Ph.D. THESIS:

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES IN EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT.

The three central assertions of this thesis are: (1) that there are no moral grounds for the belief that lesbian and gay sexualities are inferior to heterosexualities, (2) that lesbians, gays, bi-sexuals and heterosexuals are equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings with life plans of their own which they have the right to pursue, as long as they do not harm others, (3) that a philosophically informed rationale for arguing for lesbian and gay equality is required in today's aspiring democracies.

The concepts of personal autonomy, participatory democracy and the democratic virtues are familiar themes within the Philosophy of Education. This thesis brings these themes to bear on the question of the place of lesbian and gay issues within a democratic education system. In doing so, it places the oppression of lesbians and gays within the broader context of the oppression of other members of the democratic community. It examines these complex and diverse powers of oppression with the aid of philosophical literature and with reference to the philosophical concepts of personal autonomy and participatory democracy.

In the light of the previous discussions, philosophical skills, concepts and literature are employed to develop a critique of the educational policies of the British government in the 1980s and 90s and offer alternative policy suggestions based on more adequate accounts of human nature and social values. Finally, both the manner in which education should be controlled, and the form and content of education within a democratic state are critically examined.

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INTRODUCTION.

A sympathetic liberal might well ask why the majority of heterosexual students should learn about lesbian and gay issues. What's in it for them personally, apart from the obvious need for heterosexuals to learn tolerance towards lesbians and gays and thus make their lives less difficult? Identifying lesbian and gay issues in education is not simply a matter of supporting lesbian and gays as the unfortunate victims of heterosexism. Heterosexism is a complex, powerful and destructive force, threatening the democratic community as a whole. This makes coming to terms with it important for everyone in the democratic community for the following reasons:

1. Heterosexism has an important role in the formation and policing of sexualities.

The lesbian and gay political movements of recent years have encouraged many people to reject the view that lesbian and gay sexualities are somehow disordered or 'unnatural'. This movement towards an acceptance of lesbian and gay equality with heterosexuality has led to an understanding of the power of *heterosexism*: the beliefs, attitudes and institutional arrangements which reinforce the view that heterosexualities are superior to lesbian, gay, or bi-sexualities.

Heterosexism emanates primarily, though not exclusively, from heterosexuals. It is important that we understand the diverse and complex ways in which heterosexism operates and tackle heterosexist attitudes and values in schools and colleges. This must be done within the wider context of challenging all forms of oppression.

At its most basic and pervasive level, heterosexism operates by means of what Epstein and Johnson (1994, pp. 198 ff.) call 'the heterosexual presumption', namely the presumption (by individuals, cultures and institutions) that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is, in a sense, compulsory for 'normal' human beings.

Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson (1994) note the many ways in which heterosexism is manifested. "It operates through silences and absences as well as through verbal and physical abuse or through overt discrimination. Indeed, one form of heterosexism discriminates by failing to recognise differences. It posits a totally and unambiguously heterosexual world in much the same way as certain forms of racism posit the universality of whiteness. In this way, the dominant form is made to appear 'normal' and 'natural' and the subordinate form perverse, remarkable or dangerous." (p. 199).

Epstein and Johnson see *heterosexuality* itself as problematic in the sense that it is often constructed and reinforced negatively through the 'policing' or control of masculinities and femininities. For example, men and boys often use homophobic abuse against each other when they are perceived as deviating from the norm of heterosexual masculinity (e.g. 'poof', 'queer', 'pansy', etc.). They cite examples where academically capable young men who have a good relationship with their teachers are often perceived as 'gay' regardless of their heterosexual relationships (p. 204). Girls are similarly pressurised into assuming stereotypical 'feminine' roles, thus ensuring the perpetuation of a heterosexuality that exists as a negative social construct, largely at the expense of other sexualities which it represses in order to ensure its own survival and propagation. "It is because, in our society, heterosexuality is culturally and psychically enforced that homosexualities are stigmatised and expelled." (Op. cit., p. 225).

Epstein and Johnson believe that, "...homophobia can be seen as a constitutive part of heterosexual masculinities. It is not some incidental feature. Heterosexual masculinities are actually produced through different forms of homophobia, and this involves the expulsion or denial of homoerotic desire." (p. 204). This underlines the importance for *the whole of society* of coming to understand lesbian and gay oppression. In attempting to understand the powers of heterosexism we all (lesbians, gays, bi-sexuals and heterosexuals) come to understand something of the way our own sexualities have been negatively influenced.

Even the very young need to be taught in ways that avoid male and female heterosexist stereotypes. Thus, we shall provide a context within which young people will later be able to learn about sexualities which differ from their own and question societal attitudes and values with respect to lesbian and gay sexualities.

This examination of the power and complexity of heterosexism indicates the scope of this thesis: although much of what is said here relates to secondary, further and higher education, I acknowledge the importance of anti-sexist and anti-heterosexist education from an early age. The reinforcement of negative heterosexual stereotypes damages all children. Much work needs to be done in devising curricula and approaches which will lay the foundations for exploring and learning about sexualities in later life.

2. Heterosexism is a violation of individual citizens' exercise of personal autonomy.

All citizens have the right to plan and live, as far as possible, their own ways of life, unless such ways of life harm others. Heterosexism negatively affects lesbians and gays' abilities and opportunities to live their distinctive ways of life. This is a violation of personal autonomy.

The challenge for democratic education is to encourage heterosexuals to understand the need for lesbian and gay liberation from oppression. This is rooted in three propositions essential to the survival and continuation of participatory democracy: (i) that lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings, (ii) that my right to live the life I choose entails that other individuals have the same right, (iii) that lesbians and gays should therefore be allowed to formulate their own life-plans and live them out in peace and harmony with other members of the democratic community.

3. Heterosexism silences the voices of the oppressed and thus prevents the development of participatory democracy.

In order to achieve full participatory democracy, the aspiring democratic community must understand the ways in which oppressed people are discriminated against and are thus deprived of effective participation. This means that all oppressed groups, including lesbians and gays, must be listened to and taken account of. Participatory democracy can never be fully realised until this happens.

4. Heterosexism damages fraternal relationships within the democratic community,

Heterosexism and homophobia hurt heterosexuals as well as lesbians and gays by engendering fear of lesbians and gays and preventing civic friendship among citizens in the democratic community. In this way, heterosexism undermines the very foundations of participatory democracy by preventing citizens from working together to establish fundamentally important common democratic goals such as freedom and equality, as I shall argue more fully in chapter one.

The reality of prejudice.

Although I argue in chapter three that there are no substantive arguments to support the view that lesbians and gays are inferior to heterosexuals, it would be foolish to deny that many people believe this to be the case. There is also a significant number of people who have feelings of revulsion and disgust towards them. These are very deeply held views within our society and its cultures. It is important for us to understand the sheer complexity and diversity of the powers of oppression. There is still much work to be done in understanding the elaborate array of attitudes, beliefs and cultures of the young people we are educating.

Heterosexism is not uniform or entirely predictable in its manifestations. Epstein (1994) notes that, "...we are living through a time and in a society which is not homogeneously homophobic. The contradictions, and even polarisations...are manifold, in public policy, between different people and even within the same person.

For example, the British government is currently restating Section 28 in a variety of ways, but John Major has entertained gay activist and actor, Ian McKellan, at 10 Downing Street. The same police force may be simultaneously engaged in harassing gay men and appointing community liaison officers to work with the lesbian and gay community and actually increasing police presence in areas near gay pubs and clubs officially to protect lesbians and gays from 'queer bashing'. *British Social Attitudes (1992/3)* shows that the majority of those surveyed both favoured a lowering of the age of consent for gay men and found the sight of two men kissing in the street offensive..." (p. 7).

Michel Foucault's concept of 'normalisation' provides us with a further analysis of the ways in which institutionalised heterosexism works as a powerful tool of oppression. In this analysis, the use of concepts such as 'normal' or 'abnormal' are not simply chance happenings or random phenomena, they expose one of the major powers used by society to manipulate and regulate its citizens.

Stephen Ball (1990, p. 2) defines Foucault's concept of normalisation as, "...the establishment of measurements, hierarchy, and regulations around the idea of a distributionary statistical norm within a given population- the idea of judgement based on what is normal and thus what is abnormal." The research of Kinsey in the 1960s is a good example of this process. It postulated that approximately one in ten of the population is lesbian or gay.

The purpose of this classification is the exercise of power over the human body; in Foucault's terms, Bio-power. "...a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regularity and corrective mechanisms...such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise and hierarchise, rather than display itself in its murderous splendour..." (Foucault, 1984, p. 144).

Foucault uses the term 'technologies of power' to refer to a set of operations or procedures which combine knowledge and power. In this instance, they combine to produce disciplinary technologies whose aim is to normalise anomalies through corrective or therapeutic procedures.

They involve a specialised and extensive, detailed knowledge of the human subject which has gradually taken shape since the nineteenth century within such disciplines as the law, medicine, psychiatry, and by means of detailed dossiers, case studies, investigations, enquiries and surveys, etc.

Foucault thinks that it is by means of the definition and cataloguing of 'perversions' as part of the normalisation process that different forms of sexuality are exposed in detail. In the past, this led to attempts to 'cure' certain types of perversion and to increased state censorship, repression and control, but it also encouraged people to think about them and even try them out. Thus, Foucault characteristically identifies both the negative and the positive effects of normalisation as a particular exercise of power.

Foucault believed that this normative rationality has gradually undermined and infiltrated the law. It is parasitic in the sense that it undermines the law without actually destroying it. Indeed, it depends upon the law and its procedures for its existence. Foucault notes a steady increase in the use of medicine, psychiatry and social sciences in legal deliberations during the nineteenth century. This led to what he describes as 'normalisation of the law'. This meant that there was an increased emphasis on statistical measures and judgements about what is normal and what is not in a given population, rather than adherence to absolute measures of right and wrong.

In Britain, a clear example of this process of normalisation occurs in a D.E.S. circular issued in September, 1987 (discussed fully later in chapter four) which states, "There is no place in any school in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour or presents it as the 'norm' " (no. 11/87, Sept. 1987, no. 22, p. 4). As I shall argue fully in chapter four, this is evidence of the deeply held contemporary belief that lesbians and gays are 'abnormal'.

The use of the term 'gay' appeared in the early seventies and can be seen, in part, as a reaction against the supposed abnormality of lesbian and gay sexualities. People who labelled themselves 'gay' had decided to 'come out', to reveal their sexualities to the world. The term 'gay' was intended to signify a new consciousness of what it

means to be homosexual and, most importantly of all, a pride in that consciousness.

It is important to appreciate that the mere coining of such terms as 'lesbian' or 'gay' did not in itself prevent people from seeing homosexuals as unnatural, abnormal or perverse. On the contrary, these terms are still often used pejoratively.

Whatever concepts are used to describe lesbian or gay sexualities, Foucault's 'technologies of power' remain at work, applying new labels to old prejudices. A graphic illustration of this is provided by Tony Kushner's play, Angels in America (Nick Herne, 1992).

In Act I, scene 9, Roy (a very powerful, influential, but crooked lawyer) has a consultation with his physician, Henry:

HENRY.   Roy Cohn, you are...You have had sex with men, many many times, Roy, and one of them, or any number of them, has made you very sick. You have AIDS.

ROY.   AIDS. Your problem, Henry is that you are hung up on words, on labels, that you believe they mean what they seem to mean. AIDS. Homosexual. Gay. Lesbian. You think these are names that tell you who someone sleeps with, but they don't tell you that.

HENRY.   No?

ROY.   No. Like all labels they tell you one thing and one thing only: where does an individual so identified fit in the food chain, in the pecking order? Not ideology, or sexual taste, but something much simpler: clout. Not who I fuck or who fucks me, but who will pick up the phone when I call, who owes me favours. This is what a label refers to. Now to someone who does not understand this, homosexual is what I am because I have sex with men, but really this is wrong. Homosexuals are not men who sleep with other men.

Homosexuals are men who in fifteen years of trying cannot get a pissante anti-discrimination bill through the City Council. Homosexuals are men who know nobody and who nobody knows. Who have zero clout. Does this sound like me, Henry?

HENRY.   No.

ROY.   No. I have clout. A lot. I can pick up this phone, punch fifteen numbers, and you know who will be on the other end in under five minutes, Henry?

HENRY.   The president?

ROY.   Even better, his wife.

HENRY.   I'm impressed.

ROY.   I don't want you to be impressed. I want you to understand. This is not sophistry. And this is not hypocrisy. This is reality. I have sex with men. But unlike nearly every other man of whom this is true, I bring the guy I'm screwing to the White House and President Reagan smiles at us and shakes his hand. Because *what* I am is defined entirely by *who* I am. Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man, Henry, who fucks around with guys.

HENRY.   OK, Roy.

ROY.   And what is my diagnosis, Henry?

HENRY.   You have AIDS, Roy.

ROY.   No, Henry, no. AIDS is what homosexuals have. I have liver cancer.

There are important implications for education here. The stereotypes and misinformation connected with lesbian and gay sexualities will not disappear simply because we teach children to refer to homosexuals as 'lesbian' or 'gay', or because we examine the bases for the prejudices which abound in this area, demonstrating them to be groundless and unjust. What is also needed is a positive attempt at consciousness-raising. This involves, not simply an examination of the bases of prejudice, but a radical re-consideration of one's moral position, leading to a shift in values, perspectives and behaviour.

The theory and practice of lesbian and gay liberation.

This thesis attempts to provide effective ways of countering the kind of prejudice I have highlighted within the aspiring democracies of today. It is, in part, a consideration of possibilities, of what could be in the ideal democratic community and its educational establishments.

The architects of the 1960s viewed their urban planning from a distance. They began with theories relating to ideal forms of housing which would have the advantage of saving space. They surveyed available space from a height, with little or no regard for the down-to earth consequences of what they were doing. The outcome was the creation of a kind of urban jungle which alienated the inhabitants of the sky-scrapers that resulted.

Despite its necessarily theoretical focus, this thesis is not intended to be so remote as to ignore the everyday realities of life for lesbians and gays today or the imperfections of the aspiring democracies in which they live. Prejudice and discrimination are freely acknowledged and solutions are sought, but it is important that responses to lesbian and gay oppression include a carefully constructed vision of the future.

One cannot speak of lesbian and gay liberation without considering the ways in which society might develop and improve in order to make such liberation a reality. Social and educational change needs a focus. We must look at the problems that now exist in our society and its institutions and have a clear conception of societal and

institutional change. This is why this thesis emphasises both theory and practice.

The broad framework of my thesis (including the necessary societal and educational conditions for change) can be used to address and counter discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion, class and every other form of oppression. This wide range of application supports my argument for lesbian and gay liberation as an integral part of the wider struggle against all forms of unjust discrimination.

Core concepts used in this thesis.

Much of the subject matter of this thesis deals with people who have same-sex sexual relationships. The lives and loves of these people are articulated through the familiar concepts of 'sexuality', 'homosexuality' and 'lesbian and gay sexualities'.

I use the term 'lesbian' to denote women whose primary erotic and/or sexual interest is their own sex and 'gay' to denote similarly disposed men. Thus the term 'lesbian and gay sexualities' is used, for the most part, instead of 'homosexuality' because the latter term fails to distinguish between lesbians and gays whose sexualities are very different.

It is important to appreciate that the terms 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality', as we currently understand them, are modern, Western constructions. The term 'homosexuality' was invented by C.G. Chaddock, an early translator of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1892). Before this time, there was no 'homosexuality', only 'sexual inversion'. They were not the same phenomenon, as George Chauncey argues, " 'Sexual inversion' referred to a broad range of deviant gender behaviour of which homosexual desire was only a logical but distinct aspect, while 'homosexuality' focused on the narrower issue of sexual object choice. The differentiation of homosexual desire from 'deviant' gender behaviour at the turn of the century reflects a major reconceptualisation of the nature of human sexuality, its relation to gender, and its role in one's social definition." (in Boyess & Steiner 1982-3, p. 116).

Throughout the nineteenth century, preference for one's own sex was not clearly distinguished from other sorts of non-conformity to one's culturally defined sex role: 'deviant' object choice was seen as one of a number of pathological symptoms exhibited by those who reversed or 'inverted' their 'proper' sex roles by adopting a masculine or feminine style at variance with what was seen as natural and appropriate to their anatomical sex.

The disjunction, identified by Halperin (1990), of 'inversion' and 'homosexuality' was an important conceptual and political shift. The age of the 'invert' is over, even though it has left its mark on the popular consciousness and its prejudices. It is becoming clear that sexual activity need no longer be related to gender roles. For example, the identification of 'active' sexual roles with masculinity and 'passive' sexual roles with femininity is being eroded.

The term 'gay' was coined after the Stonewall riots in New York in the 1960s when homosexuals fought a pitched battle with police who raided a gay bar. This is seen by many lesbians and gays as the beginning of the struggle for liberation. The term 'gay' was coined to indicate the homosexual who was proud of her or his sexuality and was determined to make this known to everyone. The struggle for gay liberation was taken up and reinforced by organisations such as the Gay Liberation Front. A new gay consciousness was formed as a result of these important political events and movements. Gays perceived themselves as ordinary women and men who had same-sex relationships and were proud to admit it.

The centrality of sexuality in our personal development.

There are some differences in the ways that gender, race, class and sexualities manifest themselves within the individual and society. But are discrimination and oppression on the grounds of sexuality exceptionally abhorrent, more so than perhaps racial or other forms of discrimination, since many of us intuitively believe sexuality to be an elemental part of our psyche, helping to define our character and personality at a very fundamental level?

The exploration and articulation of our sexual identities is of obvious importance to the development of every human being, but I shall argue that it is not necessarily more important and profound than other discoveries we make about aspects of our identity, for example, our gender, class, culture or ethnicity. Discrimination and oppression on the grounds of sexuality is therefore no more or less abhorrent than oppression and discrimination in these other important areas of our lives.

At first glance, sexuality, race and gender seem to be very different aspects of our personal identity in the sense that lesbians and gays, unlike people of colour, are often 'invisible' in society. They can and sometimes do choose to identify publicly as heterosexual and thus avoid the disapproval, prejudice and oppression of society on a legal and/or personal level. But on closer scrutiny, the same process of invisibility can also be seen at work in at least some ethnic minorities, such as Irish people or some black people, who often choose to hide their precise ethnic origins for fear of adverse reactions, so there are some parallels here.

On another level, Dale Spender (1982) documents the ways in which girls and women are rendered 'invisible' by the way they are systematically ignored and marginalised by male dominated society and its repressive cultures. Debbie Epstein (1994) also acknowledges this marginalisation and invisibility, even for those lesbian and gays who choose to come out.

Although sexuality and race are very similar, there is one difference: in chapter three, I argue against the claim that lesbian and gay sexualities are necessarily 'given' and fixed for life because there is no conclusive scientific evidence at present to support this claim and since many lesbian feminists claim they have genuinely *chosen* their sexualities, largely as a reaction against patriarchy. Thus, there remains the possibility that some people can choose their sexualities. This is obviously not true in the case of race or colour.

Class seems to have more in common with sexuality: one can see that it is possible both to hide one's class origins, should one choose to do so, and to move successfully from one class to another. Take, for example, the working class person who adopts an 'educated

accent' and pretends to be middle or upper class, or who moves into the middle class through education or economic success. One can also imagine a situation where a young child is born into one class and then adopted by members of another. In this sense, class differs from sex or colour in that a complete change of identity in this former area is possible.

Sexuality has a broadly biological base, in the sense that most human beings (like other animals) are motivated to engage in some sort of sexual activity, but these other aspects of human identity also have obvious biological bases: race is based on one's parentage and the circumstances in which one is born, sex is also based on parentage in the sense that it is determined by the genes of both parents.

One thing that distinguishes sexuality from other important constituents of our personal identity is that sexuality seems to be a basic human *drive*, defined as including, "...instinctive and other impulses, or motive forces, prompting an animal to directed activity towards an end." (J. Drever, 1973). Thus, it tends to be experienced as a basic human *need*, in the same way as we experience the need for food and water. This is clearly not the case with class, sex, culture or ethnicity, but I do not believe that this characterisation of sexuality as a *drive* makes it more significant or important than other aspects of our selves.

We all possess this drive towards expressing some form of sexuality. This does not make sexuality particularly problematic in itself. The problem is that society polices our expression of sexuality to such an extent that only the heterosexual variety is regarded as acceptable. There are parallels between ethnicity, class and culture at this point. These parallels can be seen when we consider how society also polices our expression of ethnicity and class. Thus, we are encouraged to adopt the kind of monocultural view of life identified by Cole (1989). We are encouraged to reduce a diverse range of cultures and traditions into one monocultural 'melting-pot'. Or else the white culture is seen as the dominant (and superior) culture to which all others must conform or become integrated within. Similarly, we are encouraged to ignore class

differences (and thus unequal power relations) in favour of 'the classless society', where everyone is believed to have equality of opportunity economically, educationally and socially.

On a personal level, what makes one form of identity more significant and important to us than others is the extent to which it is accepted or rejected by the society in which we live. Thus, our exploration and acceptance of our own culture or sexuality will be important but unproblematic if it is acknowledged and valued by society. In our society, how many white heterosexuals are worried about their culture or sexuality? How many even think about them? Conversely, if our culture or sexuality are rejected by society, our acceptance of them and our exploration of them become a matter of some importance for us. In this case, we have to come to a realistic appreciation of the prejudices and discrimination that exist with regard to them and seek to form alliances with other oppressed groups in order to combat and overcome them.

On a societal level, ethnicity, class, sexuality or gender are unproblematic as long as they do not threaten the dominant societal expression of these aspects of personal identity. However, if this happens, society will try to regulate our expression of these fundamental constituents of our selves. Within this context, any group- heterosexual women or men, people of colour, or the working class- who insist on challenging traditional societal ideas and institutions (e.g., the family) are as dangerous as lesbians and gays who do likewise. All are perceived as deviant or transgressive to some extent, and all will suffer the censure of society, on either an institutional level (through the law and its enforcers) or a personal level (through negative societal attitudes and behaviour).

Sexuality, race and class are fundamentally important aspects of our personal identity. Why then do we intuitively suspect that sexuality is so pre-eminent? 'Sexuality' is a powerful social construct. Since the invention of the term 'homosexuality' and the immense increase in scientific and pseudo-scientific interest that accompanied it, sexuality has come to be seen as a mysterious, elemental force which shapes our lives in diverse and not always observable or

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obvious ways. Certainly, this is the kind of popular view of sexuality projected in the Freudian and post-Freudian era.

David Halperin observes that, in the nineteenth century, sexuality became a singular "instinct" or "drive", a force shaping our conscious life according to its own unassailable logic, determining, in part, our character and personality. Sexuality becomes, "...a mute power subtly and deviously at work throughout a wide range of human behaviours, attitudes, tastes, choices, gestures, styles, pursuits, judgements, and utterances. Sexuality is thus the inmost part of an individual human nature...Sexuality holds the key to unlocking the deepest mysteries of the human personality: it lies at the centre of the hermeneutics of the self." (Halperin, 1990, p. 26).

Halperin explores the concept of sexuality as a *social construct*, not a natural or essential feature of 'human nature'. Before the scientific construction of 'sexuality', certain types of sexual acts could be individually evaluated and categorised as could certain tastes and inclinations. To some past generations, and for many individuals and cultures today, 'sexuality' is not a coherent concept. What has more importance is a diverse variety of experiences and concepts such as sexual practices and tastes, and diverse individual and communal beliefs held in relation to such sexual activity. Halperin points out that in the ancient world there was no conceptual apparatus to identify a person's fixed and determinate orientation, much less for assessing it or classifying it.

It is therefore inappropriate to assume that our categories of 'sexuality', 'lesbian', 'gay' or 'bi-sexual' will be readily understood in societies or cultures other than ours, or even by all individuals, cultures or groups within our own society. This indicates the considerable educational task ahead of us in acknowledging, discussing and teaching about lesbian and gay sexualities within historical contexts.

"The real issue confronting any cultural historian of antiquity, and any critic of contemporary culture, is, first of all, how to recover the terms in which the experiences of individuals belonging to past societies were actually constituted and, second, how to measure and assess the differences between those terms and the ones we

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currently employ. For, as this very controversy over the scope and applicability of sexual categories illustrates, concepts in the human sciences- unlike, in this respect, perhaps, concepts in the natural sciences (such as gravity)- do not merely describe reality but, at least partly, constitute it...although there have been, in many different times and places (including classical Greece), persons who sought sexual contact with the same sex as themselves, it is only within the last 100 years or so that such persons (or portions of them, at any rate) have been homosexuals." (Halperin, 1990, pp. 28-9).

Thus, we should not be looking for 'the history of homosexuality'. This approach is far too reductive, 'sexuality' is far more complex. Sexual relationships have happened throughout history between members of a variety of highly diverse communities, societies and cultures. Halperin remarks that an historical analysis of what we now call sexuality will lead us to, "..a plurality of only partly overlapping social and conceptual territories, a series of cultural formations that shift as their constituents change, combine in different sequences, or compose new patterns." (Op. cit., p. 29).

One can imagine a scenario in which various diverse forms of sexuality are accepted and valued, in much the same way as they were in ancient Greece. If this came about, one could see that our notions of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or heterosexual would no longer have the significance that they hold for us now. It is important for lesbians and gays to identify as such in contemporary society, largely because they are treated as 'other' by the dominant heterosexual society. But if sexuality was seen as a continuum of sexual experience over time, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual experiences, one can see that sexuality might well lose the central place it now seems to hold in our personal development. Sexual tastes and preferences might well come to be seen as no more important than a preference for lager rather than bitter, popular music, rather than classical.

Outline of the structure and argument of the thesis.

The first part of the thesis adopts an explicitly philosophical perspective. In chapter one, I discuss at length the wider democratic, social and educational framework within which initiatives centring on lesbian and gay liberation should take place, acknowledging the short-comings of present democratic arrangements. My distinctive contribution to lesbian and gay issues in education is, in part, presenting this democratic social and educational framework as the necessary context within which such issues can be effectively addressed.

Chapter one begins by examining the promotion of *socially responsible autonomy* as an important social, educational and political aim. Human beings, unlike other animals, are capable, in principle, of making independent judgements. Within the context of our society which is, in the broadest sense, multi-cultural, citizens should be educated to make informed, responsible and independent judgements and decisions in all areas of life.

In a society which aspires to freedom and democracy, citizens therefore have the right to choose the lives they wish to live, providing they do not harm others. Individuals who possess and cherish this essential right should be led to a recognition of the right of others to live autonomous lives.

Using contemporary literature in political philosophy, I critically examine elitist theories of democracy. I argue, by contrast with these elitist models, that participatory democracy provides the best social and political context within which *socially responsible autonomy* can be effectively exercised. I then examine the social and psychological conditions necessary in order for democracy to survive and flourish.

Aspiring democracies must acknowledge oppressed groups and work towards their full participation if they are to attain democracy in its fullest sense. Participatory democracy recognises and respects group differences, working towards the liberation of the oppressed.

Personal autonomy and participatory democracy are inter-dependent in the sense that participatory democracy provides the best context in which socially responsible autonomy can be fostered. Conversely, participatory democracy depends on socially responsible autonomy for its own existence and development.

Chapter two examines the concept of 'the democratic personality' and explores some key virtues which are the necessary conditions for establishing participatory democracy as *a way of life.*

Chapter three addresses the central issue of lesbian and gay equality with heterosexuality. Are sexualities in some sense 'given' or are they are chosen? How important is the given/chosen debate?

My distinctive contribution to the given/chosen debate is to point out that radical educational reform can be achieved, whichever view is adopted.

I critically examine the claims, made by many people, that lesbians and gays are unnatural, perverted, ill, evil or mad. I ask whether there are any aspects of lesbian or gay moral or sexual behaviour that would support such claims.

The second part of the thesis (Chapters 4-8) is concerned with education within a democratic setting. It includes a critical evaluation of our aspiring democracy in Britain, its educational policies and institutions. It also puts forward a detailed vision of the kind of education that should be provided within a truly participatory democracy.

It critically examines recent British government legislation and advice on sexuality and exposes its heterosexist bias. It goes on to specify the form and content of education within a democratic setting. It also considers the practical implications and questions which arise from the central assertion of lesbian and gay equality with heterosexuality. There are important implications for education here: should lesbian and gay sexualities be discussed? Should such ways of life be positively promoted? If lesbians and gays are to be treated on a par with heterosexuals, what sort of steps should educational institutions take to ensure that this

message is conveyed through the informal and formal curricula of schools and colleges? Should lesbian and gay issues be treated as part of an equal opportunities initiative on a par with anti-racist and other anti-sexist attitudes and approaches?

Chapter four acknowledges the complex forms of oppression experienced by lesbians and gays as exhibited by individuals, society and its institutions. It examines the institutionalised heterosexism which is fuelled through recent United Kingdom government legislation and circulars. It considers section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, and looks at the positive and negative effects of this legislation. It ends with a critical evaluation of circular 11/87 and its replacement.

Sex education is highlighted as an effective means of encouraging students to exercise their personal autonomy by critically examining and coming to terms with their own sexualities and the sexualities of others, which might differ from their own. It is also an effective means of countering heterosexist societal attitudes, beliefs and structures.

Building on the arguments, developed in chapter one, for the centrality of socially responsible autonomy and participatory democracy as fundamental political and educational ideals, chapter five sets out the ways in which a state, built on these principles, should control the education of its citizens. In so doing, it asks questions such as: what are the rights of parents with respect to the determination of their children's education? What rights do their children have? Should the state be able to overrule or ignore these rights? These issues are important, especially when one considers situations where parents might well vehemently object to their children being taught about lesbian and gay sexualities on moral and/or religious grounds.

Chapter six examines the hidden curriculum and its relationship with certain key policies which reflect the ethos of an institution and insure that its fundamental principles are adhered to. Four key policies and their interrelationships are developed and highlighted. Practical advice is then offered for their effective formulation and

implementation. The importance of the organisation and development of educational institutions is discussed.

Chapter seven focuses on the identification of lesbian and gay issues within the overt curriculum. Certain essential features and areas of education are highlighted. The place of lesbian and gay issues within the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum is then briefly examined.

The concluding chapter draws together the main arguments of the thesis, focusing on the concept of citizenship. The central question here is: do lesbians and gays have the right to be treated as the equals of other citizens in the democratic community?

I argue for Iris Marion Young's model of citizenship as a coalition of various diverse groups who retain their own individual identities whilst sharing the essential ideals of citizenship.

This vision of ideal citizenship must be counterbalanced by a realistic appraisal of the notion of citizenship promoted by the British government of the 1990s. Do we possess real democracy in this country or is it a sham? I go on to examine Curriculum Guidance 8 on citizenship in order to clarify how this government sees democracy and which model it appears to be using.

This thesis seeks to place the reality of oppression on the grounds of sexuality within the wider social and political contexts of oppression and discrimination on other grounds, such as gender, race or class. Although the powers of oppression may operate, or be experienced, slightly differently in each of these areas, we can draw strong parallels between them. Oppression in these areas operates by using the same mechanisms. For example: stereotyping, misinformation, myths, irrational prejudices, fears and beliefs. Therefore, the imperative political task is to work towards building coalitions of all oppressed groups within the democratic community, recognising the forms of oppression we have in common and working together to expose and counter them by education, rational argument, consciousness-raising, the promotion of positive images and radical social and political change.

CHAPTER 1.

AUTONOMY WITHIN A DEMOCRATIC SETTING.

Introduction.

This necessarily lengthy chapter situates the discussion of autonomy within the context of a discussion of a democratic state because this is demanded by the treatment of the topic. My central concern is the flourishing of lesbian and gay citizens within a culturally plural democratic community.

I examine the wider social and educational frameworks within which lesbian and gay issues can be effectively addressed. This also provides the basis for my later critique of current arrangements and policy suggestions.

Human beings are capable, in principle, of reflecting on their experience and making *independent judgements* within social, political, moral and sexual spheres of life. This is what distinguishes them from other animals.

In a democratic society, citizens should be educated to reflect on their experience and to make well-informed, responsible and independent judgements and decisions in all areas of life. The justification for this argument is the fact that contemporary society is inescapably multi-cultural in every sense of the word. Within this context, individuals are faced with important political, moral and social conflicts, opportunities and choices which will affect their well-being and that of others.

It is important that people are not unduly influenced by powerful forces within our society such as local and national politicians, the media and societal traditions and values, some of which may be ill-conceived and wrong. Citizens must therefore be able to 'think for themselves', critically to evaluate the many societal, cultural and other influences of contemporary society. Joseph Raz (1990) notes that personal autonomy as an ideal is, "...particularly suited to the conditions of the industrial age and its aftermath with their fast changing technologies and free movement of labour. They call for an ability to cope with changing technological, economic and social

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conditions, for an ability to adjust, to acquire new skills, to move from one subculture to another, to come to terms with new scientific and moral views." (pp. 369-70).

Citizens have the right freely to choose their own ways of life and views of life, providing that no harm is done to other members of the democratic community. It is desirable that, within a democratic setting, valuing one's own personal autonomy might lead to a recognition of the right of others to exercise their personal autonomy and therefore to the socially responsible exercise of autonomy.

I shall argue that lesbian and gay equality and liberation can best be achieved within a democratic society based on participatory principles because it encourages this kind of independent reflection, judgement and choice with regard to societal traditions and norms.

Such a society must also listen to the voices of the oppressed if it is to reach maturity. Aspiring democracies will never fully develop unless oppressed minorities are allowed fully to participate within the life of the democratic community.

Participatory democracy also creates the conditions necessary for certain group differences to be recognised, valued and respected.

There is an important inter-relationship between personal autonomy and the kind of democratic framework discussed here. Participatory democracy provides the best social and political context within which socially responsible personal autonomy can flourish. At the same time, participatory democracy depends on this kind of socially responsible autonomy for its own existence and continued survival.

'Autonomy' involves the self-rule of the individual person in society. This concept is well expressed in Isaiah Berlin's idea of positive liberty. We all wish to be an instrument of our own wills and not others'. This involves, "The wish to be a subject not an object, not to be affected by extraneous causes. I wish to be somebody not no-body, a doer, deciding, not being decided for, self-directed, not acted upon as if I were a thing, an animal or a slave. I want to conceive policies and goals of my own and try to realise them. Above all, I

wish to be an active, conscious being, bearing responsibility for my own choices and able to explain them by reference to my own ideas and purposes." (Berlin, 1969, p.131).

Yet, how is personal autonomy possible when the world and its inhabitants seem controlled by factors which are largely beyond their power? Each human being has a given character, a set of predispositions, motivations, intellectual abilities. Individuals are located within a given social context, not of their choosing, from which they derive the standards and values which govern their choices. I am reminded here of R.F. Dearden's observation that, "The most autonomous of men owes far more to what he socially inherits than to what he makes of himself, and the ideal of personal autonomy is itself a product of one particular social tradition." (Dearden, 1984, p.111).

One can acknowledge the many given societal and psychological factors which, to a large extent, make me the kind of person I am. Yet, I can also point to the human being's capacity to assess these given elements and decide whether to accept or reject them. Of course, 'the self' that reflects on and assesses these given elements of society and character is not unencumbered, as Callan (J. P. E., vol. 28, 1994) acknowledges later in our discussion. Nevertheless, some assessment and reflection is possible. Thus, Norman (J.P.E., 1994) characterises 'stepping back' from one's circumstances, not as a detachment from one's situation and circumstances, but "...the capacity to take up a perspective on one's circumstances, to bring them into focus within consciousness." (p. 31).

Norman and Callan are defending something like a Sartrean or Hegelian view of consciousness as the condition for autonomous, free or independent activity. "It is by becoming conscious of our circumstances that we are able to assess them, to act in the light of our assessment of them and therefore, in the appropriate sense, control them instead of being at the mercy of them." (Ibid.).

One of the defining characteristics of human beings is that they are able, in principle, to reflect on their experience and exercise freedom of thought and action unless prevented by internal or external restraints. This is essentially what separates humans from

other animals who are driven or controlled by instinct alone. In this respect, people define and assert their humanity through their reflection, the independent judgements they make and the actions they perform.

Of course, there are degrees of autonomy. A prisoner confined within a very strict custodial regime has her or his autonomy severely limited. Prisoners cannot choose to leave their prisons. Nevertheless, all prisoners are autonomous to some degree: they can choose when to eat (regardless of when their food is delivered to them), when to exercise within the confines of their cells, when to speak and when to remain silent and whether or not to exercise a whole host of other minor freedoms. It may well be asked, though, whether such minor freedoms are significant, whether they are worth possessing at all.

The degree to which a person is autonomous therefore depends on a variety of different environmental, personal and societal factors. It is difficult if not impossible to measure the actual extent of an individual's autonomy. "Autonomy is like baldness. We know what perfect baldness would consist in, but we use the word 'bald' to describe people who have lost a substantial amount of hair..." (Lindley: 1986, p. 69).

R.F. Dearden puts forward three criteria of variability (S.C. Brown, 1975, Ch. 1). A person can be more or less autonomous depending on: (i) the extent to which initiative is shown in forming judgements of her or his own, (ii) the firmness with which he or she adheres to such judgements, (iii) the depth of ramifying reflection which lies behind the criteria which she or he employs in making those judgements.

An education system based on participatory principles should strive to develop capacities for reflection and for independent choice and action by, amongst other things, maximising opportunities for its students to exercise their personal autonomy. In this way students are trained gradually in the necessary personal or psychological skills, encouraging them to reflect on their experience and make important independent judgements and decisions relating to their individual goals and plans in later life.

This kind of democratic education has important implications for lesbian and gay citizens in two respects: firstly, all citizens, whatever their sexualities, will be encouraged to respect the freely chosen life-plans of others. Within a democratic setting, the right to make one's own autonomous choices involves an acceptance that others have the right to do likewise. This basic climate of acceptance and respect for others' life-plans is important if the need for lesbian and gay liberation is to be understood and eventually realised. Secondly, within such a climate, lesbians and gays will be encouraged to make independent and reflective judgements. In doing so, they may come to understand the negative views society holds about their sexualities. On this basis, they can form realistic life-plans of their own, appreciating the difficulties they may face and asserting their right to independent thought and action in these important areas of their lives.

Autonomous reflection.

I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of this kind of reflection and judgement in our everyday lives. I am not suggesting that we have to constantly make independent judgements about every aspect of life. The idea of forcing oneself relentlessly to question every minute aspect of life is unattractive, even abhorrent.

What, then, is the role of reflection in our lives and how is this related to our personal autonomy? Eamon Callan (J. P. E., vol. 28, 1994) stresses that seeing reflective autonomy as an ideal of practical reason does not entail that all action has to be preceded by protracted deliberation. To illustrate this point, he uses the example of the rescuers of Jews during the second world war. Many of these rescuers acted with *unreflective goodwill*. They did not see themselves as choosing to help, they simply *had to help*. Such 'spontaneous rescuers' (as Callan calls them) should not be seen as witless moral innocents. "Their altruism was something that had grown out of their lives to become a fixed and virtually unalterable state of character." (p. 36).

Callan contrasts the goodwill of spontaneous rescuers with that of reflective rescuers who carefully deliberate whether or not they should help the Jews. Some people might claim that the reflective

rescuers exercised autonomy whilst the spontaneous rescuers did not.

It is important to note that the spontaneous rescuers were likely to have held a whole set of convictions about the evils of Nazism, the persecution of Jews and the wrongness of racism, etc. These convictions can be regarded as true or acceptable moral beliefs. Furthermore, the spontaneous rescuers can be presumed to have engaged in *general reflection* on these important matters. Indeed, it is difficult to make sense of their spontaneous actions without presuming that some sort of general reflection along the lines indicated had taken place at some stage prior to their rescue attempts.

This kind of general reflection is not the disengaged deliberation of the reflectively autonomous agent. "For it is not as if she embarks upon an intellectual exercise that cuts her adrift from her moral decency, and then, from the lofty height of her disinterested vantage point, she opts for decency rather than indecency; it is rather that she discovers the pre-emptory authority in her life of her own moral commitment." (p. 37).

Callan examines the notion of reflective autonomy in greater depth. In doing so, he raises two fundamental questions: can human beings reflect, to any significant extent, on their experiences? If so, what is the nature of this kind of reflection?

He discusses Michael Sandel's Hegelian distinction between encumbered and unencumbered selves. "An encumbered self is someone understood as comprising the contingent attachments, projects and the like that make her the particular, historically situated being she is; an unencumbered self is someone construed as having an identity abstracted from all such contingencies, an identity confined to abstract rational and volitional powers." (p. 38).

For Sandel, the notion of an unencumbered self is an illusion. In reality, the self has certain commitments or attachments. These may include love, friendship, patriotic sentiments, communal affiliations and cultural and intellectual interests, etc. One may value these commitments and attachments, but later modify, reject

and replace them with others. This is a matter of *choice* and here the central role of autonomy can be seen.

Callan goes on to make a distinction between revocable and irrevocable constitutive attachments. Irrevocable constitutive attachments are those which are vital to my sense of identity. These are, "..things that cut so deep that I cannot acknowledge the possibility that their forfeiture could ever be for the best, at least outside of situations that verge on science fiction..." (p. 39).

Callan believes that acceptance of revocable and irrevocable commitments entails the abandonment of 'reflective autonomy'. "For even though the revocability of commitment means that in certain circumstances I will stand apart from this or that aspect of the self, and reorientate my life in a way that alters who I am, what prompts the reorientation will be found in *other* constitutive attachments from which I do not prescind at the time. So one might give up Philosophy because one has children to feed and Philosophy buys no food or one might give it up to fight a war because one is a patriot who thinks the war is just. " (Ibid.).

This reflection does not involve 'stepping outside' our experience and the constituent attachments derived from it. On the contrary, I use my constitutive attachments precisely to engage with, modify, develop and change other constitutive attachments.

Whilst I agree that autonomous people will constantly submit their constitutive attachments to self-criticism and reflection at some point in their lives and that it is not possible to 'step outside' their experience in order to do this, I do not agree that this necessarily means that we have to abandon the concept of 'reflective autonomy'. It entails only the recognition of an on-going creative and reflective process through which human beings exercise their autonomy and that nothing is immune from reflection or criticism.

Personal autonomy as expressed in people's life-plans.

Richard Norman (J.P.E., 1994) believes that 'respect for autonomy' is closely connected to the idea of 'respect for life'. He uses Rachels' distinction between the 'biological' and the 'biographical' concept of

life to illustrate this connection. Respect for life is not respect for the simple fact of being alive, a condition we share with animals and plants. It is rather respect for having a life. "Each person shapes and constructs his or her own life in his or her own way and thereby creates his or her biography." (p. 28).

This capacity for autonomy is linked to the capacity for *seeing one's life as a whole.* However, Norman warns against having an excessively intellectualist notion of the autonomous person as someone who has a 'life-plan'. The problem with this notion of life-plans is that it suggests that only the insightful, sensitive and consistent are capable of living autonomous lives. On this model, people who drift through life would be neither autonomous nor respected. The other problem with this model is that although people vary in the degree to which they plan their lives and commit themselves to their plans, almost no-one actually lives from day to day.

Although our life-plans may not be sophisticated or detailed, we still have some conception of 'life as a whole', "...one has a consciousness of one's past and a consciousness of possible futures, one has memories and one has hopes and one lives one's life in the light of these." (Ibid.). Only a person who is mentally ill or deficient would live from day to day. Even someone who drifts through life without any sense of direction is still living her or his own life. Such a person would have an awareness of their past as a disconnected sequence and a consciousness of a future which may continue as before or change. Though she or he may not have life plans, they may still be seen as shaping their lives to some degree.

The "universal stages of life" are important, e.g., the progression through birth, childhood, youth, maturity and old age. These features are what give shape to our idea of life as a whole. "It is the conjunction of the universal form of a human life as a progression of stages, and the unique individual content which each person gives to that universal form, that makes up our idea of 'living one's own life'." (Ibid.).

This emphasis on "seeing one's life as a whole" is important and must include an appreciation of the complexity and pervasiveness of societal prejudices and misinformation that lead to oppression. For the oppressed, 'seeing one's life as a whole', in this sense, is a necessary pre-requisite for understanding one's place in society and for formulating realistic life-plans which may challenge such oppression and lead to a more fulfilling and autonomous way of life.

Objections to autonomy as a major educational aim.

Some people live in groups which do not value autonomy and yet claim to live fulfilling ways of life. A good example of this is fundamentalist religion. Does this count against autonomy as a universally desirable ideal or goal?

It is important to appreciate that for most world religions, the believer is expected to listen to God's message and respond to it *freely*. Those who do not respond freely, either because they are coerced or ignorant, etc., are deemed not to have freely chosen to follow the will of God. In an important sense, they have not 'made their religion their own'. Theologically, emphasis on freedom of choice with regard to the acceptance or rejection of religious faith is usually based on the premise that humans were created with *free wills*, enabling them to choose good or evil. In most world religions, God's message is *offered* to people, not forced upon them, though one would be forgiven for misunderstanding this point when one considers, for example, the kind of atrocities committed during the crusades.

Barrow (1975: Ch. 8) feels that the pursuit of autonomy as an educational aim militates against accepting tradition and authority, particularly as enshrined within age-old institutions such as cultures, communities and families.

"Not only is the concept of autonomy very difficult, if not impossible to make use of in practice, it is also questionable whether it is an ideal of any worth. To aim to promote autonomy in this sense is to do no more than to attempt to bring people to hold opinions and to behave as they see fit. If we were to sincerely commit ourselves to this ideal, it is difficult to see what education has to do with it and

why it should be regarded as an educational ideal." (Barrow, 1975: p.137).

On the contrary, I see the development of personal autonomy as a safeguard against authoritarianism. People who are used to making autonomous choices in their lives are far less likely to succumb to authoritarian styles of government and are less vulnerable to exploitation in other areas. In learning to be autonomous, we learn to be self-reliant and to seek answers for ourselves.

R.T. Allen believes that the promotion of rational autonomy is more likely to destroy the freedom of the individual by: (i)"inculcating the desire for an absolute freedom which is impossible and which leads only to demolition and not to construction, (ii) destroying the bonds of community in which alone freedom can exist, (iii) uprooting the individual from tradition and thus (iv) leaving him without any firm guides and foundations for his life."

Allen goes on to claim that people who are educated to be autonomous will want to "..completely make themselves. Consequently, those aspects of themselves and of their situation which they have not chosen or made, will be seen by them as alien. They will resent whatever has not been chosen by themselves, and will want to be radically free, as Sartre says we are." (J.P.E., 1982, p. 202).

He believes that this will lead to the destruction of traditional values, "Yet rational autonomy would have the apprentice judge for himself and critically assess his master's competence and performance. Hence it must overthrow the communal bond of trust and acknowledgement of authority which links apprentice to master and disciple to doctor, and all tradition by which the tacit dimensions of what we explicitly know (and thus that explicit knowledge itself) are transmitted from one generation to the next." (Op. cit., p. 203).

He thinks that this kind of education for autonomy, "...cannot consistently prepare the young for any set of social roles in adult life, not even those of male and female, as we have recently been told." (Ibid.). He warns us that "...if everyone were to choose all his

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rules in adult life, then there would be no social order and no sets of mutual expectations at all." (Ibid.).

Allen bases these assumptions on a theistic conception of the cosmos which accepts that, "...in large measure, we are already defined by our historical and cultural context, which, within the limits of universal moral principles, we should accept, continue, develop and pass on to our successors." (Op. cit., p. 206).

Allen fails to specify these "universal moral principles" or their bases and in so doing he leaves himself open to some fundamental criticisms. Our histories and cultures include views which often fuel oppression. We should not pass on such traditions and cultures uncritically. For example, must we be prepared to accept that women are the subordinates of men, a role defined for them by 'nature' or by a creator who has pre-determined their roles in life? Are we prepared to see black people defined as subordinates in these terms? Must we accept that lesbians and gays are unnatural or perverted because they too do not measure up to this pre-ordained scheme of things?

The oppression of these people is universal in the sense that it has always existed and continues to exist in all cultures and societies. It is important that the beliefs and ideologies which lead to such oppression continue to be identified and effectively countered.

Allen's view offers no hope for the liberation of oppressed peoples, many of whom suffer precisely because society has, for generations, sought to enslave or oppress them, often through the social roles it has constructed for them. This does not entail a denial of the very many aspects of our societies and cultures that are worth passing on.

We should educate people to evaluate and to choose those aspects of our cultures, beliefs and morals that are worth handing on and those which must be developed, modified or directly opposed. Allen's account does not give sufficient weight to this crucially important process of critical reflection and independent judgement.

K. Ward is of the opinion that, "Insofar as it is taken to represent a distinctive principle, autonomy is not an ideal at all, and its use in this sense is a mistake." (E.A., 1983, p. 47). Ward believes that the concept of autonomy can be broken down into a large number of diverse moral and intellectual principles.

He rightly asserts that, "One must counterbalance the value of self-determination with the values of social obligation and responsibility." (Op. cit., p. 47). However, these obligations and responsibilities have to be spelt out and questioned, they cannot be taken for granted or presumed.

Ward concludes by saying that autonomy, taken alone, "...denudes morality of content (leaving that to our decision). It may breed a kind of arrogance, which rejects tradition just because it is old or unfashionable." (Op. cit., p. 54).

Independent judgement in moral matters does not necessarily denude the content of morality. On the contrary, it may be that one decides to accept age-old moral principles after reflecting on them in the light of one's own knowledge and experience.

'Thinking about moral principles seriously' involves what Bernard Williams (1985) calls critical reflection. That is, the skill of criticism and re-evaluation of one's ethical position, with special emphasis on examining and criticising the moral structures and institutions which are part of our cultures and societies and which we might otherwise be tempted to take for granted. This will not necessarily lead to harmony or peace, nor will it guarantee that individuals act justly, but it will at least help to ensure that I stand back and think seriously about the moral life I am now living or the moral course of action I propose to take.

It is important that we teach young people to control their circumstances of life, whenever possible, instead of allowing themselves to be controlled by them. This can only be done if we teach them to reflect on their experiences and circumstances in the social, moral, political and sexual spheres of life.

Bernadette Tobin (J.P.E., 1989) outlines the Aristotelian distinction between a person who has sound *practical judgement* and knows how to act in particular circumstances of life, and someone who has a *reflective understanding* of the values embodied in her or his practical decisions.

The former has 'the that' (knows that in these circumstances it would be good to do 'x'), the latter has, in addition, 'the why' (knows how to act in particular circumstances and can justify her or his decisions by reference to general goods which are achievable by human action). 'The that' and 'the why' constitute the two main elements in the knowledge which characterises the person of practical wisdom.

The person of practical wisdom often has to weigh the value of competing goods (and the harm or evils) in each situation. Aristotle called this process *deliberation.* "He has to deliberate about how to bring about these goals and about the aptness, in each situation, of the goals he pursues." (Op. cit., p. 197).

People of practical wisdom not only act well in particular circumstances, they also explicitly understand and accept the values they have accepted. They have the 'the why' or 'the because' in ethics. "He (the person of practical wisdom) appreciates that the goals he pursues, as embedded in the virtues he displays, are constituents of human flourishing; that part of his own flourishing which is up to him. He consciously endorses what he has become." (Ibid.).

Morality, for Aristotle, is a matter of objective truths: some ways of acting are rich and fulfilling and others are frustrating and degrading. However, it is not enough to be trained to act in the former ways. "A man of practical wisdom has also been encouraged to *reflect,* carefully and sensitively, on what he has been taught, test it against his own experience in the circumstances of his life, and, in freely making it his own, to express his own dignity and integrity." (Ibid.)

Autonomy requires that people reflect, if only from time to time, on the influences of their culture and society and attempt to see which are the expression of their unique character and which are not.

People are creatures with a will and therefore the capacity to deliberate. This gives them the chance of shaping their own lives and 'developing a character'.

The promotion of autonomy as an educational ideal does not necessarily undermine morality in any sense, therefore. Nor does it necessarily mean that we are bound to adopt any particular brand of morality, as Ward suggests.

If socially responsible autonomy is valued as a major aim for education, young people will grow to maturity, trained to deliberate on their experience and to make independent judgements about the many complex moral and political issues which are part of our pluralist societies. Amongst other things, they will be taught critically to evaluate and, if necessary, to challenge and combat stereotypes, respecting other people's sexualities as an expression of diversity, and in some cases, free choice.

As part of this process of critical evaluation and in the light of our earlier discussion, in the introduction, of 'the heterosexual presumption' (Epstein, 1994), it is vitally important that all citizens come to understand the many complex ways in which heterosexuality is often promoted to the detriment of lesbian and gay sexualities.

On another level, citizens have the right to *make their sexualities their own,* in much the same way as we all strive to make moral principles our own. In order to facilitate this, it is essential that they are allowed critically to assess the attitudes and values society holds in relation to their sexualities.

Within this context, heterosexual students should be encouraged to grow in knowledge and understanding of themselves and their prospective partners. It is particularly important for men critically to examine the ways in which they relate to women and to appreciate some of the unequal power relations that exist within such relationships, often preventing women from exercising freedom of thought, choice and action. It is also important for both women and men to critically evaluate *heterosexism* as a power which harms heterosexuals, lesbians and gays alike.

Similarly, lesbian and gay students should be encouraged to grow in knowledge and understanding of heterosexualities. They should also acknowledge the realities of sexism and develop a deeper awareness of themselves and their sexualities. In addition, they should examine the ways they are perceived by society. They must develop a realistic and critical appraisal of the heterosexist and homophobic stereotypes and prejudices that abound in society so that they are well prepared to take their place as citizens within the wider democratic community.

Of course, there is a danger that in helping young lesbians and gays to understand our homophobic society we may undermine their own self-respect and self-esteem, inculcating a reluctance to participate fraternally with their fellow citizens in the wider democratic community. This can be avoided if they are supported within the lesbian and gay communities. It is important for them to meet other lesbian and gay youth and to network with older lesbians and gays so that they can have role models to help and support them.

In Britain, wide-ranging and radical law reform is necessary in order to make this possible. There must be an equal age of consent for heterosexuals and homosexuals so that the enormous pressures young lesbians and gays face in relation to their first sexual encounters are minimised. It is also vital that the law positively supports lesbian and gay teachers in revealing themselves within their educational institutions so that they can support and encourage the lesbian and gay students they work with. As I shall argue later in chapter four, this means the repeal of section 28 and the withdrawal of the government circulars which support it.

Psychological conditions necessary for the exercise o f autonomy.

Strike (1982, pt. I) outlines three components which make up the concept of autonomy. People who are not mentally ill or otherwise disordered have two important rights that must be safeguarded if personal autonomy is to be safeguarded and nurtured.

1. The right of self-determination in those areas of life that are properly left to the individual's discretion.

2. The right to participate in collective choices (political participation).

In order to protect these individual rights, a free society must provide, "...both for the right to participate in collective decisions and the right to protection from encroachment by the society." (p. 67).

Strike bases these rights on the Kantian view of the value of moral agency. Human beings are ends in themselves, moral agents who are responsible for choosing wisely on their own behalf and for acting justly with respect to others. They are morally responsible for what they choose and what they do.

One can imagine an agent who lives within the perfect participatory community which fosters personal autonomy, but who lacks the *psychological characteristics* which enable her or him to function autonomously. Strike identifies one of the components of the concept of autonomy as 'Psychological freedom': the capacity for independent choice, rational judgement and self-control. One must be capable of exercising these faculties and not be impaired by brain damage, mental illness or other disorders.

R. Dearden (S.C. Brown, 1975, Ch. 1) outlines the sort of psychological characteristics an autonomous person should have, and in doing so, complements and extends Strike's analysis of psychological freedom. These include:

(1) Wondering and asking with a sense of the right to ask what the justification is for various things which it would be quite natural to take for granted.

(2) Refusing agreement or compliance with what others put to one when this seems critically unacceptable.

(3) Defining what one really wants or what is really in one's interests, as opposed to what may be conventionally so regarded.

(4) Conceiving of goals, policies and plans of one's own, and forming purposes and intentions of one's own independently of any pressure to do so from others.

(5) Choosing among alternatives in ways which could exhibit that choice as the deliberate outcome of one's own ideas or purposes.

(6) Forming one's own opinion on a variety of topics that interest one.

(7) Governing one's actions and attitudes in the light of the previous sorts of activity.

Dearden concludes, "At the centre of these activities, and common to them all, is the forming of one's own independent judgement...Advice may be sought, persuasion may be listened to, authoritative utterance may be heard, yet there remains the person's own mind to be made up on whether s/he will agree or disagree or comply, or whether s/he will reject or resist." (Op. cit., p. 7).

It is possible for someone to lack capacities or virtues such as courage, not because they are mentally damaged or ill, but because of the sort of person they are. They may have very low self-esteem or lack the courage of their convictions. Such people have been pejoratively labelled as having 'low moral fibre', a vague term which is meant to signify a kind of moral cowardice. Unless one has some degree of courage, it is hard to see how one could manage to act autonomously in very difficult circumstances. Take, for example, the citizen living within a dictatorship who feels strongly that she should speak out against some injustice, but who fails to act due to lack of courage.

Justin Oakley (1992) points to other possible deficiencies of character which could seriously affect a person's ability to function as a moral agent. In the context of our present discussion, a person who lacks care, compassion, sympathy and concern, for example, will not only fail to be affected by others' plight, but will be likely to view personal autonomy in an entirely selfish manner, taking little account of the need for social responsibility.

This has important implications for education. The character traits I have briefly outlined are important necessary conditions for the exercise of socially responsible autonomy. I have already acknowledged that they are also necessary conditions for the flourishing of participatory democracy itself. They can be supported, reinforced and nurtured by an education which encourages the exercise of such virtues. I shall develop these claims in the next chapter.

Socially responsible personal autonomy.

The exercise of personal autonomy within a democratic context is of a totally different character to the exercise of personal autonomy per se. Within democratic communities, the right of individuals to exercise personal autonomy is not absolute or unqualified. In this context, autonomy must be exercised with a sense of *social responsibility.* Autonomy does not involve the right to do whatever we please. What we do affects others. People must be free to exercise personal choices and decisions, but the rights of all people to be treated equally and to be free to exercise such personal choices and decisions must also be protected.

This protection of people's freedoms will inevitably, even paradoxically, mean that someone's freedom is going to be compromised or abandoned in favour of someone else's. It may well be that, on some occasions, the collective rights of others in the community will take precedence over the individual's right to exercise autonomy. There will be occasions when people freely choose to curtail or deny their personal autonomy for the good of society. The state has an important role to play in ensuring that everyone has the right to equality of treatment and to exercise their freedom of thought, expression, belief and action, provided they limit, as far as possible, harm to others and respect others' autonomy.

Socially responsible personal autonomy requires a certain sort of society for its growth and development. Society should provide the kind of education needed to train and encourage students in the personal or psychological skills and virtues necessary in order for autonomy to flourish.

This can be achieved through studying the subjects on offer within the fairly broadly based school and college curricula and through the many other educational activities and experiences which take place within the informal curricula of such institutions.

Good citizens are independent learners and thinkers, unlikely to succumb to undue state interference or control. This is also the hallmark of good students. Education systems should be designed in such a way as to recognise and develop people's personal autonomy. Cramming or rote learning do not succeed in doing this. Thus, the development of personal autonomy, exercised in a socially responsible manner, with due regard to one's fellow citizens and their rights, should be seen as a major aim for education within any democratic state.

In addition to developing the content of and approaches to education, we must also maximise opportunities for the responsible exercise of autonomy by examining *obstacles to its exercise* within our educational institutions. We should start (using Lindley's model) by examining the ways in which people are or become heteronomous (Lindley, 1986).

We can combat such heteronomy in two ways: (i) by ensuring that discriminatory processes, attitudes and structures in education which militate against the responsible use of personal autonomy are countered in the ways outlined in chapter seven, (ii) by educating children in those skills and virtues which will encourage critical enquiry as well as the growth and development of personal autonomy.

If this kind of socially responsible personal autonomy is seen as a key aim for education, the scene is set for free, wide-ranging enquiry which should include, amongst a whole variety of other things, lesbian and gay issues. The ideal of education for autonomy is not simply a well established, popular liberal educational ideal, but an essential pre-requisite for radical political change. Creating a democratic society where lesbians and gays can make their sexualities their own and disclose themselves freely is the only effective means of ensuring that they achieve full participation as citizens. It is also an important means of ensuring that the

democratic state is based on genuinely participatory ideals. Thus, the promotion of autonomy for lesbians and gays and other oppressed peoples is a matter of fundamental importance for the democratic community as a whole.

The wider social conditions necessary for the effective and responsible exercise of personal autonomy are the same as those required for the establishment of participatory democracy: a basic minimum of welfare provision, equality of educational opportunities, freedom of thought and expression, protection by the law, participation in the control of power at all levels.

These social conditions are necessary in order to ensure at least some measure of equality among citizens within participatory democracies so that they can be enabled to participate as fully as possible and on relatively equal terms with others in the democratic community.

The right kind of social conditions ensure that citizens are not prevented from exercising their individual freedom because of external restraints beyond their control such as extreme lack of resources (in terms of money, welfare provision, educational opportunity) or repressive laws, etc. In this way, society becomes the guarantor of personal autonomy.

Joseph Raz (1990) argues that the provision of *a sufficient range of options* in life is necessary if personal autonomy is to be exercised, and Ross Poole (R.P., 1975) cites Hegel's belief that, "...it is a necessary condition of my being free that I live in a certain form of community." (Op. cit., p.11). It is clearly possible for a person to be autonomous, but lack the necessary freedom to exercise it because of imprisonment, military conscription or state control of various kinds. There is, then, an important relationship between the kind of community or society in which one lives and the extent to which one can exercise autonomy effectively. I shall argue that a community built on the principles of participatory democracy is the best means of supporting socially responsible personal autonomy. I begin by examining the kind of elite democracies which are prevalent throughout the world today in order to illustrate, by contrast, the kind of participatory democracy I wish to advocate.

Macpherson (1977) analyses the roots of our present elitist democracies. Liberal democrats of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sought to fit a democratic structure onto the class divided society in which they lived. They devised their systems in such a way as to ensure that the principle of 'one person one vote' would not endanger property held privately or the continuance of class divided societies. Bentham and James Mill based their theories on two beliefs:

Firstly, the belief (also shared by J.S. Mill) that all people want to maximise their own good and happiness and are interested in maintaining the sanctity of private property. "The institution of property, when limited to its essential elements, consists in the recognition, in each person, of a right to the exclusive disposal of what he or she has produced by their own exertions, or received either by gift or by fair agreement, without force or fraud, from those who produced it. The foundation of the whole is the right of producers to what they themselves have produced." (The Principles of Political Economy., bk. II, Ch. 2, sect. 1, p. 215).

Secondly, their observations of the lower classes which led them to believe in the habitual deference of the lower to the higher classes. "Our opinion, therefore, is that the business of government is properly the business of the rich, and that they will always obtain it, either by bad means, or good. If they obtain it by bad means, the government is bad. If they obtain it by good means, the government is sure to be good..." (James Mill, 1830).

The main tenet of Utilitarianism is 'The greatest happiness of the greatest number.' In counting happiness, each individual should count as one. It is also believed that each individual seeks to maximise their own pleasure as a matter of fact. Therefore, a rigid system of law and government is necessary in order to control this situation.

The political requirement is a democratic franchise, secret ballots for leaders, frequent elections and freedom of the press. Bentham was not happy with the democratic franchise, but he was pushed to it by his utilitarian principle and his view of the intrinsic selfishness of human nature. The democratic process now becomes protective. It ensures that egoists act altruistically by ensuring

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that political leaders put forward policies which have the interests of the community at heart. If such policies do not meet with the approval of the general populace, they (along with their proponents) can be rejected by them. This was the first modern model of democracy.

J.S. Mill saw democracy as a means of self-development and expressed optimism that the working class would improve itself. He did not accept existing capitalist society unreservedly as Bentham and James Mill had done. Society need not be a collection of competing and conflicting self-interested consumers. The Greatest Happiness aggregate was obtained by permitting and encouraging individuals to develop themselves. This made them capable of higher pleasures and he believed this would increase the aggregate of pleasure in quantity and quality.

J.S. Mill was not a full egalitarian. His political system allowed different numbers of votes to people of different occupations, arguing that some would be more competent to judge complex political issues than others. Further, Parliament itself would not initiate legislation. It would simply approve, reject or send back for reconsideration, legislative proposals from an expert, elected commission.

In his book, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (1942), Schumpeter attacks democratic systems because they are concerned with ends. Democracy is rather a political method, a kind of political arrangement for arriving at political (legislative and administrative) decisions.

Schumpeter used an economic model to illustrate how he thought democracy should operate. The competition for leadership is the main feature. Voters (like consumers) choose between the policies (products) offered by competing political entrepreneurs and parties. They regulate the competition, just as trade associations do in the economic sphere. Thus, parties act to maximise votes (profits) and voters act to maximise their own utility. The voter becomes a kind of consumer, paying for the policies of her or his choice with votes.

There are many problems associated with Schumpeter's use of the economic model of democracy:

(1) Macpherson (1977) notes that not all markets are necessarily democratic. In the democratic as well as in the economic sphere, other forces come into play.

(2) The analogy of votes (political purchasing power) to money highlights another flaw: in a society of inequality of wealth like ours, one voter's influence is not the same as another's. My influence is not the same as a multi-millionaire's, since she or he has vastly more political power than I. For example, it is well known that in Western democracies, the wealthy support political campaigns economically in return for political 'favours' if the party concerned comes to power. The wealthy also fund lobbying organisations to promote their interests with elected representatives.

(3) Schumpeter's followers subsequently claimed that his theory was purely explanatory, not recommendatory or normative, but this is not the case, for central to his theory is a belief that the citizen must act rationally (in regard to voting patterns, etc.) and that self-interest motivates human behaviour and is the goal of individual action.

(4) The theory's basic assumption about the quality of the electorate's political knowledge tends to undercut its own effectiveness. If citizens are so unreliable in these areas, why suppose that they will be any better when it comes to electing leaders?

It is impossible to separate competence in selecting leaders from competence in selecting policies. A precondition of judging leaders is that we judge their plans for achieving certain objectives. Leaders are not chosen in a moral, political and social vacuum.

(5) Most importantly, there is little or no place, within this model, for the individual with an independent, autonomous set of demands, since the 'demand schedule' is dictated by the suppliers (ruling elites).

Schumpeter's theory is a fairly accurate empirical description of Western democracy and how it operates, but it does not allow for free and effective participation and is not, in this sense, truly democratic. Macpherson observes that, "...a system of competing elites with a low level of citizen participation is required in an unequal society." (Wringe, 1984).

Berelson, in his book Voting, presents a functionalist view very different from Schumpeter's, but with the same aim. He lists the qualities and attitudes that democracies require of the average citizen (interest and participation in political affairs). He notes that the average citizen does not possess these.

He sets out the conditions necessary for democracy to survive: (i) intensity of conflict must be limited, (ii) the rate of change restrained, (iii) social and economic stability maintained, (iv) a pluralist social organisation and basic consensus must exist.

The heterogeneity found in people's attitudes and behaviour in our society are desirable. Citizens all have different qualities and attitudes, but to control this situation we need to cushion the shock of disagreement, adjustment and change which might result if all had an equal say in the democratic process. We do this by ensuring limited *participation.*

In the end, Berelson is willing to sacrifice a system of free and effective participatory democracy for the sake of 'stability'.

In an early work, R.A. Dahl in, A Preface to Democratic Theory (1956), puts forward an elitist model of democracy, which he later radically changed to something more akin to a participatory model (Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy, 1982, discussed later in this chapter).

In his earlier work he concludes that the majority rarely rules. Democracy is characterised by the rule of minorities. A system of periodic elections and competition between parties may not result in majority rule, but it does vastly increase the size, number and variety of minorities whose preferences must be taken into consideration by leaders making policy decisions. Dahl thinks that

the main influence citizens should have within the democratic process is in the election of leaders. For Dahl, political equality is universal suffrage (one person one vote). Officials must listen to various groups and expect to suffer if they do not placate any particular group.

There are two processes which lead to minorities having some influence in politics: (i) the electoral process. Elections cannot ensure that the preferences of the majority in terms of policy are successful. Competing parties may try to form a majority by adapting their policies in response to the wishes of some intense minorities. Where the majority are indifferent or apathetic, a vote-winning strategy for policies will dictate preference to the wishes of the intense minority. (ii) The activities of pressure groups acting on governments and bureaucracies. All active and legitimate groups can make themselves known and heard at some stage in the process of decision making.

Far from diminishing equality by allowing the minority to overrule the majority, Dahl claims that these processes really restore equality by allowing individuals to affect decisions which are important to them, even if they are a minority.

Dahl is too Utopian in his view of society. He fails to take into account socio-economic and other inequalities which Marxist theorists like Macpherson point to. Only minorities who are highly motivated and highly skilled and educated or who are wealthy or have access to wealth succeed in making any impression on the leaders. Macpherson points out that once a group has gone to the immense effort of organising itself (in terms of finance, personnel, time and energy, etc.) it might well remain in existence for good or ill, perhaps influencing decisions which only marginally affect all its members. This is the case in Western societies where wealthy elites still have a massive impact on social policy and government because of their immense influence and power in the financial sector.

On 19 October, 1994 in Britain, the Egyptian owner of Harrods, Mohamed al-Fayed, claimed he had given the Tories £250,000 and got nothing for his money, and had paid Tory ministers to put down

Parliamentary questions on his behalf when they were back-benchers. He claimed he knew a lot more about widespread corruption and wanted the British people to know about it. A junior Minister (Tim Smith, M.P. for Beaconsfield) later resigned after admitting accepting £2000 to table a question.

One should also take into account the existence of Parliamentary lobbying companies. For example, Ian Greer Associates promotes the interests of 60 corporate clients and has an estimated turnover of £3m a year, employing over 50 staff (The Sunday Times, 23 October, 1994, p. 15). al-Fayed allegedly paid Greer a total of £130,000 over four years for "parliamentary services" (Ibid.).

A further indication of the close links between powerful companies and the British Parliament can be gained by looking at the large number of consultancies held by Members of Parliament. For example, David Mellor (Putney) has 10 (income: £100,000), Patrick Nicholls (Teighbridge) 9 (income: £90,000), Sir Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-mare) 6 (income: £60,000), Sir Donald Thompson (Calder Valley), 5 (income: £50,000). (Ibid.). Hundreds of other examples can be culled from the Register of Members' Interests.

Within the context of a society where the rich have a powerful influence on government, there is also a problem of permanently excluded minorities such as the disabled, ethnic minorities, lesbians and gays. In such cases it is almost impossible to avoid majority tyranny.

These are common features shared by all elitist theories:

(1) They are empirical theories, grounded in present-day political attitudes and behaviour as revealed by sociological investigation.

(2) The democratic element in the theories is the competition between leaders of elites for votes at periodic, free elections, through which *some* minorities have control over their leaders.

(3) Participation is reduced to the choosing of decision-makers by means of voting for them. The function of participation is protective, it safeguards the individual from the arbitrary decisions of elected leaders.

(4) The conditions necessary for the stability of the democratic system are: (i) The level of participation by the majority should be kept to the minimum necessary to keep democracy working because non-democratic attitudes are common among the masses. (ii) Social training or socialisation in the democratic method.

The case for participatory democracy.

The word 'democracy' comes from the Greek words 'demos' (the people) and 'kratos' (power). This suggests that democracy is a form of government in which *power resides with the people.* The form that this exercise of power takes is diverse, as we have seen from our examination of elitist democracies. An important question is: to what extent should the people participate in democratic forms of government?

It is important to say something in practical terms about the kind of participatory democracy I am arguing for. Anne Phillips (1991) notes that the only really effective way of guaranteeing a perfect reflection or representation of society would be if all citizens met in national assembly. Clearly, in very large societies such as ours, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to allow citizens full participation in every aspect of local and national life.

There is also the problem of representation. For example, within the context of the British system, it would be ridiculous for women M.P.s to claim that they only represented women, black M.P.s only black people, etc. Further, the effort to gain more women representatives or representatives from ethnic minorities will not guarantee that women are represented *as women* or that ethnic minorities are represented *as ethnic minorities.* These groups are not homogenous, they are composed of many different individuals and groups of people, each with their own beliefs, cultures and political agendas, etc. It is therefore often very difficult to define these groups' shared interests.

Phillips sees Iris M. Young's idea of a rainbow coalition as providing an answer to the seemingly intractable problem of representation. Young does not focus on the degree to which the sexual (or other) composition of a society is reflected in the legislature. She argues

that oppressed groups should have *a guaranteed role in policy formation.*

"Such group representation implies institutional mechanisms and public resources supporting three activities: (1) self-organisation of group members so that they gain a sense of collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of their society; (2) voicing a group's analysis of how social policy proposals affect them, and generating policy proposals themselves in institutional contexts where decision makers are obliged to show that they have taken these perspectives into consideration; (3) having veto power regarding specific policies that affect a group directly, for example, reproductive rights for women, or the use of reservation lands for Native Americans." (I. Young, Ethics, 1989, pp. 261-262).

It is difficult to envisage how such a power of veto would work in practice. However, Young's idea that oppressed groups should be encouraged by government support (in terms of resources and practical encouragement) to reflect collectively on the nature of their oppression and the strategies needed to oppose it and to formulate or criticise policy proposals is very attractive.

In practical terms, I believe that Britain should retain its present representative structures of local and national government with the proviso that we examine them critically and open them up to a genuine cross-section of the pluralist democratic community. The British Parliament itself is not truly representative of all sections of the democratic community in terms of race, sexuality, disability and gender, for example.

Like Iris Young, I would argue that citizens must be allowed to participate more fully and effectively in the formulation of policies at national and local levels. It is necessary to ensure that all forms of representative assembly (including parliamentary and government committees of various kinds) are required to consult and to listen to the views expressed by our diverse cultures and communities. It is also important that proposed government policies are communicated to the populace as a whole in terms that are easily understood by them.

This task can be made much easier by the mass media. However, before the mass media can be used constructively we must endeavour to counteract the damaging effects they sometimes have. It is unfortunate that television, radio and newspapers are often used to propagate views which militate against the kind of pluralist participatory democracy espoused by this thesis.

If the mass media do not rid themselves of ignorance and prejudice, they cannot be trusted to convey important government policy in an unbiased and objective manner. In practical terms, it is therefore important to monitor and if necessary regulate the mass media to ensure that they do not encourage discrimination or oppression. The media must demonstrate their commitment to objectivity and to the ideals of participatory government.

Finally, the more widespread use of referenda is important where matters of national interest are at stake.

Within education, policy decisions should be formulated by representative assemblies which include a cross-section of groups within the democratic community: educational experts, teachers, parents, students, politicians and ordinary citizens. *Important educational decisions should not be left in the hands of any one of these groups.*

I shall argue in detail in chapters four and five that there can be no place, within this democratic context, for according parents a privileged role when it comes to making important educational decisions. Of course, parents must be allowed to have their say, but their influence should not be allowed to exceed that of other citizens involved in the processes of consultation and discussion. In the light of this, the undue influence accorded to 'the family' by the present British government through its laws and pronouncements (discussed in chapter four) is unjustified.

The combined knowledge, expertise and experience of a broad section of the democratic community should be utilised when important educational decisions are taken at national and local levels. This is the only effective way ensuring that such decisions are wise, just and meet the needs of the particular communities concerned.

The case for participatory democracy rests on two important claims:

1. Democracy based on participatory principles is the best means of ensuring that socially responsible autonomy is supported and encouraged.

Democracy is self-rule, rather than rule by others. Human beings are capable, in principle, of deciding how to live their own lives. They must be allowed to reflect on their experience and to make rational and moral choices and judgements under their own, not someone else's, control. Participatory democracy is the best means of generating the conditions which enable autonomous people to flourish. Such democracy depends upon the personal autonomy of its citizens for its survival. A system of government in which people are not truly free to deliberate, choose and act is not a democracy.

The democratic state must therefore strive to maximise the opportunities available for the creative processes of reflection, decision-making and independent judgement. However, the maximisation of autonomy should not be promoted above all else. Autonomy is a qualified notion. In a system of participatory democracy, we do not have the freedom simply to do as we please.

Keith Graham (1988) outlines an issue of major importance for any discussion of democracy. Decisions on laws, etc. are made if they attract the support of a majority of some sort. The problem then arises: if people agree to obey the state in all cases, they lose autonomy. However, if they decide autonomously whether or not to obey the state in each case, the state loses its authority.

Graham's answer to this problem is that sometimes it is rational to forfeit autonomy. In the end, forfeiture of autonomy is to be minimised rather than avoided altogether and at all costs. At the conclusion of a debate, say, in a representative assembly, someone's autonomy will be thwarted, it is simply a question of whose.

In general, majority voting in representative assemblies ensures that the exercise of autonomy is maximised. We may freely choose the democratic process, but this does not necessarily guarantee the individual's freedom of choice in every subsequent situation.

2. Participatory democracy is based on the principles of equality and respect for persons.

Because participatory democracy recognises the equality of all citizens and is based on the principle of respect for persons, it is of crucial importance in supporting social and political change which will free groups such as heterosexual women, the disabled, ethnic minorities, lesbians and gays from discrimination and oppression.

Within a participatory setting, all citizens should be treated equally unless there are good reasons for not doing so. Colin Wringe feels that the right to be governed democratically rather than in any other way rests on "...the absence of any convincing argument why any person should consider himself the natural subordinate of, or less important than, any other." (Wringe, 1984, p. 22).

Because participatory democracies recognise the equality of citizens, they also recognise the necessity of according people significant roles in the decision-making process. They differ from other forms of government in that they seek the *effective* participation of all citizens in government at local and national levels.

To have no active interest in or influence over important decisions that affect your life is to be alienated from yourself as a rational, autonomous agent. Keith Graham (1988) characterises participatory democracy as essentially a conception of democracy with no fundamental dichotomy between active leaders and a passive, inert mass. Consequently, participatory democracy tackles a major problem thrown up by the elitist model: the apathy, ignorance and powerlessness of ordinary citizens.

The argument for participatory democracy is further strengthened by the following general considerations: (i) Karl Popper acknowledges that the modern world is a very complex place. We learn about the world by trial and error, by hypothesis and refutation. Feedback on our progress is essential if we are to succeed. Participatory democracy has the advantage of using the combined knowledge and judgement of most if not all the citizens involved. The dictator can encourage such feedback, but she or he can ultimately reject it if

necessary. (ii) Participatory forms of government encourage dissatisfied citizens to express their disquiet and also ensure that the government is sensitive to the views of the electorate. (iii) People feel more committed to decisions they have helped to make. (iv) A government based on participatory principles rules more justly because criticisms of policies and leaders are an integral part of its modus operandi. (v) Participatory democracy provides the best conditions for wide-ranging and informed debate, including lesbian and gay issues.

The social conditions necessary for participatory democracy.

What social conditions are necessary if this kind of participatory democracy is to flourish? J. Lively (1987) highlights the importance of *political equality* and notes that universal suffrage and the adoption of appropriate decision-making rules are not sufficient to attain this. A whole variety of psychological, social and economic considerations are also relevant. Political equality depends on other sorts of equality.

R.A. Dahl in <u>Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracies</u> (1982) abandons his earlier elitist position and puts forward a participatory model. He claims here that an ideal democratic process would satisfy five criteria. Each of these criteria presuppose a set of enabling social conditions to ensure that citizens exercise real power:

1. Equality in voting, "In making collective, binding decisions, the expressed preference of each citizen...ought to be taken into account in determining the final solution." (op. cit., p. 6).

2. Effective participation: the citizen should have control of the process of decision making at all stages, especially in setting the agenda and in expressing preferences with regard to the final outcome.

3. Enlightened understanding: each citizen should have "...adequate and equal opportunities for arriving at his or her considered judgement as to the most desirable outcome." (Ibid.).

4. Final control over the agenda: "The body of citizens (the demos) should have the exclusive authority to determine what matters are or are not to be decided by means of processes that satisfy the first three criteria (put in another way, provided the demos does not alienate its final control over the agenda it may delegate authority to others who may make decisions by non democratic processes.)." (Ibid.).

5. Inclusion: the "The demos ought to include all adults subject to its laws, except transients." (Ibid.).

Patricia White (1983) complements and extends Dahl's criteria by citing a list of basic rights which every citizen must possess if democracy is to flourish. These should be part of a constitutional framework. I have listed them differently, but they include:

(a) Freedom of thought and expression.

(b) Protection by the rule of law.

(c) Participation in the control of power at all levels.

(d) A basic minimum of welfare provision.

(e) Opportunities: the right to education and the sampling of different ways of life.

(f) White also includes in her list of rights, non-discrimination on grounds of sex.

With regard to rights (e) and (f), I would add that the right to education and the sampling of different ways of life should also involve an appreciation of different *views* of life and that people should not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex *or sexual orientation.*

The basic rights identified by White are intended to specify the general conditions required for a flourishing democratic polity, but they are equally important in ensuring effective democratic participation.

Freedom of thought and expression and protection by the rule of law are important. Without such basic guarantees, political participation will be severely restricted and perhaps prevented altogether. Only the right to control of power at all levels ensures that such participation will be comprehensive and effective.

Basic welfare provision is important. We must recognise that a person's participation in democratic government at various levels may well be adversely affected by their economic circumstances. Many people are understandably pre-occupied with money matters, trying to ensure that they and their families are provided for. Compared to this central concern, political participation may take second place or may not be considered at all.

We must also examine the ways in which wealthy minorities influence society in a way which is out of all proportion to their number.

Safeguarding these basic rights ensures that participatory democracy is given the chance to grow and prosper, but such rights are inadequate, of themselves, to promote the continuation and survival of participatory democracy.

The most important right which safeguards the conditions necessary for effective participatory democracy is the right to equality of opportunity. In this context, Marxist analyses alone are inadequate because there are inequalities in our society which cannot easily be reduced to a simple class divide. These include discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability and sexual orientation. Many people are excluded from full participation because they are oppressed by society and state.

On one level, this does not seem to be the case, for they all have the vote and to this extent they are equal to other citizens, but on another more fundamental level, they do not have equal political rights. Many ethnic minorities are excluded from work due to racial prejudice. They are also often limited in educational opportunity and achievement.

Heterosexual women suffer discrimination in these areas too, as do lesbians, gays and the disabled. The really powerful and influential elites in our societies are composed, to a large extent, of men. The very machinery of 'democratic' government is riddled with inequality. For example, it is startling to appreciate how few women in Britain hold senior positions within local or national government as Counsellors, M.P.s, Cabinet Ministers, Civil Servants, etc.

Anne Phillips (1991) notes that regardless of when women gained the right to vote and stand in elections (1902 in Australia, 1920 in the U.S.A., 1928 in the U.K. and 1971 in Switzerland), women's participation in national government in all these countries has remained between 2-10%. In the case of the U.S.A. and in Britain, this figure is approximately 5%.

Figures are similar for local politics, "By 1983, women representatives had captured 18% of the seats in the West German councils; 14% on the French conseils; 14.4% on county councils in England and Wales; 11.1% on regional councils in Scotland; and 7.9% on district councils in Northern Ireland (Lovenduski 1986). By 1985, women made up 14% of the membership of municipal and township governing bodies in the United States, but had been elected Mayor in only four of the hundred largest cities (Randall 1987: 105)." (p. 60).

In 1991 there were only 43 women out of 650 members of the British Parliament, only 28 women out of 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The majority of lesbians and gays who hold such senior national and local government positions do so because they do not reveal their sexualities publicly. For this reason we cannot be certain what percentage of such senior positions are held by 'closeted' lesbians and gays.

Oppressed people do not usually have the money or the resources with which to make their voices heard. If governments are serious about allowing the full participation of citizens, they must remedy this situation by improving people's socio-economic circumstances and providing equality of opportunity in education and employment.

The participation of the oppressed.

An aspiring democracy built on participatory principles is concerned to hear the views of all its citizens, including the oppressed. This thesis is not simply a plea for the recognition of oppressed peoples, it provides a challenge to participatory democracy itself. The very existence, survival and growth of participatory democracy depends on the full recognition and participation of all people. Therefore, combating oppression of various kinds which limits or prevents such participation is the task of all citizens.

In order to win social justice for excluded and oppressed minorities and encourage their greater participation, we must critically examine oppressive social and institutional structures and practices. I shall argue in chapter five that this process of examination and evaluation involves, in part, the scrutiny of our educational establishments, their curricula and the way they are structured in order to ensure equality of treatment and freedom from unjust discrimination for all citizens.

How, then, are we effectively to bring about social justice for the oppressed and what precise form should their participation take? Iris M. Young (1990) provides us with a valuable response. Young's essential point is that social justice requires more than the "melting away" of the differences that oppressed groups exhibit. It requires that society promotes *recognition of and respect for group differences without oppression.*

Young sees oppression as a complex concept which can be broken down into five categories: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.

Oppression is defined as, "...the exercise of tyranny by a ruling group", but Young thinks that the many political movements of the 1960s and 70s (centred on women, people of colour, lesbians and gays) helped to enlarge this meaning to include "...the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society." (Op. cit., p. 41). Using Foucauldian analyses, she sees oppression as structural: it is not simply the

result of certain individuals' behaviour. Rather, "...its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules." (p. 41).

Oppression, in this structural sense, refers to the injustices inflicted on some groups because of the often unconscious assumptions and reactions of ordinary well-meaning people. These take place in the context of ordinary social interaction, but also within the media, cultural stereotypes and bureaucracies encountered in everyday life, what Foucault calls "the technologies of power" (discussed in the Introduction).

Young shares Foucault's belief that the elimination of such structural oppression is not easy because it is systematically reproduced in economic, political and cultural institutions. We cannot rid ourselves of the powers of oppression simply by deposing rulers or changing laws.

One aspect of oppression discussed by Young is *marginalisation.* "Marginals are people the system of labour cannot or will not use." (Op. cit., p. 53). She sees this as the most dangerous form of oppression. "A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination." (Ibid.). Marginalisation can occur because of sex, age, disability, or presumably, in cases where it is made visible or explicit, sexual orientation.

Young goes on to examine the category of *powerlessness.* "The powerless are those who lack authority or power...those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them...the powerless lack the authority, status, and sense of self that professionals tend to have." (Op. cit., 56-57).

Among the privileges enjoyed by professionals is 'respectability'. "To treat people with respect is to be prepared to listen to what they have to say or to do what they request because they have some authority, expertise or influence." (p. 57). In reality, oppressed people such as women and people of colour have to prove or 'work

for' their respectability. This also includes lesbians and gays who have 'come out', though Young does not include the latter in her analysis at this point.

Young goes on to look at the concept of *cultural imperialism*. "To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other." (Op. cit., pp. 58-59). Cultural imperialism takes place in societies where the dominant group's experience and culture is universalised as 'the norm'. "The dominant groups project their own experience as representative of humanity as such." (p. 59). As Foucauldian analysis points out: within contemporary societies, anything which does not approximate to the dominant culture or which differs markedly from it is deemed to be deviant, perverse, abnormal and, in some cases, dangerous.

Epstein's (1994) concept of 'the heterosexual presumption' can be used to extend Young's analysis at this point. The heterosexual presumption is, in Young's terms, a kind of sexual imperialism: the assumption that heterosexuality is the only valid or 'normal' form of sexuality and that its existence is universal (except in rare cases of perversion or abnormality).

Young completes her analysis with a discussion of *violence*. She sees violence as "...a phenomenon of social injustice" (p. 62) and not simply a moral wrong because it is systematised as a social practice. Members of some oppressed groups live with the fear of random, unprovoked attacks on their person or property, which have no motive other than to psychologically or physically hurt or harm. What makes violence systematic is the fact that it is directed against the individuals composing a given group simply because they are members of that group. Members of oppressed groups experience not only violence, but the *threat* of violence; they feel *liable* to violent attacks.

Young's analysis is a sober reminder of the complexity and difficulty of the task of enabling oppressed minorities such as lesbians and gays fully to participate in society. Such participation requires a revolution in the way that many oppressed minorities are perceived,

valued and treated by the dominant culture.

A central argument of this thesis is that the pre-requisite for this kind of social change is a democratic education system which will enable students fully to understand such oppressed minorities and, at the same time, come to terms with the many complex ways in which the dominant culture has asserted itself to their detriment. I shall argue in chapter four that such an education must also involve 'consciousness raising' so that students can appreciate what is important and valuable in the lives of lesbians and gays. This process of consciousness raising involves either a shift in someone's values, or their perceptions of oppressed peoples, or perhaps the realisation that a value someone is committed to applies in an area they had not realised it did.

A major psychological condition necessary for the establishment and development of participatory democracy is that citizens are taught and nurtured in certain desirable character traits. These include virtues like altruism, respect for persons, fraternity and toleration. Without such virtues, democracy is an ideal, a theory, or worse still, a fiction. It is of fundamental importance that citizens possess these character traits in order for democracy to become a way of life. The importance of these virtues and their place within democratic education systems will now be explored.

CHAPTER 2.

THE DEMOCRATIC PERSONALITY.

Introduction.

F.W. Garforth (1985) provides us with a useful definition of value: "The word "value" is used to indicate that something is regarded as *having worth*, as *attracting choice or preference.* Value is thus the property of being choice worthy and it attaches to objects, like money, cars and books, to states of mind, like happiness or contentment, to modes of behaviour like courtesy, kindness and loyalty, to moral qualities like temperance and chastity, and to innumerable other items of human choice." (Op. cit., p. 55).

I take "virtue" to mean desirable or choice worthy personal qualities or character traits. The concept of virtue is more limited in scope than value, referring to important aspects of the agent's personality.

In the previous chapter, I made two claims about participatory democracy: it provides the best conditions for autonomous flourishing, and it is based on the principles of equality and respect for persons. This is why full and effective participation is valued and encouraged.

This chapter will outline certain key virtues which are the indispensable pre-requisite for establishing and maintaining the existence of democratic communities based on participatory principles. Without such democratic virtues, participatory democracy *as a way of life* could not exist.

R.S. Peters (1981) sees democracy as, "...a way of life in which high value is placed on the development of reason and principles such as freedom, truth-telling, impartiality and respect for persons, which the use of reason in social life presupposes." (p. 37).

Peters sees these values as procedural, by which he means that they influence how social, political and personal life ought to be conducted. However, they do not provide a blue-print for an *ideal* society or indicate what sort of life is worth living. "Indeed, there is a certain sense in which democracy manifests a certain

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scepticism about values in that no single conception of the good for man is acknowledged, and fallibility rather than certainty tends to be emphasised in the realm of truth." (p. 37).

He believes that, "Encouragement for the individual to make something of himself is feasible only in a society in which respect for persons and its offshoot of toleration are widespread. These, together with impartiality and concern for others, are the fundamental principles of the democratic way of life, in which as much as possible is decided by discussion rather than by authoritative fiat." (p. 42).

It is important to add that as well as educating and nurturing citizens in these virtues, we must also encourage the spirit of *independent reflection and judgement*, argued for in the previous chapter, so that people can critically evaluate situations in which the exercise of a given virtue might or might not be appropriate, however fundamental such a virtue might be taken to be.

Education in the virtues.

Is it possible to teach virtues in the first place? Gilbert Ryle (in Dearden, Hirst, Peters, 1975) acknowledges that the acquisition of virtues cannot be a wholly in-born phenomenon. People who are brought up well possess virtues such as frankness, loyalty, honesty, etc. They are evidently not born with such virtues, they have to *learn* them, though, as we shall see, the precise identification of who *teaches* them is far from easy.

Protagoras tells Socrates that learning the virtues is rather like learning to speak in one's mother tongue. In both cases, one acquires knowledge, without formal instruction, from a variety of sources.

There is another parallel between learning the virtues and learning one's mother tongue: nearly everyone knows about general standards of conduct. Sometimes, moral issues are complex and we may need the help of someone of experience and sound judgement to help us make our moral judgements, just as we may occasionally need to consult a dictionary or book of grammar to help us with aspects of language.

Ryle notes some fundamental differences between learning competences and skills and acquiring virtues:

(1) Children may differ enormously in their ability to acquire language, depending on their aptitudes and up-bringing.

(2) A child may be very proficient in her or his mother tongue, but may mis-use this proficiency to tell lies, spread gossip, etc. Ryle concludes that, "...a child can indeed pick up the main techniques of conversational English from the conversation of any English speakers with whom he associates; but this does not suffice for him to acquire standards of conversational conduct." (p. 50).

A person may be taught how to play cards, but this will not teach her or him anything about the desirability or otherwise of cheating. This brings into focus Socrates' question: How, if at all, can virtue be taught?

Ryle's important insight is that acquiring a virtue is not a matter of being well informed about anything or of coming to learn how to do anything. "Indeed conscientiousness does not very comfortably wear the label of 'knowledge' at all, since it is to *be* honourable, not only primarily to be knowledgeable about or efficient at anything..." (p. 54).

Ryle believes that Socrates made the mistake of assuming that the learning of virtue terminates in knowing. However, Ryle points out that, "...the knowing terminates in *being* so-and-so, and only derivatively from this in knowing so-and-so- in an improvement in one's heart and only derivatively from this in an improvement in one's head as well." (Ibid.). A person learns to be honest or not to cheat. Only derivatively does she or he know that honesty is a good thing or realise that cheating is wrong.

Ryle's point is that I may learn something (e.g. another language) and gradually become 'rusty' through lack of practice and may eventually lose the capacity. However, a person who has learned to be considerate, though she may eventually become inconsiderate, will not usually be described as having forgotten how to be considerate or to have become rusty at being considerate. "It is not just

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knowledge that he has lost, whether knowledge *that* or knowledge *how*. It is considerateness that he has lost; he has ceased to be considerate and not just ceased to know, say, some principles about considerateness. His heart has hardened, so it is not reminders or refresher courses that he needs." (p. 55). As we shall see, being virtuous or good has as much to do with being *a certain sort of person* as it has to do with knowing the principles of right and wrong.

Young people learn virtues from diverse sources, including: (a) some of the elders who bring them up: parents, relatives, teachers, etc., (b) people they happen to meet or live among, (c) people they hear about or read about. Most of these people could not be classed as teachers because they are often unaware that anyone is trying to live up to them. They are often unintentional models. Indeed there would be something rather odd if this were not the case, "...in matters of morality, as distinct from techniques, good examples had better not be set with an edifying purpose. For such a would-be improving exhibition of, say, indignation would be an insincere exhibition; the vehemence of the denunciation would be a parent's, a pedagogue's, or a pastor's histrionics." (p. 56).

He concludes by suggesting that we should not ask the question, 'Can virtue be taught?', but rather, 'Can virtue be learned?' Clearly, people can learn virtues, but the manner of their inculcation and learning is diverse and unspecifiable in any detail.

This should not prevent us from recognising the place of the virtues in education. Indeed, it should encourage us to be aware of the many contexts (for example, formal and informal curricula) in which people, particularly the young, learn virtues from their surroundings and their communication with others.

Factors such as the way a school is organised, its aims and ethos, the formal and informal relationships between young people and teachers are just as important, perhaps more important, than the subjects offered within the formal curricula of schools and colleges in contributing to the learning of young people in this area.

Living democracy: the democratic personality.

Participatory democracy as a way of life is constituted by people who possess certain democratic virtues.

There is a parallel between being a good democrat and leading a good life. Justin Oakley (1992) notes that performing good actions is only one aspect of 'living a good life', "...living well perhaps more importantly involves the development of a certain good character as an enduring way of being which underlies and informs it." (p. 39).

Living a good life involves the whole person, emotions as well as intellect. He sees emotion as, "...a complex which involves dynamically related elements of cognition, desire and affectivity." (Op. cit., p. 6).

Bernadette Tobin (J.P.E., 1986) points out that, "...morality is a matter of how one feels and the spirit in which one acts as well as what one thinks."(p. 204). If moral maturity is a matter of becoming *a certain sort of person*, the same is true as far as becoming a mature democrat is concerned.

Is there, then, a suitable kind of personality for democracy? There are dangers in espousing this idea. I do not wish to advocate the brainwashing of citizens so that they conform to a particular kind of democratic norm. On the other hand, one can see that it is important to educate people in the democratic virtues so that they may choose to live fulfilling and happy lives as other-regarding citizens, strengthening and supporting the democratic community.

This dual emphasis on the individual citizen and the community is important. Democratic virtues help the citizen to participate fully and effectively in the life of the community, but they also, at the same time, constitute the very nature of that community. Without the democratic virtues the democratic community would be a utopian fiction. If this point is grasped, the importance of education in these virtues becomes clear.

As I shall argue in chapter six, the formal curriculum of an institution, together with its ethos and principles, strengthened, and to a large extent, defined by its policies and procedures, have a deep

influence on students' personalities.

G. J. Direnzo (Ichilov, 1990) sees personality development as, "...the psychological formulation of the individual in terms of uniquely personal or individuating abilities. Personality may be defined as one's acquired, unique, dynamic, yet relatively enduring system of internal predispositions to behaviour." (p. 26).

Key democratic virtues.

I do not intend to list all the possible virtues which may be useful in supporting and strengthening democratic communities. Such a list would inevitably include virtues not necessarily related to democracies at all. For example, kindness, patience, generosity, courage, initiative and strength of will.

I am highlighting the virtues of respect for persons, reciprocity, fraternity and toleration as the necessary conditions for establishing participatory democracy as a way of life.

Some writers see autonomy itself as a virtue. John Benson is of the opinion that "To be autonomous is to trust one's own powers and to have a disposition to use them, to be able to resist the fear of failure, ridicule or disapproval that threatens to drive one into reliance on the guidance of others...autonomy, like courage- to which it is closely allied- is an essential virtue that everyone needs." (Doyle, 1973, Ch. 8.).

It is unhelpful to see autonomy as a virtue. Certainly, autonomy is supported and helped in its development by desirable character traits or virtues, but if one classifies autonomy itself as a virtue, one is in danger of saying that only the virtuous are autonomous. There seems to be something amiss here because we all know that one can be acting autonomously in a way that harms others. This underlines the need, emphasised in the previous chapter, for education in the *socially responsible* exercise of autonomy, rather than simply 'education for autonomy' per se. Such education requires the inculcation of desirable character traits on which socially responsible autonomous action depends.

Direnzo (Ichilov, 1990) acknowledges the negative side of Western societies: "...dehumanisation and alienation are emerging as distinctive marks of people in Western societies. Such individuals are perceived to have become less individualistic, less autonomous, less inner-oriented, and less innovative. They are correspondingly more other-directed, conforming, sheepish, and essentially chameleon-like, changing appearances at will and taking on the colouring of a variety of social atmospheres as needed." (p. 35).

In order to counteract these negative societal traits, democracies need a social character that is *altruistic*. If people have a sense of social responsibility, they will feel a genuine commitment to the democratic societies in which they live. This is a necessary condition for the establishment and development of such ways of life. John White (O.R.E., 1989) supports this position: "We should freely acknowledge that we are taking a life containing altruism as a baseline; and that as educators, or educators of educators, we want young people to be brought up so that they do too." (pp. 37-38).

This kind of altruism entails the recognition that others are equally agents. It implies the need for *respect for persons* as individuals with purposes of their own and involves the acknowledgement that if human beings are to flourish, they must be allowed freely to choose the particular way of life they wish to live. Within a democratic setting, the fact that I want to live my own sort of life should be linked to an appreciation that others may wish to do likewise and should be allowed to live in peace, provided no harm is caused to others.

Respect for persons is related to fairness and what Rawls calls *the sense of justice*. Rawls supports the widely held view that human beings are essentially social animals who have strong instincts for self-preservation and protection. They also have a deep need for security and this latter need is satisfied through their relationships with the members of the society in which they live. In terms of evolution within species which live in stable societal groups, the ability to comply with fair and co-operative arrangements and to develop the sentiments necessary to support them will be very advantageous. Rawls concludes that, "These conditions guarantee

innumerable occasions when mutual justice consistently adhered to is beneficial to all parties." (Rawls, 1990, p. 503). In this way, justice, "strikes a balance between altruism and the claims of the self and therefore involves a notion of reciprocity." (Op. cit., p. 502).

This sense of justice must be based on the belief that everyone has equal liberty and we must be further assured that, "our claims will not be neglected or overridden for the sake of a larger sum of beliefs, even for the whole society..." (p. 499). Within such a society, individuals will build up real self-esteem and will be inclined more towards altruistic attitudes.

The essential pre-requisite for developing a sense of justice, solid self-esteem and an interest in others' welfare is an equal society. "The improvement in political institutions removes that opposition of interests and the barriers and inequalities that encourage individuals and classes to disregard one another's claims." (p. 502).

A sense of justice and the virtue of respect for persons helps to ensure the survival of democratic communities based on participatory principles. Without respect for persons and a sense of justice, there would be no reason why the needs of others should be taken into account or why their needs and wants should take precedence over mine, especially in situations where these conflict.

It is especially important that citizens appreciate the need to respect oppressed people, including lesbians and gays, and to oppose discrimination and the mis-information that encourages it. Even people who believe homosexuality to be wrong, for moral or religious reasons, should still be interested in preventing the unjust treatment of lesbians and gays or countering inaccurate or misleading information about them. They should, for example, be concerned to correct the fallacy that all lesbians and gays are paedophiles. This kind of opposition to misinformation and discrimination is the necessary condition for genuine debate on these issues, though it is far from sufficient.

Respect for persons involves having the sort of perspective on life which may be summed up crudely by the old adage, 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. This is what Carol Gould (1988)

calls *reciprocity*, which is "...the ability to understand the perspective of the other as equivalent to one's own, and a readiness to act with respect to the other in a way that is equivalent to the other's actions with respect to oneself, as well as to have an expectation that the other will understand and act similarly. Thus, epistemologically, the structure involves a shared understanding by the participants that their actions are reciprocal." (p. 290).

A key feature of reciprocity is reciprocity of perspectives, going beyond the limits of one's own view and allowing the establishment of a *shared point of view*, as well as an explicit understanding of differences in points of view. She illustrates this by reference to the nuclear armaments debate. What is required here is that each side understands each other's need for security and the fear that people have of attack in order to establish common ground for a moratorium on testing and for de-escalation.

Fraternity is also based on respect for persons. It supports and complements reciprocity. It involves feelings of comradeship and togetherness, co-operative attitudes, encouraging a bond between oneself and others; a view of others as equals. This does not imply that one has to be the friend of everyone or even like everyone. One should establish a feeling of co-operativeness, which is not an extension of mere toleration but positively encourages collaboration directed towards common democratic goals, thus creating the essential conditions in which democracy can be established and will flourish.

Michael Fielding (Chitty, 1987) presents fraternity as a regulative principle within which this kind of equality and liberation can flourish in a way which is conducive to democratic communities. This is brought out in the following quotation from Halsey (1981), "Liberty and equality can operate as social principles only within the bounds set by fraternity...They offer the basis for a new fraternity without which both liberty and equality are impoverished..." (pp. 10-12).

Fielding emphasises the importance of liberty, equality and fraternity as fundamental principles of democracy. They are related to each other and "...it is this interconnectedness which gives them

emancipatory potential. Each on its own is only contingently related to democracy and the excesses of each uninformed by the significant presence of the others may lead, for example, to a freedom which favours only those with wealth and power, to an equality which mistakes uniformity for fulfilment, or to a fraternity whose boundaries are narrowly drawn around the disguised template of fascism." (Op. cit., p. 57).

A key feature of fraternal relationships is that they are caring relationships, "...not just for some aspect or part of someone, but for them as a person. They are personal, not functional relationships. Secondly, they are characterised by liberty and equality. Fraternal relations cannot exist if these are absent; without liberty and equality, their growth is temporary or distorted." (Op. cit., p. 61).

Finally, I would single out *toleration* as an important virtue which ensures at least the basic minimum of give-and-take within the pluralist democratic communities of today. At the same time, it implies a recognition that citizens have the right to live as they choose without interference.

Toleration should not be limited to moral judgements or points of view. The tolerant person is someone who is willing and able to listen to any alternative point of view, in for example, moral, political, social, religious and aesthetic contexts. Those who cultivate a tolerant attitude will be less likely to dismiss other points of view or ways of life out of hand. A tolerant person is one who is not naive about the many irresolvable conflicts and disagreements in life, but is able, essentially, *to live with them*. Toleration, with all its intricacies and difficulties, is necessary in order to ensure that human beings flourish in harmony and peace together.

Toleration is clearly not a universally good or desirable principle. One can think of examples where toleration might be disastrous: for example in cases of rape, paedophilia, racism, etc. We must be careful to impose certain limits on toleration, certain constraints of justice.

With regard to lesbian and gay sexualities, people may ask why they should be tolerant of ways of life they find morally or aesthetically distasteful. There are two aspects to my reply: (i) I will argue, in the next chapter, that there are no legitimate moral arguments to suggest that lesbians and gays are intrinsically bad or evil; they are no more or less evil than heterosexuals, (ii) feelings of disgust and distaste are widespread in this area, but the fact that I find something distasteful is not a sufficient reason for banning it or discriminating against it, especially if my disgust and distaste are based on irrational prejudice or misinformation.

This latter point applies equally to feelings of disgust and distaste with regard to people of different ethnic groups, the disabled, and people who are despised for an infinite number of other seemingly trivial and illegitimate reasons: the short, the tall, the large, the freckled, etc. When people display these negative attitudes towards lesbians and gays, they must be challenged within this wider context of the irrational likes and dislikes some people display towards a variety of groups and individuals in society.

I want to identify two aspects of toleration: the individual and the institutional.

On an individual level, it is important that people are encouraged to be tolerant of individuals and groups, their societies, cultures, traditions, ways of life, or sexualities which may not necessarily appeal to them or of which they may disapprove for other reasons, providing that such people do not pose a threat to the democratic community. Toleration at this level, then, involves the inculcation of tolerant attitudes, values and behaviours.

On an institutional level, toleration by the state (through its laws and institutions) provides protection for individuals or groups who might otherwise be interfered with, oppressed or discriminated against. Here, toleration ensures non-interference by the state and its citizens. This is what Isaiah Berlin called negative liberty. Institutional toleration must also encourage citizens to cope with and positively welcome the reality of the increasingly pluralist societies in which they must live and work.

Toleration, as the nurturing of a 'live-and-let-live' attitude to life, and the promotion of people's individual flourishing, is based on the virtue of *respect for persons and their liberty* discussed earlier. If we demand the right as individuals freely to choose our own way of life and develop our own perspectives on life, we must, in all justice and fairness, allow others the same right.

If toleration is such a risky business, why bother with it? What are its advantages? Toleration is necessary as a pragmatic principle or device helping at least to ensure that pluralism (for example of culture, politics, religion or sexuality) can be accepted and lived with.

Society is prone to conflict on many different levels. Anthony Black (J. Horton & P. Nicholson, 1992) characterises these conflicts in biological terms, "...human beings should enable themselves collectively to replicate in the social environment that degree of homeostasis that exists generally in plant and animal communities (in which many different species coexist and adaptively interact) or in populations within a single species." (p. 165).

Whether one sees the need for peaceful co-existence or harmony in biological terms (as a means of encouraging the relatively trouble-free propagation of the species) or in social or cultural terms (as helping to nurture the flourishing of individuals or groups within larger communities), toleration will always be an important pragmatic principle in any pluralistic society as a means of coping with various forms of tension or strife.

Susan Mendus (1989) outlines three necessary conditions of toleration:

(i) toleration occurs in circumstances of *diversity*.

(ii) it occurs in circumstances where the nature of diversity gives rise to *disapproval, dislike or disgust*. It is important to appreciate, here, as Peter Gardner elsewhere (Horton & Nicholson, 1992) points out, that the reasons we have for disapproving of an action may be quite distinct from the grounds for toleration, "...someone might disapprove, say, of some form of sexual practice on religious

grounds, and yet hold that it should nevertheless *not* be prohibited, because this would violate equal respect." (p. 95).

(iii) the tolerator must be in a position to influence (socially or legally) the behaviour of the tolerated.

These conditions of toleration are what separates it from liberty, licence or indifference. "Simply to allow the different practices of others, whilst not objecting to them, disapproving of them, or finding them repugnant, is not to display tolerance, but only favour liberty." (Op. cit., p. 8).

Mendus supports the Millian view that diversity is not a good in itself. It is a necessary precondition of human flourishing. This is why intolerance can be a real evil, especially if it leads to oppression and suppression. "We may think (though we need not) that the world would be a better place if there were no homosexuals in it. However, to suppress (by legal or social disapproval) the practice of homosexuality would be to stunt the very nature of those individuals themselves. It would be the moral equivalent of foot binding." (Op. cit., p. 51).

It does not follow that we allow every kind of diversity indiscriminately (including, for example the habits of the pyromaniac or the rapist). Nevertheless, diversity is an important feature of human life which we cannot simply ignore, but must live with.

Mill's commitment to liberty and diversity is based on two fundamental beliefs: "...the belief that human nature is diverse and can only flourish if allowed to express itself in all its diversity, and the belief in individual autonomy, which dictates that the life which is worth living is, supremely, the life which is self-chosen and self-determined. Such a life cannot be obtained or sustained in the absence of an adequate range of options, and thus diversity is a precondition of autonomy." (Op. cit., p. 55).

In order to affect the social and political changes necessary to encourage this kind of diversity and personal autonomy, Mendus puts forward a suggestion similar to Marion Young's idea of a coalition of

different cultures and interest groups, discussed in chapter one. Such a construction of what she terms socialist unity, from different solidarities, cultures and communities is, in itself, a demand for toleration. It is an articulation of the desire to be involved in the wider community, "..but on *one's own terms.* without taking on wholesale the values of the whole community." (Op. cit., p. 157).

Socialist unity can be seen as a complicated, often dangerous, construction of many different solidarities, some of which will inevitably be in conflict with each other. Toleration, within this context, helps to promote a very minimal sense of citizenship. Yet, as Mendus points out, socialists must want to go further than this: citizens also have to feel that they *belong.* To this extent, toleration can also have positive content in the sense of positively welcoming diversity.

In the next chapter, I shall put forward a strong case for lesbian and gay equality with heterosexuals. In the light of this, is mere tolerance of lesbians and gays enough? On one level, the answer is no. As Peter Johnson puts it, "Those who are *merely tolerated* (my italics) know what it is like to be in receipt of good intentions, to be condescended and patronised. Equally, those who tolerate may allow only on condition of good behaviour or with the provision that the tolerated remain compliant. Bare permission can be close to indifference." (Horton & Nicholson, 1992, p. 148).

Susan Mendus believes that we should tolerate "homosexuals" because they have no choice in their sexualities, "Whatever may be said about the moral repugnance of homosexuality, about the deep-rooted belief that homosexuality is 'at best an inferior way of life and a worse a sickening perversion', it is also important to bear in mind that we have very little control or choice about our sexual preferences. To this extent, talk of 'preferences' is itself misleading." (Op. cit., p. 150).

This is not an adequate defence of the grounds for tolerating lesbians and gays. Would Mendus change her position if it was found that some or all lesbians and gays freely chose their sexualities or that sexualities are a continuum in human lives (a possibility I

accept in the next chapter)? If lesbian and gay sexualities were chosen, what status would she give to the real "moral repugnance" that many in our society feel at lesbian and gay sexualities? Do these become grounds enough to justify intolerance? Mendus does not address these important questions.

Mere toleration alone is inadequate to ensure that attitudes change. What is also required, if our present society is to grow towards genuine participatory democracy, is that citizens are educated to identify and challenge the negative aesthetic or moral judgements they make about oppressed minorities, including lesbians and gays. Education, within this participatory setting, is the means of ensuring that the need for mere toleration fades and gradually disappears as the fallacies and misinformation that surround lesbian and gay sexualities are exposed and countered.

Conclusion.

I have argued that in order for participatory democracy to be more than a set of principles or a worthy ideal, it should be grounded in certain essential virtues possessed by its citizens.

A democratic community should be essentially other-regarding or altruistic. Such a society should promote a *respect for persons* as individuals with life-plans and purposes of their own. People should be allowed to live as they choose, providing they do not harm others. This belief is based on *reciprocity*, the ability to see another's situation in life as if it were one's own.

The need for fair, co-operative arrangements requires a *sense of justice*, involving a belief that others should be treated with the same fairness I expect to receive. It also entails an acknowledgement that allowing others to flourish autonomously is beneficial to both myself and the democratic society as a whole.

Encouraging people to establish fraternal relationships with one another provides a context in which lesbian and gay issues can fruitfully be addressed. Fraternity does not require that all citizens fully understand, approve of, or find lesbian and gay sexualities aesthetically pleasing, but it does provide a baseline from which

fruitful dialogue can grow. Citizens who want to promote the flourishing of participatory democracy must work together to ensure its continuance and survival. This necessarily involves tackling the problems of all those who are excluded from full participation.

Individual toleration requires that people possess suitably tolerant attitudes, values and behaviour. Institutional toleration, expressed by society's laws and institutions, promotes, and if necessary enforces, a pragmatic principle of toleration, providing the minimum of protection so that oppressed peoples can achieve some measure of security, freedom and peace. It is important for all oppressed groups that the democratic community promotes both individual and institutional toleration primarily through its education systems, but also through its legal and other institutions.

Pluralist societies such as ours require toleration if they are to function effectively and peacefully. Toleration has positive content, it is not a mere 'letting alone' or a 'live and let live' attitude to life, it is the welcoming of and respect for differences. Promoting this positive view of toleration, especially within education, would also have the beneficial effect of promoting equality of treatment and opportunity for many oppressed minorities.

The key democratic virtues outlined here are important in providing a stimulus for consciousness-raising and an awareness of the need for lesbians and gays to be, at worst, tolerated and at best, liberated. Citizens who possess such virtues will be more likely to appreciate the realities, possibilities, challenges and dilemmas of living in a socially, culturally, morally, and sexually diverse democratic society.

CHAPTER 3.

THE EQUALITY OF LESBIANS AND GAYS WITH HETEROSEXUALS.

Introduction.

I have argued for socially responsible autonomy and participatory democracy as major social and educational aims. In the previous chapter, I examined the key virtues which citizens should possess in order to make participatory democracy a reality and experience it as a way of life. I shall now discuss the treatment of lesbian and gay citizens within that framework.

We can draw parallels between the need for lesbian and gay equality and the kind of equality sought by other people within the spheres of sex, class, race or disability. In practice, our educational establishments do not promote effective equality of opportunity in any of these areas, often refusing to recognise the existence of lesbians and gays.

One important reason for this is that people are not sure that they want to promote equality of opportunity for sexual dissidents. Lesbians and gays are often seen as transgressors against the norm of heterosexual behaviour. It is therefore important to examine claims that lesbians and gays are somehow abnormal, perverted, unequal or inferior. If these claims can be disproved, the way lies open for discussion and action which will bring about equality of treatment for lesbians and gays within our educational institutions and the wider democratic community.

Lesbian and gay sexualities: given or chosen?

On one level, the question of whether one is born with a definite form of sexuality or can choose it is an important issue. From 1852-1863, Casper, writing in Germany, developed the distinction between innate and acquired characteristics that was to influence the debate for generations. Havelock Ellis, writing from 1897 to 1910 and Richard Von Krafft-Ebbing (1906-1935) followed Casper in accepting that some forms of homosexuality were congenital, whilst others could be acquired.

Havelock Ellis later distinguished between inversion, a purely congenital condition and perversion, an acquired condition. This invert/pervert distinction was used by moral reformers of the 1950s and 1960s.

'Inversion' is the theory that gay men assume reversed sex roles, seeing themselves as women trapped in men's bodies, and lesbians vice versa. The theory was probably influenced by the existence in Paris and London (beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) of meeting places for people of the same sex who wished to socialise and/or engage in same-sex sexual activity with one another. In London, these places were known as Molly Houses. Here men dressed as women and assumed women's names.

Some of the early sexologists, believing that sexualities were largely congenital, campaigned for legal reform and more liberal attitudes towards homosexuality. Clearly, if it were possible to prove that lesbians and gays are 'born that way', it would follow that it is impossible to persuade people- particularly the young- to adopt this form of sexuality.

Many writers in the field of sexual politics assume that we have two clear-cut positions. On the one hand, the essentialists who claim that sexual orientations are biologically 'given', on the other, the social constructivists who claim that we choose our sexual orientations in various ways. The situation is actually more complex than this because the social constructivist can also claim that sexual orientation is, to all intents and purposes, a 'given'. Freudians, for example, would claim that early parental influence is crucial in establishing our sexual orientations in later life. Thus, not all social constructivist positions necessarily allow for a significant element of choice in the formation of our sexual orientations, they can contain essentialist elements.

The social constructivist, therefore, may adopt one of two positions:

1. The essentialist view that societal and environmental influences determine the sexual orientation of an individual very early in life (e.g. a Freudian analysis of early parental influence).

2. The view (shared by writers such as Michel Foucault and Jeffrey Weeks) that sexual orientations are not fixed essences which we all acquire either at birth or soon after. On this model, everyone is capable of adopting a whole range of sexual orientations throughout their lifetimes. For example, some lesbian feminists claim that they have made a political choice to establish single sex relationships, largely as a reaction against various forms of patriarchy.

Of course, social constructivists who maintain this second position admit that people do actually seem to be predominantly and permanently heterosexual, but this is not surprising because of the way things are organised by society and its institutions, which are based on heterosexism (the belief that heterosexuality is more important or valuable than any other sexual orientation) and on the assumption that sexual orientations are a 'given', a fixed way of behaving sexually.

These two basic assumptions mean that we are all positively encouraged to become heterosexual at a very early age because of the prejudices and disadvantages that society creates for us if we consider the lesbian, gay or bi-sexual options.

A more accurate description of the two protagonists in this debate is in terms of those who believe in a degree of freedom of choice in the formation of a sexual orientation and those who see sexual orientation as, in some sense, a 'given'. The essentialist begins with the presupposition that we are born with a particular sexual orientation or are strongly persuaded, soon after birth (e.g. by our parents or by wider social circumstances), to adopt a sexual orientation which is thereafter 'fixed' for life. This presupposition is then justified with reference to sociobiology, psychology, etc.

J. Martin Stafford and Michael Ruse are examples of writers who adopt the essentialist position. Ruse believes that, "As far as sexual orientation is concerned, just about all of the causal theories suggest that this is something found rather than chosen. One is straight or gay by destiny and not by choice...it is something which comes about by the forces of nature." (Ruse, 1988, p. 172). Stafford believes that, "Homosexuality is no more alterable than heterosexuality- and for the same reasons." (Stafford, 1985, p. 5).

The earliest modern scientific formulations of lesbian and gay orientations were biological. The essence inhering in homosexuals was variously described in terms of sex drives, brain centres, germ plasm, genes and hormonal secretions. The sociobiologists, following this line of enquiry, are still interested in determining the genesis of sexuality, often with reference to hormonal theories (e.g. Lorraine et. al., 1971, Meyer-Bahlburg 1977, 1979, 1984; Sanders et. al., 1984).

Hormones contribute to the male and female ability to function biologically as male and female. They also contribute to the male or female's inclinations so to function (e.g. a eunuch castrated before puberty has little or no sexual drive).

One difficulty with scientific research in this area is that hormone levels fluctuate daily and even hourly, so their measurement is very difficult and often leads to inaccuracy. More importantly, the relationship between hormones and homosexuality is not a simple one of cause and effect. It is not true that gays have an excess of female hormones and lesbians an excess of male hormones. If this were the case, correcting the imbalance would be a relatively simple matter. However, it has been found that where correction of such a purported imbalance is attempted, lesbians and gays still retain their original sexual orientations.

No one has proved that hormonal differences somehow cause homosexuality. Many of these studies suffer from grave deficiencies. For example, many hormone experiments are conducted on rats. Rats are not humans; they are not even primates. It is impossible to make valid generalisations from one species to another in such circumstances. Michael Ruse admits that "...for the time being we may have to make theoretical bricks with very little empirical straw." (Koertge, 1985, p. 15).

Recent versions of the essentialist position have been formulated by sociobiologists who assume that lesbian and gay sexual orientations are a distinct reifiable trait. If lesbian and gay sexualities are an evolved trait, they must have a genetic basis. Sociobiologists, attempting to search for this basis, have posited the existence of homosexual and heterosexual genes transmitted through the

evolutionary process of natural selection and controlling a person's entire sexual behaviour.

In 1991 Dr. Simon Le Vay, a scientist at the Salk Institute at San Diego, California, found slight structural differences in the hypothalamus of the brains of gay men. Other researchers identified further structural differences in different areas of the brain, but were unable to say whether this resulted from environmental or genetic influences.

In July 1993, Dr. Gene Hamer, director of a research team based at the National Cancer Institute near Washington D.C., published an article in the journal Science, claiming that he had evidence to link a region of the X chromosome- which men inherit from their mothers- to the sexual orientation of some gay men. Hamer studied the X chromosome of forty pairs of gay brothers. Thirty three of the gay pairs had the same chromosome region, implying that 65 per cent of families studied were passing on a gene responsible for homosexual orientation. The gene has not been isolated and the mechanism by which it operates is unclear. It might act directly on a sex-specific area of the brain or indirectly through influencing a personality trait.

He emphasised that this does not account for each and every case of homosexuality, "Given the intricacies of human behaviour, it is not surprising that a single genetic locus fails to account for all the variation seen in the study group." (The Independent, 18 July, 1993). He stressed that this does not mean that all those people who have the 'gay gene' would necessarily be homosexuals; environmental influences are also very important in the formation of sexualities.

If a biological explanation is found for at least some instances of homosexuality, we are still left with some rather complex and difficult problems. David Halperin (1990) cites an anthropological case study of the tribesmen and warriors of New Guinea who, from between the ages of eight to fifteen are orally inseminated daily by older youths who, after years of orally inseminating juniors, will be apparently happily married to a woman and have children.

Identification of a 'gay gene' or some other biological basis of sexualities would not necessarily mean that scientists could tell us definitely whether a New Guinea tribesman was gay or not. There are in fact two possibilities here: (i) he just spends half his life having oral sex with other males, (ii) his primary erotic and sexual interest is in same sex relationships (i.e., he is homosexual). However, if this is the case, why does he show no erotic interest in males outside initiatory contexts and why does he not hesitate to marry?

Other examples of this type of problem may be drawn from the armed forces and from prisons where same-sex relations are prevalent. Would we expect all of these people to have 'the gay gene', even those who only engage in same-sex relations during their periods of service or imprisonment and may be otherwise happily involved in heterosexual relationships? How would we explain the behaviour of those who engage in single-sex relations but do not have 'the gay gene'?

It seems likely that environmental influences can never be completely divorced from biological considerations when it comes to deciding which factors influence our sexualities.

Sociobiological research assumes that human nature is directed towards reproduction. For the Darwinian, what is significant is how well we manage to replicate our species. Yet lesbians and gays do not usually produce offspring. This supposedly curious state of affairs interests sociobiologists greatly. If heterosexuals reproduce more than homosexuals, genes for heterosexuality (if they exist) would eventually have replaced those for homosexuality during the course of evolution. Sociobiologists therefore posit the existence of a counteracting advantage of homosexuality which makes it desirable in an evolutionary sense. Various theories (such as kin selection) have been put forward to account for this advantage. Most of these theories centre on the belief that lesbians and gays can help the survival and reproduction of copies of genes carried by relatives by actively looking after their relatives' general welfare. Weinrich and Ruse (1988) argue that lesbians and gays may be better actors or more intelligent than heterosexuals, thus they are assisted in their helping roles, since they obtain important positions in society!

At present, neither the freedom of choice model nor the essentialist model can be proven conclusively. The fact that essentialism is often used by conservatives as a stick with which to beat progressives does not necessarily mean that essentialism blocks any progressive moves in the area of lesbian and gay rights. The crucial pre-requisite for real co-operation in this area is an appreciation that lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings. As such, we are all entitled to live the lives we choose, as long as we do not harm others. Once this is accepted, the way is clear for joint participation in radical social and educational policies to promote lesbian and gay equality and liberation.

Arguments characterising lesbian and gay sexualities as unnatural, perverse or inferior.

Dialogue about whether or not sexual orientations are dynamic and changing, or somehow 'given' is useful to the extent that it helps us to focus on the crucial question of equality. In this context, essentialists might be asked to perform a kind of thought experiment: Imagine that it was possible, in principle, for everyone freely to choose lesbian or gay sexualities. Would such sexualities still be seen as equal in every way to heterosexualities? Is there anything in lesbian and gay sexual behaviour or ways of life that would count against this belief?

It is important to outline the major arguments used in this debate by those who claim that lesbian and gay sexualities are illnesses or 'perversions' or are inferior to heterosexualities in some other way.

Lesbian and gay sexualities as sickness.

In 1974, the American Psychiatric Association de-listed 'homosexual orientation' as a mental disorder by a postal vote of 5854 to 3810. Today, most mainstream psychologists and psychiatrists would accept that there is no evidence that lesbians or gays are generally more psychologically disturbed than heterosexuals. Nowadays, most people who object to lesbian and gay sexualities do so on the grounds that they are bad rather than mad.

The supposed centrality of reproduction.

Sara Ruddick's writing (Baker and Elliston, 1975) is a good example of the view that the goal or end of all 'natural' sex is progenitive. She believes that males and females were specifically designed for the purpose of procreation and the continued survival of the species. Therefore, any kind of sex which deviates from this goal is unnatural or perverted because it deviates from the original design. She adds (p.11) that 'perverse' should carry no pejorative sense.

This is a very common line of thought, especially amongst some religious people. However, Roger Scruton is doubtful about this kind of argument when he assesses Elizabeth Anscombe's attempt to offer a more refined version of it. She proposes that any sexual act which does not, in some sense, involve the intention to perform an 'intrinsically generative act' is perverted. Scruton warns Anscombe that, "...the argument, if valid, would imply that the sexual act performed by people ignorant of the facts of human reproduction is intrinsically deviant, while homosexual acts performed in the mistaken hope of inducing pregnancy in a male are perhaps not." (Scruton, 1986, p. 287).

Michael Levin believes that homosexuality is a perversion because it involves "A misuse of bodily parts." (The Monist, 1984). This position is by no means original: Plato holds that homosexuality is wrong because: (i) it is 'unnatural', in the sense that it is not something engaged in by animals, (ii) our bodies are designed for the purposes of procreation.

Plato is wrong about homosexuality in the animal world. It occurs throughout the animal species. Weinrich (1976), among others has reviewed the evidence.

The fifth century African writer, Caelius Aurelianus, cited by David Halperin (1990), shares Plato's view of homosexuality as unnatural. He translated (into Latin) a work on chronic disease by the Greek physician Soranus (ninth chapter of the fourth book of *De Morbis Chronicis*). Here he puts forward the view that men who adopt the 'passive' role in same sex sexual activity suffer from excessive desire which, in an attempt to satisfy itself- drives out their sense

of shame and forces them to convert parts of their bodies to sexual uses not intended by nature (P. 22).

Levin is clear that genitalia are "for something" (The Monist, 1984, p. 251) and that "...penis and vagina seem made for each other." (Ibid.). He also believes that misuse of bodily parts, in most cases, results in unhappiness because, "...it leaves unfulfilled an innate and innately rewarding desire." (Ibid.). He cites a study by Weinberg and Williams in Denmark (supposedly a very liberal and tolerant country) and the U.S.A. (supposedly a very intolerant and conservative country) which found that homosexuals from both countries were equally unhappy.

It seems more likely that the unhappiness of the people involved in this study was due, in large measure, to society's reactions to their homosexuality, rather than their homosexuality itself. The fact that one of the studies was conducted in a supposedly 'tolerant and liberal' country does not affect this point. Lesbians and gays are discriminated against legally and socially even in so-called tolerant countries.

The difficulties involved in positions such as Levin's become clear when they are applied to other areas of sexuality. Are masturbation and oral-genital sex a misuse of bodily parts and, if so, do these activities make the participants unhappy?

Ruse notes the sociobiological claim that because humans need so much parental care, they have evolved sexual habits different from the rest of the animal world. In particular, unlike most mammals, the male human gets involved in child-rearing. One way in which the female keeps the male in attendance is by being continuously sexually receptive. This means that much human heterosexual intercourse does not have the biological end of reproduction in the sense of insemination. Hence, arguments that sex not potentially leading to conception is unnatural is based on defective biology as far as some sociobiologists are concerned.

Arguments relying on the 'use', 'function' or 'purpose' of bodily parts often rely on fact/value ambiguities. It is a fact that genitalia can be used for reproductive purposes, but it is also a fact that they are

not always used exclusively in this way, either by heterosexuals or homosexuals. It requires a specifically moral argument to go further and assert that this is how the genitalia *ought* to be used; such arguments will always be open to question.

Moral disapproval of sex acts which do not lead directly to procreation must extend to oral-genital sex, but it must also, on the same criteria, include kissing and holding hands, since these two activities are not directly related to procreation any more than oral-genital sex is.

People have sex for all sorts of reasons, but the primary aim is usually pleasure. This intention to engage in a pleasurable activity is often quite distinct from the intention to procreate. In Western societies, very few people see reproduction as the primary aim of sex. Recent scientific advances in contraception and artificial insemination have made the choice about whether to have sex purely for pleasure or in order to procreate much easier.

Ruse (1988) notes that this disparity between certain sorts of intention can be seen in other areas of life, for example, eating and exercise. The pleasures of these two activities are, to a large extent, distinct from their roles in nourishment or health. For many people, the primary attraction of exercise is the 'natural high' one gets from it. The primary attraction of food is often its taste, with little or no thought of nourishment.

Lesbian and gay sexualities as cowardly, narcissistic or promiscuous.

Roger Scruton (1986) tries another tack. He does not want to categorise homosexuality as a perversion, since many lesbian and gay relationships clearly involve a degree of human responsiveness, which he sees (following Nagel, 1988) as the hallmark of a 'normal' sexual relationship. However, he does think that heterosexuality is more courageous and morally valuable than lesbian and gay sexualities. Homosexuality is cowardly and borders on narcissism. This is based on his belief that heterosexuals are moving adventurously, even courageously, 'beyond themselves' when they establish a relationship with a person qualitatively different from

themselves. Lesbians and gays can never achieve this kind of relationship, their sexualities are thus flawed to some extent.

Martha Nussbaum (New York Review of Books, 18 Dec., 1986) criticises this view, using an example drawn from another significant qualitative difference: race. If Scruton's line of argument is applied here, it will be morally superior to have sex with someone of a different race. Sex with a member of one's own race could be construed as moral cowardice or narcissism! She concludes that, "...it is individual people who have homosexual relationships, men and women as different from each other as any heterosexuals are, living each one a unique life." (Op. cit., p. 52).

Eve Sedgwick believes that, "...far from its being the essence of desire to cross boundaries of gender, it is instead the most natural thing in the world that people of the same gender, people grouped together under the single most determinative dialectical mark of social organisation, people whose economic, institutional, emotional, physical needs and knowledges may have so much in common, should bond together also on the axis of sexual desire." (Extract from Eve Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet in Abelove et. al., p. 58).

Elsewhere, Scruton, writing in The Sunday Telegraph (24 September, 1989) and in an essay collection entitled The Philosopher on Dover Beach. (1990) puts forward the belief that since homosexuals have no children, they can have no real interest in society or its future. Homosexuals therefore tend to be careless and promiscuous in their sexual relationships. For this reason, he advocates that, "we should instil in our children feelings of revulsion" (Stafford, 1991, p.187) towards homosexuality.

J. Martin Stafford (1991, pp. 197-193) replies that many heterosexuals abstain from having children, often for very selfish reasons. Further, many of those who do decide to become parents are so careless in discharging their duties that it would have been better had they not done so. At the very least, if Scruton's argument is correct, it should be applied to all childless people, not just homosexuals.

Stafford sees Scruton's argument as defective on three counts: (1) not all homosexuals are promiscuous, (2) it is not true that all homosexuals are childless and even those who are often take a beneficent interest in the children of their friends and relatives. (3) Consequently, "...having children is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of a sense of social responsibility...there are...prolific and irresponsible breeders who have little or no social responsibility." (Op. cit., p. 188).

There is, Stafford notes, "...a striking incongruity between the sober reflections of Scruton the philosopher and the demotic ravings of Scruton the man." (Op. cit., p. 190). Scruton's position in his Sunday Telegraph piece and his Dover Beach essays contradict his earlier position in <u>Sexual Desire</u> (1986), highlighting his deep prejudices.

One of the major themes of Scruton's <u>Sexual Desire</u> is that in a proper sexual relationship we fully encounter the other *as a person*. This is what constitutes a loving relationship. Scruton admits that both homosexuals and heterosexuals are capable of this kind of love. Scruton has to admit, therefore, that homosexuality is not a perversion.

The inadequacy of the terms 'unnatural' and 'perverted' when applied to lesbians and gays.

The most important philosophical objection to the use of the term 'natural' in moral reasoning is that it commits what G.E. Moore (1903) described as 'the naturalistic fallacy', inferring an 'ought' from an 'is'.

Paul Hirst (1974) notes that "What all forms of naturalism do is simply to take some particular state of affairs or human quality, or social rule, and without any justification, assert that the pursuit of it is what is good or right." (p. 29). The naturalistic fallacy fails to distinguish the description of actual or possible states of affairs from their evaluation.

"...what is wrong with naturalism is not merely that it mistakenly sees moral questions as scientific questions when they are essentially no such thing. Rather it is that it sees moral questions

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as being in the end answerable by an accurate description of how things are when description alone is quite inadequate for the business of evaluation." (Op. cit., p. 30).

Fact and value are logically different in kind. "The ultimate weakness of naturalistic theories is that they fail to keep the distinction between descriptions and evaluation, and thus in the end fail to provide any real justification for the evaluations they are seeking to establish." (Op. cit., p. 34).

Of course, lesbian and gay sexualities can be morally evaluated, but this evaluation should not be based on unsubstantiated claims relating to the supposed goals or ends of sexual activities. The fact that human reproduction is not the prime goal of many forms of sexual activities (whether heterosexual, bi-sexual, lesbian or gay) does not make them immoral, bad, sick or perverted. Lesbian and gay sexualities should be evaluated in exactly the same way as other forms of sexuality, using the same criteria (e.g. the extent to which they promote the welfare of oneself or others, or cause harm).

This is an important point because it counts against the possibility of a 'heterosexual morality' of the kind implied in the British government's recent pronouncements, legislation and educational circulars, as I shall argue in the next chapter.

Thomas Nagel published an article in The Journal of Philosophy (66), no. 1 in January, 1969 which was widely re-published and sparked off a great deal of interest in the concept of sexual perversion. He supports the view that the term 'perverted' is inappropriate when applied to lesbian and gay sexualities. For Nagel, the following conditions would have to be met for 'perversion' to be a viable concept:

(i) Sexual perversions would have to be sexual desires or practices that are in some way unnatural. He recognises that this natural/unnatural distinction is the crux of the problem, but fails to analyse these concepts further.

(ii) Certain practices will be perversions (he lists as examples: shoe fetishes, bestiality and sadism).

(iii) Perversions are unnatural sexual inclinations, rather than just unnatural practices. For example, contraception cannot realistically be described as a sexual perversion. "A sexual perversion must reveal itself in conduct that expresses an unnatural sexual preference." (Nagel, 1981, p. 39)

Nagel sees the concept of perversion as primarily psychological, not physiological. For example, we do not apply it to the lower animals or plants, all of which have reproductive functions that go astray in various ways (e.g. seedless oranges). He does not regard as perversions every deviation from the reproductive function of sex in humans (such as contraception and abortion).

Sex, for Nagel, is a complex form of interpersonal awareness in which desire itself is consciously communicated on several different levels. His central idea is that, in sex, two people are aroused by each other, aware of the other's arousal, and further aroused by this awareness. This, for Nagel, is the norm of a sexual relation.

He believes that to see some practice or inclination as perverted is to make an evaluation of it, but not necessarily a moral evaluation. "...if humans tend to develop some version of reciprocal interpersonal sexual awareness unless prevented, then cases of blockage can be called unnatural or perverted." (Op. cit., p. 49). To say that some sexual inclination or practice is perverse is merely to indicate that better forms of sexual activity are possible, though he believes that perverted sex is better than no sex at all.

Nagel appears to see 'normal' and 'natural' as corollaries of each other. For Nagel, it is in some sense 'natural' for human beings to want some form of complex interpersonal relationship and this becomes the 'norm' or standard of a good relationship. Nagel's position suggests that both the capacity and the desire for complex interpersonal relationships are somehow intrinsic. This intrinsic capacity becomes the norm by which we measure good human sexual relationships in a non-moral sense. Nagel believes that, "Nothing rules out the full range of interpersonal perceptions between persons of the same sex." (p. 50).

Michael Ruse puts forward the view that, "...naturalness ought to be redefined in terms of culture and not simple biology. What is unnatural and what is consequently in some important sense perverse, is what goes against or breaks with our culture. It is what violates the ends or aims that human beings think are important or worth striving for." (Ruse, 1988, p. 199).

He follows Nagel's attempt to remove perversion from the moral realm by defining perversion as the, "...breaking not of a moral rule, but of an aesthetic rule." (Ibid.). On this view, questions about whether lesbian and gay sexualities are perverse are questions as to how we feel about such sexualities (given our culture, beliefs, etc.) and the extent to which we can relate to or empathise with them. Some people can so relate and some cannot. He concludes that "...neither side is absolutely right and neither side is absolutely wrong." (Op. cit., p. 201).

He feels that we must educate people not to confuse 'perversion' with moral indignation and that we should work towards reducing the number of people who hate homosexuals, since homosexuality is not in itself immoral.

The terms 'unnatural' and 'perverted' are inadequate when applied to lesbian and gay sexualities. It is important, especially for lesbians and gays who have felt the full force of such potent rhetorical devices, to abandon them altogether. Ruse is naive if he thinks he can persuade people to use them in a dispassionate and non-moral sense. These terms are deeply offensive, steeped as they are in a history of bigotry and hate. It is difficult to see how they can be 'lifted out' of their historical and cultural contexts and given a new currency as aesthetic opinion.

The terms 'unnatural' and 'perverted' depend upon the converse concept of 'natural', thus providing a standard against which the 'unnatural' can be measured. Yet, 'natural' is a highly ambiguous term. It has at least three principal meanings: (1) that which is believed to be part of human 'nature', but is in fact the result solely of social influence and conditioning, (2) that which is fixed or 'given' by nature at birth, (3) that which has its basis in nature (in this latter sense), but can develop and change throughout a person's lifetime.

Jeffrey Weeks warns us that "...the meaning of 'Nature' is not transparent. Its truth has been used to justify our innate violence and aggression and our fundamental sociability. It has been employed to legitimise our basic evil, and to celebrate our fundamental goodness. There are, it often seems, as many natures as there are conflicting values." (Weeks, 1985, p. 62).

Recent political organisations within the lesbian and gay communities such as Queer Nation in the United States and OutRage here in the larger cities of England have adopted the term "Queer", rather indiscriminately, to refer to any form of sexuality which deviates from the perceived 'norm' of conventional heterosexuality. "The insistence on "queer"- a term defined against "normal" and generated precisely in the context of terror- has the effect of pointing out a wide field of normalisation, rather than simple tolerance, as the site of violence." (Michael Warner, 'Fear of a Queer Planet.'). Whatever one makes of this particular term, it can be seen, in part, as an attempt to state unambiguously the belief that it really does not matter whether a sexuality is judged unnatural or abnormal because these are empty categories.

In any case, how useful is the term 'unnatural' in other, perhaps less controversial, contexts? Using a typewriter or word-processor, cooking in a microwave oven, using a telephone, travelling by train or in an aeroplane. Could these activities be considered unnatural in some sense? One can imagine irate individuals exclaiming, "If god (or nature) had intended us to fly, we would have developed wings!"

David Halperin (1990) cites W.C. Rivers ('A New Male Trait (?)' in Alienist and Neurologist, 41, 1920, pp. 22-7), writing in the 1920s, who believed that women with political aspirations and men who liked cats were examples of deviant object choice, one of a number of pathological symptoms exhibited by those who reversed or 'inverted' their sex roles by adopting a masculine or feminine style at variance with what was deemed to be *natural* and appropriate to their anatomical sex.

'Nature' should not be used as the basis for arguing that something or someone is either eccentric, distasteful, disordered, ill or wrong. The term is inadequate when it comes to making these sorts of

judgement.

My point is not simply that lesbian and gay sexualities are as 'normal' as other forms of sexuality. Even if it could be proved that lesbian and gay sexualities are somehow abnormal or unnatural, we would still be left with the question as to whether they are consequently immoral.

Abandoning such terms as 'unnatural' or perverted' does not mean that we cannot make moral appraisals of sexual activity; that one form of sexuality is much the same as another in this respect (including paedophilia, for example). I believe the opposite holds true, for once we have recognised the inadequacy of such terms, we are free to consider sexual activities in all their complexity and to make sound moral judgements about them, whenever appropriate and necessary.

The enculturisation of the unnatural.

Culture, not 'nature', powerfully shapes our views of what is 'natural' or 'unnatural'. The kinds of sexual behaviour condoned or condemned by various cultures is diverse. What is acceptable in one culture or era is sometimes taboo in another. David Halperin (1990) cites K.J. Dover's book, Greek Homosexuality. (1978), which gives us a thumbnail sketch of ancient Greek society and underlines the radical differences between its views of sexual activities and ours.

Dover makes the following points with regard to ancient Greek culture:

(1) Homosexual behaviour among Greek males took the form, mostly, of pederastic relations between a man and a youth.

(2) Classical Greeks considered the desire of adult males for sexual pleasure through contact with handsome youths to be normal and natural.

(3) Neither Athenian law nor Athenian custom forbade or penalised the sexual expression of such desire, so long as the lovers observed certain conventional decencies.

(4) Pederastic love-affairs which conformed, at least outwardly, to those conventions were regarded by Athenian society as decent, honourable, and- under certain circumstances- even praiseworthy.

In Athenian society, sexual partners were of two different kinds, not male and female, but *active* and *passive*, dominant and submissive. The homosexual/heterosexual distinction would have had no meaning for the classical Athenians. They did not think in terms of two different 'sexualities'.

Active and passive modes of sexuality separated classes and were hierarchical. Therefore, an adult male citizen of Athens could have legitimate sexual relations only with statutory minors (his inferiors, not in age, but in social and political status). The proper outlets for his sexual desires were women, boys, foreigners and slaves, all of whom did not enjoy the same legal and political rights as he did.

In this scheme of things, the 'active' partner has his pleasure promoted, the 'passive' partner is penetrated and is 'at the service' of another's pleasure.

"...the 'sexuality' of the classical Athenians, far from being independent and detached from 'politics' (as we conceive sexuality to be), was constituted by the very principles on which Athenian public life was organised." (Halperin, 1990, p. 31).

In Athenian society, sex between members of the subordinate groups was almost inconceivable. Whereas sex between a member of the superordinate and a member of a subordinate group was seen as a manifestation of personal status, not a 'private act'.

Whatever reservations we might have about the hierarchical and class divided nature of ancient Athenian society reflected in these same-sex relationships, we must also acknowledge this as an example of a society where same-sex relationships were positively valued, albeit within strict and unacceptably discriminatory boundaries.

This analysis of ancient Athenian society should inspire us with hope. There is no reason to believe that people in our society must

necessarily continue to hold bigoted and prejudiced views with regard to lesbian and gay sexualities for all time.

Conclusion.

I began by examining two very influential models of sexuality: the 'given' and the chosen. This issue is a red-herring in the sense that we do not have to postpone the promotion of lesbian and gay issues and the adoption of radical policies until we weigh the available evidence or wait for more evidence about the genesis of sexualities.

What is of central importance in these discussions is the argument that lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings with life-plans of their own which they must be allowed to pursue in order to flourish.

If we accept this basic argument, it follows that, on the essentialist model: lesbian and gay minorities deserve the same legal and political rights as others, and that positive images of lesbians and gays should be promoted. One would also have to argue for the promotion of the self-realisation of the individual in this area of their lives. It would be important to be as fair as possible to lesbians or gays and help them to achieve the good life on equal terms with everyone else. The heterosexual majority would also have to be educated to cope with, understand and respect minorities, just as one does in anti-racist education, for example.

The same things apply on the freedom of choice model, but in addition, one would anticipate and welcome possible gradual increases in the numbers of lesbian and gay citizens as lesbian and gay sexualities became more accepted by society, thus making this sexual choice more attractive.

Producing strong arguments for the equality of lesbians and gays with heterosexuals is one thing, tackling the reality of homophobic bigotry, violence and oppression is quite another. It is very important that heterosexism is exposed in all its complex forms and that connections are made between this and other forms of oppression.

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Heterosexism is a powerful and dangerous force which threatens democracy itself. Opposition to it must be seen as the task of everyone in the democratic community. The next chapter examines the reality of institutionalised heterosexism and the threat it poses to all citizens, whatever their sexualities.

SEX EDUCATION: A CHALLENGE TO INSTITUTIONALISED
HETEROSEXISM?

Introduction.

The previous chapter presented a strong argument in support of the view that lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings with life plans of their own.

The opposite view is held by our society and its institutions, but it is important to understand that the situation is far more complex and dangerous than this. Society does not simply disagree with lesbian and gay equality and liberation, it constructs cultures in which heterosexualities are promoted to the detriment of lesbian and gay sexualities, actively encouraging citizens to disparage or reject lesbian and gay sexualities as ways of life.

This chapter examines British government legislation and circulars of the 1980s and 1990s relating to sex education. These demonstrate clearly the British government's heterosexist ideologies. Section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1988 encapsulates the government's central worry that lesbian and gay sexualities might be 'promoted'. The government reports and circulars discussed contain three principle heterosexist assumptions: (i) that sex education should take place within the context of heterosexual family life, (ii) that the views of (heterosexual) parents should be given prominence and that they should be allowed to withdraw their children from sex education lessons, whatever their reasons (which might, for example, include racist, sexist or heterosexist beliefs), (iii) that lesbian and gay sexualities are inferior to heterosexualities.

The importance of government pronouncements, legislation and advice is next discussed. The section 28 legislation grew out of the homophobia and heterosexism which is deeply imbedded in society and its institutions. Faucauldian analysis demonstrates that for centuries sex was seen as a secretive affair which was not to be

spoken of openly. Paradoxically, this led to a proliferation of discourses related to 'sins of the flesh' and sexuality in general.

The A.I.D.S. epidemic has led to an explosion of information and discourses centring on sexuality by means of the press, publishing and the media. This has had the positive effect of bringing sex into the open and making it accessible to public scrutiny, examination and debate. Paradoxically, heterosexist government legislation, circulars and pronouncements have provided us with the opportunity of questioning and perhaps reappraising our reactions to and beliefs about sexualities.

The need for consciousness raising is then highlighted. It is not enough to present solid arguments for lesbian and gay equality and liberation. What is also needed is a shift in moral perspective, a change in or reappraisal of attitudes and values with regard to sexuality.

Finally, it is also important that positive images of lesbians and gays are promoted so that negative stereotypes can be effectively countered. The most effective way of countering prejudice and misinformation in this area is by working towards radical social and political change which will facilitate lesbians and gays in the task of coming out, of revealing their sexualities to the rest of the democratic community so that people can work and live with lesbians and gays and come to see them as equals.

Heterosexism is the beliefs, attitudes and institutional arrangements which reinforce the view that heterosexualities are superior to any other sexuality, whether lesbian, gay, or bi-sexual.

Chris Gaine (Cole, 1989) sees institutional *racism* as a subtle form of domination. "It happens when procedures and practices perhaps date from a time when most of the population were white and Anglo-Saxon, so they operate in such a way as to exclude minorities." (p. 32). Institutional racism is not necessarily intentional, it is, "...simply the continuation of routine procedures originally devised in different circumstances. Nevertheless, their effect is to disadvantage a particular group." (Ibid.).

Similarly, institutionalised heterosexism is a subtle mode of domination, taking on many complex forms and occurring within a variety of different contexts. Institutional heterosexism is manifested principally in two ways: firstly, its most pervasive form can be seen in what Debbie Epstein (1994) calls 'the heterosexual presumption'. It is assumed that everyone in society is heterosexual and consequently other forms of sexuality are systematically (or as a matter of course) ignored or marginalised.

Secondly, it is evident in the widespread negative views people have about lesbians and gays. These views are encouraged and fed by the many mythologies and cultures that exist in society with regard to sexualities which are not heterosexual. These mythologies and cultures are encouraged by institutions such as the mass media, the law and the education system, all of which, to some extent, either ignore the existence of lesbians and gays or positively encourage their oppression.

Section 28 of the Local Government Act, 1988.

The British government of the 1990s is supporting institutionalised heterosexism, prejudice and discrimination. It does so by its unjust laws relating to the age of consent (16 for heterosexuals, 18 for gays), its failure to acknowledge lesbians in the law, its denial of the rights of lesbians and of gays to marry if they wish and its attempted prohibition of the 'promotion' of lesbian and gay sexualities in section 28 of the Local Government Act, 1988.

Similar discriminatory legislation can be found in the United States of America. Greenberg (1988) cites The Family Protection Act, introduced in Congress during the first Reagan administration: "It denies Legal Aid Societies the right to "promote, defend or protect homosexuality." An Arkansas statute permits schoolteachers to be fined for "advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting public or private homosexual activity in a manner that creates a substantial risk that such conduct will come to the attention of school children or school employees."

Section 28 is inserted awkwardly, almost as an afterthought, into what is, in any case, a mish-mash of diverse regulations affecting local authorities. This is well illustrated by the following list of contents which appears at the beginning of the Act.

"An Act to secure that local and other public authorities undertake certain activities only if they can do so competitively, to register certain functions of local and other public authorities in connection with public supply or works contracts; to authorise and register the provision of financial assistance by local authorities for certain housing purposes; to prohibit the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities; to make provision about local authorities' publicity, local government administration, the powers of auditors, land held by public bodies, direct labour organisations, arrangements under the Employment and Training Act 1973, the Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland and dog registration; dog licences, and stray dogs; and for connected purposes." (24 March, 1988).

The government claimed that there was growing concern throughout Britain about the use of ratepayers' money by some local authorities intentionally to promote homosexuality. They had in mind left-wing local authorities of the time, whose radical attitudes in this area had been widely publicised.

A number of the allegations about the supposed 'promotion' of homosexuality were made in the Conservative Party's advertising campaign in the 1987 General Election. Madeleine Colvin (1989) notes the use of large billboards featuring books (bound with red covers) bearing the titles *Young, Gay and Proud* and *Black Lesbian in White America.* It was implied that there was something shocking about these books. In fact, one was a collection of writings by gay teenagers about their experiences, the other a collection of academic essays. The implication was that these books were part of a campaign to encourage young people to become homosexual.

The National Council for Civil Liberties sees section 28 as, "...an extraordinary badly-drafted piece of legislation...some have argued that it is unlikely ever to be used to any effect because of its narrow scope and the difficulties of its implementation. But it is

also a very dangerous piece of legislation, because as long as these difficulties of interpretation remain, there is the very real likelihood that, *without cases ever coming to court,* section 28 will be both misunderstood and misinterpreted, and used to justify acts and decisions which result in censorship and discrimination." (M. Colvin, 1989).

There is also the problem of self-censorship. Teachers may well be tempted to avoid tackling lesbian and gay issues within the curriculum or as they arise informally from discussions with students in case they may somehow prove to be in breach of the law.

A brief history of Section 28.

Sketching some of the background to section 28 helps to demonstrate how legislation can both reflect and reinforce the kind of bigotry and prejudice just acknowledged. It is very likely that the moral, political and social climate relating to lesbians and gays shifted in response to the A.I.D.S. hysteria of the time. Lesbians and gays were seen as the major cause of H.I.V. and A.I.D.S. because of their 'promiscuous' sexual behaviour. The clause acknowledges that "Nothing in subsection (1) shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease." Thus, lesbian and gay sexualities may be spoken of and discussed, but ideally, only within the context of disease.

In 1986, Lord Halsbury introduced a Private Members Bill entitled 'An Act to restrain local authorities from promoting homosexuality' as an amendment to the Local Government Bill. This received an unopposed second reading in the House of Lords on 8 December, 1986.

Dame Gill Knight (M.P. for Birmingham, Edgbaston) adopted the Bill in the House of Commons. It received its third reading on 8 May, 1987. It was accepted by 20 votes to 0, but the Bill fell because it needed a minimum of 40 votes in order to become law. The general election was called the next week.

In December 1986 the Government's attitude, as presented by Lord Skelmersdale was one of 'neutrality'. That is, whilst sympathising with the aims of the Bill, it was deemed unnecessary and was seen

as undermining other legislation, in particular the 1986 Education Act no. 2.

This attitude had shifted by May 1987 to one of full support and encouragement for the Bill. Margaret Thatcher, then Prime Minister, made this clear in her reply to an oral question from Dame Gill Knight in the House of Commons on 14 May, 1987 and again in her remarks at the Conservative Conference in October of that year when she dismissed "the inalienable right to be gay".

Tory backbenchers had been campaigning on this Bill throughout 1987. Several were members of the Conservative Family Campaign whose aim, as described by Geoffrey Dickens, M.P. on I.T.V.'s London Programme in April 1987, was to re-criminalise homosexuality. He saw support for this clause as the first step along this path.

When the Local Government Bill was being debated at the committee stage in the House of Commons, David Wiltshire, a Conservative M.P. on that committee, proposed an amendment to the Bill broadly following the Halsbury lines. The amendment was debated on 8 December 1987 in Committee, and this time it was formally adopted by the Government.

Section 28 states that:

2A (1) The local authority shall not

(a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality

(b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) above shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease.

(3) In any proceedings in connection with the application of this section a court shall draw such inferences as to the intention of the local authority as it sees fit.

There is an attempt to ban the "promotion" of lesbian and gay issues by Local Education Authorities, yet nowhere is 'promotion' defined. One can only assume that a dictionary definition was intended. In this case, 'promotion' means to, "Advance, prefer...help forward, encourage, support actively...publicise and sell." (The Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 1970).

This definition encapsulates the Government's heterosexist fears. These are three-fold: (i) promotion in general. The idea that teachers, in particular, might positively commend lesbian and gay sexualities as a morally and socially acceptable lifestyle, (ii) the publication of materials which promote homosexuality. It seems likely that the government was especially concerned about a children's story book called Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin, about a young girl, her gay father and his lover (Gay Men's Press, 1983), (iii) the promotion of homosexuality as "a pretended family relationship". This rather vague phrase encapsulates the government's concern that homosexuality somehow undermines the traditional heterosexual nuclear family (defined as a heterosexual mother and father and their children). Therefore the notion of homosexuality and the notion of family are to be very sharply distinguished. There is no place for homosexuality within the kind of 'traditional family values' espoused by the Conservative government of the day.

In the previous chapter, I noted that the sexologists of the nineteenth century advocated law reform in order to legalise lesbian and gay sexualities. They did so on the assumption that sexualities are determined at birth or very soon afterwards and that it is therefore not appropriate to punish or condemn people for their sexual orientation. This position implies that it is not possible to 'catch' lesbian and gay sexualities. The idea of 'promotion', in this sense, is ruled out.

Interestingly, section 28, on the other hand, accepts that it is possible to persuade people, especially the young, to adopt a sexual orientation. This position has unexpected parallels with the lesbian feminist idea that many people-predominantly women-can and do choose their own sexual orientation. Many women have chosen to be lesbians as a reaction to patriarchal society. They have made a

conscious decision to abandon relationships with men and establish social and sexual relationships exclusively with women.

I claimed, in the previous chapter, to be agnostic as to the genesis of sexualities because there is no conclusive scientific evidence to support either the 'given' or 'chosen' claims at present. It is nevertheless interesting to consider the idea, implied in section 28, that sexualities may well be open to development and change and that it may be possible to influence someone with regard to their sexual orientation. If this is the case, we may well ask what is so wrong with the idea of 'promoting' lesbian and gay sexualities? In asking this question, we are faced with the single most important assertion in the area of lesbian and gay rights: that lesbian, gay and heterosexualities are equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings who have the right to live the lives they choose, providing they do not harm others. I argued in the previous chapter that there are no substantive arguments against this fundamental assertion and that therefore the way is open for radical legal and social reform leading to lesbian and gay liberation.

Section 28 encapsulates a worry felt by many people: namely, that it is possible to persuade the young to become lesbian or gay. It is highly significant that people do not have the same worries when it comes to heterosexuality.

With regard to the issue of teachers encouraging young people to become lesbian or gay: it is no more appropriate for teachers to persuade young people to indulge in any particular form of sexual activity than it is to persuade them to adopt a particular religious or political viewpoint. On the other hand, teachers do have a clear duty to ensure that young people are aware of the range of sexualities that exist within our democratic society so that they can develop their sexualities and, just as importantly, formulate independent and critical views of sexualities which may differ from their own. This is important for all students, whatever their sexualities may be.

It must be acknowledged that Section 28 could well have an adverse effect on the employment rights of lesbians and gays in education, especially since the introduction of Local Management of Schools.

From now on, it is the governors of a school who decide who should be employed and who not. Some governing bodies may well use Section 28 to support the disciplining or sacking of lesbian and gay teachers who are deemed to be 'promoting' lesbian and gay sexualities.

It is interesting that the government's response to lesbian and gay issues has been concerned almost exclusively with curriculum matters (pastoral and wider school curricula), whereas the response of progressive local authorities and teaching unions has also been based on equal opportunities initiatives, in terms of support for lesbian and gay students, teachers, and parents. They have seen this as an issue for the institution as a whole.

In fact, Section 28 does not relate directly to school at all; it restricts only the type of advice and material a *local education authority* can give to its schools, as Circular 5/94 makes clear (under the heading 'Other Provisions', p.19). It is the schools' governors, parents and staff who control their own sex education policies.

Section 28 and Government Guidance on Sex Education.

The central belief that lesbian and gay sexualities are inferior to heterosexualities and the fear that homosexuality might be 'promoted', expressed in Section 28, forms the basis of all the government circulars that followed.

The Education (no. 2) Act 1988 states that the governors of a school must decide whether or not sex education is to be taught in that school. If governors decide to offer sex education, it must be taught with "...due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life." (sect. 46, p. 48). The Education Act does not define what 'family life' is, though we may assume that they mean to define the family as a heterosexual married couple and their children. However, the fact that the concept of the family is not closely defined makes it possible to interpret 'family' in its broadest sense, including single parents, lesbians, gays and, in some cases, their children.

A report published by the D.E.S. in 1986 called <u>Health Education from</u> <u>5 to 16</u> (D.E.S. Curriculum matters 6) sets out a framework to help schools develop a health education programme which is appropriate for their pupils. This was a discussion document, not a directive, and comments were invited when it was first published. It focuses on the aims and objectives of health education between the ages of five and sixteen and considers the implications for choice of content, teaching strategies and the assessment of pupils' progress.

This report is important because it contains, in embryo, many of the themes of the later 11/87 circular. These include: (i) the idea that sex education should take place within the context of family life, loving relationships and respect for others, (ii) emphasis on the importance of parents' views, (iii) the presumption that lesbian and gay sexualities are inferior to heterosexualities.

The report states that schools have a statutory duty (under section 8 (5) of the Education Act 1980) to inform parents of the manner and content of sex education. Primary school heads should involve parents as well as staff if they decide to have structured sex education within their school. Further, sex education should always be presented, "...in the context of family life, of loving relationships and of respect for others: in short, in a moral framework." (S. 15).

I will argue in chapter seven that sex education should not be confined to a discussion of the 'mechanics' of sex or to sex acts. Sex must be contextualised within the spheres of feeling, emotions, and morality. To this extent, the D.E.S.'s definition of moral frameworks as including, "...loving relationships and of respect for others...", though inadequate and sketchy, is uncontentious because it covers lesbian and gay sexualities as well as heterosexualities.

Section 41 of the report stresses that schools should always be open to parents' views and keep their sex education policies under continual scrutiny and review in the light of such views (presumably, however negative or harmful these views may be).

Section 42 acknowledges that problems may arise when pupils have had access to parental advice and information and have already formed strong moral or religious views on this basis. Teachers are

advised not to seek to undermine the views of pupils (which may well stem from their parents) but to aim to help all pupils to gain an understanding and respect for the views of others.

Whilst we should, in general, respect the views of others, this cannot be an absolute principle because there are some views that are intolerable. For example, the kind of racist or sexist ideas to which some children may be exposed within their family environment. Consequently this piece of advice is inadequate and misleading.

The fact that certain views emanate from the family does not make them immune from questioning and, where necessary, refutation. This piece of advice ducks this issue. If children hold racist or other distorted views which they have learnt from their parents, they must be challenged. Of course, one must challenge young people sensitively and avoid alienating them, but not to challenge them at all in such circumstances is to collude with them.

As I shall argue more fully in the next chapter, a democratic education broadens young people's horizons by exposing them to educational experiences which the family alone cannot provide. The family cannot be allowed to completely mould the child politically, morally or socially, since the child is part of the wider democratic community and must be taught as a future citizen of that community.

Paragraph 48 deals specifically with homosexuality:

"Information about and discussions of homosexuality, whether it involves a whole class or an individual, needs to acknowledge that experiencing strong feelings of attraction to members of the same sex is a phase passed through by many young people, but that for a significant number of people these feelings persist into adult life. Therefore it needs to be dealt with objectively and seriously, bearing in mind that, while there has been a marked shift away from the general condemnation of homosexuality, many individuals and groups within society hold sincerely to the view that it is morally objectionable. This is difficult territory for teachers to traverse and for some schools to accept that homosexuality may be a normal feature of human relationships would be a breach of the religious

faith upon which they are founded. Consequently, L.E.A.s, Voluntary bodies, governors, heads and senior staff in schools have important responsibilities in devising guidance and supporting teachers dealing with this sensitive issue."

Once again we have evidence of the view that lesbian and gay sexualities are essentially inferior to heterosexualities, even when we are being advised to deal with the issue "objectively". Why do lesbian and gay sexualities have to be singled out as being a *phase* that young people go through? Surely, the same is true of heterosexuality for some people.

This paragraph is extremely negative and cautious in tone. The messages it conveys are that: (i) homosexuality needs to be dealt with "objectively", (ii) but at the same time, many in society hold that it is "morally objectionable", (iii) "...this is difficult territory to traverse", (iv) "for some schools, to accept that homosexuality may be a *normal* feature of relationships would be a breach of the religious faith on which they were founded.", (v) Governors and senior managers have important responsibilities in devising guidance and supporting teachers in dealing with this "sensitive issue".

Although the propositions of this paragraph are all factually correct, no attempt is made to put forward the alternative and equally valid moral viewpoint that lesbian and gay sexualities are not abnormal or unnatural and that lesbian and gay sexualities are equal to heterosexualities. To teach about sexualities within a moral framework is important, but it does not necessarily follow that such a framework must be built on reactionary or conservative principles.

What should have been stressed is that the requirement to deal with homosexuality objectively is paramount. Clearly, some parents will believe lesbian and gay sexualities to be "morally objectionable" for religious or other reasons, but this state of affairs should not prevent schools from dealing with such issues. Indeed, failure to do so would mean that pupils are deprived of a proper, broadly based education which seeks to develop their personal autonomy by encouraging them to reflect, to make independent and well informed judgements, decisions and choices.

This paragraph effectively discourages teaching and discussion centring on lesbian and gay issues in the classroom. It ends by placing the responsibility (and perhaps any potential blame) for tackling such issues firmly with the governors and senior managers of schools. At the same time, no practical advice or support is offered.

A major aim of this thesis is to provide such support. Beginning with the argument that lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally worthy of respect as autonomous human beings who have the right to live their own lives and that lesbian and gay sexualities are in no way inferior to heterosexuals (developed in the previous chapter), chapter six provides a framework within which policies can be formulated, developed, implemented and monitored so that teachers can feel confident and secure in dealing with these issues. Chapter seven indicates the areas of the curriculum where lesbian and gay issues can be effectively identified and explored.

This report illustrates well the chaos that is caused when a government refuses to acknowledge in any way the equality of lesbians and gays with heterosexuals. In practical terms, until this government brings the age of consent for lesbians and gays into line with that for heterosexuals, objective and fair treatment of these issues is impossible. Lowering the age of consent for lesbians and gays would signify some acknowledgement of equality among lesbians, gays and heterosexuals and would encourage and support teachers to acknowledge lesbians and gays as the equals of heterosexuals in their teaching, advice to and counselling of students.

Circular 11/87.

A D.E.S. circular (11/87) issued in 1987 called <u>Sex education in schools</u> (later replaced by circular 5/94) gives guidance to education authorities on the implementation of the 1980 and the 1986 Education Acts insofar as they relate to sex education in schools. Its recommendations are purely advisory and the statutes it quotes are the only directives which must legally be complied with by an education authority or school.

The purpose of this circular is to advise on the educational implications of these two important pieces of legislation. It does not seek to provide a framework within which Personal and Social Education or Sex Education Programmes can be developed, as did the previous D.E.S. report.

This circular takes up and develops the major themes dealt with in the D.E.S. report of 1986. Greater stress is placed on the centrality of the family and on 'parent power'. Lesbian and gay sexualities are now explicitly acknowledged to be inferior to heterosexualities (para. 22).

The circular re-emphasises that governors have complete control over whether there shall be a sex education programme and, if so, what form it will take. It strongly advises governing bodies to adopt some sort of sex education programme.

Although the document acknowledges (in paragraph 16) that, "...opportunities for considering the broader emotional and ethical dimensions of sexual attitudes and mores may arise in other subject areas", the only context within which 'sex education' is to be taught is that of, "...moral considerations and the value of family life." (paragraph 6). Once again, the term 'moral' is not defined. I can only assume that by linking "moral considerations" to "the value of family life", the document means to convey the idea that sex should be taught within the context of a kind of 'heterosexual morality'.

This raises the fundamental question of whether such a 'heterosexual morality' can exist and, if so, what it would consist of. Perhaps an attempt might be made to base such a morality on the belief that only heterosexual relationships are normal because they are open to procreation. I demonstrated the weakness of this argument in the previous chapter. However, even if such a belief could be supported, a further argument would be required to establish that lesbian and gay sexualities are immoral because they are abnormal.

In any case, lesbians and gays do have children, either by sexual intercourse or by artificial insemination, and it is difficult to see

how this can be argued as immoral or wrong in itself, without recourse to unsubstantiated religious pronouncements or beliefs.

The circular states that schools have a duty to: (i) present facts in an objective, balanced manner, (ii) help students to appreciate a range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society (paragraph 19), (iii) to know what is and what is not legal, (iv) to encourage students to make their own informed and responsible decisions about their own future sexual behaviour in adulthood, (v) to warn students of the physical, moral and emotional risks of promiscuity, (vi) to help students to "...recognise the benefits of stable married and family life and the responsibilities of parenthood." (paragraph 19).

The acknowledgement, in paragraph 19, that we must, "...enable pupils to comprehend the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society..." is the only positive acceptance of discussions centring on sexualities other than heterosexualities.

Paragraph 21 acknowledges that, "Schools cannot, in general, avoid tackling controversial sexual matters, such as contraception and abortion, by reason of their sensitivity. Pupils may well ask questions about them and the schools should be prepared to offer balanced and factual information and to acknowledge the major ethical issues involved. Where schools are founded on specific religious principles this will have a direct bearing on the manner in which such subjects are pursued."

Paragraph 21 is unclear as to whether lesbian and gay issues could be included under the term "controversial sexual matters", but a case can clearly be made for this reading of paragraph 21, especially in the light of what is said in paragraph 19. Consequently, we have at least some vague reassurance that schools cannot avoid such issues and that we should, "offer balanced and factual information and...acknowledge the major ethical issues involved." We are not told what these major ethical issues might be or how they should be tackled.

Paragraph 22 states. "There is no place in any school in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which presents it as 'the norm', or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils. Indeed, encouraging or procuring homosexual acts by pupils who are under the age of consent is a criminal offence. It must also be recognised that for many people, including members of various religious faiths, homosexual practice is not morally acceptable, and deep offence may be caused to them if the subject is not handled with sensitivity by teachers if discussed in the classroom."

The question now arises as to the meaning of the term "norm' in this paragraph. There are three possibilities: (i) a statistical norm. In this context, lesbian and gay sexualities would appear not to be statistically normal and to present them as otherwise would be factually incorrect, (ii) a moral norm, in which case lesbian and gay sexualities are seen as abnormal, perhaps because of the mistaken belief that only heterosexual sex leading to procreation is morally justified, (iii) the pejorative use of the term 'normal' to connote society's general moral or aesthetic disapprobation of lesbian and gay sexualities.

There is evidence that the use of the term 'norm' is intended primarily within a moral context because paragraph 22, which includes this term, occurs under the heading of 'A moral framework for sex education.' This further supports my earlier argument that the circular makes the illegitimate inference that lesbians and gays are immoral because abnormal. The authors of circular 11/87 appear to be conflating the terms 'norm' and 'moral' without appreciating that there is no necessary link between what is normal and what is moral and without attempting to put forward the grounds on which such an assertion is based.

The draft circular (6.12.1993).

On 6 December 1993, the Secretary of State for Education issued a draft circular intended to replace advice about the provision of sex education in schools contained in Circular 11/87. The purpose of this circular is the same as that of 11/87, to advise on a new piece of legislation, in this case, the Education Act 1993, the main effect of

which is to allow parents to withdraw their children, "...from any or all parts of a school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science order."

Again, the three major themes of the family, 'parent power' and the inferiority of lesbian and gay sexualities are re-emphasised.

The structure of the proposed revision of circular 11/87 differs from that of the original circular in one important respect, the situation of the heading 'A Moral Framework for Sex Education'. This has been moved from its original place at the end of paragraph 17 to the beginning of the document, immediately after the introduction. Presumably, this was intended to highlight the importance of such a moral framework, though, once again, this framework is not spelt out in detail anywhere in the document.

The revised section on 'a moral framework for sex education' begins with the central proposition that, "The purpose of sex education is to provide knowledge about the processes of human reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships."

As in circular 11/87, we are advised that sex education should, "...present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, set within a clear moral framework." Although this "clear moral framework" is not closely defined, it is acknowledged that it has something to do with encouraging pupils to, "...consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others and sensitivity towards the needs and views of others. They should be enabled to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour, and to accept that both sexes should have responsibility in sexual matters. Last but not least, pupils should be helped to appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood. Teachers should, however, remember that many children come from backgrounds which do not correspond to this ideal: sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing personal hurt and giving unwitting offence."

This emphasis on a 'moral framework', or a "framework of values" demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between morality and education in sexuality. Such a relationship is not contingent: it is impossible for morality *not* to be linked to education in sexuality. Stevi Jackson (1984) makes the point that, "Even if sex is reduced to its biological facts, the selection and presentation of those facts implies moral messages. For example, a description of the sexual organs could emphasise either the reproductive or the sensual functions, thus conveying quite different images of sex. Moreover, all debates on sex education revolve around its supposed effects on the young, revealing that we are not simply seeking to offer them information, but are interested in influencing their behaviour." (pp. 135-6).

If one appreciates that one cannot avoid teaching sex education within some sort of moral framework, the purpose of circular 5/94 becomes clear: the kind of morality hinted at (rather than explicitly acknowledged) here is one which sees heterosexuality as the only legitimate and normal form of sexuality, and reproduction as the biological function which gives heterosexuality its legitimacy.

This passage gives great prominence to the assertion that the purpose of sex education is to study the processes of human reproduction. However, the sentence ends by also allowing for the study of "...the nature of sexuality and relationships". Thus the door is open, if narrowly, for tackling lesbian and gay issues.

The study of "the nature of sexuality and relationships" is a tall order indeed. However, the covering letter states that, "It (the final draft of the circular replacing 11/87) will include further annexes offering examples and models of school sex education policies and programmes, which the Department has commissioned and are currently in preparation."

It is important to note that there has been a change of emphasis with respect to the aims of sex education. In the 11/87 circular, we are told that the aims of sex education should be to, "...present facts in an objective and balanced manner so as to enable pupils to comprehend the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society..." In the new circular, the emphasis on the presentation

of objective and balanced facts remains, but the aim of sex education is now the study of, "...the nature of sexuality and relationships." Thus, there is a definite shift from the empirical, practical recognition and study of sexual attitudes and behaviour to a more theoretical approach, not necessarily linked to what is going on in society at all.

We are not enlightened as to 'the nature of sexuality', despite the prominence given to the notion. Of course, it could be argued that this emphasis on the nature of sexuality is broadening the discussion at this point, but it is likely that 'the nature of sexuality' is thought to be defined by reproduction. This would explain why the concepts of human reproduction, the nature of sexuality and relationships appear in the same sentence (in para. 7). Thus, it is implied that reproduction is what gives sexuality its legitimacy and moral acceptability. This is supported by John Patten's comments at the launch of the circular. He claimed that values such as "...respect for authority, personal responsibility, loyalty and fidelity as well as the teaching of the *mechanics of reproduction* (my italics)" should be taught. (Donald MacLeod in The Guardian, Tuesday 7 December, p. 4).

In paragraph 11 we are told that, "In <u>secondary schools</u>, sex education should encompass, in addition to facts about human reproductive processes and behaviour, consideration of the broader emotional and ethical dimensions of sexual attitudes."

The prohibition, in paragraph 22, of the 11/87 circular against presenting homosexuality as 'the norm' has been deleted, but John Patten made it clear, at the launch of the draft circular, on 6 December 1993, that, "Teachers should tell pupils that marriage is better than single parenthood and heterosexuality better than homosexuality when it comes to giving sex education." (Donald MacLeod in The Guardian, Tuesday 7 December, p. 4).

Paragraph 8 of the draft circular re-emphasises the importance of 'parent power'. We are advised that, "The teaching offered by schools should be complementary and supportive to the role of parents. *The more successful schools are in achieving this, the less the likelihood that parents will wish to exercise their right of withdrawal.*"

Whilst teaching should aim to be complementary and supportive to the role of parents whenever possible, this cannot be an absolute principle. As I shall argue in the next chapter, it is also important that teaching sometimes provides a challenge and a contrast to the values offered within the family, not all of which may be morally justifiable. It must also be recognised that children need to make independent judgements about the things they learn within their families. Only in this way will they make morality their own and build their individual moral character.

The right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education is being used here as a threat in order to ensure that teachers 'toe the line' as far as teaching 'what is acceptable to parents' is concerned.

It could be argued that parents have a special responsibility for their children deriving from their intimate knowledge of their personalities, levels of understanding, etc. and that this is the basis of their right of withdrawal. However, one has to balance the right of parents to have some say in the education of their children with the right of the wider democratic community to provide young citizens with a broad and well-balanced education that will prepare them for life in the wider democratic community. As I shall argue in the next chapter, the state has a duty to educate children fully and freely to participate in this wider democratic community. Sex education is very much a part of this kind of democratic education.

It is far from clear why sex education should be a special case for withdrawal, apart from the unfounded fear that children may somehow be 'corrupted' by a sexual knowledge which they are not yet ready for. The fact is that children experience sexual feelings and are able to articulate these feelings, discuss them and ask questions about them in the right setting. It is true that some children are reluctant to discuss sexual matters and there is a sense in which they are perhaps not mature enough to cope with such information. In this case, children should not be forced to participate actively in discussion, though allowing them to 'take a back seat' in sex education lessons might positively encourage them to come to terms with questions of sexuality in their own way and in their own time.

Children who are diffident about discussing sexual matters are not going to be ruined for life because they do not feel able fully to participate in sex education lessons.

The fact that education in sexuality can be controversial, that there can be real disagreement between students, teachers and parents on the issues raised is not a sufficient reason for not fully discussing and studying these issues in schools.

Circular 5/94.

The final circular on the Education Act 1993: <u>Sex Education in Schools</u> (5/94) issued on 6 May, 1994 is substantially the same as the draft circular which preceded it. Its tone is less dictatorial with phrases like "The Secretary of State considers..." (para. 10), or "In the Secretary of State's view..." (para. 11) replacing the more definitive pronouncements and assertions concerning sex education in the draft circular.

The draft circular promised us, "...annexes offering examples and models of school sex education policies *and programmes.*" (my italics), but the final circular offers us only, "Guidance on Good Practice in developing a school Sex Education Policy" (pp. 22-29). No sex education programmes are forthcoming.

In *Annex A* (p. 17) the only the definition of sex education we are presented with is that provided by the Education Act 1993, "...a definition of sex education which includes education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases." It goes on to state that, "The law does not however define what else is included in sex education; and the Secretary of State has no statutory power to prescribe, by subordinate legislation, the content of sex education." Although this broad definition of sex education provides a loophole for lesbian and gay issues to be dealt with, it is also indicative of the Secretary of State's reluctance to offer a comprehensive definition of sex education, other than to indicate what he considers to be some of its essential content.

Paragraph 8 of the draft circular has now been moved to the beginning of circular 5/94 (p. 5), with the heading, 'The Role of Parents', thus giving 'parent power' more emphasis.

This is followed by 'A Moral Framework for Sex Education' which is substantially the same as the corresponding section in the draft circular. There are two minor changes of emphasis: firstly, this section now begins, fairly negatively, with the statement that the Secretary of State recognises that sex education is a "difficult issue", secondly, the moral framework being proposed is now clearly recognised as the Secretary of State's own view:

"*In his view*, the purpose of sex education *should be* to provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction." (5/94, p. 6).

Compare this to the draft circular which states, "The purpose of sex education *is* to provide knowledge about the processes of human reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships."

On p. 6 of circular 5/94, human reproduction is not given so much prominence (it appears last on the list) and there is a new and welcome emphasis on "loving relationships".

The new circular contains a paragraph (31), not included in the draft circular of December 1993:

"There will be occasions when teachers and other professionals giving sex education have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particularly explicit issues raised by an individual pupil. It is unlikely to be appropriate to deal with such issues with the whole class. *Teachers should normally discuss the child's concerns first with the parents*, to see how they would like the matter to be handled. ...In exceptional circumstances, where the teacher has reason to believe that a child may be distressed or in danger, it may be appropriate for the teacher to speak individually to the child, before consulting the parents, to clarify the basis for the concerns..." (p. 11).

This is going to make it very difficult to talk about sexual matters on a one-to-one basis. Instead of respecting teachers' professional judgement, the Secretary of State has here reinforced the climate of apprehension, generated by Section 28, encouraging a reluctance to discuss any personal issues with individual students. This is a tragedy because students often wish to discuss personal matters arising from sex education lessons on an individual basis. A significant proportion of these students find it either difficult or impossible to discuss intimate details with their parents. Yet we are now being advised to contact parents first before speaking to their children.

For lesbian and gay students who disclose their sexualities to teachers within the context of a private discussion, it is very often highly inadvisable for the teacher to communicate what was discussed with parents. Many parents share the prejudices of society with regard to lesbian and gay sexualities. It is not uncommon for young people to be thrown out of their homes because they identify or are identified as lesbian or gay.

The implication of the draft circular and the final version (5/94) is that sexualities are "difficult" or even dangerous, to be ignored or at least 'handled very carefully'. This attitude is a danger to participatory democracy itself because it discourages and limits human beings' essential freedom to make socially responsible, independent, well informed judgements and choices of their own in every area of their lives.

The draft circular of December 1993 nowhere mentions lesbians and gays explicitly, though their existence might be implied in the phrases, "...sexuality and relationships" (par. 7) and "...the broader emotional, and ethical dimensions of sexual attitudes." (para. 11). The fact is that any form of sexuality other than heterosexuality is simply ignored.

In circular 5/94, homosexuality is mentioned under the heading of 'Other Provisions'. Here we have a quotation from Section 28's prohibition of Local Authorities from "...intentionally promoting homosexuality or publishing material with that intention, and from

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promoting the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship." (p.19).

Sexual discourses.

Section 28 and recent D.F.E. circulars relating to sex education can be seen, in part, as a response to A.I.D.S. hysteria and the moral panic that accompanied it. However, despite the adverse effects of government policy and advice, it is also the case that they have generated important discourses about sex and sexualities.

Wayne Dynes, in the preface to The Encyclopaedia of Homosexuality (St. James Press, 1990) observes that, "The love that dare not speak its name is now, in spite of or because of AIDS, shouting it from the rooftops, and in many voices. Almost as much scholarship on homosexuality has appeared since 1969 as in the previous hundred years, even in the wake of Freud and Hirschfeld, and with each passing year the volume increases." (p. ix).

Michel Foucault recognises the importance of such sexual discourses. Sex had been prohibited, barred and masked since the classical age, a time when sex was identified as "the secret". He sees the seventeenth century as the age of repression (Foucault, The History of Sexuality. An introduction.). This period of the Church's history was the origin of many important sexual discourses, beginning with pronouncements and advice relating to sex.

With the deliberations and pronouncements of the Council of Trent (in the mid sixteenth century) came an elaboration of how 'sins of the flesh' should be confessed. Spiritual manuals and confessionals would later direct the penitent to mention sins of the flesh in as much detail as possible. "...not only consummated acts, but sensual touchings, all impure gazes, all obscene remarks,...all consenting thoughts." (Alfonso de Liguori, Preceptes sur le sixieme commandement, 1835). By the end of the eighteenth century, Sade takes up the challenge. He uses words which seem to be borrowed from the treatises of spiritual direction: "Your narrations must be decorated with the most numerous and searching details; the precise way and extent to which we may judge how the passion you describe relates to human manners and man's character is determined by your

willingness to disguise no circumstance; and what is more, the least circumstance is apt to have an immense influence upon the procuring of that kind of sensory irritation we expect from your stories." (Foucault, 1984, p. 21).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the author of <u>My Secret Life</u> takes the confessor's advice to 'tell all' in intimate detail! This is an account of all the sexual episodes experienced by the anonymous author throughout his lifetime. There were eleven volumes and only a few copies were printed.

Foucault concludes that, "...in an epoch dominated by (highly prolix) directives enjoining discretion and modesty, he was the most direct and in a way the most naive representative of a purisecular injunction to talk about sex. " (Op. cit., p. 22).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, population was acknowledged as a major economic and political problem. This occasioned detailed studies of the effectiveness of contraceptives, fertility, health, illness, diet, etc. "Between the state and the individual, sex became an issue, and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledge, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it." (Op. cit., p. 26). Of course, at times, discourse was limited and even silenced, but sex was very much on the agenda.

Foucault sees the 'Christian Pastoral' (i.e. confessional manuals and practices) and the need to expose sex as absolutely crucial to the burgeoning of sexual discourses. Sex had to be confessed, brought into the open. "What is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as *the* secret." (Op. cit., p. 35).

He notes that the repression of all forms of pleasure whose object was not procreation continued throughout the nineteenth century. Up to the end of the eighteenth century, three major codes governed sexual practices: canonical law, the Christian Pastoral and the civic law. These were all centred on matrimonial relations. The 'stable married couple' became '*the norm*', a concept the inadequacy of which I exposed in chapter three. This was no longer questioned or

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scientifically investigated. At the same time, the sexualities of children, those who were not attracted to the opposite sex, and various manias, obsessions, etc. came under scrutiny. This process led to, "...the setting apart of the 'unnatural' as a specific dimension in the field of sexuality." (Op. cit. p. 39).

In our day, discourse centred on the A.I.D.S. epidemic has led to the kind of positive and negative effects broadly described by Foucault. Positively, A.I.D.S. has been highly effective in putting sex firmly on the political agenda. Sexual behaviours are now more freely discussed than ever, especially within the context of safer sex. Lesbian and gay sexualities are also widely discussed. This has had an impact on every area of our lives. The media have begun to discuss lesbian and gay issues. Television companies in this country have screened lesbian and gay seasons (such as Channel Four's 'Out on Tuesday') as well as films such as Brideshead Revisited, E.M. Foster's Maurice, Prick Up Your Ears, Torch Song Trilogy, Longtime Companion, etc., plays, documentaries, arts programmes and soap operas (such as East Enders and Brookside) dealing with lesbian and gay issues.

Discourse centred on A.I.D.S. has also had negative effects. It is important to realise that since the identification of A.I.D.S. in the U.S.A. in 1981 it has been strongly associated with marginalised, oppressed or feared groups. Jeffrey Weeks (Aggleton & Homans, 1988) notes that at first it was associated with Haitians, and subsequently with blacks (a disproportionate number of American sufferers are black); with injecting drug users; with prostitutes and with gays. A.I.D.S. has fed into much deeper anxieties and fears that find a focus in society's racism and homophobia. The result has been fairly predictable: a moral panic rooted in fear of the disease, and fuelled by the search for scapegoats.

Patrick J. Buchanan wrote in New York Post (May 24, 1983) that, "...homosexuals have declared war upon nature, and now nature is exacting an awful retribution." (Quoted in Weeks, 1985, p. 48). James Anderton, the then Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, attributed the spread of A.I.D.S. to "degenerate conduct" in the form of

"obnoxious sexual practices" and described gays as "swirling around in a human cesspit of their own making." (Greenberg, 1988, p. 478).

Weeks sees one of the major changes in the organisation of moral behaviour in Britain over the past century as the detachment of sexual from religious norms. By the 1960s, many of the Christian churches (ranging from the liberal Quakers to the traditional Church of England) abandoned attempts to impose their morals on the whole of society. The Quakers began to support a less moralistic legal code (see Hall, Reformism and the legislation of consent and C. Davies, 'Moralists, Causalists, Sex Law and Morality' in Armytage, et. al, Changing Patterns of Sexual Behaviour.). A distinction was made between individual morality and the social order. The role of the state was now seen as guarantor of the social order, it was not considered appropriate for the state to interfere with individual morality. This was the position broadly endorsed in the law reforms of the 1960s relating to a whole cluster of sexual matters, including homosexuality, abortion, censorship and divorce.

These changes were never accepted by moral conservatives or by many of the churches in Britain. Since the 1960s, minorities advocating 'moral absolutism' and 'social purity' have developed. Mary Whitehouse (of the Viewers and Listeners Association) with her media campaigns and Victoria Gillick with her campaigns centred on sexuality and contraception, were backed by more sinister people inside and outside Parliament, including members of the Conservative Family Campaign.

A.I.D.S. has allowed these "moral entrepreneurs" (Weeks borrows this phrase from Becker, 1963, p. 147) to increase their influence. In recent years, growing anxiety has been expressed with regard to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as herpes and hepatitis B. From the moral right's point of view, if A.I.D.S. is also a sexually transmitted disease, then it must be the case that 'promiscuity' is not only wrong, but it kills. Thus gay men, traditionally thought of and described as 'promiscuous', the main sufferers of the disease in the West, became symbolic of this moral decline. "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6: 23).

These beliefs are a feature of the homosexual as well as heterosexual moral right. J. Martin Stafford (1988), for example, links the spread of A.I.D.S. to promiscuity per se, regardless of the sexualities of those who engage in it. However he also acknowledges a link between his stereotyped ideas about 'lesbian and gay promiscuity' and the spread of H.I.V. and A.I.D.S.:

"In the 1980's much harm has been inflicted by the publicity surrounding A.I.D.S.- a sexually transmitted disease which is rightly associated with promiscuity and loose-living of the kind which many homosexual 'spokespersons' were once only too happy to condone, although not all those who have contracted this disease are guilty of such faults...Accordingly, the unsavoury images of homosexuality which A.I.D.S. has helped to promote have militated against its acceptance as potentially a responsible and legitimate way of living." (Op. cit., p. 28).

Stafford defines promiscuity in terms of "...'less durable liaisons in which there is the intention to keep deep emotional involvement and personal commitment to a minimum'. By this definition, which I find attractive, the criterion is related more to intention than to conduct." Op. cit., , p. 59, *note 13*). Stafford is assuming that he can judge the intentions of people with A.I.D.S. when they chose to have sexual encounters. He is implying that the majority of people with A.I.D.S. sought to have as many sexual partners as possible and to have sex for its own sake with the explicit intention of limiting deep emotional involvement and personal commitment. What grounds has Stafford for assuming that people's intentions are so readily available for scrutiny or judgement?

Stafford and other members of the moral right seem unaware that the cause of A.I.D.S. is not "loose-living", but H.I.V. This virus has attacked all sorts of people: those who have had only one sexual encounter, those who have had few and those who have had many. His remarks about A.I.D.S. do not fall far short of the tabloids who announced the onslaught of a "Gay Plague". There is a need for clarity of thought here: what is dangerous is not the number of partners one has, but the kind of sexual behaviour one engages in. We must all be wary of engaging in unsafe sex regardless of our sexual orientation.

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Unfortunately, many moralists of the right have used the A.I.D.S. epidemic as a stick with which to beat those who live what they see as 'promiscuous' lifestyles, employing such distinctions as 'innocent' and 'guilty' victims, as if it were possible for a virus to act as judge and jury in a case of life and death.

Colin McGinn (1992) emphasises that micro-organisms don't have any moral views about sexual morality, "...they are just using the most convenient way to invade another organism. If sex didn't involve any kind of contact, of the kind that micro-organisms can exploit- say, you did it over the phone- there would be no sexually transmitted diseases, no matter *how* promiscuous and irresponsible this telephone sex was. " (p. 58).

These remarks are important because the way we view lesbian and gay sexualities in this age of A.I.D.S. will have a profound impact on the way we present such sexualities, lifestyles and issues in the curriculum. It is proper that we discuss promiscuous sexual behaviour in any course of study dealing with human sexuality. However, *issues about whether promiscuity is or is not morally right are separate from beliefs about the cause of A.I.D.S.* It is improper to claim that promiscuous behaviour is the actual cause of diseases like A.I.D.S. This is a confusion of the metaphors of moral 'disease' and 'decay' with the physical effects of disease.

Jeffrey Weeks acknowledges the, "...'unfinished revolution' in attitudes to sexuality in general and to homosexuality in particular. There have been many fundamental changes in the past thirty years, but their impact has been uneven and fragmented, producing frustration as well as social progress, new tensions as well as the alleviation of old injustices. Secularisation, liberalisation, changes in the pattern of relationships have all taken place. But they have left deep residues of anxiety and fear, which A.I.D.S. as a social phenomenon has fed on and reaffirmed." (Aggleton & Homans, 1988, p. 15).

These "deep residues of anxiety and fear" are what led to the enactment of section 28. The echoes of something Mary Whitehouse once said can be detected in section 28 and the circulars that followed it, "Over recent years homosexuality has been represented

as being perfectly normal...But now the laughing is over." (The Guardian, 22 February, 1985, Aggleton & Homans, 1988, p. 13).

As I argue in chapter seven, lesbian and gay issues cannot be ignored. They exist within our educational institutions, like it or not. They are explored within playgrounds, classrooms and common rooms, bars and seminar rooms throughout the country and around the world. It is not our task, nor is it possible, simply to 'introduce' such issues into our educational institutions, since these issues are already there. On the contrary, it is our task to acknowledge such issues and find ways of engaging with the whole range of discourses on sexualities that emanate from our educational communities, their life and work.

The most urgent task for educationalists is to work towards the abolition of laws such as section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1988 and circulars such as 5/94 which encourage heterosexism, replacing them with advice and guidance which promotes education about lesbian, gay and heterosexualities in a spirit of freedom, honesty and integrity.

The Promotion of Positive Images of Lesbian and Gay Sexualities.

This thesis is a direct refutation of the requirement of section 28 that lesbian and gay sexualities should not be 'promoted'.

It has long been accepted within educational circles that racist and sexist stereotypes need to be countered with positive images. It is necessary to promote positive images of lesbian gay sexualities in order to counterbalance the negative and misleading stereotypes that abound in our society. This would have three desirable effects: (i) opportunities for consciousness-raising in this area would be more abundant, (ii) young people, particularly young lesbians and gays, could be provided with positive role models to live up to, (iii) people's negative attitudes towards lesbians and gays could be effectively challenged.

Heterosexist attitudes and beliefs are not effectively countered solely by rational argument, since they often spring from irrational

and illogical feelings and prejudices. What is needed, in addition to rational argument, is a 'change of heart', a shift in moral perspective. This is affected by what is often described as 'consciousness-raising', meaning either that a person has come to feel differently or hold more positive views about lesbians and gays, or that they realise that a value they are committed to (say, respect for persons) applies in an area in which they had not realised it did.

Consciousness-raising in this area may be brought about by encouraging people to share their views about sexualities with others in a supportive atmosphere and by giving them the time and space to do so. It may also be brought about by challenging prejudiced and stereotyped views, but in my experience, the most effective form of consciousness-raising comes from talking to, living with and working alongside lesbian and gay people and understanding first-hand that they are as worthy of respect as anyone else.

It is of fundamental importance that we positively challenge negative stereotypes and attitudes relating to lesbian and gay sexualities. Failure to do this undermines the rights of lesbians and gays to participate within the wider democratic community, it also undermines democracy itself, as I argued in chapter one.

Effective participation involves a positive and radical movement towards *social change*. It is not sufficient to formulate policies or espouse worthy ideals. The democratic community has to examine the prejudice, discrimination and oppression that lead to many citizens' disempowerment through lack of material and educational resources and political power. It must strive to overcome these obstacles to full participation. This is the task of everyone within the democratic community, it is not limited to educational institutions or to lesbians and gays themselves.

More fundamentally, building on my identification, in chapter one, of personal autonomy as a key value of democracy: it is necessary for young people to engage with lesbian and gay issues in an unbiased manner so that they can examine a wide range of morally acceptable sexualities and ways of life. This kind of study is part of a broad

democratic education which encourages students to exercise their personal autonomy by making independent, informed judgements.

Irrational bigotry and prejudice shown towards lesbians and gays can be partly challenged and combated by broad well-planned curricula coupled with pedagogical skill and ingenuity, but we must also consider the hidden curriculum and the way such issues are responded to in the lives and cultures of school and college communities.

Only when we re-examine, challenge and reform educational institutions' responses to sexualities will we be able to create communities of learning where lesbian and gay students and teachers will feel sufficiently safe and encouraged to reveal their sexualities and act as effective role models for students and staff.

It is within this context that the radically political nature of education in sexuality can be seen. Consciousness-raising, rational argument, curriculum development, sound policy planing and implementation, and radical social change are the pre-conditions for any truly effective education in this area.

The following three chapters will examine the control, form and content of democratic education systems that are necessary to support and promote the basic ideals of participatory democracy, ensuring that the sexualities of lesbian and gay citizens are acknowledged and discussed.

CHAPTER 5.

THE CONTROL OF EDUCATION WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC STATE.
Introduction.

An education system based on participatory principles must ensure that students learn about the many forms of oppression that exist in society. This is important because the degree to which citizens are able to participate will depend, to a large extent, on their position within society. Oppressed people very often have their societal influence and power limited or eliminated altogether. The state should consequently ensure two things: (i) that oppression and discrimination are combated within the education system itself, (ii) that all students have the opportunity to learn about the diverse forms of oppression that threaten participatory democracy.

In chapter one, I claimed that it is not sufficient to put forward a theoretical case for lesbian and gay equality and liberation, it is also necessary to examine the actual society one is addressing and to seek ways of preparing people for free, informed and open debate on this important issue.

This chapter will explore, in practical terms, the manner in which education within a participatory democracy should be controlled, balancing its role in encouraging the autonomous and effective participation of all citizens with safeguarding the continuation of democracy. I begin with a general examination of the role the state should play in protecting and promoting the essential elements of a democratic education system. I go on to consider the extent to which parents and children should participate within such a system.

I will raise three questions: (i) Who, within the democratic community, should determine what sort of education is best and the basic structure and content of education? (ii) To what extent should the democratic state promote what it considers to be the right kind of education for its citizens? (iii) How should the democratic education system be controlled and managed in practical terms within local and national government?

The participation of parents in a democratic education system.

T.H. McLaughlin (Halstead, 1994) provides us with a useful account of the two sides in the debate about the nature and scope of the moral rights parents have over their children.

The 'Parents as determiner' view sees parental rights in education as, "fundamental, overriding and extensive. On this view...there is a suspicion of the priority of 'professional' or 'political' judgement in educational matters and of a common form of education provided by the state. The child's educational experience is seen as properly determined to the greatest possible extent by the child's own parents and family." (Op. cit., p. 94).

The other side of the argument is characterised by what McLaughlin calls the 'Parents as trustee' view. "On this view, it is denied that parents *qua* parents have any rights over their children's upbringing and education independent of the duties they have in relation to these activities. One of the most basic of these duties is to enable their children to become rationally autonomous persons and democratic citizens. The fundamental rights on this view are those of the children, which are merely 'held in trust' on their behalf by parents. This view is suspicious of parental choice of school as straightforwardly conducive to the satisfaction of these parental duties, and favours children being educated together within common schools." (Ibid.).

Coons & Sugarman (1978) illustrate well the Parents as Determiner view, putting forward a case in support of the rights of 'the family' and its place within the education system. Since Victorian times, the concept of the family has been used in a distinctly moral context. It is often said that the child must learn about the moral life (and things pertaining to the moral life) within the 'privacy' of the family where the parents' influence can be brought to bear. Public institutions such as the education system have no right to interfere in these family matters.

A good contemporary example of this kind of 'family centred morality' is circular 5/94, examined in detail in the previous chapter. Here, the British government stresses that, "The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. Schools should therefore recognise that parents are key figures in helping their children to cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. The teaching offered by schools should be complementary to and supportive to the role of parents, and should have regard to parents' views about its content and presentation..." (paragraph 8).

When 'the family' and its rights are spoken of, what is often meant is that the rights of parents over children should be established. The concept of the family is unhelpful in this context because it disguises some of the real issues in question. The fact is that both parents and children have rights.

Education within a democratic society requires that we expose our children to as wide a variety of experiences, and what Gutmannn (1987) describes as, "forms of the good life", as possible. This breadth of experience is not possible if we confine the whole of a child's general or moral education to the family. The British government, typically, does not offer us any arguments in support of its brand of family centred morality, but we can gain some insight into their moral viewpoint by examining two arguments put forward by those who defend the parents as determiner view.

Firstly, the argument from progenitorship. This involves the view that parents have rights over their children because their children are their off-spring. This argument fails to emphasise sufficiently that children are essentially separate human beings with separate rights in virtue of their being separate persons with individual consciousness. It follows that children's interests and needs are not necessarily connected with those of their parents. They may either coincide or diverge from time to time. Therefore, when we consider how children are to be educated within a democratic society, we must look beyond the family for the provision of a good, broad education.

A second argument used to defend parents' rights is the principle of subsidiarity. Coons and Sugarman (1978) define this principle in the following way, "...responsibility for dependent individuals should belong to the smaller and more intimate rather than the larger and more anonymous community to which the individual belongs." (p. 49). Coons and Sugarman believe that the family should consult widely on matters concerning their child's education, but that in the end, such decisions must be left with the families concerned.

Amy Gutmann notes that in many cases, the family itself cannot provide a sufficiently broad education, though it can, of course, contribute to it significantly. "...they (parents) still have a duty to permit, if not to prepare, their children to choose among a range of conceptions of the good life that differ substantially from those held by the family." (P.P.A., 1980, Vol. 9, no. 4, p. 342). She believes that, "We can justify limitations on parents' rights because our valuation of liberal freedom to pursue differing conceptions of the good life is dependent upon that freedom being exercised by beings who have been raised under conditions conducive to choice." (Op. cit., pp. 350-1).

The family already has considerable influence on the child for the majority of the time. We must see the role of the school as adding a new dimension to students' education, going far beyond the necessarily limited confines and perspectives of the family.

Joel Feinberg points to the "closed circle" of influence that parents seem to have over their children. "...the parents help create some of the interests whose fulfilment will constitute the child's own good. They cannot aim at an independent conception of the child's own good in deciding how to do this, because to some extent, the child's own good (self-fulfilment) depends on which interests the parents decide to create. The circle is thus closed." (Aiken & Lafollette, 1980, p. 148).

A democratic education system provides opportunities outside the family for the child to grow and develop. It is the task of the family to encourage, not stunt, this growth. This argument is based on the empirical fact that children are not just members of a family, they are also members of the wider democratic community.

Does this mean that parents have no rights at all? P.A. White (1983, ch. 5) says that, strictly speaking, parents do not have 'rights'. She prefers to characterise parents' responsibilities in terms of duties. Parents have three principal duties: (i) those covering educational matters and involving an intimate knowledge of the student based on a personal relationship with her or him, (ii) that of an intermediary between formal educational agencies and the individual child, (iii) to introduce the child to aspects of the good life beyond formal education in school.

White emphasises that parents have no right to impose any particular conception of the good life on their children, especially by way of imposing indoctrinatory forms of education on them (e.g. in a Catholic or Public school). This is based on the argument that there can be no moral experts as to what constitutes the good life for individuals.

The state's role is to facilitate students freely to choose the kind of life they wish to live. The state has the right to specify what general forms of education will best facilitate this kind of choice.

White concludes by defining two sorts of parental enabling rights: (i) rights to help them carry out duties connected with providing intimate knowledge of the student and a personal relationship with her or him, (ii) The right to interest others in their hobbies, pastimes, concerns, etc.

What about parents who object to lesbian and gay issues being dealt with in schools? The right of parents to withdraw their children from any or all aspects of sex education other than those which are statutory requirements of the National Curriculum Science Order are enshrined in section 241 of the Education Act 1993.

Parents now have the right to withdraw their children from sex education *without giving a reason.* This means that parents can withdraw their children from sex education even if their reasons for doing so are reprehensible or ill-considered. This legislation fundamentally misunderstands the purpose and aims of democratic education.

I have already argued that parents do not have the right to override what the democratic state considers, after proper consultation and reflection, to be the best form of education for its young citizens. In cases where education in sexuality is confined to the family because the child has been withdrawn from school sex education, the education of the child concerned will be limited. She or he will be exposed to a restricted range of moral, cultural and social attitudes and values. This is unacceptable in a plural democratic society in which citizens should be encouraged at least to understand and tolerate religions, moralities, sexualities and other aspects of life which differ from their own.

Since the focus of democratic education in schools is children and young people, this kind of parental power is unjustifiable on democratic grounds. The freedom of parents to remove their children from this important aspect of education is also the freedom to deny their children the liberty to learn about fundamental features of their growth and development as people and as citizens.

Parents who do not wish their children to attend education in sexuality courses, for whatever moral or religious reason, should not have the right to withdraw their children for two reasons:

(i) They are at liberty to teach their children what they consider to be morally acceptable within the family setting, but children have the right to expect to encounter attitudes and values which may differ from those held by their families. In this way, democratic education provides a positive challenge. The child is able to test what she or he has learned against what she or he encounters within the wider democratic school community.

(ii) The right of withdrawal from education in sexuality courses undermines equality of opportunity for lesbians and gays. In very many cases, the real reason why parents withdraw their children from education in sexuality is because they do not want their children to learn about contraception, abortion, or lesbian and gay sexualities, which they object to on moral or religious grounds. Children should be allowed to make up their own minds on these issues. Failure to allow them to do so may be likened to a situation where parents are permitted to withdraw their children from

aspects of anti-sexist or anti-racist education because they believe that women or people of colour are inferior.

Parents who hold strong moral or religious beliefs must, in the end, accept the state's right to decide on the right kind of education for its citizens. Religious and moral education are important aspects of young people's education, but parents must accept that these subjects are taught from a secularist point of view. This is necessary because some people in our society are agnostic or atheist and many belong to a diversity of religions with contradictory beliefs, generating irresolvable moral and religious conflicts. These irresolvable conflicts must be openly acknowledged as part of life within a pluralist democratic community.

The essential requirement is that religious parents agree to their children learning about a variety of other religions, cultures, moralities, beliefs and ways of life, many of which differ greatly from their own. This is fundamental to living harmoniously in a pluralistic democratic community.

The right of the state to paternalistic intervention in the lives of children.

In chapter one, I argued that personal autonomy is an important educational aim. In what circumstances, then, can the state justify the limitation of children's personal autonomy for the purpose of securing what it considers to be the right sort of democratic education?

Amy Gutmann (P.P.A., 1980, p. 38) defines the concept of paternalism as, "...a standard justifying interference with a child's freedom of action by reference to the child's present or future interests." There are times when a child's freedom is restricted for its immediate good (e.g. physically preventing a child from touching a flame or crossing a busy road), but there are other occasions when a child's freedom is restricted for his or her long term good (e.g., by the state's insistence that children must attend school until they are sixteen, or by a parent's decision that their child comes home at a certain time).

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The right to exercise paternalism is based upon the empirical fact of the child's emotional, intellectual and physical immaturity and dependence. Children depend on adults for guidance, protection and material needs. Gutmann justifies paternalistic intervention using Rawls' Primary Good Standard (Rawls, 1990). If there are certain primary goods that adults would choose to have had provided for themselves as children, then one might justify paternalistic intervention that supplies these goods. Examples of such goods are adequate nutrition, health care, housing, familial affection, education as a democrat. Gutmann does not see primary goods as timeless or universal. They reflect a common understanding within a particular society of what goods rational individuals want provided for them in their society.

Feinberg (Aiken and Lafollette, 1980) also bases his argument for the exercise of paternalism in certain cases on the child's immaturity. He focuses on the child's immaturity in the sphere of freedom and identifies two senses of autonomy: (i) the capacity to govern oneself (this is a matter of degree), (ii) the sovereign authority to govern oneself (this is absolute within one's own moral boundaries). Children's capacity to govern themselves is limited by their immaturity, but they still have the sovereign right to exercise freedom within certain limitations imposed by their particular stage of development. "...recognition and enforcement of the right of self-determination (autonomy) is a causally necessary condition for the achievement of self-fulfilment (the individual's own good)." (p. 144). It is vital that the child is allowed to exercise autonomy within the self-imposed limitations of her or his emotional, moral and intellectual development.

A democratic education system based on the ideal of education for autonomy, should never sanction paternalistic intervention in the case of adults, with the exception of the mentally ill or retarded whose social, moral and intellectual capacities have been temporarily or permanently impaired. The ideal of personal autonomy should make us wary of interfering with the goals or life plans of mature adults, even if we disagree with them. We should also avoid cultural paternalism based on the idea of 'the noble savage', or the sort of colonialism exhibited by some Western countries. It is

largely for these reasons that we need to fix a rough barrier between childhood and adulthood, beyond which we want to restrict the use of paternalistic intervention by the state.

It is true that many children will be uninterested in or even hostile to some aspects of education which adults may consider to be fundamental. These aspects may include the formal subject areas of the curriculum or certain other subject areas and processes of teaching to be outlined in chapter seven. The state has the right to insist that children explore these aspects of education, despite their lack of enthusiasm or even hostility. It is important that young people learn perseverance, the ability to engage in and pursue activities which they may not initially see as important, interesting or worthwhile. They should be enabled to realise that activities which may initially seem boring or irrelevant often turn out to be important and worthwhile on closer scrutiny. This promotes open-mindedness.

The participation of children within a democratic education system.

When is a child not a child? Some would answer, 'When she or he is an adolescent', thus invoking that mid-way stage between childhood and adulthood. 'Coming of age' is a process, it does not happen instantaneously. The question as to when someone is no longer to be treated as a child is complex. Definitions of childhood can be divided into two basic types: Normative (concerning the needs, interests and capacities of people, their maturity of thought and action, etc.) and Institutional (the way the law determines who is and who is not to be treated as a child).

The law discriminates arbitrarily between adults and children, apportioning various rights at different stages of chronological development. The question as to when people are ready to assume certain responsibilities and hold certain rights depends on individual development, as any experienced teacher knows. The law can only roughly define the ages at which certain rights are applicable and it is clear that improvements could be made in the way it does this. The central problem concerning the adult/child distinction is well put by John Harris (K. Graham, 1982), "There are numerous children

whom it would be implausible to regard as incompetent and numerous adults whom it would be implausible to regard as anything else." (p. 37).

Despite the state's right to paternalistic intervention in the lives of children under certain circumstances, we must also recognise that children should learn to make autonomous choices and decisions on matters which concern them. *It is necessary to balance the need for paternalistic intervention with the need for education in autonomy.* The overall aim should be to maximise, whenever possible, the young person's socially responsible exercise of autonomy. The extent to which this is possible will depend on the intellectual and emotional maturity of the child concerned, but it will also depend on the sensitivity of the educational institution in providing real opportunities for the exercise of these freedoms. It is by participating as fully as possible within their educational communities that children are enabled to learn first-hand the real benefits of participatory democracy.

How the state should control curricula.

In what ways should the democratic community determine the form and content of education? David Bridges (J.P.E., 1979) believes that it is important for all sections of the democratic community (experts, teachers, students, parents and other citizens) to have some influence over what is taught and, I would add, the manner in which it is taught. I would also emphasise this as the only effective way that people will see the importance of democratic education, establishing ownership of and commitment to it.

The rationale Bridges gives for this form of decision-making is:

(a) A variety of ideas, hypotheses and policies are generated.

(b) False or bad ideas are subjected to criticism.

(c) The virtues of good ideas or opinions can be properly appreciated.

(d) All relevant interests and opinions can be represented.

(e) This system provides for the best accommodation of as many

opinions and talents as possible.

Yael Tamir (J.P.E., vol. 24, no. 2) supports the view that a wide variety of different sections of the democratic community should decide on the kind of education required in such a community. She claims that, strictly speaking, educators do not have a right to educate. The problem with establishing a right to educate is that this would allow the educator to supply any assumed deficiencies in someone's education according to a subjective and individual conception of what these deficiencies might be. Education can never be truly impartial because it reflects the cultural, moral and educational viewpoint of the educator. This is essentially why important educational decisions should not be left to a small number of individuals or certain sections of society but should be the responsibility of the democratic community as a whole.

Tamir's argument is based on the liberal belief (shared by Gutmann) that no-one has the right to determine the type of life others will live and that the only worthy type of education is one that promotes and protects the person's personal autonomy. In the case of children, Tamir feels that the justification for the type of education chosen should not be grounded in the preferences of parents, but in an independent argument about the nature of 'right education.'

"While the duties of educators towards children force them to make educational choices- regarding the cultural and moral horizons, and the kind of knowledge children should acquire- no educator has the right to make these choices. I suggest that such a right is not needed. In fact, to give the educator a right to educate can only injure the child." (Op. cit., p. 168). She concludes that children should be exposed to different ways of life from their parents and that education should express preferences, views and knowledge of a wide variety of different educators. Parents, state representatives and educators should all determine the child's education, but no single group has an exclusive or absolute right to educate.

It is consequently important that the general framework of the curriculum should be determined by the wider democratic community and controlled by the state in its name. Syllabus details should then be worked out by local education authorities.

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As to the way in which these representatives should control the curriculum, John White (Sockett, 1980, pp. 25-41) makes an important distinction between: (a) the control of syllabus details and (b) the control of the general framework of the curriculum. White's argument is that teachers should have control over syllabus details. However, because the general framework of the curriculum has important implications for the whole of society, decisions relating it should be made by a more representative body of people.

Amy Gutmann (1987), speaking within the context of the American education system, poses a problem with regard to the control of the curriculum: "At one extreme, delegating to local school boards full control over public schooling would reduce the U.S. to a collection of democratic city-states, totally neglecting our collective interest in a common education. At the other extreme, centralising all control at the national level would eliminate any effective democratic control over schools, leaving bureaucrats, administrators and teachers in de facto control." (p. 73).

Gutmann proposes a solution to this problem by advocating a Federal system of government. The central government should set down the absolute minimum structure of school and college curricula in order to promote autonomy and participation within the democratic community. It is then for the education authorities to decide how to implement these government policies within their areas. Within J. White's framework, the national government would control the general framework of the curriculum while local government would control the syllabus details, tailoring them to the cultural and social needs of each school community.

The limits of state control.

Isaiah Berlin is wary of too much state intervention or control. He believes that the liberal state's exercise of control should be used only to defend people's negative liberties. Negative liberty involves the idea that the state should not interfere with people's personal freedom of activity or thought. "...a frontier must be drawn between the area of private life and that of public authority." (Berlin, 1969, p. 124). His worry is that positive liberty may well involve the coercion of people by the state in the name of their own liberation.

The main rationale for promoting a large sphere of negative liberty is that it is essential for the promotion of positive liberty. Thus, negative liberty is *freedom from* coercion and interference by the state; positive liberty is *freedom to* exercise one's positive liberty (or personal autonomy).

Berlin's worries about the state interfering too much in people's positive liberty are to some extent justified. Roger Scruton, for example, argues that 'contentious issues' should be banned from schools. The intervention of government in this wholly undesirable way is now a reality in Britain with the appearance of section 28 of the Local Government Act, discussed at length in the previous chapter. Here it was acknowledged that a major consequence of this Act and the D.F.E. circulars that followed it, is that many teachers are very wary of tackling lesbian and gay issues. This is an attempt by the British government to restrict the democratic education of students to an intolerable degree by limiting their field of enquiry and exploration.

I argue for the view that there is a principled limitation on state control: the state should not determine what constitutes the good life or the right path for individuals. The state must remain agnostic in this area. However, J. White argues that the state should encourage people to co-operate with one another, thus engendering a sense of mature social responsibility and the kind of democratic virtues discussed in chapter two. The state should also guarantee people's freedom to pursue their own concerns privately (except where these are anti-social concerns) and without interference as far as possible because this goes some way towards safeguarding their positive liberty.

Amy Gutmann (1987) highlights an important dichotomy faced by state education: "Either we must educate children so that they are free to choose among the widest range of lives (given the constraints of cultural coherence) because freedom of choice is the paramount good, or we must educate children so that they will choose the life that we believe is best because leading a good life is the paramount good." (p. 36).

She concludes that "Neither alternative is acceptable: we legitimately value education not just for the liberty but also for the virtue that it bestows on children; and the virtue that we value includes the ability to deliberate among competing conceptions of the good." (Ibid.). Her point is that neither choice- freedom or virtue- is neutral. In any society (especially one that encourages democratic participation), many general aims in education are controversial because there will always be sections of society that disagree with them.

State educators do not have the right to indoctrinate students into believing that 'our way is best', states can be wrong about what constitutes the good life. Even if they were right, there is no guarantee that everyone will agree that this conception of the good life is for them. "...the objectively good life, defined as the life that is best for people who are rightly educated from birth, need not be the good life, or even the closest approximation of the good life, for people who have been wrongly educated." (Op. cit., p. 26). Gutmann believes that our good is always relative to our education and the choices we are capable of making for ourselves, our children and our communities. Therefore the state's role should never be the realisation of the good life for individuals through education.

The function of education within a democratic state is rather to enable and empower students freely to choose for themselves the lives they wish to pursue and the views of life they wish to hold, whilst respecting the well-being and life-plans of others.

Although we can never hope to have a consensus agreement on what constitutes the good life for a particular individual, John White feels that we can make certain generalisations and agree on what a good education is. We can state uncontroversially that everyone has the right to an education of some sort. Whilst we may not all agree on the rights and wrongs of a particular moral dilemma such as abortion, for example, we can agree that moral education should take place, even if we have different moral and political viewpoints as to what moral education should consist of.

John White outlines two important features of a good society: (a) its members are not egoists, they should have a genuine regard for the well-being of others as well as themselves. Society is not simply a collection of atomic individuals. Wittgenstein's private language argument dispenses with the notion of a pre-social individual. Members of a society should co-operate in order to function within that society. This co-operation is, in the broadest sense, political. There are two important implications of this for education: (i) we should encourage people to be other-regarding, to consider the needs and desires of others as well as their own because this is what builds and sustains the democratic community, (ii) in order to nurture this basic attitude, subjects like personal and social education, moral and political education must be included within school and college curricula and the state must ensure this inclusion.

(b) The good society must allow freedom to pursue one's own concerns in privacy and without interference. This is an argument for a broad curriculum in which people can decide which aspects of education will contribute to their well-being. "Since a good society will aim at promoting the well-being of individuals and since, as I should want to argue in a fuller account, the individual is to a certain extent the final authority on that in which his well-being consists, he must be left as free as possible to develop his own preferred way of life within the framework of his moral, including political, commitments."(J. White, P.P.E.S.G.B., 1976).

Amy Gutmann's notion of personal autonomy goes some way towards developing a clear notion of the limits of state control. She articulates personal autonomy in terms of what she calls the principles of "non-repression" and "non-discrimination". The principle of non-repression involves the idea of not preventing rational deliberation about different ways of life. It also involves inculcating character traits of the kind discussed in chapter two (e.g., respect for persons, toleration, etc.) which are the foundation of rational deliberation of various ways of life.

Gutmann (1987) claims that non-repression is not just *freedom from* repression, it is also the *freedom to* deliberate rationally among

different ways of life (a feature of autonomy discussed earlier in chapter one). "Rational deliberation remains the form of freedom most suitable to democratic society in which adults must be free to deliberate and disagree but constrained to secure the intellectual grounds for deliberation and disagreement among children." (p. 45).

Importantly, whilst non-repression is a limitation on democratic authority, its foundation is, at the same time, democratic education itself. "Because conscious social reproduction is the primary aim of democratic education, communities must be prevented from using education to stifle rational deliberation of competing concepts of the good life and the good society." (Ibid.)

The principle of non-discrimination extends the logic of non-repression. It acknowledges that education is open to all educable people. The effect of discrimination is to repress the capacity or desire of groups or individuals to participate in the processes that structure choice among good lives. The state must ensure that its educational establishments adhere to these two principles in order to safeguard personal autonomy.

Conclusions.

In summary:

1. The state should control education in the name of the democratic community. A representative assembly of citizens should determine the general form and content of education best suited to promote participatory democracy. Syllabus details should be worked out by local authorities, with regard to the cultural, educational and material needs of local educational institutions.

The rationale for this kind of state control is based on the argument that democratic education should seek to provide students with a wide variety of experiences and "forms of the good life." This cannot be provided by the family alone. Children are not only members of a family, they are also members of a much wider democratic community.

2. Therefore, there is no place, within the democratic community, for 'family centred morality', although families do have an important role to play in nurturing and supporting the aims of state education and in looking after the educational and social welfare of their children.

3. An important limitation on state control is that it should not specify what is constitutive of the good life, since there can be no 'moral experts' as to what will lead to an individual's happiness. The state's role is to facilitate students to live the lives they wish to live, while, at the same time, encouraging a sense of social responsibility.

It has sometimes been objected that encouraging co-operation, honesty, toleration, mutual respect for persons, etc. is the same as encouraging or promoting a particular conception of the good life. This is not the case: although these desirable character traits or virtues support democratic society and help to ensure that it functions along participatory lines, they do not specify in any detail what the good life consists in for that society or for any given individual within it.

4. The democratic state's right to specify the form and content of education best suited to its young citizens is a kind of state paternalism. The right to exercise such paternalism is based on the fact of the emotional and intellectual immaturity of children.

5. We must balance the need for paternalistic intervention by the state in certain circumstances with the need for children to learn how to become more autonomous. The overall aim should be, whenever possible, to maximise opportunities for the young person's exercise of socially responsible autonomy. Students must learn to participate freely and effectively within their educational institutions in order to see that participatory democracy works.

Finally, I would argue for Gutmann's position: It is not sufficient for the state to defend what Berlin calls negative liberty. Students must also be allowed to deliberate about different ways of life. However, the provision of opportunities for students to exercise their personal autonomy is inadequate of itself to ensure the proper

education of future citizens. A democratic education should also develop the kind of democratic personality discussed in chapter two. In practical terms, I shall argue that the kind of education outlined in chapter seven is the best means of fostering the exercise of socially responsible autonomy and developing such a personality. Such an education will also provide a context in which various forms of oppression, including lesbian and gay oppression, can be addressed and countered.

CHAPTER 6.

POLICY FORMATION, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN A DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION SYSTEM.

The acknowledgement of lesbian and gay issues within the lives and work of educational communities is not a simple one-way process of staff enabling students to appreciate the importance of such issues. This process of acknowledgement requires that both staff and students are made aware of the importance of the struggle for lesbian and gay equality and liberation. Therefore, the need for staff to explore such issues should be seen within the wider context of their continuing in-service training and development.

Focusing on the current needs and practices of educational institutions, this chapter examines the life and work of educational institutions, highlighting the importance of educational policies and exploring the significance of the way educational institutions are organised.

Simon Harris (1990) emphasises the practical importance of institution wide (in this case, whole school) policies. Individuals and even departments who take on lesbian and gay sexualities as an issue face the risk of homophobic behaviour and abuse from parents and/or children. It is therefore necessary to situate the work of individuals and departments within a supportive institution wide framework that recognises the value of the work being done and supports such work by offering a solid rationale for it, linking it to the institution's fundamental principles, policies and ethos.

"First it (a whole school policy) would depersonalise the issue, bringing it within the ambit of issues which concern the entire school. Second, it would set up agreed procedures, ensuring a unity of response and a coherence of objectives. It would remove accountability from an individual teacher or department and result in the headteacher's having to take clear responsibility for both its representation to parents, governors and the local education authority and its implementation within school." (Op. cit., p. 97).

Policies serve a dual purpose: they reflect the ethos of an institution and, at the same time, they help to define that ethos. Of course, the ethos of an institution cannot be reduced to a set of policies. However, such policies can offer a valuable insight into an educational institution's ethos.

Because policies are a reflection of a living institution, they must be open to continual evaluation and development. In this way, they can be used as a valuable tool for assessing the life and work of an institution and its development.

The institutional development plan, introduced with the enactment of the Education Reform Act 1988 is an excellent way of integrating the major aims and objectives of an educational institution, its fundamental principles and ethos. It is a very useful tool for planning and evaluation and is of relevance to educational institutions at all levels.

Such a plan will reflect, inter alia, all important institutional policies. Short, medium and long term aims for their effective implementation can then be established. It should include an element of resource planning so that a realistic appraisal of necessary resources (in terms of people, time, materials, etc.) is undertaken.

A certain type of ethos is necessary in order for lesbian and gay issues to be recognised and for lesbian and gay liberation to come about within our educational institutions. Without a supportive ethos, policies will not be effective. Central to such an ethos are the ideals of respect for persons and their differences in terms of race, sex, culture, class, ability and sexuality and equality of opportunity for all students and staff. Policies on equal opportunities, discipline, pastoral care and education in sexuality will help to establish, develop and support such an ethos and clearly articulate the institution's fundamental principles.

Equal opportunities.

Students should understand the need for equality of opportunity for lesbians and gays by becoming aware of the wider context of discrimination, the many ways in which their fellow citizens are

oppressed for a variety of reasons. This awareness often emanates from the 'hidden curriculum', the countless informal ways in which an institution expresses its ethos.

Educational institutions all too often mirror the bigotry and prejudices of society. It is therefore necessary to develop, promote and effectively implement an equal opportunities policy which will reflect the fundamental principles and aims of the institution in this important area and seek positively to combat heterosexism and all other forms of oppression.

It is important to examine the meaning of equality of opportunity in order to ensure that policies in this area are effective in expressing and achieving what they intend.

Alan H. Goldman (E.F. Paul, 1987) provides us with a useful definition: "An opportunity is a chance to attain some goal or obtain some benefit. More precisely, it is the lack of some obstacle or obstacles to the attainment of some goal(s) or benefit(s). Opportunities are equal in some specified or understood sense when persons face roughly the same obstacle or obstacles of roughly the same difficulty of some specified or understood sort. In different contexts we might have different sorts of benefits or obstacles in mind...we generally divide obstacles into two broad classes: those imposed by the social system or by other persons in the society, for example the hardships of life in the lower economic classes or barriers from prejudices based on race, sex or ethnic background; and those imposed by natural disabilities, for example, low intelligence or lack of talents." (Op. cit., p. 88).

James W. Nickel (Op. cit.) describes opportunities as, "...states of affairs that combine the absence of insuperable obstacles with the presence of means-internal or external-that give one a good chance of overcoming the obstacles that remain. A means that provides only a remote chance of reaching a goal will not be thought of as an opportunity. On the other hand, a means does not have to be a *guarantee* (my italics) of reaching a goal in order to present a genuine and valuable opportunity." (p. 110). In simple terms, equality of opportunity is about 'evening up the score' for those who are unjustly discriminated against or disadvantaged. Nickel sees equal

opportunity as a norm or goal, a principle identifying which opportunities ought to be equalised to some degree.

John White, in a paper entitled <u>The dishwasher's child: education and the end of egalitarianism</u> (1994) challenges the idea that a society equal in terms of wealth, income, personal well-being or power, is desirable in itself.

Contemporary writers such as Nagel and Nielsen believe that egalitarianism is a good in itself, but they give no reason for valuing such equality. Nielsen can only point to his 'pre-theoretical sense of unfairness' at, "...the existence of very different life prospects of equally talented, equally energetic children from very different social backgrounds: say, the children of a successful businessman and a dishwasher." (Nielsen, 1985, p. 8).

White believes that whilst we may well share Nielsen's sense of unfairness at the poorer life-prospects of the dishwasher's child, we do not necessarily have to accept that this also involves advocating a society in which all life prospects are *equal.* What is undesirable is that the dishwasher's child's life prospects are so poor. We can improve this situation by supporting the child's well-being. We do not necessarily have to wish that the dishwasher's child's prospects are equal to those of the businessman's child. The fundamental ethical consideration is that "...all human beings' interests are equally worthy of consideration." (White, p.141). This ethical consideration does not necessarily imply equality in the distribution of goods or burdens, in life prospects, or economically. "Even when both the dishwasher's child and the businessman's child have what they need to lead a flourishing life, one may be much richer than the other." (Ibid.).

Following Frankfurt (1988), White rejects the claim that, "...equality in the distribution of goods, including economic goods, is an intrinsically desirable social goal." (Ibid.). What is morally important is not that everyone should have the *same,* but that everyone should have *enough.*

A.H. Goldman (E.F. Paul, 1987), arguing for a principle of distribution of goods rejected by White, acknowledges that there are sometimes good reasons for overriding such a principle. One such reason is *incentive*. "If society is to influence the behaviour of its members in socially desirable directions, then it must utilise positive rewards and negative sanctions. The former will include the prospect of higher than average income and wealth, and the latter may include losses of liberty. Such inequalities are necessary for maintaining social values." (p. 90).

White goes on to support Nagel's concept of a "high social minimum". This involves the notion that in order to enable everyone to lead a flourishing life, certain conditions are necessary. The political task is to provide everyone with these conditions, which include adequate food, shelter clothing, good health, etc. White adds to this list: a decent education, a reasonable income, enjoyable work, friends and lovers, social recognition and sustaining virtues such as confidence and practical wisdom.

White believes that, "The central value is that everyone lead a flourishing life." (Ibid.). Within the political sphere, policies would have to be formulated in order to *limit impediments to universal autonomy*, not in order to ensure total equality, as egalitarians would argue.

The egalitarian argument for equality of power is then tackled, "..foremen are typically more powerful than operatives, managers than other staff, prime ministers than civil servants, teachers or parents than children. If power is to be equalised, these differences are at risk." (pp. 142-143). One reason for diminishing these power gaps might be to increase a sense of commitment at lower levels on the hierarchy. If so, the underlying value is commitment, not equality of power.

White concludes by acknowledging that in some cases equal opportunities policies in schools and colleges are concerned with *enlarging opportunities* for women or blacks, etc. in order to obtain more senior posts within these institutions. However, they are also applied to *prevent abuse or disrespect*. Abuse and disrespect can affect opportunities available, for example, by diminishing self-

confidence, but even when this does not happen, this kind of behaviour is still reprehensible. "Abuse and disrespect are bad not because they offend against egalitarian values but because they make things more difficult for individuals: they are impediments to their autonomous flourishing and need to be cleared out of their way." (p. 144).

'Equal opportunities issues' in schools and colleges are not always what they seem, *equalising* opportunities is not always what people really intend. For example, the proportion of working class people going into higher education is much lower than in the middle class. The central aim cannot be to even up the proportions, for this could be achieved by eliminating higher education for everyone and they are not interested in that.

A.H. Goldman (Paul, 1987) points out, in support of this position, that chances cannot be literally equal unless certain jobs are awarded by lotteries, a clearly undesirable state of affairs. In the light of this, "Equality of opportunity is normally interpreted in terms of *opportunity to compete for such places and to earn them through productive effort.* Interpreting it in this way, we could still seek to *equalise as far as possible chances to succeed in the competitions.*" (Op. cit., p. 91).

White agrees that data on differential opportunities is useful because it singles out deficiencies- e.g. the obstacles facing working class people-which need to be put right. The use of 'equality of opportunity' in such cases is, as Raz (1986, p. 228) suggests, largely rhetorical. It is simply pointing to a need not met. "Once again, the real value which directs us is not the essentially comparative notion of equality but a non-comparative concern for certain individuals' well-being." (White, p. 144).

In chapter two, I supported the idea of a democracy which acknowledges the pluralist nature of our communities in terms of race, sex, sexuality, ability, etc. Tolerance of and, more fundamentally, respect for differences among people is just as important as respecting those features they have in common.

The focus of equal opportunities policies should not be the naive 'equalisation' of all human beings. Such a goal is unattainable and even undesirable in some circumstances. People do not possess equal intellectual aptitudes, talents, skills and capacities. As Goldman points out, "The demand upon a moral social system for equal respect for all its members would be violated if its educational institution failed to contribute to the development of gifted individuals until all others had caught up, or if it so contributed only to the extent that doing so benefited others, otherwise concentrating exclusively upon the less gifted." (E.F. Paul, 1987, p. 92). No-one should be held back from personal development, whether they are intellectually talented or not.

Equal opportunities policies should concentrate on *combating oppression and unjust obstacles to people's well-being and life plans.*

In summary, an equal opportunities policy should have four principal features:

(1) The focus of equal opportunities policies should be an acknowledgement of and respect for people's individuality and their many differences, with regard to, among other things, race, gender, sexuality and ability.

(2) It must be acknowledged that people should have sufficient resources to achieve their goals or aims in life. Here, John White's list of minimal social conditions is important: adequate food, shelter clothing, good health, a decent education, a reasonable income, enjoyable work, friends and lovers, social recognition and sustaining virtues such as confidence and practical wisdom.

(3) Such policies should enable people to flourish as autonomous human beings and to remove obstacles to such flourishing.

(4) In order to promote this latter aim, these policies should seek to provide an adequate number and range of chances to succeed in competition for training, education and employment, especially where applicants suffer unjust discrimination because of their race, sex, sexuality, ability or other relevant factors.

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The National Union of Teachers (circular 75/89 E & EO, Appendix A) suggests that the following model statement be adopted by schools in order to ensure equality of opportunity for teachers.

"This institution is an equal opportunities employer. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, family responsibility, trade union activity, political or religious belief. Selection criteria and procedures will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. All employees will be given equal opportunity and where appropriate special training to progress within the organisation. Applications from persons with disabilities who have the necessary attributes for a post are welcomed. The institution is committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective."

This statement is useful as a model because of its assurance of monitoring, its reference to positive action and its commitment to implementation. It is also important because it links the discrimination of lesbians and gays to other forms of discrimination and oppression, as I have done throughout this thesis. Treating heterosexist and homophobic issues on a par with racist and sexist issues provides a wide-ranging and robust framework from within which day-to-day oppressive and discriminatory behaviour can be recognised and tackled.

A similar statement should form part of the institution's policy for students, ensuring that they too will be treated fairly at all times and given equal access to any support and training they may need.

Discipline.

The discipline policy should positively support the central idea of equality of opportunity. In this way, sexist and heterosexist behaviour or remarks aimed at students or staff can be dealt with thoroughly and effectively. It is important to emphasise that heterosexist behaviour or remarks should be treated in the same way as racist or other forms of sexist remarks. The emphasis should be

on education of the offenders rather than their punishment because punishment alone very often reinforces students' prejudices and resentment. I have worked with many well-meaning people who have made the mistake of punishing students very harshly for sexist or racist remarks without bothering to counsel them about the offensiveness and inaccuracy of such remarks.

Pastoral care.

An institution wide policy on pastoral care is also necessary. This would identify the perceived needs of students in personal, social and academic spheres. It would also emphasise that students are encouraged to be self-reliant and to find valid bases for self-esteem in order to counteract the stereotypes and prejudices of society with respect to their race, class, sexuality, gender or ability.

The importance of the pastoral curriculum (including Personal, Social and Health Education) and the context in which it operates should also be highlighted.

Education in Sexuality.

Such a policy is complementary to an equal opportunities policy, especially as it relates to sexual orientations because it ensures that a variety of sexualities are identified, discussed and studied. It also ensures that biological reproduction is not presented as the central, most important goal of sexual activity and that sex is seen as something pleasurable and enjoyable. This should, of course, be balanced with a realistic appraisal of the dangers and risks of sex (e.g. unwanted pregnancy, H.I.V., A.I.D.S. and other sexually transmitted diseases) and an appreciation that sexual acts, like other forms of human activity, are open to moral appraisal, depending on whether they promote others' welfare or cause them harm.

The relationship between the core policies.

These core policies have a dynamic, integral relationship. They support each other by indicating a wider rationale and framework for their formulation and implementation. For example, the policy on equal opportunities is closely related to the education in sexuality

policy. The equal opportunities policy indicates the range of different sexualities that should be studied (on the grounds that lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings and should therefore be included in any education in sexuality course). The discipline policy supports the essential idea of equality of opportunity by stating that derogatory remarks or behaviour, whether they are racist, sexist or heterosexist, etc. should be taken seriously and should be dealt with in a firm but sensitive and educative manner.

The pastoral care policy provides a broader framework for the successful implementation of the equal opportunities and the education in sexuality policies by responding to the need to discuss matters connected with equality of opportunity and sexuality sensitively and in the right sort of environment and by indicating the kind of knowledge and skills that will aid education and consciousness-raising in this area.

The institution's development plan should draw these core policies together, indicating the ways in which they interconnect and support each other. It should also help to promote their successful implementation, development and evaluation.

What follows is an outline of the practical steps that should be taken to formulate an equal opportunities policy or a policy on education in sexuality. The same steps apply broadly to any kind of core policy implementation: (1) identification of the main issue/s addressed by the policy, with opportunities to discuss them in depth and learn more about them, (2) the formulation of a working party, including teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and, where possible, students, whose remit is to produce the first draft policy as a basis for consultation and further discussion, (3) discussion of the first draft policy with students in tutorial time so that they can suggest developments and amendments, (4) in the light of comments received from staff and students, the second draft should be re-circulated to staff and students for further discussion, (5) the final version of the policy should be presented to the whole (teaching and non-teaching) staff and the whole governing body for discussion and approval, (6) the final document should then be circulated to every

student and discussed with them in tutorial time, focusing on the important issues addressed and encouraging discussion of them.

1. There is an urgent need to look at the concept of sexuality in all its complexities and to appreciate the many misunderstandings, prejudices and stereotypes that have grown up around it and obscured its understanding. Issues of sexuality should be discussed openly with the whole staff and governing body of a school or college and provision must be made for in-service training in this area. In-service training should be provided by expert agencies or individual consultants, but it must also be developed and delivered by teachers within the particular institution. This is an important prelude to the construction of an institution wide policy on sexuality.

The training offered to teachers and governors should include activities designed to help them do four things: (i) increase their knowledge and awareness of lesbians and gays in society, (ii) enable them to explore their views of different types of sexuality and to challenge homophobic and heterosexist attitudes and beliefs within a supportive environment, (iii) appreciate the equality of lesbians and gays with heterosexuals; to understand that lesbians and gays are as valuable and worthwhile as other human beings, (iv) link lesbian and gay oppression to other forms of oppression (based on class, sex, race, ability, etc.).

It is important that lesbians and gays are used as facilitators so that teachers who are unused to interacting with 'out' lesbians and gays are enabled to establish a dialogue with them.

2. What should arise from this forum is the creation of a working party or ad hoc committee composed of representatives from the teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and, where possible, students, which would undertake to produce an institution wide policy on equality of opportunity and/or sexuality. Because lesbian and gay sexualities are universal phenomena (in the sense that they appear in all races, classes and periods of history, etc.), the presence of lesbians and gays in society must be demonstrated by discussions which range right across the curriculum. An institution

wide policy would ensure that lesbian and gay sexualities, lifestyles and issues are identified and discussed in all subject areas.

Heads of Departments, pastoral, administrative and other middle managers, members of the senior management team and governors should be asked to discuss the document with their teams and submit plans for the implementation of its aims and objectives within their particular subject or responsibility area.

3. The first draft should be discussed with the whole teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and, in the case of secondary schools and colleges, the students themselves. This seems to be an obvious point, but I have never yet worked in an institution where the students were fully consulted about such policies. The result is predictable: the students neither understand the rationale for the policy concerned nor feel sufficiently involved in its implementation to abide by it. Involvement in the evolution and implementation of policies should be a fundamental part of the students' education, providing an invaluable insight into the effectiveness of participatory democracy at a fundamental level.

4. A second draft policy should be produced in the light of previous discussions and presented to the whole teaching and non-teaching staff, the governors and the students. Responses should be sought and the second draft document amended and developed as appropriate. It is particularly important at this second stage to ensure that the document is written and set out in a way that staff and students easily understand.

The document should be discussed with students as part of the pastoral curriculum in tutorial time. This will provide an opportunity for well-structured, open discussion and consciousness-raising. At this stage, teachers should be briefed on how to handle questions which may arise and to lead discussions successfully. This could be done by the people responsible for the delivery of P.S.E. within the institution or by outside agencies. Teachers should be briefed on how to handle questions relating to lesbians and gays sensitively in the classroom, drawing on their initial in-service training as outlined in the first stage of the process. Students' responses to the policy should then be noted in broad terms (perhaps

by the use of a simple pro-forma issued to all tutors) and their suggestions for amendments, additions or development should be adopted whenever possible and practicable.

5. The second version should be amended and developed in the light of this discussion. The final version should be submitted to the whole staff and governing body for discussion and approval.

6. The final document should be circulated to students and the tutors should use it to emphasise the institution's approach to lesbian and gay issues and the implications for codes of conduct, highlighting the need to combat sexist remarks directed at staff and students and to safeguard the rights of all individuals in the educational institution, whatever their sexuality.

This is a long and complex process requiring careful planning, implementation and on-going monitoring and evaluation.

The success of any policy depends, in the end, on the general ethos of the institution. If students are already encouraged to respect themselves and others within the institution, these policies will take root. There has to be an order of priority as far as the introduction of such policies is concerned. We cannot expect success in institutions where these ideals are not, at least to some extent, established.

If a reasonably caring and supportive environment does not exist, this must be the first, most basic priority and policy development will have to wait. The term 'institution wide policy' is meant to convey the idea of a policy which, in a sense, transcends subject areas in that it applies not only to the overt time-tabled curriculum, but also to the covert or "hidden" curriculum, through which students learn things in an informal manner, via the attitudes of fellow students and teachers, teaching materials and styles and through the general ethos of the institution.

An effective institution wide policy on equality of opportunity or sexuality will facilitate a radical and on-going reappraisal of the way sexuality is dealt with throughout the school or college. This will involve, for example, an evaluation of the books and materials

used, many of which present a heterosexual bias when they deal with relationships and ways of life.

It is also important to ensure that the concept of the family is explored in all its diversity and complexity. This exploration should include negative as well as positive aspects of family life. The former should include an acknowledgement of problems of domestic violence and the sexual abuse of women and children predominantly within heterosexual families. At present, it is difficult for the children of lesbian and gay parents even to mention their families, let alone express public pride in them. Families can no longer be presented as an ideal expression of heterosexuality.

The Organisation and Development of Educational Institutions.

(i) The teaching staff.

The most important way in which positive images of lesbian and gay sexualities can be promoted is through the institution's support and encouragement of lesbian and gay teachers in the process of coming out. The challenge we face is to create an ethos that will allow and positively support lesbians and gays to reveal their sexualities to everyone so that they can act as role models. This is the only really effective way of combating negative images. Of this the British government is well aware and from this realisation and this fear grew the opprobrium manifested in section 28 and its accompanying D.F.E. circulars.

It is important that lesbians and gays are treated fairly and have equal chances of promotion within such institutions. The law promotes equal opportunities in employment with regard to sex and race, enshrined in the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Race Relations Act of 1976. There is no legislation protecting the employment rights of lesbians and gays. On the contrary, as we saw in chapter four, legislation such as section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1986 creates the conditions where discrimination can be encouraged. This highlights the crucial importance of legal reform within the area of equal opportunities

and anti-discriminatory legislation relating to the employment rights of lesbians and gays.

The initial selection and training of staff must also ensure that we recruit people who have had a broad experience of life. The education system should include some people who have left school, gone immediately to higher education and then returned to another educational establishment as teachers, but it should also include people who have worked in other areas and have decided to change career or return to teaching after a long absence. The latter category includes the large numbers of women who have interrupted their careers to look after a family.

In-service training programmes should promote, develop and reinforce the essential components of a democratic education system. National government and L.E.A.s must supply the necessary resources to make in-service training widespread and available to all.

This also applies to teacher-trainers: their recruitment, appointment and training. In addition, I feel that it is crucial that teacher trainers teach in the classroom for part of the time so that they can appreciate what practical steps need to be taken to support democratic education.

Student teachers now spend much more of their time in school-based learning activities. This has meant that experienced school teachers are being asked to take on the role of tutor. This is commendable, in principle, but this initiative is severely under-resourced in terms of the time allocated to teacher tutors and the amount of money made available to the schools who support this kind of teacher training. The most worrying feature of this new teacher training initiative is that there will be very little time to discuss important social and political issues in the time allocated to teacher training colleges. There is, of course, no guarantee that schools which offer initial teacher training will include these crucial issues in their training programmes. Thus, exploration of important social and political questions, of the kind outlined in this thesis, becomes a 'hit and miss' affair. This has very serious consequences for the development and growth of democratic education.

We must either ensure that social, political and philosophical aspects of initial teacher training are dealt with in college in a well-structured manner, or that outside consultants are bought in by the schools concerned, thus guaranteeing that initial teacher training includes these important elements.

(ii) The organisation of the democratic community of learning.

The organisation of an educational institution, the way it runs on a day-to-day basis, its policies, rules and regulations will either help or hinder young citizens in their experience of democracy. If an educational institution is not democratic in its organisation, it has failed to show democracy at work. Student consultation and participation is crucial. School and college councils should be able to make decisions about many aspects of educational life and should at least have the opportunity to discuss the rules of a particular educational institution and wider educational policies, including curricula design and development. The precise extent to which students can participate in their education will be determined by their intellectual and emotional levels of development. In my experience, the more students are involved in this way, the more valuable the learning experience becomes, and this applies to people of all ages.

(iii) The Role of Governors.

The task of persuading governors of the necessity of identifying lesbian and gay issues within schools and colleges will be made easier if a cogent rationale of the kind I have outlined is presented to and fully discussed with them.

These discussions should take place within a supportive environment. Essentially, governors should be reminded that all students have the right to a broad education which acknowledges the plurality of sexualities and ways of life that exist in contemporary society. This includes their ways of life and ways of life that may be unfamiliar to them.

Governing bodies should also be reminded of their responsibility to ensure that all students are treated fairly and equally. This

obviously includes lesbian and gay students. Unjust prejudice and discrimination can only be effectively tackled if lesbian and gay issues are discussed openly everywhere within the school community.

Some governors may be worried about breaking the law, particularly section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1988. In this case, their attention should be drawn to a circular issued by the Department of Education on 20 May, 1988 which states that, "Section 28 does not affect the activities of school governors, nor of teachers. It will not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom nor the counselling of pupils concerned about their sexuality. Such activities will continue to be governed by section 46 of the Education (no. 2) Act." (DOE 1988, paragraph 20).

It will also be necessary to have an informed discussion of circular 5/94 (examined in chapter 4) in order to respond to any concerns governors may have with regard to its advice. It is important that governors are fully involved in all the staff discussions that will take place as part of the policy formulation process.

Conclusion.

It is important for us to come to terms with the enormity of the problems faced by oppressed people in general and of lesbians and gays in particular. There is an urgent need for further educational research in this area, focusing on the complex ways in which cultures that support such oppression operate and the impact they have on young people and the wider society.

Redman (Epstein, 1994) emphasises the importance of appreciating these complex modes of oppression in offering a critique of conventional approaches to education in sexuality:

"Existing 'equal opportunities' approaches tend to assume that the needs of pupils beginning to identify as a lesbian or gay can be addressed by simply 'adding on' lesbian and gay issues to the existing curriculum as if they are somehow discrete entities or issues wholly divorced from other areas of sexuality education. Thus 'tackling lesbian and gay issues' becomes a matter of 'positive

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images' in text books, and classroom discussions on the value of extra strong condoms or the options for self-insemination. Valuable though such innovations would be, they do not go far enough. The problem lies in the fact that they work within a liberal framework that claims that gay and lesbian sexualities are 'different but equal'. While it would be nice if this were true, its assertion before the fact runs the risk of ignoring the very real ways in which lesbian and gay sexualities are subordinated, marginalised and constructed as 'other' both within the social formation at large and within schools themselves. Once it is accepted that schools operate as significant cultural sites in which the meanings of sexuality are constructed then it becomes necessary to address the precise ways in which schooling and school cultures operate to construct heterosexualities or homosexualities in relations of opposition and subordination. It is this, I would argue, that sexuality education should seek to address, as well as the more obvious issues that form the 'equal opportunities' agenda." (p. 144).

It is important to recognise that educational institutions do not simply 'reflect' the prejudices and bigotry of the wider society, they are also places where particular cultures supportive of oppression are formed and maintained by the workers and the students within them.

Whilst it is important to understand as much as possible about the complex powers of oppression at work in our educational institutions and the wider society, it is also important that the case for lesbian and gay oppression and their need for liberation is somehow articulated within school and college communities and within the wider democratic community. Lesbian and gay rights should be linked to the rights of other oppressed people and students should be helped to appreciate the importance of the liberation of the oppressed for the continuation and survival of participatory democracy.

This process of understanding the complex and diverse modes of oppression as they actually operate in educational institutions should inform and support policy and curriculum development, providing a means for their modification and development in the

light of students' and the institution's perceived educational needs. Thus, understanding oppressive cultures and the development of policy and the curriculum are two on-going and complementary processes.

The next chapter explores the facets of the overt curriculum which are conducive to encouraging exploration and education in lesbian and gay issues.

CHAPTER 7.

LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CURRICULA.

I am not arguing for the 'introduction' of lesbian and gay issues into school and college institutions, as if to interject a new set of experiences and issues. Lesbians and gays are, and have always been, part of our societies and cultures. Their presence involves us in on-going issues and concerns. We must acknowledge lesbian and gay issues and contextualise them within the history of individuals, institutions, cultures and societies.

This careful definition of our task provides an important response to people such as Roger Scruton who object to the *introduction* of certain subjects, seeing them as an attempt to project a particular political viewpoint. His solution is to banish them from the curriculum. Scruton's concerns are discussed later in this chapter, but it is important to state from the outset that whether or not we highlight subject areas involving race, gender or sexuality, the issues they engage with already exist and are already being discussed and explored by students. We can choose whether or not to recognise them, but the issues themselves cannot be reduced to 'subject areas', nor can they be somehow cancelled out.

The rationale for identifying lesbian and gay issues in education.

This rationale is based primarily on the recognition that: (i) there are no moral grounds for the belief that lesbian and gay sexualities are inferior to heterosexualities, (ii) lesbians, gays and heterosexuals are all equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings who have the right to live the lives they choose, (iii) we are educating students as present or future citizens of a democratic community. Within this context, students should be educated:

(a) to understand themselves as fully as possible, (b) to plan their own ways of life and form their own views of life, (c) to appreciate and respect the diversity of the democratic community, including

cultures, beliefs and sexualities which differ from their own, (d) to understand something of the complex modes of oppression operating within their own youth cultures, within all institutions and within the wider community, (e) to appreciate the threat that such oppression poses to all members of the democratic community.

There are other wide-ranging and diverse reasons why we should tackle lesbian and gay issues in our educational institutions:

(1) Education in sexuality or personal and social education will necessarily include information about lesbian and gay sexualities, lifestyles and issues. Students themselves will ask questions about lesbian and gay issues within these contexts. Any attempt to restrict their questioning or ignore it means that their education takes place informally in a very distorted and biased manner. Further, we cannot design our curricula and schemes of work in this area on an ad hoc basis; it is not sufficient to answer these questions as and when they arise. It is also important to adopt a *proactive* educational approach, responding to lesbian and gay issues as part of a well planned and well thought out programme of Personal and Social Education, teaching about them and encouraging discussion of them in a balanced and supportive manner.

(2) Unfortunately, students very often tend to link the spread of H.I.V. infection and A.I.D.S. with gays. We must present accurate facts. In my experience, some heterosexual students feel that they will not be liable to infection either because they are heterosexual or because they can somehow spot a gay or bi-sexual person and so avoid sexual encounters with them. We must deal with lesbian and gay issues *before such questions arise* so that students can explore these issues in a rational manner. This involves the production of a well planned and well thought-out curriculum.

(3) The Education Act of 1986 helpfully points out that sex education must have "due regard to the value of family life." (sect. 46). It follows that children must be encouraged to feel proud of their family backgrounds. It is inaccurate and dishonest to pretend that the heterosexual nuclear family is the only possible model for family life. For example, one quarter of London families include single parents. Many children do not live in nuclear families for

historical, social and cultural reasons, including racist immigration laws. It is therefore necessary that we present positive and accurate models of real family lives in all their richness and diversity.

The identification of lesbian and gay issues within school and college curricula.

Basic literacy skills, together with the more complex skills of reasoning and argument and the usual fairly broadly based curricula of school and college are important means of educating citizens to take their full place within the democratic community as independent thinkers, choosers and actors. These fundamental aspects of education help to provide the conditions within which lesbian and gay issues can be fully and fruitfully discussed.

In addition to these important facets of education, I wish to identify the following areas of education which also help to provide the conditions for informed and fruitful dialogues concerning lesbian and gay equality and liberation:

Anti-indoctrinatory and anti-discriminatory approaches to teaching, Personal and social education, including: political education, moral education, education in sexuality and anti-sexist education. This will lead us to an exploration of a number of diverse but relevant issues.

The importance of personal and social, including political, moral and sex education should be highlighted since these aspects of education are often either neglected or ignored because they are perceived as controversial. Pressures on school timetables have increased due to the demands of the National Curriculum. There is considerable pressure to curtail or abolish courses in personal and social education, despite the fact that National Curriculum documents emphasise its importance. The pressure springs from the simple necessity of making room for the delivery of other core and foundation National Curriculum subjects. We have reached a point in Britain where we must fight for these subjects to be retained. It is therefore crucial that we are able to provide a rationale for their inclusion within school and college curricula.

The democratic state has a regulative function which helps prevent oppressive or discriminatory practices in education. The process of learning (including content, teaching styles and approaches) is of central importance and the state should exercise its control in this area to ensure that teaching takes place in an open, objective, and comprehensive manner. It should also ensure that the subjects I have identified are included within school and college curricula and safeguarded against neglect or abolition. This dispels the fallacy that education can be neutral in this respect. Amy Gutmann (1987) acknowledges that "All sophisticated liberals recognise the practical limitation of neutrality as an educational ideal: it is, in its fullest sense, unrealisable." (p. 35).

ANTI-INDOCTRINATORY APPROACHES TO TEACHING.

Chapter one argued for personal autonomy as a major aim for education within a democratic state. Teaching which is no more than rote learning or cramming is not a truly educational activity. What distinguishes education from other kinds of intellectual activity is the encouragement of reflection and the formation of independent judgements. Successful students question what they have learnt. They should be able to decide which views to accept and which to reject. We should train students to use what they have learnt throughout their lives. A good education is one that empowers students relevantly to transfer the concepts and skills they have learnt to all areas of their experience so that they can think autonomously and critically. Democratic education is, in this fundamental sense, radically anti-indoctrinatory.

Indoctrination has become a pejorative term in our day, used by both the political left and right to attack trends in education with which they disagree. It is therefore necessary to examine the concept more closely in order to understand what is so disagreeable about it.

Indoctrinatory methods of teaching threaten participatory democracy, stifling discussion, independent thought and judgement. Colin Wringe (1981) makes the important point that, "The democrat is committed to the view that in the long run there is no need to manage information; for the more information is available the more free-ranging discussion takes place under conditions in which

rational argument is possible, the more likely it is that people will come to see that some sort of democracy is the only tolerable form of government." (p. 35).

Roger Scruton (1985) defines indoctrination by its method: "Not respecting the criteria of rational judgement, indoctrination prevents the exercise of those critical faculties which education sets out to develop." (p.16). A fundamental feature of indoctrination, for Scruton, is that it encourages students to arrive at "foregone conclusions", without examining alternative viewpoints. I would agree with Scruton's initial analysis and would characterise indoctrination as a closing of the mind to full, independent and unprejudiced rational judgement. This is affected principally by the teaching method, for example, cramping or forbidding discussion.

Scruton particularly objects to political indoctrination. He suggests two ways in which the curriculum can be used to indoctrinate politically, "One is to *introduce* (my italics) 'subjects' whose major purpose is to project a particular set of political attitudes. The other is to subvert some existing subject in order to replace its methods, aims and subjects of study with 'politicised' alternatives." (Op. cit., p. 7). Scruton's objection to indoctrination is based on his belief that education is an end in itself. "Education in all its forms provides the pupil with something which is intrinsically valuable: access to information, understanding and knowledge, access to skill and access by means of which it must be interpreted." (Op. cit., p. 44). He is against the idea that education should be used or manipulated in order to influence students in a certain way. That is, he is against education as simply a means to an end. According to Scruton, Marxists see schooling, "...merely as a social process, designed to produce a certain kind of citizen. Rather than acquiesce in the 'reproduction' of the existing order, therefore, we should re-fashion the school as an instrument of social justice." (Op. cit., p. 11).

Scruton's view of education is naive. Firstly, many of the subjects studied in educational institutions carry with them political, moral and social ramifications. These cannot be ignored. It is not the task of the teacher to 'cleanse' their subject of all political or moral

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content, even if this were possible, but rather to identify relevant political, moral or social implications in a well-balanced and comprehensive manner.

Secondly, we must accept that education influences people, particularly the young. Of course it would be wrong to manipulate the education of children and young people in such a way as to mould them into accepting a certain world-view, theory or piece of dogma uncritically, but there is nothing wrong in recognising that we have common aims in educating young people, one of which is preparation for life as fully participating citizens. A good, comprehensive education will involve some appreciation of the social, moral and political contexts of the subjects on offer in educational establishments. In this way, students will appreciate the relevance of these subjects to everyday life and will come to understand the forces which shape human history and endeavour.

Scruton goes on to attack what he calls 'meta-disciplines', subjects which he deplores, accusing them of being indoctrinatory and subversive. He proposes the axing of such subjects as women's studies, black studies and anti-sexist and anti-racist education from the curriculum. To claim that these subjects are sometimes used to indoctrinate is one thing, but to conclude that they should be wiped off the educational map as a consequence is quite another.

Just as it is often necessary to look at economic, political or philosophical factors relating to some aspect of the sciences, humanities or arts, so it is appropriate to examine relevant social or political factors in more detail, focusing on race, class, sexuality or gender. These subjects can be studied separately or they can be included within other disciplines which appear on school and college timetables. Both approaches are legitimate.

There is no reason why these subjects cannot be studied in an open-minded and objective manner, taking into account many different shades of moral and political opinion. There is nothing special about these subjects as far as teaching methods are concerned. The teacher has exactly the same responsibilities to remain as objective as possible, ensuring that students are acquainted with a broad range of views and to teach in an atmosphere of critical, well-

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informed and well disciplined discussion.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION.

Personal and social education is especially important in helping young people to mature. The pastoral curriculum is an essential aspect of young people's education. Pastoral care is only truly effective if it is grounded in the pastoral curriculum. Students should learn facts, opinions, attitudes and skills which will help them to develop into confident, mature and responsible young people at school and college and as adults in later life. Pastoral care is dependent upon the pastoral curriculum because without some sort of personal and social education, students will not have the necessary knowledge and skills for personal, social, vocational and academic growth.

More concretely, if we are presented with students who lack personal and social education, our advice or counselling in academic or social contexts will be less effective. Indeed, we may find it necessary to talk about some important aspects of personal and social education before effective counselling or advice can take place. The pastoral curriculum creates a context within which pastoral care and the work of the pastoral team can flourish.

Personal and social education includes subjects such as political, moral and sex education. It has an especially valuable role to play in developing the democratic personality, discussed earlier in chapter two. Every curriculum area has a part to play in students' personal and social development.

The tutor group system in schools and colleges provides an integrative centre in which personal and social issues can be explored within a well identified and supportive group situation where people know each other fairly well and have established a reasonable amount of trust and confidence. Ideally, then, P.S.E. should take place within two contexts: (i) each curriculum area, (ii) tutorial groups, facilitated by a tutor who knows the group well.

Political education.

Education is not an optional extra that the democratic state encourages and supports. Democratic education is one of the necessary conditions for democracy's growth and development. Colin Wringe (1984) emphasises that, "In so far as education is the process by which society renews itself and passes on its acquired knowledge and the values it regards as important, it is necessarily political." (p. 34).

A political education involves people in studying democratic systems of government, their justification and their workings, experiencing democratic processes in action in the context of school, home, youth clubs, work, etc. and by involvement in decision-making and implementation within these areas. Students should also examine the inequalities in our society, appreciating the impact that these inequalities have in stunting the growth of democracy.

Educational institutions should ensure that students' experience of democracy is positive. Approaches to education should be anti-indoctrinatory, hierarchical structures should be minimised, unnecessary secrecy and manipulative devices avoided.

P.A. White notes that, "...the structure of education itself expresses a certain political stance." (Op. cit., p. 88). She believes that political education should exist as a distinct subject, but the curriculum as a whole should also contribute, to different degrees, to the student's education in this area. For example, even the seemingly mundane task of teaching a child to read and write is of crucial importance in facilitating and furthering her participation in democratic communities.

White feels that a knowledge of political processes and the issues involved is essential. Joining the armed forces, being involved in public service, taking part in (or not taking part in) a strike can only be properly understood from a political perspective. Moral and political education are connected at this point because many political judgements involve a consideration of the ultimate values people hold and the reasons they have for various courses of action.

Some people, because of family connection or formal education, do have considerable knowledge of how power is exercised in our democracy and of how to come to positions in which they can exercise power and influence. This knowledge must be shared with as many people as possible through a political education which seeks to provide everyone with a good grounding in the mechanisms of national and local government and the major extra parliamentary influences at work in our society (e.g. multinationals and other big businesses, the unions, etc.) together with a broad curriculum.

P. White sees political education as encouraging the citizen, "...to develop autonomy, to be able to distinguish what is in her interests from what she may currently want, or have been brought to want, and enables her to understand and participate in the exercise and control of power." (1983, p. 82). To some extent, educating young people politically is attempting to give them some insight into the way power is used and misused in our society.

We cannot teach young people what lesbian and gay oppression means and why it is an evil if we do not examine our aspiring democracies, their laws, institutions and customs, and expose the positive and negative power structures within them. The oppressed have important stories to tell. The histories of women, people of colour, the disabled, lesbians and gays, etc. reveal these power struggles in all their ferocity, complexity and horror. This kind of political education is a necessary pre-requisite for any effective education in lesbian and gay issues and is a powerful means of raising consciousness in this and other related areas of oppression.

Moral education.

Moral education must involve: an appreciation of the many moral conflicts that exist in life, some of which are insoluble, an understanding of how moral decisions are influenced and made, and an appreciation of the part played by factors such as religion, culture, society and its institutions in the process of moral decision-making.

Morality has an important relationship with autonomy, for the morally responsible person is, inter alia, one who chooses freely and usually after some deliberation, to accept moral laws and duties.

Of course, there are many people who live virtuous lives and who follow moral rules that they never question, but the moral life is full of problems, conflicts and dilemmas which the individual often has to face. In such situations, it is important for the individual freely to decide the best course of action, as opposed to simply following a law blindly (because this is what the community or culture requires of her, etc.).

Moral conflicts cannot be avoided or shunned. Each individual must face them and decide which course of action to take. This involves at least questioning independently the right course of action and considering a variety of solutions to the moral problems concerned. Of course this may mean, in the end, either the acceptance or rejection of accepted moral codes. This is, in part, what it means to have a will of one's own, capable of deciding for oneself and overcoming external societal pressures.

Joel Feinberg expresses this point well: "...the rational self sets or accepts for itself the rational law...to be autonomous in this normative sense means that one acts as a rational person, in accordance with rationally justifiable norms whose rational justifiability one accepts for oneself precisely because and insofar as one is rational. Insofar as the person and the criteria are rational, the criteria are not 'imposed from without', they are his or her own." (Doyle, 1973, p. 41).

Students, particularly young students, must be encouraged to make independent moral judgements on, amongst a variety of other things, lesbian and gay issues. This will never be possible unless they are encouraged to make independent moral judgements on fundamentally important issues.

Pedagogically, it is important to distinguish moral from religious judgements. Moral judgements are not necessarily religiously based. Further, one can be perfectly moral without being religious. This is an obvious fact that can be empirically tested by examining the lives

of morally good atheists and agnostics of the past and present. Students should be enabled to weigh the evidence when making moral judgements and to assess the role that religion and other institutions and traditions play in making such judgements.

Paul Hirst (1974) acknowledges that the religious person and the secularist may share overlapping values or beliefs while differing about their justification. For example, many secularists and Christians share scientific, aesthetic and metaphysical understanding as well as moral and social ideals.

Hirst sees religion as a private matter. "In so far as religious and non-religious people can agree about social principles, religious questions can be regarded as a private, personal matter. In so far as people can also agree on a secular basis on which to settle matters of disagreement about social issues, the more firmly privatised religious concerns become." (p. 3). He believes that, "To areas of secular thought, all religious thought and determination is irrelevant." (p. 2)

We might adopt Wittgenstein's analogy of autonomous language games to illustrate this point. Moralities based directly on religious revelations or scriptures have a logic of their own which states that these revelations or utterances are the word of god and that they are therefore unconditionally and universally valid, just because they possess this quality of divine revelation. If one does not accept the existence of a deity, there is really nothing much more to be said and the rational foundations of this kind of theistically based morality crumble away, at least for the non-believer.

Whilst religious people are at liberty to quote their scriptures and traditions in defence of their opinions, they must also realise that not everyone accepts their validity and that judgements about sexualities which are based on such sources are often contrary to empirical observation.

Education in sexuality and anti-sexist education.

The tutor group is the ideal forum for education in sexuality as part of the institution-wide P.S.E. programme. Here, the tutees meet

regularly with the person who is responsible for their welfare. If this person is trusted and respected, the atmosphere will be supportive and open during tutorial sessions. There is, after all, something rather contradictory about discussing human relationships and sexuality within a context of antagonism, tension, mistrust or animosity.

The tutorial session is also a good opportunity to emphasise that sexualities are not only a means of sexual expression through a variety of sex acts, but often involve highly complex and intimate emotional relationships between human beings. The tutorial session is ideally the place where work done on sexualities in various subject areas throughout the curriculum is brought together and reinforced within the context of human relationships.

Peter Redman (Epstein, 1994, ch. 10) points to the need for, "...a new agenda in the field of sexuality education as something more than a 'moral issue', and one that gets to grips with relations of power, pupils' different 'sexual cultures', and the lived experience of their lives." (p. 134). Such education should take account of educational institutions as places where, "..understandings and practices concerned with sexuality are actively constructed, reproduced and lived out, both in the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum." (p. 141). Educational institutions must take account of the fact that students bring with them a vast body of knowledge gleaned from various sources (e.g. friends, the media, books, etc.), some of which is inaccurate and misleading.

It is important for educators to understand the sexual cultures that influence young people's attitudes and values. These powerful sexual cultures and ways of behaving are extremely complex and diverse. Redman quotes the following example (from Holland, 1990), "[A] transition from condoms with new partners to the pill with steady partners is laden with symbolic meaning and can be used to signify the seriousness of a relationship, a way of showing someone they are special. As one of our correspondents put it, 'I went on the pill for him.'...For the current generation of young women the pill...is closely associated with grown up status and grown up sex. This makes the prospect of long term condom use highly problematic."

(Op. cit., p. 145).

Redman believes that the effective implementation of an education in sexuality programme requires us to look at the ways that heterosexualities are constructed and supported in the formal and informal curricula of schools and colleges and the ways in which lesbian, gay and bi-sexualities are marginalised or denied.

We need to engage in more educational research in order to identify and understand the whole range and diversity of cultures within educational institutions, especially as they relate to this important area of the curriculum. To some extent, the work of Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (1991, 1994) has begun this important task, focusing on the areas of sexualities, masculinities and racism.

Education in sexuality involves, not only 'the mechanics of sex', or "the processes of human reproduction", as circular 5/94 describes them. A person's sexual relationships also involve emotions, feelings and, importantly, relations of power. Young people should be educated to appreciate the immense complexity and diversity of human sexual relations. This will necessarily involve, not simply a study of what people do in bed, but wider social, political and moral relationships. Education in sexuality should also include an appreciation of the ways that heterosexual women are often exploited and, similarly, the ways in which lesbians, gays and bi-sexuals are oppressed.

It has long been acknowledged by organisations such as The Family Planning Association that the best way of educating children and young people about the wider moral, cultural, social and political aspects of sexuality is to abandon reproduction as the central concept. This is, of course, contrary to the approach taken in circular 5/94 discussed earlier in chapter four.

I argued in chapter three that sex has many purposes, not least of which is pleasure. Most people do not intend to have babies when they have sex. Of course we must teach about the importance of behaving responsibly and ethically within sexual relationships, acknowledging the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, the dangers of exploitation and abuse, but we

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must not lose sight of sex as enjoyable and pleasurable.

Sex as the secret danger.

Our society has many taboos with regard to children and sex. Sex is seen as something dangerous from which children need to be protected. Yet Stevie Jackson (1984) rightly points out that the violence that our children are exposed to in the media is much more of a threat to their well-being. "Violent death on a large scale is not seen as a threat to their supposedly delicate psyches, but the most gentle act of sex apparently is." (Op. cit., p. 50).

Jackson challenges the basic and widely held assumption that children are unable to understand sexual matters, that they lack the cognitive capacity to cope with it and because they cannot understand it, they would find it frightening and disturbing. In reality, children have no difficulty in understanding other types of pleasure, so why is sex an exception?

Jackson cites the Mbuti, !Kung or Trobrianders whose culture is much more accepting of and open to sexuality. "They learn that sex is pleasurable, incorporate it unselfconsciously into their games, and, as they mature, gradually replace play by more adult forms of sexual expression." (p. 56).

The most important argument against preserving sexuality as 'the secret' is that it reinforces ignorance, a factor that is particularly influential in rendering children powerless when it comes to sexual abuse. Giving children vague warnings about not talking to strangers or accepting sweets from them, accompanied by veiled references to 'peculiar men' is inadequate. In fact, most children are molested by members of their families or close friends.

Jackson is rightly concerned that if children are not educated sexually, "...they simply do not know what they are being warned against. Nor have they the means of reading the signs that indicate the possibility of a sexual approach, or of anticipating what might happen. Since they cannot see the threat, they have little opportunity of making an escape before it is carried out." (p. 59).

There is no justification for hiding sex from children. On the contrary, to attempt to do so is to place them in danger. All children have the physical potential to be sexual; the capacity for arousal and orgasm is present from birth. Children must be allowed to make sense of this capacity, to ask questions and to enter into discussions about sexuality.

The lack of freedom of discussion and information about sex which children experience from an early age teaches them that sex is a rather unpleasant or "difficult" (Circular 5/94, para. 8, p. 6) area of life, which can only be discussed, at least partially, when the child is 'old enough', usually in adolescence. Until then, it is not permissible to explore one's body or ask questions about sex. "This alone tends to give sex an air of furtiveness, and all the protosexual learning of childhood- the guilt, anxiety and 'dirtiness' associated with particular activities or parts of the body- can only serve to intensify the problem of coming to terms with new sexual knowledge." (p. 102).

There are further problems associated with preserving the secrecy of sex: when it comes to adolescence, how do we convey information that we have previously withheld? It is not surprising that many parents are embarrassed to broach the subject and that in some families it remains unmentionable.

The Education Act 1993 and circular 5/94 are supportive of this conspiracy of silence within some families by allowing parents the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons, thus exposing them to possible danger from inside and outside the family.

Sex is as much an area of knowledge as any of the subjects in the curriculum. Children have as much right to a broad, well-balanced sex education curriculum as they do to a science or maths curriculum. Education in sexuality is an integral part of their preparation for life in the wider democratic community.

Amy Gutmann (1987) describes conservative and liberal views of sex education. Conservatives claim that sex education should take place within the family, liberals claim that schools should have a part to play in education in this important area. Conservatives are worried

that in teaching sex education, schools may present values, ideas and ways of life which are not shared by them as parents (e.g. contraception and abortion). Liberals reply that teaching about such issues as abortion and contraception is not the same as advocating their use. Gutmann believes that "There is no way of resolving this controversy between conservatives and liberals on sex education by moving back and forth between the fundamentally different moral foundations of the state of families and the state of individuals." (p. 108).

Gutmann argues that sex education should be included within the curriculum under the same conditions as religious education. Parents should have the right to withdraw their children from sex education if they so wish. Gutmann gives two reasons for this conclusion. The first is her belief that sex is "...even more private (in the sense of intimate) than religion and at least as controversial." (Ibid.). The second is that "Mandatory sex education is as offensive to parents who believe in the sanctity of sex as mandatory prayer is to parents who do not believe in God." (Op. cit., p. 110).

Gutmann's belief that sex is private is in direct opposition to the feminist claim that 'the personal is political'. The feminist argument is that sexual violence and sexual pleasure are political issues linked to the power structures within our patriarchal society. They reject the idea that 'what I do in my bed is my own business'. Lesbians and gays, for example, are oppressed precisely because of what they 'do in bed'.

I find Gutmann's conclusion surprising and disturbing. What about the rights of children? Every child has the right to a well-balanced, broad and objective education in sexuality. Gutmann says that the state has a duty to ensure that education operates on principles of non-discrimination and non repression. One effective way of countering stereotypes and prejudices about certain forms of sexuality is by making sex education mandatory.

As I argued in chapter five, the state must ensure that sex education is taught to all students, regardless of their parents' beliefs. It is against the spirit of democratic education to allow parents to close their children's minds to such subjects. Children cannot become

autonomous if their learning is censored in such an important area of knowledge. A well-balanced sex education programme will enable children critically to examine the many social and moral issues involved and either accept or reject their parents' views in this area.

Gutmann defines sexist education as "...a set of educational practices: those that serve, often unintentionally, to restrict the quality or quantity of democratic education received by girls (or women) relative to that received by boys (or men)." (Op. cit., p. 111).

She does not mention lesbians or gays in her definition of sexism. Yet young lesbians and gays are subjected to the most extreme forms of discrimination and heterosexism within educational institutions and the wider community. They have every right to examine their own sexuality in a well-balanced and objective manner, regardless of the views of their (mostly) heterosexual parents.

I would argue for Gutmann's basic view that anti-sexist education is a vital part of education in a democratic society. If half the people in any society are excluded from full democratic and social participation for no good reason, we have to redress the balance. We must therefore widen the definition of anti sexist education to include the promotion of positive images of heterosexual women, lesbians and gays in order to counteract stereotypes and prejudices.

Anti-sexist education involves not only a consideration of the material taught, the methods used to teach and the ethos of particular educational establishments. We must also understand the social and political contexts in which such education takes place. We must also try to enhance the self-respect and self-esteem of all students who are discriminated against and we must ensure that we promote their participation within the educational community and society at large.

Lesbian and gay issues within the core and foundation subjects.

Since the beginning of the nineteen seventies, with the rise of the

Gay Liberation Front, the importance of 'coming out' has been emphasised. 'Coming out' is essentially a lesbian or gay person's decision either to acknowledge their sexuality to themselves or to make it public. The latter form of disclosure involves a revelation to individuals, selected groups, or everyone. This personal decision publicly to reveal their sexual identity is crucial if lesbians and gays are to play a full part in society and challenge prejudice and misinformation.

The decision whether to come out or not must remain with the individual alone. It is clearly undesirable for a lesbian or gay person to be forced into revealing their sexual identity. This would defeat the whole purpose of coming out in two respects: (i) it would cease to make this revelation a positive and safe experience for the individual concerned, (ii) it is unlikely that such forced revelation (what has become known as 'outing') would provide a positive example for others to follow.

The task of the democratic community is not primarily to help and encourage those individual lesbians and gays who want to come out. It is rather to work for a much broader social change which will eventually mean that lesbian and gay citizens feel safe and confident enough to reveal their sexualities.

I want to identify another form of 'coming out', grounded in our education system in general and our established school and college curricula in particular. Lesbians and gays have been driven underground, buried by centuries of oppression and dishonesty. It is hardly surprising, then, that they and their histories are often invisible in the established curricula of schools and colleges. Our task must be to reveal lesbian and gay histories and sexualities to educational communities through the life and work of those communities. School and college curricula should provide a context in which those individual lesbians and gays who wish it, are assisted in the radical political task of revealing their presence to others and thus helping to affect and reinforce radical social change.

English language and literature are important vehicles for our understanding of sexuality in terms of relationships. Simon Harris (1990) outlines what he sees as the three main concerns of teachers

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of English:

1. The development of communication skills across the range of linguistic registers of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

2. The development of responses to and involvement with a variety of texts and the issues they raise.

3. The personal, social and moral development appropriate to each individual.

Harris notes that an understanding of these central concerns helps us to understand why English has often been the spring-board for issue-based cross curricular development. Harris cites, as examples, three discussion documents issued by the former Inner London Education Authority (I.L.E.A.), abolished in 1990. These focused on the contribution of English to the issues of anti-sexism, beliefs and values, and gender (Harris, pp. 32-35).

He makes the point that, "We are aware that students exist and experience things outside school and that generally those influences and situations have a more pervasive and effective result on them than most of what we try to do. So it becomes essential (and mutually beneficial) that we take account of and show an interest in these influences and experiences, if we are not to alienate students and if we truly desire to engage them actively in our lessons." (Op. cit., p. 35). Discussion centring on sexualities generated either by English texts or by personal experiences, is integral to this approach to English teaching.

Harris highlights the importance of the library as a place where young people, coming to terms with their sexualities, can get reliable information. He quotes from someone's personal experience, "During my adolescence, realising that I was 'different', I increasingly identified the need to seek out alternative means of getting information about my 'difference'. No adult could be trusted enough to be questioned; the library was the only possibility." (Op. cit., p. 44). It is therefore important that libraries stock fiction and non-fiction which reflects lesbian, gay, and bi-sexual as well as heterosexual relationships.

Harris' book is an important means of encouraging and supporting English teachers in tackling lesbian and gay issues. He suggests ways in which these issues can be fed into Primary, Secondary and Further education. He also presents two case studies for use with upper school secondary students (based on the novels Who Lies Inside by Timothy Ireland and Annie on my Mind by Nancy Garden) and provides a very useful annotated list of materials for the use of English teachers.

Science, particularly biology, has a part to play in leading students towards a deeper understanding of the physiological characteristics of both sexes and the physical expression of our sexual needs, wants and desires. We can see clearly, within this context, the need to balance this approach with one that also emphasises the emotional and interpersonal aspects of human sexuality.

History too has an important part to play in helping people to appreciate lesbian and gay concerns. Courses on various aspects of the history of oppression often concentrate on racial oppression, whilst the history of lesbian and gay oppression is ignored. For example, studies of the Holocaust in Germany often stress the suffering and murder of the Jews, ignoring the annihilation of tens of thousands of lesbians and gays. No history course is accurate or worth-while if it fails to emphasise that history is a record of human activity and that as such it must include women and men from all cultures, races, classes, genders and sexualities, often suffering the same irrational forms of oppression.

A person's sexuality is often an important motivating force in their lives. Where this is the case, mention must be made of it. It is also necessary to stress that although same-gender sexual relationships have existed throughout the history of the human race, various concepts and terminologies have been used to describe such relationships. For example, the term 'homosexual' is a nineteenth century construction and the term 'gay'' appeared in the nineteen sixties.

Many of these terms contain a wealth of interpretation and sometimes misinterpretation. For example, sexologists of the nineteenth century referred to lesbians and gays as 'inverts',

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implying that gays were women somehow trapped in men's bodies and that lesbians were men trapped in women's bodies.

To a large extent, history a collection of stories of how groups of people have attempted to dominate one another. One valuable insight is that very many forms of oppression have certain things in common. They are usually based on, or supported and encouraged by, misinformation, prejudice, stereotypes and bigotry. Consequently, common alliances are often forged between disparate oppressed groups with the aim of fighting oppression on a common front. By studying history, students who are oppressed in various ways may well be encouraged to see their oppression in a much wider context and seek more comprehensive political responses and solutions.

Religious studies has an important part to play in helping students to appreciate the range of beliefs and attitudes that exist in relation to sexuality in general and lesbian and gay sexualities in particular. Many of our students belong to one or other of the world's major religions and they often have very definite beliefs about these subjects. Many lesbians and gays are active members of these world faiths. It is important that students are allowed to examine the bases for such beliefs and that agnostic or atheistic students engage in fruitful dialogue with other students on these issues.

Oppression and the death of participatory democracy.

Social, institutional and political change are the means by which lesbians and gays will achieve liberation. Detailed, practical proposals for institutional and curriculum change, and research into the ways in which heterosexism is encouraged by individuals and institutions are complementary and on-going processes.

We must begin with the obvious, but often unheeded, assertion that it is necessary to understand both the nature of what we wish to change and the kind of changes we wish to make if these changes are to be effective. Here, extensive educational research is of vital importance, especially with regard to the ways in which educational institutions, their students and staff, reinforce various forms oppression and threaten the existence of participatory democracy.

CHAPTER 8.

CONCLUSION: DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP.

The major themes of this thesis are encapsulated in the concept of citizenship. My fundamental claim is that lesbian, gay and heterosexual citizens should have the same rights because (i) there are no rational or moral grounds for the belief that lesbians and gays are inferior to heterosexualities, (ii) lesbians and gays are equally valuable and worthy of respect as autonomous human beings with life plans of their own which they must be allowed to pursue without hindrance.

The model of citizenship I am proposing is based on the twin democratic ideals of equality and liberty. Essentially, citizens should be treated equally unless there is a good reason for not doing so. They should also be free to choose their own ways of life and to make their own decisions as long as these do not threaten or harm other citizens.

Iris Marion Young's model of citizenship proposes the creation of, "...a heterogeneous public that provides mechanisms for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices and perspectives of those constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged." (Butler & Scott, 1992, p. 380). Thus, citizenship is a coalition of many different groups who retain their own diverse and distinctive identities, whilst sharing the essential ideals of citizenship.

In chapter one, I argued that lesbian and gay liberation can only come about if we work towards a society based on the principles of participatory democracy. I also claimed that we must work towards achieving a revolution in society's attitudes and values so that the oppression of lesbians and gays can be actively combated.

There is, as I pointed out in chapter five, a dynamic relationship between politics and education. Democratic systems of government should influence education policy and practice. Conversely, participatory democracy depends on education for the furtherance of its ideals, and ultimately, for its very existence.

humanitarian grounds. Rather, they are essential to minimise those social and economic inequalities which are incompatible with the civil and political equality that positive participation requires." (Op. cit., p. 380).

In a moral democracy, pupils are given the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for public participation, enabling them to fulfil their roles as citizens adequately.

In 'market' democracies, on the other hand, citizenship is interpreted in ways which emphasise *responsibilities* rather than rights and therefore advocate law-abiding behaviour, service to the community and national loyalty. In such a democracy, 'civil rights'- especially those associated with individual liberty and property ownership- tend to have an elevated status and the egalitarian thrust of social citizenship is rejected on the grounds that it creates the kind of state-dependency, a second-class citizenship, it originally promised to eliminate.

Within this perspective, citizenship is exercised, not by the extension of social rights, but by creating a property owning democracy. Only the expansion of 'popular capitalism' can free citizens from the stigma of social security and their reliance on the beaurocracies of the Welfare State.

This kind of education for citizenship is very different from the moral democracy model. In a market democracy, political apathy and ignorance are widespread. Education for citizenship will have a marginal status in the curriculum, corresponding to the marginal status of politics in the lives of individuals. Further, "Since a market democracy prizes factual knowledge and vocational skills over social awareness or critical reflection, the political role of 'general education' would not be seriously entertained...In a modern market democracy 'education for citizenship' must not only depoliticise general education; it must also depoliticise the concept of citizenship as well." (Op. cit., p. 382).

In chapter one, I made the case for participatory democracy as the social prerequisite for radical social change. Elitist or Market modes of democracy of the kind outlined by Carr undermine all struggles

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for equal rights and against discrimination and injustice. Such action is seen either as irrelevant to the pursuance of other more important goals, or a distraction or, worse still, as positively dangerous.

In the end, Curriculum Guidance 8 can be taken to support either model. Like British democracy, it contains elements of both.

Market and moral modes of democracy generate what T. H. McLaughlin (1992) describes as minimal and maximal senses of citizenship. Minimally, the idea of citizenship involves civil status: the possession of a passport, the right to vote, etc. Maximally, it involves social, cultural and psychological factors. "Thus, the citizen must have a consciousness of him or her self as a member of a living community with a shared democratic culture involving obligations and responsibilities as well as rights, a sense of the common good, fraternity and so on." (Op. cit., p. 236).

The kind of virtues citizens should possess can also be seen in minimal or maximal terms. Minimally, loyalties and responsibilities are seen primarily as local and immediate. The citizen is law abiding and public-spirited (e.g., in the sense of helping neighbours). Maximally, citizens require a more extensive focus for their loyalty and responsibility. For example, they will question and extend their local horizons in the light of more general and universal considerations such as those of justice. They will also help to secure the kind of social conditions which will lead to the empowerment of all citizens.

Minimal and maximal conceptions also apply to the concept of education for citizenship. Minimally, this involves providing information relating, for example, to the legal and constitutional background to citizenship and the development of virtues of local and immediate focus (e.g., those relating to voluntary activity and basic social morality). There is no requirement here for broad critical reflection and understanding. Nor is there a concern to ameliorate the social disadvantages that may inhibit students from developing into citizens in a significant sense. There is a danger that minimalist conceptions of education for citizenship may well lead to mere socialisation into the status quo.

What is needed is a maximalist interpretation of education for citizenship of the kind argued for throughout this thesis. McLaughlin sees this as requiring, "...a much fuller educational programme, in which the development of a broad cultural understanding and a much more extensive range of dispositions and virtues in the light of a general liberal and political education are seen as crucial." (p. 238).

McLaughlin identifies minimalist aspects of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Education in Citizenship. For example, in the introduction, two ways are specified in which the school can lay the foundations for "positive participative citizenship": (i) by helping students acquire and understand essential information, (ii) by providing them with opportunities and incentives to participate in all aspects of school life.

Education for citizenship is seen as developing, "...the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for exploring, making informed decisions about and exercising responsibilities and rights in a democratic society." (p. 2).

Its aims are:

"...to establish the importance of positive participative citizenship and to provide the motivation to join in;

help pupils to acquire and understand essential information on which to base the development of their skills, values and attitudes towards citizenship." (p. 2).

Later, however, the document appears to accommodate a maximalist interpretation. Here, education for citizenship involves acquiring certain positive attitudes: "...independence of thought on social and moral issues" and "..an active concern for human rights." (p. 4). Moral codes and values are to be explored in relation to difference, conflict, complexity and context." (p. 4).

The document goes on to outline eight "essential components of content": "diversity, fairness and justice, co-operation and compassion, prejudice and discrimination, inequality, racism and sexism, knowledge of political systems and processes, an understanding of social, political and economic contexts in which

decisions about work, employment and leisure are made and different perceptions about the best forms of provision for public services." (section 4, p. 5).

In addition to the National Curriculum Council's guidelines on education for citizenship, Colin Wringe (1992) identifies the notion of Education for *Active Citizenship* in the writings and public pronouncements of some politically influential individuals. His analysis is a good practical illustration of Carr's distinction between moral and market modes of democracy and also highlights McLaughlin's maximal and minimal senses of citizenship.

Active Citizenship entails:

(1) an understanding of the benefits of living in a democratic or free society;

(2) respect for the rule of law;

(3) a concern for obligations rather than rights;

(4) voluntary community service for the benefit of the old, the handicapped and the environment.

These themes are culled from such diverse sources as Douglas Hurd's article 'Freedom will flourish where the individual accepts responsibility' in the Independent, 13.9.89, a speech by John McGregor, the then Minister of State for Education at the Consultative Conference on Citizenship organised for the Speaker's Commission on Citizenship in Northampton on 16.2.90. A speech by John Patten, the then Minister of State at the Home Office to the Lions Club International Conference at Torquay on 4.9.90. An article by Anthony O'Hear, 'Not on the citizens' band wavelength', T.E.S., 9.3.90.

This kind of education means that respect for the law, for one's obligations, for democratic values, etc. are to be "inculcated". The meaning of this term is unclear, but it appears to involve certain responses being "implanted vigorously and without equivocation" (Op. cit., p. 30). There is to be no discrete subject area called Education

Whilst it is important to have a vision of the sort of democracy necessary to support lesbian and gay liberation, it is also important to have a realistic view of the British government's concept of citizenship. This will enable us to understand their wider view of democracy.

The present British government acknowledges the importance of citizenship education. Some time ago, it set up a commission on citizenship under the then speaker of the House of Commons, Bernard Weatherill. The National Curriculum Council Circular number 6 (October, 1989) and Curriculum Guidance 3 (March, 1990) set out and discussed five cross-curricular themes which are seen as essential to the whole curriculum. They are: economic and industrial understanding, careers education and guidance, health education, environmental education and education for citizenship. Curriculum Guidance 8: Education for Citizenship appeared in 1990 and established education for citizenship as part of the educational entitlement of young people aged five to sixteen in schools.

The British government's interest in citizenship education is also evident from the many diverse pronouncements of prominent government figures, identified by Colin Wringe (1992) which I shall discuss later.

The various pronouncements relating to the virtues of 'citizenship education' by the government and its ministers highlight the ambiguity of their position. There are at least two very different interpretations of what 'education for citizenship' means, each relying on very different wider interpretations of what democracy means:

Moral and market models of democracy.

Wilfred Carr (1991) makes a distinction between moral and market models of democracy, roughly corresponding to the participatory and elite models of democracy discussed in chapter one. "In a 'moral' democracy, the state has an obligation to redistribute the wealth of society in a more egalitarian way than a free market economy would naturally allow. Hence, the social rights embedded in the institutions of the Welfare State are not justified simply on

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for Citizenship. Instead, it is to be taught across the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities.

The concept of Active Citizenship is ambiguous, but Wringe wonders if "...the term 'active' was intended to stand in contrast to that of 'critical' or 'reflective', as if today's all-action citizen had no time to bother his head about wider issues, or become involved in politics or consider serious collective undertakings. Both Action Man and the Action Bank are supposed to be swift and vigorous in their responses without asking too many questions beforehand, while persons with a 'bias for action' may have little time for debating the whys and wherefores of what they do." (p. 30).

What is needed is political education of the kind outlined in the previous chapter. Wringe contends that such political education has three principal educational goals:

(1) that pupils should acquire skills necessary to undertake effective action in the community;

(2) that they should acquire attitudes which incline and embolden them to do so on appropriate occasions.

(3) Most importantly of all, the cognitive goal of developing the conceptual framework and minimal knowledge base necessary if pupils were to understand the social and political world around them.

Wringe identifies an important problem: "Modern usage...extends the term 'citizen' to all inhabitants of the state who qualify for nationality and certain legal and social benefits and obligations that go with it. By thus extending the term, however, we lose the sense that a citizen is one who is expected to participate actively in the affairs of the city, and thus run the risk that the good citizen may simply become synonymous with a serviceable subject." (p. 31). Emphasis on what Wringe calls political literacy, as opposed to the ambiguity of "Active Citizenship" helps to avoid this danger.

Among other things, it is held that *active citizens* should be more concerned about their obligations than their rights. This claim is ambiguous, but there are real dangers in playing down citizens'

rights. The liberal democratic tradition has always encouraged citizens to stand up for their rights. If human rights are being violated or ignored it is immoral to suggest that people should keep quiet about this situation. Further, "If people are truly citizens and not mere subjects, it is quite reasonable to ask what their country can do for them, as well as what they can do for their country. Community is a reciprocal relationship, and all have both rights and duties. It is only in totalitarian regimes that we expect people to say little about the former." (p. 34).

Wringe concludes by observing that. "..if the citizens of the next generation are to choose the good effectively in political terms and eschew the evil...,they require political education of a sustained and extended kind that the proposals for Education for active Citizenship, even on the most generous interpretation of its stated aims, seems unlikely to provide." (p. 37).

The National Curriculum Guidelines on education for citizenship (no. 8), like the National Curriculum as a whole, do not contain a clear and detailed account of their fundamental aims, values and principles. Most importantly, they do not offer a clearly worked out conception of citizenship. Perhaps this is intentional. After all, Western-style democracies are not known for their eagerness to encourage the full and effective participation of all citizens along the lines advocated in this thesis.

The failure of contemporary Western democracies to welcome and encourage full participation, in some cases discouraging it, is largely covert. Such democracies often pay lip service to the ideals of 'true democracy' without ever explaining precisely what is meant by the term. Thus, they are able to manipulate this ambiguity for their own purposes. What is needed in order to remedy this situation is that the concept be reclaimed and re-defined, thus avoiding a situation where it becomes so ambiguous as to be devoid of all meaning.

I would argue for T.H. McLaughlin's view: what is needed is a formulation and specification of the shape that education for citizenship should take. We must also decide to what extent education for citizenship should "transmit a particular way of life."

(p. 243). This debate should be carried out nationally in order to come to some consensus on the public virtues, the common good and how citizenship is to be understood. This implies that we must challenge the trend of Western governments of discouraging consultation and discussion.

Renewed interest in this important area of education, together with the N.C.C. guidelines, should be taken as a stimulus for further, better informed debate, rather than as firm guidance for action or curriculum development. Curriculum Guidance 8: Education for Citizenship states that, "It is intended as a framework for curriculum debate and is certainly not a blueprint or set of lesson plans."

The points made in this thesis with regard to the kind of education required in a democratic context provide a model of education for citizenship which could be used as a stimulus for such debate within democratic communities at all levels. The model of education proposed in this thesis may be summarised as follows:

1. Building on the points made about toleration in chapter two, I support the claim that citizenship education involves, among other things, teaching people to at least tolerate diversity (as a minimal goal), but ultimately to accept and welcome it.

In practical terms this involves four things: (i) understanding the many complex modes of oppression operating in educational institutions and the wider society, (ii) a recognition of our pluralist society as composed of different cultures, world-views, religions, and sexualities, (iii) the positive acknowledgement of the value of such diverse groups, (iv) effective opposition to, and eventual elimination of, oppression.

With regard to toleration and gradual acceptance of diversity, particularly within a multi-cultural society, R.S. Sigel (Sigel & Hoskin, 1991) points out that both minority and majority students are in need of socialisation, "They must learn to accept the realities of multi-ethnic living, to become acquainted with, and respectful of, the value of living patterns of other ethnic groups, without blindly

assuming that their own culture is superior, and is therefore immune from change or improvement." (Op. cit., p. 6).

In America, the idea of the multi-cultural 'melting pot' (the assimilationist model) has been dominant for a long time. Newcomers from other countries are expected to become 'Americanised' as soon as possible, leaving behind the cultures and traditions of their former communities. This model must be abandoned in favour of cultural pluralism. "Cultural pluralists envision an organic relationship in which the individual freely partakes of his or her own distinctive heritage, but also becomes an integral part of the history and experience of the common culture." (Op. cit., p. 7).

In 1911 Dewey wrote, "The intermingling in the school of youth of different races, differing religions and alike customs creates for all a new and broader environment." (J. Dewey 1966). The time has come to add sexualities to this spectrum of experiences.

2. A broad education is required, enabling students to become acquainted with different ways of life and views of life. They should learn to think for themselves and formulate their own views and life-plans as autonomous human beings. A central aim of education is to encourage *independent thought and judgement.*

3. Students should be entitled to Personal and Social Education, involving: (i) a realistic understanding of themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses, (ii) an appreciation of the society in which they live, its cultures, ways of life and institutions, (iii) their responsibilities within that society, (iv) nurturing in the skills and personal qualities which help participatory forms of democracy flourish, (v) an understanding of themselves intellectually, socially, morally and sexually, (vi) encouraging a respect for persons, their similarities and differences.

4. As part of their personal and social education, students should be taught and encouraged to exercise *desirable character traits or virtues* which help to support and sustain participatory forms of democracy and, at the same time, develop the democratic personality. In chapter two, these virtues were said to include

altruistic attitudes, respect for persons, fraternity and tolerance. On the other hand, attitudes such as servility and willingness to 'follow the crowd' should be discouraged.

Orit Ichilov (1990) makes the important point that, from a moral point of view, 'the good citizen' and 'the good person' overlap. This is based on the premise that 'preferring' participatory democracy is in itself a value judgement. It is a judgement of what kind of political and social arrangements are in the best interests of human kind, of what sort of polity will promote human flourishing. To this extent, to specify the sorts of knowledge, understanding and skills required of a good citizen is also to specify some of the ingredients that go into the making of a good person.

D. Heater (1990) reminds us that. "...the ideal good citizen must be a paragon of *multiple virtues,* who brings to the fore different qualities according to circumstances. To assume, as so often happens, that certain components of civic virtue are the totality is to emasculate the word." (p. 193).

We should attempt to specify the kind of virtues that are conducive to participatory democracy, but we must also be aware that democratic education should be geared towards the growth and development of *the whole person*, socially, psychologically, morally and sexually. This indicates the enormity and complexity of the task of educating citizens. It also implies that education must be seen as a life-long process of learning, both inside and outside educational institutions.

5. Political, moral and sex education are also important aspects of students' personal and social education.

Political education includes: (i) the studying of democratic systems of government, their justification and their workings, (ii) experience of democratic processes in action (at school, home, youth clubs, work, etc.) by involvement in decision-making and implementation on all levels, (iii) an examination of the inequalities in our society and understanding the impact that these inequalities have in stunting the growth of participatory democracy.

6. Moral education is important because citizens will often need to make independent moral judgements. and decisions on matters of political importance. Moral education attempts to answer the question, 'What is morality?' It also involves: (i) an appreciation of the many moral conflicts that exist in life, some of which are insoluble, (ii) an understanding of how moral decisions are influenced and made. (iii) This in turn requires an appreciation of the part played by factors such as religion, culture, society and its institutions in the process of moral decision-making.

7. Sex education is an important means of encouraging students to understand themselves and others. Students should acknowledge and value their own sexualities and the sexualities of others which may differ significantly from their own. They should be taught to respect lesbian and gay sexualities in the same way as they are taught to respect other differences relating to class, race or gender.

8. The *approaches* we adopt towards education within a democratic context are as important as the content of education. We should, for example, adopt anti-indoctrinatory approaches to education which encourage students to *think and judge reflectively and critically.*

Ken Fogelman (1988) quotes a university student's view of his schooling, "What you're taught at school is to obey what you are told to do by a teacher. This is absolutely opposed to good citizenship. Good citizenship is that you use your brain and teach yourself about things. What you're told to do is: 'don't question, just do what you're told.' You're actually being taught to be a bad, unresponsive, passive, stupid citizen." (p. 81). We should not underestimate the enormity of the task involved in changing our educational institutions so that they put forward more proactive models of citizenship. However, it is essential that such change comes about if we are to support a citizenship which requires knowledge, critical understanding, skills and attitudes.

Orit Ichilov (1990) supports this idea, "Democratic citizenship requires more than passive compliance: citizens are also required to make choices, decisions, and judgements, to criticise and object." (p. 1).

We should ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted in all educational establishments, so that students are encouraged to participate as fully as possible within their educational institutions and the wider democratic community with due regard to their sex, race, abilities, class and sexual orientations.

The way forward.

Citizens within an aspiring democracy should have the courage to examine the ways in which they fail to live up to democratic ideals. The democratic state must encourage examination of its laws and institutions (similar to the kind carried out in chapter four) in order to reveal the ways in which it sometimes unwittingly oppresses its citizens and limits their freedom and participation.

As citizens within an aspiring democracy, we must ask why the educational establishment at all levels has consistently ignored lesbian and gay issues within the curriculum. The answer to this question can be found in society itself. Prejudice, hatred, misunderstanding and ignorance abound. It is not surprising, then, that educational establishments reflect and perpetuate these attitudes. What is inexcusable is the way that educators have shirked their responsibilities in countering this discrimination, misinformation and oppression.

Of course, some educators are not immune from these very prejudices, either because they see lesbians or gays as somehow 'unnatural' or subversive or because of religious or other beliefs. However, this leaves us with a large body of liberal educators who do not share these beliefs. Why have they remained silent for so long? There are really two answers to this question.

The first involves the fundamental lack of understanding of lesbian and gay issues. There is an urgent need for education in these matters at all levels. This must be complemented by an effective programme of consciousness-raising, especially within teacher training institutions. I have been appalled at the lack of understanding exhibited by many teacher trainers over the years. Even those who are sympathetic to the issues involved are extremely reluctant to do anything about it because of real insecurities about

their lack of knowledge and experience in this area. These issues must be discussed as part of initial teacher training courses and in-service training programmes for teachers and support staff.

The second answer to the riddle of non-involvement in these issues concerns the controversial nature of the subject. Given society's views and opinions, enshrined in anti- lesbian and gay legislation, how is it possible to withstand the hostility which might result from a programme of education in this area?

The answer an individual gives to this question is of fundamental importance and goes right to the heart of what it is to be a teacher. A teacher who, as a matter of personal decision or policy, sets out to endorse everything that society thinks or believes, is worthless. The essential task of all educators is to teach students to question for themselves. This will sometimes involve questioning their own understanding and beliefs as well as the accepted beliefs of society, resulting in their acceptance or rejection. The fact that society disapproves of something does not necessarily mean that it cannot be discussed in the classroom if there are sound reasons for doing so.

I have put forward strong arguments that society's views about lesbians and gays are misinformed and prejudiced. Acknowledging lesbian and gay issues in educational institutions needs courage and conviction. This must be supported by a radical education and consciousness-raising programme for teacher trainers, teachers, governors and support staff. If this is not forthcoming there is little hope that teachers will have the confidence to make the necessary advances.

There is also much work to be done within the teaching unions. Lesbian and Gay workers in Education (now known as School's Out!) has, over the years, made significant in-roads into lesbian and gay rights, particularly within the N.U.T. At least lesbian and gay rights are now seen by the union as a major issue. The next stage is to persuade and encourage teacher unions to use their considerable resources to promote and defend the rights of lesbian and gay students and teachers and to press for the necessary curriculum changes.

It is imperative that lesbians and gays take the initiative themselves. It is for lesbian and gay educators at all levels to join forces and make radical proposals for change. It is for them to argue the case with the government for the discussion of such issues and to devise courses for teacher trainers and teachers which will increase understanding and awareness of the complex issues involved. Lesbians and gays must set and control the agenda for change that will bring about their liberation.

The A.I.D.S. epidemic has galvanised lesbian and gay communities into positive and effective political action. Organisations such as ACTUP, the Aids Coalition To Unleash Power engaged in acts of civil disobedience in order to force the Wellcome Group to reduce dramatically the price of the drug A.Z.T. so that *everyone* suffering from H.I.V. and A.I.D.S. related illnesses could afford it.

Whatever is now known about the effectiveness or otherwise of this drug, we can see this struggle between lesbians and gays and a gigantic multinational company as a model for future political involvement and successful action initiated by lesbians and gays for the benefit of lesbians and gays and the wider society.

The history of lesbian and gay movements, particularly in the nineteen seventies, teaches us that the most significant political gains were made by lesbians and gays themselves, fuelled by the anger of their oppression and the pride that comes from a strong sense of self-worth and power to affect change.

The same pattern of self-help can be seen if we examine the political gains made within the black communities, particularly in the U.S.A. and South Africa. Here, black activists took the initiative, inspiring their peoples to fight for social justice, supported by their white fellow citizens.

Lesbians and gays need to take up the challenge of citizenship education, fully supported by fellow heterosexual citizens, some of whom suffer other kinds of oppression because of their sex, race, class or ability. This must emphasise the necessity of listening to the diverse voices of the oppressed. It must also acknowledge the right of these oppressed groups to join together in order to identify

the many forms that oppression takes and fight it on a united front. Citizenship should not be presented as an assimilation of many cultures, beliefs, viewpoints, lifestyles and sexualities. Instead, it should be seen as the coalition of a diverse collection of individuals and groups, respecting each others' differences, and working towards the fundamental democratic aims of equality and liberty.

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