal democracy to be evaluated. Because they form part of a perspective, or orientation, rather than a prescription they permit the possibility of many diverse models being developed that reflect such an orientation.

V. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide some context within which to ground this study. First, it has endeavoured to provide a brief historical overview of formal education in Australia, and New South Wales in particular, in which it has been argued that governments (both State and Federal) have gradually assumed greater responsibility for education and its philosophical direction. As a result of this overview it has been argued that preparation for participation in society has been part of the philosophical framework of government regulated education. This preparation takes place, it has been argued, within the context of a pluralist liberal democratic society and as such must be reflective of the needs of such a society. Second, the work of Crittenden has been used to outline essential features of pluralist liberal democracies. Here it has been argued that the social and political contexts of society ought to provide a perspective from which to develop criteria needed for the construction and evaluation of suitable educational models. The context relevant to this present study is that of a pluralist liberal democracy. Third, this chapter has suggested four philosophically necessary criteria for models of education in pluralist liberal democracies. It has been argued that these criteria provide broad evaluative tools that may be used when considering the validity of educational models within a pluralist liberal democracy.

CHAPTER TWO
Parents' Rights, Children's Rights and Religious Upbringing

I. Introduction

In Chapter 1 some broad outlines for education within the context of a pluralist liberal democracy were identified. In that chapter it was argued, among other things, that for the orientation of any model of education to be considered valid it ought to provide for student's to undertake a critical investigation of their personal world view as well as consideration of alternative world views. It was also argued that respect for and toleration of alternative world views were necessary elements of the orientation in suitable models. Yet there are very real tensions for parents who wish to provide an upbringing for their children within the context of a particular world view. This is especially real for parents who operate from within the context of a religious world view. For these parents, they may wish to argue it is part of their parental right to provide a religious upbringing for their children in which alternative world views are seen as erroneous within the context of their faith and thereby do not merit detailed investigation. On the other hand, it would seem there are particular rights for children concerning the nature of their upbringing. They are entitled to expect security and protection as well as education and preparation for future life. The question then arises: what claims do each of these rights have upon parents and children and how can these competing claims be reconciled? In considering these claims it will be argued that the rights of children and parents are complementary, that it is reasonable and valid for parents to seek to provide a religious upbringing for their children within a pluralist liberal democracy,

and that under certain circumstances provision of a religious upbringing is not necessarily incompatible with adequate preparation for entry into wider pluralist liberal democratic society.

II. The complementarity of parents' and children's rights

In his study of children's rights, Wringe (1981) identified a number of basic welfare rights to which children are entitled. These included material support, protection, and guidance. Wringe argues that material support is a welfare right according to the helpless state into which children are born. They are incapable of caring for themselves and must therefore be cared for by others who are able to give such care. The same logic is used regarding the child's protection, that is, that due to lack of physical and emotional development of the child it is incumbent upon the elders responsible for the child, or if they are inappropriate, the wider community, to provide protection against not only the 'physical and animal world, but also the malevolence or self-interest of his fellows' (Wringe 1981, p.136). In both examples Wringe takes the position that it is natural and moral to provide initial care for the child irrespective of whether or not such a right is legislated. In both cases he argues that the child develops from a state of dependence to independence. Wringe allows the right to be the child's but the responsibility belongs to the elders, or in the case of their unsuitability, the wider community. Violation of these rights ought to bring, quite appropriately, both moral and legal condemnation.

Wringe argues similarly regarding the right to guidance. In the same way that a child requires material and physical protection as well as to develop the capacity to become independent in these matters, a child requires guidance and a growth in the capacity to discern what is in their best interests. While still a child, they may not have broad enough knowledge and experience to exercise such discernment and thus it is again incumbent on

those responsible for the child to see that such guidance is given. It is also a requirement that the child becomes increasingly capable of independent decision making as they develop. Wringe concludes that the 'general principles upon which prudent conduct and a satisfactory life may be based...can of necessity only be learned from others' (Wringe 1981, p.138). Wringe goes on to argue that although it is the responsibility of elders to provide guidance for the child it is not the case that any guidance is suitable. For example, he argues that some forms of religious and political control exercised over guidance are unsatisfactory (Wringe 1981, pp.142-143). Education is then to be considered a welfare right on the basis that it leads the child from an ignorant protected state (i.e., one where they are led by the guidance and knowledge of others) into an independent understanding state (i.e., one where the capacity to know and discern are exercised in pursuit of that person's best interests).

The concept of independence is central to Wringe's argument regarding education (Wringe 1981, pp.145-148): education is necessary to pursue material goods and thus be independent of others, education is necessary for understanding one's participatory role within a democratic society which 'implies the ability to choose between courses of action not only intelligently but wisely' (Wringe 1981, p.146), and some minimum education is required so that a person may 'decide for himself whether to continue this pursuit by himself' (Wringe 1981, p.148). The growth from dependence to independence is what characterises maturity and acceptance of the full potential of being human. An education that does not seek to provide such growth can be said to be socially restrictive and morally deleterious.

Having established the idea that certain rights of children exist concerning their upbringing, it is now appropriate to consider what rights, if any, exist for parents in the upbringing of their children. If any such rights

exist, it is necessary then to consider whether or not these can be satisfactorily reconciled with those of children.

It has already been noted that one of the rights of children is the right to be given protection and guidance as they move from dependence to independence. This point is affirmed by Hobson (1984) who argues that parents have a right by virtue of procreation to 'fulfil their duties and obligations to care for the vulnerable and defenseless being they have brought into the world' (Hobson 1984, p.64). He goes on to argue that parents ought to be the 'prime agents in their children's upbringing' (Hobson 1984, p.64) according to the idea that they will have the best interests of children at heart. Yet what constitutes the best interest of the child in a pluralist liberal democratic society? As no agreed idea as to what constitutes the good life exists, Hobson argues that the development of rational autonomy, that is, development of the capacity to 'examine and judge the merits of a range of world views before deciding which values to accept' (Hobson 1984, p.66) has a distinct advantage. Because it focuses on the process rather than the content of the good life, the development of rational autonomy may be said to be in the child's best future interest. In this sense, then, it seems that the right of parents to determine what is in the best interest of the child is potentially compatible with the rights of child to be given protection and guidance provided that both seek the best for the child and both recognise the role that parents (or other primary care givers) have in this process. But this is too simplistic.

In order to provide an environment in which the child is given support and guidance, parents will obviously wish to continue with the view of the good life which they have chosen, since this is their right to do so within a liberal society. However, do parents then have a right to bring up their children within that particular way of life? Hobson claims it is in the best interest of children to begin their development towards autonomy from

within a 'stable framework of reference or set of standards' (Hobson 1984, p.69) and that it is in the best interests of the child for their development to occur 'free from unnecessary family conflict and confusion' (Hobson 1984, p.69). Thus for Hobson, the best interests of the child can be met through the provision of a stable primary environment. In considering the conditions under which such an upbringing is possible for parents affiliated with a religious faith, McLaughlin (1984) has argued along similar lines, using the central idea of primary culture as the basis of his argument. Because children are 'necessarily dependent both physically and culturally upon adults' (McLaughlin 1984, p.78), it is recognised that a primary culture is an important environment in which guidance and security are provided. As the child develops towards autonomy, however, the role of the primary culture must change and it must itself be subjected to the autonomous consideration of the child. The right of children to seek protection and guidance and the right of parents to provide these within the context of a particular conception of the good life seem, then, to be not in contradiction. It would seem that the two rights can coexist in a way that is complementary: the child requires protection, security and guidance which is provided for them *by* the primary culture of the parents. In this way, parental concepts of the good life are able to respect the rights of the child. Consideration must now be given to the issue of one particular form of upbringing that seems more problematic, that of a religious upbringing.

III. Religious upbringing and the liberal democratic society

Both McLaughlin (1984) and Hobson (1984) argue that the provision of a stable, coherent primary culture is an important element of an initial upbringing, and that it is right and proper that parents who have a religious world view ought to be permitted to provide an upbringing for their children from within that primary culture. McLaughlin argues that it is 'impossible for

a parent who practises a religious faith to insulate his children from that faith' (McLaughlin 1984, p.82) because of the infusion of such a faith position through all aspects of the believer's life. He further argues that opportunity for a child to have an inside view of one particular version of the religious life leads to the possibility that any decision the child makes to adopt or reject that particular faith position is made with knowledge. He argues that a decision made '*in abstracto*' (McLaughlin 1984, p.82, emphasis in original) does not allow the child to appreciate fully the operation of the faith or reasons why others may hold to such a belief. Importantly, however, there must exist within parents a desire, or an intention, to move the child from dependence and heteronomy to independence and autonomy. This is critical to the justification of a religious upbringing in a liberal society (Hobson 1984, pp.68-71; McLaughlin 1984, pp 81-82). It is now necessary to consider whether or not it is possible for parents to provide a religious upbringing that does not restrict the development of childrens' autonomy yet satisfies parental desires for children to develop faith.

Gardner (1988) and Callan (1985) maintain it is impossible for a religious upbringing to be compatible with the development of autonomy due to the nature of religious belief. Gardner argues that part of the structure of religious belief is the belief that opposed belief positions are, by definition, not true. Using basic formal logic, he argues that if P (a faith belief) is true, not-P must be false. If this is the case, how then will the religious parent view any serious consideration of alternative positions by the child? Gardner claims 'they will want their children to believe that the beliefs in question are false and that those who believe them are mistaken' (Gardner 1988, p.92). As such, any parents who seriously wish their children to adopt the faith position of their primary culture will make it difficult for the child to move beyond that primary culture. Callan (1985) appeals to a distinction between "weak" and "strong" religious upbringing to identify

reasons why he believes a religious upbringing will not permit the development of autonomy demanded by Hobson and McLaughlin. He argues that the provision of a primary culture in which strong religious beliefs are developed within children means they are unlikely to reconsider those beliefs (Callan 1985, p.115). When such beliefs become unshakeable, it is impossible for autonomy to develop. Accordingly, Callan argues a strong upbringing cannot be justified on the basis that it produces an unshakeable belief within the child (Callan 1985, pp.116-118). The question must then be asked, is it possible for parents to provide a strong form of religious upbringing in which strong beliefs are held but one in which future development and refinement of belief is possible? Or, to express it in terms of the current issue under consideration, is there a form of religious upbringing that would satisfy the parents in exercising their right to provide a religious upbringing for a child whilst upholding the rights of the child to a more broad type of education? If the answer to these questions is yes, the arguments of Callan and Gardner can be countered.

Laura and Leahy (1989) draw attention to a number of significant points. First, a primary culture in which value neutrality is accepted creates potential problems for children, particularly if such an upbringing permits an alternative view to exist whereby oppression of weaker groups is considered a legitimate activity (Laura & Leahy 1989, p.254). In response to such a situation they suggest it may be beneficial if a child's upbringing deliberately '*not* be neutral in relation to all ideologies' (Laura & Leahy 1989, p.254, emphasis in original). The same principle has already been shown (Chapter 1, Section III) to exist within liberal democracies where it is appropriate for world views that include beliefs contrary to the nature of liberal society itself to be deemed invalid and not worthy of support. Second, the structure and function of epistemological presuppositions requires a certain element of "fixedness" without which the operation of the beliefs is not possible.

However, the nature of the "fixedness" is such that the condition under which revision of the belief would be possible is not able to be determined in advance. Furthermore, because of the human need for ordering of the world, it is highly unlikely that reordering of any basic presuppositions will take place until a better way of ordering is forthcoming (Laura & Leahy 1989, p.258). It therefore seems permissible to provide a coherent primary culture the strength of which may be changed only when another world view becomes demonstrably more tenable. Third, Laura and Leahy make the strong argument that neutrality of any upbringing is at best a principle rather than a reality (cf. Macedo 1995, pp.227-228). They attribute this to the availability of many alternative belief systems through the pervasiveness of the media. They further argue that Gardner's appeal to neutrality is simplistic in that it claims far more than is logically possible (Laura & Leahy 1989, pp.262-263). To demonstrate this point they consider the issue of how many alternative beliefs would need to be considered to satisfy the claim that a child has adequately chosen a world view from a variety of alternatives. Rather than a study of the vast range of alternatives, they suggest a child be given 'an understanding of the epistemological bases in which the differences between...alternatives...lie' (Laura & Leahy 1989, p.262). According to Laura and Leahy, then, the opportunity for parents to raise their children within a religious primary culture is not immediately discounted on the basis that it will restrict children from future revision of their beliefs. It remains to be seen whether the provision of a religious upbringing can, in principle, provide a valuable foundation for entry into pluralist liberal democratic society and thus uphold the rights of the child to adequate preparation for life in that society.

IV. The nature of religious upbringing and indoctrination

Both McLaughlin and Hobson argue strongly for the right of parents to provide a religious upbringing for their children. However, such an upbringing is not without restrictions, and both McLaughlin and Hobson place their own restrictions on what may be acceptable practice for parents. The strongest of these concerns the avoidance of indoctrination. Consideration of whether a charge of indoctrination is legitimate tends to be based on criteria such as content, methods, intention and consequences (Hobson 1984, pp.68-71; Thiessen 1987; 1992, pp.68-69). In attempting to show how it is possible to provide a religious upbringing that avoids indoctrination, Hobson and McLaughlin seek to provide alternative methods and content ideas. Both suggest that parents ought to take into consideration changing developmental needs of the child and this is reflected in the changing nature of methods used. With young children, Hobson argues it is quite appropriate to use instruction 'with little in the way of intellectual backing or full rational explanation of what is taught' (Hobson 1984, p.70) provided the methods used are not anti-rational. As children develop, however, they ought to be given reasons for what they are being taught. Religious beliefs based on faith rather than 'publically accepted evidence' (Hobson 1984, p.70) ought to be declared as such so that children are placed in the best possible position to assess the relative merits of competing claims. Both Hobson and McLaughlin maintain that under such circumstances it is possible for parents to retain their own faith position and hope their children adopt the same faith while avoiding forms of indoctrination.

Thiessen (1993) has further developed some of these ideas in his defence of parental provision of a religious upbringing. It is worth considering Thiessen's ideas as he argues that parents are justified in actively seeking the faith commitment of their children; this is a position similar to that favoured by those advocating the BCE model and thus his ideas bear

careful examination. Because he attempts to argue both from within a Christian world view position and within the context of a pluralist liberal democratic society, his ideas have significance due to their similarity to the present study of some philosophical issues concerning the BCE model within a pluralist liberal democratic society. If Thiessen's ideas have validity then they may serve as useful guides to resolving some of the difficulties present in the BCE model.

V. Thiessen's two phases of liberal education

In *Teaching for Commitment* (1993), Thiessen's primary concern is to address the charge of indoctrination made against parents wishing to exercise their philosophical right to provide a religious upbringing. He begins with two different concepts of education: the liberal concept, characterised by objectivity, autonomy and critical rationality, and its antithesis, characterised by authoritarian transmission of subjective beliefs and values and the use of indoctrination (pp.221-225).[8] The charge of indoctrination made against parents who wish to provide a religious upbringing is largely based on the assumption that this first concept, traditionally understood as liberal education, is non-problematic, a view with which Thiessen disagrees. In order to defend his call for parents to teach for commitment, he argues that many concepts associated with liberal educational philosophy are problematic. The domination of these ideas in educational thinking results in religious parents being charged with indoctrination on the basis of a problematic understanding of the content, methods, intentions or consequences of the upbringing they wish to provide. These criteria as generally understood, argues Thiessen, are restrictive, abstract and

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[8] The distinction between the two concepts of liberal education is more fully outlined in Thiessen, E.J., 1987, 'Two concepts or two phases of liberal education?' *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 21, 2, pp.223-234. In this paper, Thiessen characterises the two concepts (after Hirst) as sophisticated as opposed to primitive. He provides more detailed arguments than are presented here for why two distinct *phases* of liberal education ought to be considered in contrast to two *concepts*.

unworkable in reality. Consequently, he argues for the adoption of more 'normal' concepts: 'normal rationality' (pp.110-116), 'normal autonomy' (pp.137-140), and 'normal critical openness' (pp.163-174). After arguing for these concepts, he then turns his attention 'towards a reconstruction of the ideal of liberal education' (p.214). The underlying metaphysical, ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of the traditional ideal of liberal education must be reconsidered, argues Thiessen (pp.214-221), if they are to be more philosophically defensible. Having argued for the reconstruction of both the ideal of liberal education and its underlying assumptions, Thiessen further argues that charges of indoctrination and confusion about whether indoctrination occurs are alleviated somewhat by thinking about two distinct *phases* of liberal education rather than two different concepts of liberal education (p.225; cf. Thiessen 1987). This reconstruction of what constitutes indoctrination therefore permits parents to pursue religious upbringing for their children with boldness, including education in a parochial religiously-based school. Of more importance to this present discussion, however, is that in Thiessen's argument, the rights of the child to adequate preparation for life are not disregarded. Thus Thiessen's ideas serve as one attempt of how parents wishing to provide a religious upbringing can exercise their own philosophical right whilst upholding the rights of their children.

Thiessen's first phase is an *initiation*, or nurture, phase (p.228). In this phase, the primary culture of the child (and thus of the parents) is considered essential for healthy social and moral development. The primary culture of the child is one into which the child is initiated boldly and deliberately. As with McLaughlin and Hobson Thiessen argues the need for transmission of cultural ideas and forms without much (if any) rational justification for them in the early years (pp.225-227; Hobson 1984, p.70; McLaughlin 1984, pp.78-82). Drawing on the writings of Hirst, Peters, Oakeshott and Ackerman, Thiessen illustrates that many of those who espouse the first concept of education

admit the necessity of an initiatory process early in the child's development. Ackerman's 'stable and coherent "primary culture"' (Thiessen 1993, p.227) concept reinforces the argument for provision of a family culture into which the child is necessarily initiated without being given specific rational foundations. This recognition by some of the major advocates of the first concept of education, along with the similarity between the ideas of Thiessen, McLaughlin and Hobson, clearly indicates that parents are well within their philosophical rights to provide a religious upbringing as the primary culture for their children. The significance of Thiessen's contribution to this present study comes through examination of his second phase, the *liberation* phase.

According to Thiessen, the liberation phase must proceed from the initiation phase. He recognises that a more developmental approach ought to be taken (and that much more work still needs to be done in this area) and provides at least an outline of how the transition from initiation to liberation occurs (p.235). The next phase after initiation, 'a gradual opening-up phase' (p.236), exposes children to other influences and beliefs, although still from the perspective of the primary cultural belief. After this 'young people should be encouraged to reflect critically on the traditions into which they were first initiated' (p.236). Finally, critical reflection on alternative traditions is required when the child reaches maturity. These ideas also seem very similar to those of McLaughlin and Hobson who both call for growth into autonomy.

Thiessen's ideas provide a broad perspective for a Christian education seemingly well-suited to a pluralist liberal democratic society. However, it is not clear that liberation is what some religious parents would desire for their children. Thiessen recognises that use of terms like liberal and liberation beg important questions and thus the notion of what is liberation and from what people need liberating are two important questions that need addressing (p.231). For many religious parents, ideas associated with liberal education such as autonomy and critical openness are anathema and thus any

education associated with such an idea is likely to be discounted. To address these fears, Thiessen argues that an adequate and philosophically defensible account of liberation and thus liberal education is understood by reference to his 'normal' concepts of rationality, autonomy and critical openness. When these 'normal' concepts are seen as the goal of the liberating process, religious parents can be encouraged to initiate their children boldly provided that they *also* move on to liberate them according to these concepts. It is an understanding of these concepts that will enable parents to uphold their rights and yet meet the needs of their children in providing adequate preparation for life.

'Normal' rationality, according to Thiessen:

> while very conscious of its subjectivity and fallibility, nevertheless seeks to be as objective *as is possible*, always being open to reassessing what is presently claimed to be the "truth" and always searching for more adequate expressions of truth. (Thiessen 1993, p.110, emphasis in original)

For religious parents desiring a religious upbringing for their children, the move towards rationality does not necessitate a divorce between faith and rationality but rather recognises that faith is a way to provide reasons for understanding our experience, it also recognises that it is only one way to understand that experience and that other ways of understanding human experience also exist. It recognises that rationality in justification for belief must resist a purely empirically foundationalist approach given that justification for belief is 'an ongoing process conducted by human beings who have a psychology and a history and are part of a larger society with traditions' (p.110). Consequently, commitment to liberate children into 'normal' rationality must entail a commitment to critical investigation of a personal world view as well as critical investigation of alternative world views, two of the criteria for educational models argued for in Chapter 1.

'Normal' autonomy entails recognition that the human self is not an absolute self in the sense that it is disconnected to any others in society. There must be a recognition that the human self's sense of autonomy is determined by the group into which it is born (or chooses to move). The rules as to what governs autonomy are not the same for various social groups, but change from group to group. Thus Thiessen argues that 'the ideal of normal autonomy acknowledges that to a large extent the self is always defined by what it has inherited' (p.128). This being so, the religious parent (and the religious community to which the parent belongs) will have a clear idea of what entails normal autonomy for the believer and that such an idea will be what parents will want their child to move towards. 'Normal' autonomy sees a difference between 'substantive and procedural independence' (p.138): the manner in which one comes to adopt a belief is what is important, not the substantive belief itself. As Thiessen (p.138) argues:

> as long as people enter into a relationship of commitment to God reflectively and from time to time reassess this commitment, they satisfy the requirements of procedural independence and hence must be described as autonomous.

Such a concept of autonomy permits the religious believer to be autonomous by virtue of the process undertaken in the move from initiation to liberation. This process, by necessity, entails a more critical investigation of one's personal world view; to qualify as one demonstrating 'normal' autonomy, according to Thiessen, one must critically reflect on one's faith position. Liberation into 'normal' autonomy therefore will contribute to critical reflection on a personal world view.

'Normal' critical openness, according to Thiessen, recognises that by nature human beings need to have some sort of closed-mindedness. We cannot realistically continue to reflect critically and infinitely on every idea all the time, nor are we free from historical and social factors that help shape our minds (pp.152-155). We must accept some things on the basis of

authoritative statements whether they be from scientists, historians, parents or other trustworthy beings. Because of this situation, 'normal' critical openness 'recognises the limited degree to which human beings can and should be critical and have open minds' (p,155); as Thiessen states, 'all of us are partly closed-minded and partly open-minded, partly critical and partly uncritical' (p.156). A further point emphasised by 'normal' critical openness is that in order to be open-minded one must first have some beliefs to which one is committed. However, there is an important assumption that these beliefs may not be true and thus the need for critical openness, reflection and possible revision of those beliefs is required. 'Normal' critical openness also recognises that exclusive truth claims can still be held by one who is open-minded given that the making of exclusive truth claims is itself inescapable: 'to claim that all truth claims are relative is to make one exclusive claim, namely, that all truths are relative' (pp.161-162). The necessity for critical openness is due to the fallibility of human beings and the belief that they may be in error. As to what type of counter-evidence would be required for a truth belief to change, Thiessen agrees with Laura and Leahy (1989) that the nature of 'unquestioned assumptions or "epistemic primitives" that underlie any conceptual scheme' (Thiessen 1993, p.163) makes it impossible to question more than small parts of belief structures at any one time. Laura and Leahy (1989, p.258) go so far as to argue that it is impossible to 'specify in advance the conditions whose fulfilment would lead [religious believers] to give up their belief in God.' For parents wishing to provide a religious upbringing, 'normal' critical openness removes the burden of constant critical reflection and analysis. It provides for critical reflection that, having established justification for a belief or beliefs, does not need constant testing and analysis. What is required for the believer is an attitude of preparedness for further revision should new or conflicting evidence come to light. In this way, 'normal' critical openness is likely to help meet the criteria of

investigation of a personal world view without paralysing the child or parent in a situation 'where everything is always "up for grabs," and every conviction or allegiance is to be examined afresh each time it comes up, as if past confirmations count for nothing' (Feinberg 1973, p.166, quoted in Thiessen 1993, p.152).

As has been argued above in Sections II-IV, there exists evidence for parental rights to provide a religious upbringing for their children *provided that* such an upbringing does not restrict the child's growth into moral, intellectual and social maturity. By thinking in terms of Thiessen's normal concepts and the two *phases* of education, religious parents wishing to provide a religious upbringing is given greater freedom to pursue their goal without fear of being indoctrinatory. The two phases accommodate the 'normal' concepts of liberal education thus satisfying the demands of preparation for life in a liberal democratic society as well as going some way to satisfying the desires of parents to provide a religious upbringing for their children; it is interesting to note that the argument for acceptance of two phases has similarity to the ideas of Hobson (1984) and McLaughlin (1984) who both argue for a strong primary culture from which to begin the journey towards liberation. Furthermore, an outline of Thiessen's 'normal' concepts demonstrates the extent to which they are compatible with the criteria for evaluating educational modes in Chapter 1. It also suggests that the likelihood exists of being able to satisfy both the criteria for education in pluralist liberal democracies and the desire of parents to provide a religious upbringing.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter has argued for the right of parents to provide a religious upbringing for their children. However, it has also been argued that a number of conditions are necessary if such an upbringing is to satisfy both the rights of the parents and the children. Whilst it has been found there is support for the right of parents to provide a religious primary culture, it has also been found that children have the right to be given an education that enables them to evaluate that upbringing critically . It has been argued that Thiessen's distinction between two *phases* of liberal education as well as his reconstruction of 'normal' criteria of liberal education is helpful for reconciling tensions felt by parents in attempting to provide a religious upbringing.

Part I of this thesis, then, has attempted to locate areas of concern related to the investigation of the BCE model. It is now clear that the major concern for parents who wish to provide a religious upbringing for their children, and who have a philosophical right to do so, is that the model must also uphold the philosophical rights of their children within the context of a pluralist liberal democratic society. Because it can be argued that parents have a right to provide a religious upbringing, and thus a religious education as described in the BCE model, it is critical to consider whether the BCE model is able to satisfy the criteria of valid educational models within pluralist liberal democracies thereby upholding the rights of the children. In order to do so, the BCE model must first be described and then critically analysed. The next section of this thesis, Part II, describes the BCE model; critical analysis of the model is undertaken in Part III, Chapter 4.