

Respect for persons and for cultures as a basis for national and global citizenship

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ABSTRACT After distinguishing several ways in which the notion of the moral roots of citizenship and citizenship education can be understood, this paper focuses on the question 'Is there some underlying attitude that citizens should have towards their fellow citizens?'. It argues for respect, rather than love or care, as being the appropriate attitude, in part on the grounds that the emphasis on respect helps to make moral sense of the notion of global citizenship.

The rest of the paper argues that while understanding a person's cultural background is necessary to respecting the person, there are two further connections between respect and culture. First, respect itself is in part a cultural phenomenon. Secondly, there is a case for saying that persons should respect, not only other persons, but cultures as such. It is argued that this case is flawed in its presupposition that distinct cultures can be identified. What is needed, rather, is respect for human cultural contexts in all their diversity.

Introduction

The idea of the moral roots of citizenship and citizenship education is open to a number of interpretations, as will be clear from the articles in this *JME* special issue. This openness to interpretation is already consistent with a certain kind of value pluralism, as is the very fact that it seems natural to speak of the moral *roots*, in the plural, of citizenship. The kind of value pluralism in question is Isaiah Berlin's, or something similar (Berlin 1990; 2002): its central claim is the denial that all values can be reduced to one. Such a claim is not committed to denying objectivity to values, or to asserting

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relativism (though the terms ‘objectivity’ and ‘relativism’ both need more careful attention than there is space for here). Berlin, at any rate, thought it perfectly possible to hold that, for instance, liberty and justice are both, objectively, important values: the point is that they are not the same, and are not necessarily in the real world consistent with each other. This means that moral and political agents sometimes have to decide which to pursue or which to put most weight on in particular circumstances.

If this kind of pluralism of values is recognised, then to any question of the form ‘what is *the* moral basis of citizenship?’ the right answer is likely to be that there is no single basis: a number of values, open moreover to a number of interpretations (as Berlin (2002) famously explored different interpretations of liberty) will be important in citizenship. Any argument for putting special weight on one particular value, or indeed on a particular interpretation of a particular value, will not be an argument that this is the *only* value that matters. It will be, less ambitiously, an argument for putting weight on a particular value in a particular context and with particular purposes in mind. It is in this spirit that I shall here philosophically examine the notion of respect and argue for its special importance in citizenship and citizenship education.

We should remember – consistent with value pluralism - that the values we recognise come into play in different ways. Sometimes we appeal to a certain value as a standard when evaluating a state of affairs. Where the state of affairs is in some condition of a society - or indeed of the human world - then we may appeal, for instance, to values of peace or justice as standards in criticising the *status quo* and arguing for change. Such evaluations are of obvious relevance in contexts of citizenship. If such values are not all reducible to one - as utilitarians for instance, would argue they are - then there is room for argument about their relative importance. Is it better, for instance, that the human world should be one of peace even if some injustice has to be tolerated, or that it should be a world in which there is a constant striving for justice even at the cost of peace? Might the search for a sustainable global environment mean that some injustice between different parts of the world has to be tolerated, and might some resulting conflict be an acceptable price to pay for the achievement of solutions to environmental crisis?

One important question for citizenship education is about the standards of evaluation that we should encourage and enable citizens to use. Should we, to continue the same example, try to educate citizens so that they will think peace more important than justice, or justice more important than peace; or perhaps saving the environment more important than either? That is to put the question very crudely, and no doubt any actual programme of citizenship education should be more sophisticated in its aims. At the very least, we can try to educate citizens so that they are aware of the plurality of values, able to avoid crude dichotomies, and capable of making judgements that may have to be heavily contextualised.

It is not, however, only as standards for criticism and evaluation of states of affairs that values come into play. We can recognise certain principles that we think people should try to follow in their actions, and we can identify personal qualities that we count as virtues. It follows that when we raise questions about the values we should try to promote through education, different kinds of answer can be given: not only, for instance, that we should encourage citizens to use a standard of justice in reflecting on the state of their society or their world, but also that they should themselves try to act justly as a matter of principle, and, perhaps, that they should develop that deeper sense of justice that we might think of as an aspect of someone's character (justice as a virtue). The notion of 'values' is a very broad one, and justice - which is perhaps a paradigm case of a value if anything is - is not unique in being able to function in these different ways while still recognisably remaining one value. As the relation between principles and character is addressed by David Carr in this *JME* special issue,^s I shall say no more about it here as a general issue.

Attitudes towards fellow citizens

My starting point for the rest of this paper is just one of the many kinds of questions that we may ask about the values that citizenship education should seek to develop: namely, is there some underlying attitude which it is desirable that citizens should have towards their fellow citizens? (I shall come later to the question: who is to count as a fellow citizen?) There are several attitudes that are often mentioned in such a connection, including tolerance, respect and (at least in some religious contexts), love. My argument will not be original in attributing a special importance to respect; but I want to ask why respect has this special importance, especially in a multicultural context in which there is a need for a discourse of global as well as national

citizenship. I shall examine the claim that we should seek to educate students to have respect for other cultures as such. I shall argue that, while this claim is plausible, it is flawed in its presupposition that we can identify distinct cultures. What is needed is respect, not for distinct cultures, but for human cultural contexts in all their variety.

Something needs to be said first about what is involved in treating respect as one *attitude*, among others, that people may take towards their fellow citizens. Within moral education and citizenship education we may sometimes concentrate on influencing how people *behave* towards each other. It is possible to treat respect itself as a matter of behaviour. Indeed Raz (2001) in a very subtle discussion of respect says at one point ‘respecting people is a way of treating them. It is neither a feeling, nor an emotion, nor a belief, though it may be based on a belief and be accompanied (at least occasionally) by certain feelings. It is a way of conducting oneself, and more indirectly, of being disposed to conduct oneself, towards the object of respect’ (Raz 2001, p.138). On this understanding, if one role of citizenship education is to promote respect, then the task could – in principle – be carried out by inculcating a moral principle that one should treat others with respect. If this were what promoting respect amounted to, it would be subject to the familiar difficulties that face any attempt to conceive of values education purely in terms of the teaching of principles.

As an alternative, one might attempt to give a virtue-ethical account of respect. As Carr’s paper in this *JME* special issue makes clear, this would not be incompatible with upholding a principle that one should treat people with respect, but it would add psychological richness to the way we understand respect. It would amount to trying to construe the disposition to respect – to respect the appropriate objects, in the appropriate way, and so on – as a quality of character. In advance of further exploration, it is not clear whether this can be done. On the face of it, while Raz is correct that respect may, at least occasionally, be accompanied by certain feelings, there is probably no specific kind of feeling, or specific kind of motivation, that has to be associated with respect, and for that reason respect may not be susceptible of a virtue-ethical account. At the same time, the point that respect may be based on a belief is important for education, since teachers have the general responsibility to see so far as they can that their students’ beliefs are well founded. Exploring beliefs about other persons and their cultural background may well be one way in which respect can be nurtured.

If respect needs to be seen, for educational purposes, as more than a pure behavioural disposition but less than a fully-fledged virtue, the category into which we can best place it – consistent with much philosophical discussion – is *attitude*.

For the purposes of the present argument, no further analysis of the idea of an attitude need be attempted; ‘attitude’ can stand as a category within which we can compare a number of possible orientations that persons^s can have towards other persons (and possibly towards other kinds of objects^s besides persons). Consistent with value pluralism, we should not expect an argument that there is just one correct attitude that citizenship education should seek to promote. Nevertheless, we might argue that a certain attitude should be promoted as fundamental in the following sense: that people should hold that attitude in a way that will affect their orientation towards other values that come into play. So, for instance, if love of their neighbours is a fundamental attitude for Christians, that will make a difference to the way they think about circumstances in which issues of justice or of war and peace come into play.

Within the broad class of attitudes towards others, there are some attitudes that involve a negative evaluation of others: for example, hating others or despising others. Regrettably, there are historical examples in which the schools of a particular society have been used, with more or less deliberate intent, to promote negative attitudes towards certain groups of people¹. Putting such examples on one side, I shall assume that any ethically justifiable policy for citizenship education will involve the promotion of positive rather than negative attitudes. That immediately raises an issue about tolerance (tolerance as a personal disposition, rather than toleration as a political and legal policy). If we do not in some way dislike or disapprove of something, the question of tolerance towards it does not arise. In practical contexts of citizenship, tolerance is often a matter of putting up with something which one does not like simply because it is different from what one is used to. While certainly better, in that context, than intolerance, it is doubtful whether it should in itself be called a positive attitude.

Within the class of attitudes that are more certainly positive, there is still a question to be asked about which attitudes it is most important to promote. In asking this question, I shall assume that the answer will have to apply to citizenship education that can be undertaken within schools that are themselves open to the

children of all citizens within liberal societies. I shall leave aside the question of whether schools that are committed to a particular religious perspective might promote as fundamental to citizenship some different attitude to that promoted in secular schools. Here I shall make the presumption, admittedly one that needs further defence, that to look for one attitude as being fundamental for citizenship is to look for an attitude that all citizens could in principle take towards each other. In this light it is doubtful whether *love* can be the right answer, since (even putting aside the question whether love falls into the category of attitude) there are many issues of interpretation that would need to be faced if love is to be extended from the sphere of interpersonal relationships to that of relationships between citizens. If a particular framework, which might be Christian or might be that of some other religious or spiritual perspective, is assumed, then there may be at least some basis for interpreting what love would mean in a context of citizenship. If no such framework can be assumed, the idea of love of each human being for their fellow human beings will probably seem both too ambitious and too tenuous as a basis for citizenship. There is also a more specific danger in emphasising love. Psychologically, it does not seem easy to extend love for what is perceived as close and similar towards love for what is more distant and different. Love for fellow-citizens can easily be interpreted as love for those with whom one shares citizenship within a nation-state. In other words, love for fellow citizens may be uncomfortably close to love of one's country, and while that notion is open to a benign interpretation, its dangers hardly need to be spelled out.

Another candidate might be an attitude of care towards others, but this faces somewhat similar difficulties. As interpreted by Noddings (1984; Noddings and Slote 2003), caring is, at bottom, not an attitude of one person but a relationship that has to be completed by the involvement of the person cared for. Though Noddings has tried to extend her basic notion of caring to other contexts beyond the directly interpersonal, the idea of the caring relationship will inevitably seem attenuated if seen as the fundamental relationship between citizens. Besides, when it is detached from the contexts of direct interpersonal relationships, the idea of the citizen having a caring attitude towards others can easily slip into the sort of benevolence that can be patronising, in which the one caring operates with their own idea of what is good for the other. That rather detached kind of caring can, in turn, lend itself to a weighing up of consequences that is little different from utilitarian calculation, in which the importance of each individual can be downgraded.

There is no doubt more that could be said about love or care or perhaps other candidates, but my purpose here is to make a case for respect as fundamental. I shall make that case largely by unpacking what is involved in respect and showing that treating respect as fundamental can make sense in contexts not only of national citizenship but also of global citizenship. Importantly, it can make sense across cultural differences. Exploring that point will lead to an argument that citizenship education should promote not only respect for persons - fellow human beings - but also respect for cultural difference.

National and global citizenship

The notion of global citizenship is a popular one among many educators². There is, however, by no means universal agreement that the notion of global citizenship even makes sense, let alone being something that we can sensibly educate people for. Sceptics such as David Miller (2000, Ch. 5) have argued that the status, the rights and the responsibilities of citizenship have no reality outside the existence of shared bonds with fellow citizens and the existence of institutions through which the rights of citizens can be secured and their responsibilities carried out. For historical reasons the relevant institutions operate mainly at the level of nation states, and psychologically the idea of nationhood seems able to function as a focus for identification with others. On such an argument the idea of global citizenship is at best metaphorical, even if it is an expression of an admirable aspiration.

I have already suggested, referring to love, that the bonds that create a shared sense of belonging across citizens of one country may be difficult to extend to a global context. If we are to make sense of global citizenship nevertheless, we need to be able to see it as supported by attitudes that *are* possible across a global context, yet that do not make global citizenship collapse into morality as such.

The problem here is that some accounts of global citizenship in effect do no more than emphasize the consequences of taking our moral agency seriously. As moral agents we should be benevolent; we should recognise our responsibility for the consequences of our actions; we should have respect for persons (these ideas are commonplace in widespread conceptions of morality, even if theoretically they may sometimes be pulled apart in consequentialist and Kantian directions). There is nothing in these ideas to imply that their scope should be limited by national or any other boundaries; implicitly, they already have global scope. Sometimes talk of global

citizenship seems to be a roundabout way of making that point. But if that is all it is, then the notion of citizenship seems unnecessary to making the point. If the central educational concern lying behind the idea of global citizenship is essentially the idea of moral education as such, then we do not have to emphasize the idea of *citizenship*. We could instead play down the idea of citizenship and simply emphasize that all human beings are of equal moral standing and that the responsibilities of moral agents are not subject to any arbitrary limits.

If respect for persons is in itself a root moral notion, and inherently universal in the scope of its application, why do we need to investigate respect as a basis specifically for citizenship? Here it is important that we can have respect for a person *under some description*. I can, for instance, respect certain people as colleagues. This is entirely compatible with respecting them as persons, but it is also more specific. I am conscious of sharing with my colleagues in some joint enterprise, I give weight to the contribution they seek to make to that enterprise, I am inclined to trust that they wish the enterprise to succeed, and so on. In a similar way, to respect certain people as fellow citizens, while compatible with respecting them as persons, adds something more to that notion. Let us look at this first at the level of citizenship with which we are most familiar - within the nation state. Here it is important that relationships with fellow citizens can be seen as relationships within a shared enterprise within which there is influence to be wielded and decisions to be made; in short these relationships are political: some have power over others and all potentially have the possibility of exercising some power. We can see the society that we share with fellow citizens as having at least the potential to be, in Rawls' term, a fair system of cooperation (Rawls, 2001). Then too, with fellow citizens we can see ourselves as sharing a fate, in Melissa Williams' term, and thus having some motivation to ameliorate that fate (Williams, 2003). This is enough to give some purchase to the idea of having respect for one's fellow citizens, as a notion that is not simply equivalent to respect for persons.

Perhaps for much of human history these notions of sharing a fate with others, of potentially being members of a fair system of cooperation, of having the potential with others to exercise some influence over the shared fate - to exercise some power over others, or voluntarily to refrain from doing so - could never be extended to a global scope. Now, however, it is not only possible for people to see themselves both as sharing a fate with the rest of the world's population and as having some possibility

of exercising or refraining from exercising influence over that fate, but arguably it is necessary in terms of justice, peace and even long-term expediency that people do see themselves in this way. People *can* see themselves as global citizens (though whether they will do so is heavily dependent on the kind of education they receive) and thereby can also see others as global citizens, who as citizens of the same world have an equal standing. People can, therefore, have respect for others as citizens of the same world, and this does add something to simply having respect for persons.

Respect as the root notion here assumes that all people share in one world and are all caught up in the structures of power and politics in that world. But it does not assume that all are the same in more substantial ways: it does not assume that all have the same beliefs or the same priorities in their lives. There is an element of distance - of the recognition of the other as other - inherent in respect that does not seem to be similarly inherent in love or in caring, interpreted in Noddings' way. We can comprehend this in relation to the Kantian roots of much of the understanding of respect in modern ethics. One does not have to accept all of Kant's ethical theory to accept that to respect persons is to recognise that other persons are ends in themselves and to treat them accordingly: that is, never to treat them purely as means to one's own ends, and, we can add, never to assume that one can understand them or judge them purely from one's own perspective without taking any account of their values or their perspective. To accept this does not mean that criticism is ruled out, but it does mean that it is possible to distinguish more and less respectful ways of approaching and of expressing evaluative judgments that are made about others. It hardly needs to be spelled out that respect in this sense is important in citizenship, and not least when ideas of citizenship are extended beyond national boundaries.

Respect and culture

From what has just been said it follows that respect for persons has to take a person's cultural context into account. Respect has to be expressed or shown in some way (where sometimes the way of showing respect may be to refrain from some action or speech). Exactly what is counted as respectful behaviour - and therefore what is perceived as an expression of respect - can vary culturally. Therefore to know whether someone else is being respectful we need to have, if not certain knowledge of their cultural positioning, then at least some basis for a provisional presumption about 'where they are coming from'. Similarly, to show respect to another we need to have

at least a basis for a provisional presumption about how our speech or action towards them will be perceived. Parekh puts it more strongly: ‘We can hardly be said to respect a person if we treat with contempt or abstract away all that gives meaning to his life and makes him the kind of person he is’ (Parekh, 2000, p. 240).

This point is often expressed by the idea that in a multicultural society it is important that citizens respect other cultures or respect cultural difference. Typical examples are ‘a commitment that people will respect the diverse views and culture of their neighbours’ (The UK government’s *Respect Action Plan*, p. 27³) and ‘Photo activities can help children appreciate diversity, challenge stereotypes and develop respect for other cultures’ (Oxfam 2006: p.10). If we take such sentiments seriously in an educational context, we must consider that the onus to respect ‘other’ cultures falls not only on the majority culture (if there is such a thing) of a particular society, but on all members of the society whatever their culture. This view is one that I have seen expressed in the words ‘cultures should respect each other’. One might interpret this simply as a shorthand way of saying that people, of whatever culture, should respect other people, of whatever culture; in other words, what is intended might be reduced simply to an affirmation of the importance of respect for persons, with understanding of cultural difference playing no more than an instrumental role in enabling people to see how to express their respect. I want to argue that the relation between respect and culture goes deeper than this, in two ways.

First, respect should not be understood purely as an individual phenomenon. An example can be drawn from the UK government policy referred to in the previous paragraph. The *Respect Action Plan* refers to the need to build ‘a culture of respect’ (pp. 2, 5, 9). There is a valid insight here: that whether individuals treat each other with respect is dependent in part on the example set by others and the perceived expectations of others. Respect for persons, or the lack of it, is itself in part a cultural phenomenon.

It is not unusual to find that attitudes or values are attributed to a culture. To do this is not merely to sum up the attitudes or values of the individuals who are seen as belonging to that culture; it is to say something also about social practices which can be instantiated in political institutions, media, education systems and so on. We know roughly what is meant by such claims as that one culture values cricket while another values baseball (and the basis for such claims is not destroyed by the fact that

in each cultural context there will be many individuals who are indifferent to cricket and baseball respectively). Similarly we can know what is meant by claims that, for instance, a culture respects self-made entrepreneurs, or a culture does not respect intellectuals, or a culture does not respect women.

No doubt these are problematic ways of speaking, but the problem lies in the implication that distinct cultures, distinguished by such features, can be identified. As will be argued below, the phenomena of culture are much more fluid than this. But the insight that respect, for particular objects, manifested in particular ways, is a cultural as well as an individual phenomenon, remains valid. This is an important point for education: as regards nurturing respect, the responsibilities of teachers, and the opportunities open to them, are not limited to seeking to induce attitudes of respect in individual students; teachers can and should seek to nurture a culture of respect at least within the classroom and school environment.

I said above that the relationship between respect and culture is more than an instrumental one (awareness of a person's cultural location being instrumental to expressing respect for a person) *in two ways*. To explore the second way we need to ask whether persons can and should respect *cultures* over and above respecting persons. In other words, should teachers encourage their students to respect cultures as such? Whether a Jewish child in the classroom does or does not treat a Muslim child with respect is a question that can be addressed in terms of respect for persons. Respect here involves awareness of an individual's cultural context, but this is still respect for persons, not respect for cultures as such. There are some who would say that respect, properly speaking, *can* only be extended to persons. The thinking behind such a view may well be Kantian: that it is only the rational moral capacities of persons - precisely the capacities that make it possible for persons to have respect - that make persons fit objects of respect. On such a view, there is something suspect about respect for an abstract entity such as a culture.

My argument on this point will first present a case in which we seem to need the idea of respect for a particular culture, and will then proceed by analysing what respect in such a case involves. The world in which the idea of global citizenship

makes sense is a world in which there are many possibilities of relationships between cultures that are not direct person-to-person relationships. Consider the following case.

In September 2005 a Danish newspaper published cartoons that lampooned the prophet Muhammad, in one case depicting the prophet as a terrorist. By January 2006 reports about these cartoons had spread widely through the Muslim world, leading to protests in several countries. Protests escalated in February after several other European publications reprinted the cartoons. There was widespread media coverage of the protests, and discussion of the rights and wrongs of the case, continuing through February into March 2006.⁴

I shall assume for the argument here that there were indeed substantial grounds for moral objection to the publication of the cartoons, without attempting to assess whether these grounds may have been outweighed by other considerations, as some liberal proponents of freedom of expression claim.

What should we consider to have been wrong or objectionable about the publication of those cartoons? The offence caused to many Muslims is certainly one consideration, but the fundamental issue here is not the psychological consequence that feelings of hurt or offence were caused to many individuals (nor, in this case, do the numbers offended seem very relevant). The more fundamental issue is the reason why the cartoons were (perceived as) offensive.⁵ We can say that the cartoons were disrespectful. But to whom? Given that there is no direct person-to-person relationship operating here (between, say, the cartoonist and some particular Muslims who might be offended) an individualist analysis along Kantian lines does not appear to work. It is hardly that the many millions of Muslims in the world were being used purely as means towards the ends of the cartoonist or of the publishers.

One could say that the cartoons were disrespectful to the prophet Muhammad - as indeed they were perceived to be - but that does not yet capture the fundamental objection. While disrespect to the dead - even those who died centuries ago - may perhaps in general be undesirable, what is important here is clearly the very special status of the prophet Muhammad to Muslims. We cannot understand the objection to the publication of the cartoons without referring to the beliefs and values and religious practices of Muslims, that is, to (aspects of) Islamic culture. Since these beliefs, values and practices are not susceptible to an individualist reduction, this is an

example where it makes good sense to say that the lack of respect in question was lack of respect for a certain kind of culture.

If the case just considered shows that it is possible to have respect, or lack of respect, for a culture, this does not yet enable us to see whether any particular culture *should* be respected, or on what grounds we might say that it should be, or whether indeed citizenship education should encourage people to have respect for cultures - any cultures - as such. These questions demand further attention to what is involved in respect.

Respect, in all the contexts with which this article is concerned, involves recognising value in someone or something independently of its relationship to one's own desires, preferences and goals (here the root Kantian notion of not treating the object purely as a means to one's own ends, but as an end in itself, still has force, even if we need to extent its application beyond persons). In a formulation used by Raz, respect is a matter of 'recognising the value of the object of respect, and being disposed to react appropriately' (Raz, 2001, 137 footnote). This formulation is broad enough to encompass two importantly different ways in which respect can operate. Some philosophers would argue that there are two distinct kinds of respect in question here, or two distinct senses of 'respect'. The exact distinctions made, and the terminology in which they are expressed, vary from one philosopher to another; one of the most commonly cited is a distinction drawn by Darwall (1977) between 'recognition respect' and 'appraisal respect', where the former recognises the value in something, while the latter makes some judgement of how great the value is. Others, including Raz, have questioned whether such a distinction does mark two different kinds of respect. For the present purpose, it is sufficient to note that some cases of respect involve comparison between one object of respect and another, while other cases do not; I shall mark the distinction here by the terms 'comparative respect' and 'non-comparative respect'.

Sometimes we respect particular individuals for what they have achieved or what they have contributed to society. I might respect someone for their skill in philosophy or for their work for charity. Here there is, at least implicitly, a comparison made with others: not everyone is such a good philosopher or has made such important contributions, so not everyone is deserving of respect *for these reasons*. In contrast, respect for persons, as it is understood in the broadly Kantian tradition, does not rest on distinctions between one person and another. We are to

have and show respect for persons as such, independently of our comparative judgement of their qualities. Respecting persons as such is not incompatible with our expressing disagreement with them or criticising their personal qualities or their beliefs, though it should make a difference to how we do that.

If we can recognise the distinction, with regard to persons, between comparative and non-comparative respect, then we can ask whether the same distinction can apply to respect for cultures. There seems to be no conceptual difficulty in having respect in a comparative way for particular aspects of particular cultures. We can admire, say, Islamic art, and so respect Islamic culture for its historical contribution to the world's artistic traditions; similarly for its contribution to mathematics and to Aristotelian scholarship. Here, since an appraisal is being made, there is at least an implicit comparison with what might have been the case and with other cultures for which the same claims cannot be made. Respecting a culture in this sense is analogous to respecting individuals as artists or as scholars, for their particular qualities and contribution. The implicit comparison is shown in the fact that it would not make sense to respect everyone as an artist or everyone as a scholar; there are some persons, indeed many, who have made no contribution that could merit respect of that kind. Similarly, there may be cultures that have not shown the qualities that would merit respect under these particular categories.

Again, we can criticise individual persons for deficiencies in their personal qualities and for moral failings. Cultures too can be criticized; certainly nothing in this argument rules that out. But in the case of persons, we can hold that criticism of individuals is not incompatible with respect for them as persons. The question remains whether we can and should respect cultures as such, in a way that is not incompatible with appraising and either praising or criticizing particular aspects of those cultures.

Are there cultures as such?

We need to face a problem with the idea of respecting cultures. Notwithstanding philosophical conundrums about personal identity, for practical purposes we can usually identify one person as distinct from another. Indeed, this is implicit in the way respect for persons operates as a fundamental moral value: it underpins, for instance, the language of human rights as inalienable rights *of individuals*. But it is not at all clear that we can identify distinct cultures. There is no disputing cultural differences; indeed, it has been argued above that respect for persons has to be

sensitive to cultural differences. The question is whether the differences fall along fault lines that enable us, without artificiality, over-simplification and, indeed, stereotyping, to say ‘this is Islamic culture’, ‘this is Christian culture’, ‘this is European culture’, ‘this is Japanese culture’, or whatever. The evident overlaps between even these categories already show that cultures cannot readily be compartmentalized.

Realistically, we need to recognise many dimensions of cultural difference: religious beliefs, values that are most salient for people, language, identification with a nation, a sense of historical connection with certain others, geographical roots, typical patterns of family structure, forms of art and decoration, everyday practices in dress and food: these are just some of the more evidently recognisable dimensions of difference. It is inherently unlikely that all the possible differences along so many dimensions will align and match up into just a few of what we might call Cultures with an upper case C (cf. Haydon, 2006b, Ch. 2). Even if some liberal thinkers (e.g. Waldron, 1996) exaggerate the extent to which individuals in the modern world can take a ‘pick and mix’ approach to their own cultural identity, the cultural contexts that individuals can inhabit are indefinitely variable. Respect for persons requires a sensitivity to culture that is also a sensitivity to individual positioning (Stables, 2005).

The point is of practical educational importance. A serious risk in promoting within education the idea of respecting cultures as such is that by seeking to promote such respect we may at the same time promote a false and dangerous idea of cultures as distinct entities. Faced with this risk, we may think it better to retreat from the idea of respect for culture and emphasise respect for persons alone. Yet this also carries a risk for citizenship education: that the persons who are taught to respect persons as such may not be sufficiently sensitive to cultural difference and thereby not in practice able to respect all persons equally.

Respect for culture

We need, I suggest, an idea of respect for culture - for the multifarious cultural context of human life - rather than respect for *cultures* as such. We may find an analogy for respect for culture in the idea (also important for citizenship education, but not the topic of this article) of respect for the environment. It is possible to respect the natural environment in the sense of recognising that there is value in the natural environment independently of the ways in which human beings can use the

environment for their own ends: indeed, this is a theme of much environmental ethics. To have respect for the environment is necessarily to recognise the reality and the importance of different environments. The differences are real: a polar environment is very different from a tropical environment, for example. But, at the same time, it is not that different environments exist in distinct compartments; on the contrary, we are very much aware now (and it is another constant theme of environmental ethics) of the influence of one part of 'the environment' on another. We can have respect for the environment, and for environmental difference, without treating parts of the environmental whole as being distinct entities.

Analogous to respect for the natural environment would be respect for the cultural context of human life. If we ask *why* we should have respect for the cultural context of human life, in all its diversity, then the answers we might give do not entirely overlap with answers to the equivalent questions concerning respect for the environment. We can make sense of the idea of natural objects - rocks, forest and so on - and other aspects of the natural environment having a value quite independently of their being the context for human life and subject to human intervention. Culture does not have value *independently* of its being the context of human life. The point is, rather, that it is much more than just the context of human life. It is more like the ground or substrate of the lives of individual human beings. Crucially, the very qualities that on a Kantian approach are the grounds for respect for persons (rationality, with the possibility of a rationally-based moral consciousness) are qualities that cannot develop, let alone flourish, outside a cultural context. For Kant, respect for persons is itself grounded in respect for the rational and moral capacities that distinguish persons from other entities; the present point is that the individual possibility of developing those capacities is grounded in a context that necessarily transcends the individual. The cultural ground, then, can itself be seen as a fit object of respect.

Educating for intercultural respect

The upshot of these arguments is that education should promote, not the idea of respect for each of a number of distinct cultures - since that is itself a flawed idea - but an attitude of respect towards human cultural contexts in all their variety. As noted above in reference to Raz, beliefs about other persons and their cultural context are a vital area for educational attention. Students must be taught about the sheer diversity

of human cultural contexts –since this is something they will not necessarily learn from their own classroom environment – and must be helped to recognise the sheer importance of culture as the necessary grounding for human life. They need to recognise that their own cultural context is not to be taken for granted and is not to be assumed as *the* norm. They need, as part of a respectful attitude, to work with the presumption that in any cultural context there is something of value that can explain why human beings can find meaning and identity in that context.

It is often said that we should celebrate diversity. It can equally be questioned whether diversity as such is something to be celebrated - given that the diversity necessarily includes all that may from whatever perspective be appraised as undesirable in human nature and practices as well as all that may be admired. To focus on respect rather than celebration may help educators and their students to take a more sober view. Diversity in human culture is important because it opens up possibilities for human achievement and flourishing that would otherwise never have developed. At the same time, unavoidably, it opens up possibilities of disagreement and conflict. We should respect the diversity of human cultural contexts, not only in the sense that we respect a positive achievement, but also in the sense that we can respect something of importance that is outside our individual control, not to be ignored or trifled with.

The task for teachers in promoting cultural respect is, unavoidably, a difficult one. Teachers have to recognise, and bring their students to recognise, cultural difference without stereotyping. They have to bring their students to an attitude that will not refuse to make evaluative comparisons, yet will work with a presumption that there is something of value in any cultural context. They have to do this, in most parts of the world, in schools in which a degree of cultural diversity is present within the classroom, so that sensitivity is needed to the culturally-grounded perceptions of individuals actually present, while at the same time they have to open their students' eyes to the still greater diversity that the students will, for the time being, know only at second hand.

While each teacher will see their primary responsibility as lying with the individual students who pass through their classroom, there is also a broader task that educators share, and this is itself a cultural task. It was argued above that it is not only individuals who can have attitudes of respect. Respect can itself be a cultural phenomenon; one cultural climate may be more respectful than another of diversity or

non-conformity. Educators share the task of trying to create and maintain cultural conditions - an appropriate ethical environment - that will be supportive of individual respect for cultures.⁶

The educational task, then, is complex and daunting. It will not be possible to lay down a formula by which teachers should proceed in promoting intercultural respect. The need will be as great here as in any area of education for the exercise of practical wisdom by teachers (McLaughlin, 1999).

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1 Notes

Plausible examples, subject of course to historical evidence, are schools for white students in ante-bellum southern States of the USA and in pre-apartheid South Africa, and schools in Nazi Germany. Without full review of the evidence it would be too contentious to speculate on whether there are still schools in some parts of the world today in which negative attitudes towards certain groups are deliberately or inadvertently promoted.

² The idea of global citizenship has been promoted to educators by The Council for Education in World Citizenship (www.cewc.org) and by Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/globalcitiz). Academic discussions can be found in, e.g. Dower and Williams(2002) and Heater (2002)

³ This is a policy, promoted under the general heading of ‘The Respect Agenda’, which arguably has as its primary purpose to do something about, and be seen as a government to be doing something about, anti-social behaviour in British society. The Respect Action Plan can be found at www.respect.gov.uk/assets/docs/respect_action_plan.pdf.

⁴ See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,1699811,00.html> (1 February 2006) for an early report, and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/cartoonprotests/story/0,1791557,00.html> for a retrospective view in June 2006.

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⁶ For more on respect as the value underlying offence and offensiveness as moral categories, see Haydon (2006a) and Barrow (2006).

⁶ See Haydon (2004) and Haydon (2006b) for the background to the idea that values education is about creating and sustaining a desirable ethical environment. For valuable discussions of the issues facing teachers in multicultural environments see Stables 2005 and McLaughlin 2003.

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