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One people, one nation, one Singapore: The construction of multiculturalism in Singapore

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**ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION, ONE SINGAPORE: THE
CONSTRUCTION OF MULTICULTURALISM IN SINGAPORE**

by
Suvie Khong B.A. (Media Studies)

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the way in which an official multicultural identity has been constructed in Singapore at the expense of the cultural specificity that exists within the multiculturalism framework. The construction of the multicultural identity in Singapore has been engineered socially through language policies, heritage preservation projects and the media. However, the official multicultural policy in itself is problematic because of the existence of the four independent parent cultures so that a Singaporean is constantly reminded of a cultural identity which is determined by race, history, language and class. This is further complicated by a dominant Chinese population so that the cultural identity of Singapore is fundamentally Chinese, while the Malay, Indian and Eurasian cultures are dragged along in its tail.

I will argue that the Singapore government has carefully constructed a multicultural identity without addressing the underpinning historical and racial factors. The purpose of the study is an investigation of the tension between the multiculturalism and cultural specificity which will help to reveal my claim that there is predominantly a Chinese cultural identity in Singapore and the created notion of a multicultural identity is an illusion.

The multicultural identity in Singapore is founded on a set of neo-Confucian principles which are reproduced in the national core values defined by the government in the White Paper in 1991. These neo-Confucian values are established on principles of frugality and the emphasis on the family. Although these values are not entirely foreign to the Malay and Indian cultures, their perceptions on how the family operates may be different based on the Islam, Hindu or even Christian teachings. Although the government maintains that Confucian teaching is regarded as philosophical in character rather than reflecting Chinese teachings, it is nevertheless a topic which begs investigation within the multicultural and multireligious context of Singapore.

It appears that multiculturalism in Singapore does not equally promote four cultures but is inclined towards the Chinese culture and the minor cultures have come to identify with the cultural framework that the Singapore government has constructed. I will investigate this construction by analysing the speeches of well-known Singapore politicians like Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chok Tong and George Yeo and the role of the media in reporting multiculturalism in Singapore.

The relationship between multiculturalism and the Singapore media will be examined through the methodology devised by Birch (1993). His theoretical framework deals specifically with the analysis of the Singapore media and is shown to be crucial to the understanding of cultural and political practices in Singapore. By applying Birch's theory, I will show how multiculturalism is constructed by the Singapore government through the media.

The study of Sentosa, a heritage tourism site in Singapore, will be explored to establish the relationships between multiculturalism, tourism and conservation in Singapore. This will be done following the framework devised Boniface and Fowler (1993) on the phenomena of 'heritage' and 'tourism', adapting it to multiculturalism in Singapore. Their theoretical framework for the study of culture deals specifically with heritage in the United Kingdom and Europe, but I will argue the methodology devised is appropriate for the study of culture in Singapore because the issues confronting each nation are similar. The key elements to be investigated are the relationship between culture and tourism, architectural heritage in the tourism context, and the construction of multiculturalism through the media.

By looking at the various (multi)cultural, social and economic underpinnings of multiculturalism, I will show in my thesis that the construction of multiculturalism in Singapore is to negotiate a mechanism of control by the government.

DECLARATION

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Signature.

Date.....

Y. L. 1992. 1

Preface

As a contender of ethnic peace and having been brought up in the Singapore society where ethnic harmony prevails has led me to take on the challenge of investigating the multiculturalism framework of Singapore.

In the various stages of developing this thesis, I have learned that my growing up in a society where criticism of state policies is met with a zealous defence by the government has resulted in my cautious approach in questioning the political aspect of Singapore society. Since young I have been exposed to an education and media system that credits the government for its achievements for the country and equates criticism with disloyalty. For the past eighteen years, I have strongly believe that all government policies are for the good of Singaporeans and made no attempt to understand or analyse them in detail.

In the course of writing this thesis, I was able to see the faults in the Singapore government but at the same time, I was also able to appreciate the complex web of policies to enusre continual economic progress and multicultural co-existence in Singapore. Being a Singaporean who have lives in a Western country for the last 5 years, I hope that I will offer an interesting analysis of the multiculturalism framework in Singapore.

I am grateful to a number of people who have been a source of encouragement during the writing of this thesis. Firstly, my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Brian Shoesmith, for all his invaluable advice, guidance and encouragement. I would also like to thank Dr Anura Goonsenkera and Dr Yao Suchao for providing me with important research information. My appreciation also to Sharon Woo for proof-reading and to Sebastian Ng for his continual support and comments towards the development of the

thesis. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents whose unfailing love has been my source of motivation in the completion of this thesis.

Background notes

The ancient history of Singapore dates back to the thirteenth century where it was known as Temasek or Sea Town. According to the Malay Annals Singapore was, at that time, caught in the struggles between Siam and the Java-based Majaphit Empire. Around 1390, Iskandar Shah or Parameswara, a prince of Palembang murdered the local chieftain and made himself the island's new ruler but he was driven out by the Javanese forces not long after. Iskandar fled to north to Muar where he founded the Malacca Sultanate and extended his authority over Temasek.

In the second half of the 18th century, the British who were extending their dominion in India and expanding their trade with China established a trading post in Singapore. Modern Singapore was founded on 6 February 1819 and remained part of the Straits Settlements until it was dissolved on March 1946.

Today the island republic occupies a total land area of 641.4 square kilometres (including the smaller islands) and has a population of 2.9 million. Being just north of the equator, its temperature is relatively uniform and its climate hot and humid with abundant rainfall. Singapore is strategically located at the tip of the Malaya Peninsular and the two nations are linked by a kilometre long causeway.

Parliament in Singapore is unicameral comprising 81 elected members and has a life span of five years from the date of its first sitting. Voting is compulsory for all citizens aged 21 and above. The Constitution amended in 1991 provides for an elected president who is the Head of State, currently Mr Ong Teng Cheong is the first elected president of Singapore and is empowered to veto government budgets and appointments of state. The cabinet is responsible collectively to Parliament, and comprises the Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and 14 ministers.

The average life expectancy is 74.9 years. There is an average of 1018 males per 1000 females. The age profile is 23.1 per cent below 15 years old and 9.5 percent 60 years and above. The population is classified ethnically as follows; Chinese 77.5%, Malays 14.2%, Indians 7.1% and people of other ethnic groups 1.2%. The crude birth rate has declined over the years and ethnically, the Chinese birth rate declined the most, the Malay the least.

The official languages of Singapore are English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil in descending order of usage. Mandarin is being increasingly used, replacing the Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese which are the principle Chinese dialects. General literacy rate for citizens aged 10 years and over is 91.6 per cent.

The main religious affiliations of Singaporeans are Buddhists and Taoists, making up 53.9 per cent of the population aged 10 years and over. Islam is the religion of 15.4 per cent of the population, nominated by 85.9 per cent of Malays. Christianity form 12.6 per cent and Hinduism 3.6 per cent, almost all were Indians. Singapore profess to a secular state but guarantees freedom of religious expression.

Singaporeans enjoy a high standard of living with a per capita indigenous Gross National Product of S\$24,871. More than 87 per cent of the population reside in Housing and Development flats. Unemployment rate is relatively low and the 1993 work force comprised 65 per cent of the population aged 15 years and above.

Singapore continues in its efforts to develop itself into a sophisticated and well-equipped city state, thriving as a successful business centre in the international arena. Economic growth is largely dependent on the manufacturing, tourism, trade, construction and financial sectors with an increasing emphasis on high-tech industries like communications and computers. The island's port, airport and infrastructure facilities are of the highest

standards, attracting multinational investments from the United States, Hong Kong and Japan, and welcomes 6.4 million visitors annually.

Defence is the cornerstone of Singapore's strategy of deterrence against external threat and it is the responsibility of every male citizen aged 18 years and above to enlist for two and a half years of national service. To ensure the prevailing peace and security that it now enjoys, Singapore seeks to improve the manpower resources of its Armed Forces, to strengthen its technological edge and to foster close ties with countries in the region.

In 1994 and beyond, Singapore aims to combine Asian traditions with the drive towards modernisation, and to embrace western institutions without losing Asian pride. The journey has been embarked on, but not without with the carefully constructed policies of identity building, language, media and tourism. This framework of entangled policies underlying Singapore's progress towards modernity is what my thesis seeks to explore.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the construction of the multiculturalism in Singapore. It explores the reproduction of multiculturalism in the second language formation, heritage tourism, and media policies that socially engineer the construction of the multicultural identity of Singapore. Underpinning the various policies, however, is a predominant Chinese culture which is reproduced largely in the neo-Confucian values which the Singapore government defines as national core values. Multiculturalism appears to be the cultural identity which Singapore has created for itself in the form of harmonious ethnic living. However, it is appropriate to address the existence of cultural specificity, within this multicultural framework, which is underpinned by ethnic, historical and language components.

As a country, Singapore occupies a unique geographical position that allows the confluence of rich and diverse cultures. Efforts have been made by both public and private organisations to promote this multicultural heritage. However the notion of a multicultural identity in Singapore is aligned to the construction of separate cultural identities based on ethnic and historic differences. Cultural specificity is reproduced in the Singapore government's conservation policies where heritage sites are restored to celebrate the underlying plurality of cultures in Singapore. The multicultural identity that Singapore adopts for itself acknowledges social and linguistic heterogeneity in Singapore and that the heterogeneous population has distinct independent cultures and religious beliefs (Siddique, 1989, p. 563).

When Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles founded modern Singapore in 1819, the island at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula proved to be a prized trading center. Singapore, together with Malacca and Penang, remained the Straits Settlements under the control of British India until 1946 when it was dissolved. Between this period and the short-lived

merger with Malaysia which ended in 1965, Singapore was confronted with economic and social problems, and the impending threat of communism (Siddique, 1989, p.562). In order to survive politically during that period, Singapore had to essentially take advantage of its only resource - the people. However, with the culturally diversified base of settlers, the community was fragmented without a common identity. At that time, the People's Action Party (PAP), led by Lee Kuan Yew, came to power and the newly elected government saw the need to construct a identity to unite the various cultural groups, this identity became the official Singapore version of multiculturalism.

However the construction of multiculturalism in Singapore is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, multiculturalism is simply referred to an agglomerate form by the separate parent cultures - the Chinese, Malay and Indian. Within the multiculturalism framework, each culture remains as an individual entity, unmerged with the others. The version of multiculturalism adopted by the Singapore government is essentially to promote the distinctiveness of each parent culture, at the same time maintain the existing ethnic harmony. In this sense, cultural specificity is apparent in the multiculturalism framework of Singapore.

According to Schudson (1994),

language, symbols, rituals, and stories - culture, in a word - bring individuals and families of varying circumstances and backgrounds together in a collectivity that people may strongly with, take primary meanings from, and find emotionally satisfying (p. 22).

The construction of multiculturalism should be a unifying government policy for the various ethnic groups but with the existence of cultural specificity in the Singapore context, this is clearly not the policy that the Singapore government has adopted with respect to multiculturalism. However, given the unique components that make up the parent cultures of Singapore, the construction of multiculturalism following the concept

of cultural integration does not hold. In the attempt to portray the unification associated with multiculturalism, the Singapore government has taken to promote Singapore's multicultural identity by campaigning for a homogeneous population marked by separate cultures, so that Singaporeans, regardless of race, language, or religion, are essentially 'one people, one nation, one Singapore'.

Secondly, the construction of a multicultural identity in Singapore is further complicated by a predominant Chinese population so that the cultural identity of Singapore appears to be fundamentally Chinese while the Malays, Indians and Eurasians are dragged along in its tail. A good example of this is the establishment of the five core values, set out in the White Paper in 1991, which emphasises neo-Confucian principles of frugality, the family as a basic unit of society and the importance of the community. Asian values are interpreted by Ho (1976) as

not a particular set of attitudes, beliefs and institutions which all Asian people share in common, but rather to refer to the great diversities which characterise Asian values as such, and which in the context of this discussion pose serious difficulties to the task of modernising Asian for social, economical and political development
(p. 11).

The use of what the government claims as 'desirable Asian values' presents the evidence of preserving a Singaporean way of life, amidst the perceived erosion of Asian values, by the government, that the nation is undergoing. However, academics have offered different opinions - Goonasekera¹ (1995) claims that the adoption of Western values by Singaporeans has in fact helped foster a clearer concept of multiculturalism in that all Singaporeans, regardless of ethnicity, will have a common allegiance to a set of Western values and ideals, rather than subscribing to individual cultural beliefs. Yao² (1995), on the other hand, sees the cultural implications of Confucianism as a tool used by the

¹ taken from an interview with Anura Goonasekera, 17 May 1995. see Appendix 1.

² taken from an interview with Yao Shuchao, 27 March 1995. see Appendix 1.

Singapore government to justify the state of totalitarianism that it has created in Singapore. Above all, the neo-Confucian nature of the national core values can be seen to compliment existing Chinese values within the multicultural society of Singapore as a fundamental ingredient of social progress.

The perceived success of multiculturalism in Singapore appears to be the fact that Singaporeans have lived relatively harmoniously for the past twenty-five years. The fundamental objective of the Singapore government with regards to the construction of multiculturalism is to invoke the image of a homogenous society regardless of ethnic origins, and which the Singapore media has effectively undertaken the task to promote. The issue of constructing a parallel national cultural identity, however, only seems to surface in the mid- 1980s when the government realised the need to preserve Singapore's heritage through the conservation of artifacts.

The third problematic area associated with the construction of multiculturalism in Singapore is that Singaporeans are inclined to show particular concern for ethnic identity so that a Chinese Singaporean is set apart from a Malay Singaporean. This problem is magnified by the fact that every Singapore citizen must by law identifies his / her 'race' on the Singaporeans identity card (Benjamin, 1976, p. 120). This condition not only reinforces cultural specificity within the multiculturalism framework, there appears to be contradictions within this framework that the Singapore government has constructed.

While multiculturalism in Singapore concentrates on constructing a national cultural identity for the parent cultures in Singapore, it rarely addresses cultural categories derived from inter-ethnic marriages. Hassan (1976) reveals

the child of a Chinese father and European mother would in most cases be treated as Chinese for census purposes, and the child of a European father and an Indian mother as a European. However, it

remains possible for the child of a Malay mother and a European father to become a Malay by entering the Muslim religion (p. 207).

'Multiculturalism' is a carefully constructed term with a powerful image of homogeneity amongst the culturally heterogeneous population in Singapore. In other words, the term acknowledges that each ethnic group has a distinct culture which is perpetuated by race, language and religion. Multiculturalism in Singapore also begs the question of an eventual emergence of a national culture which oversees these 'multicultures' (Siddique, 1989 p. 565). This thesis will argue that the construction of this national culture is executed within the dominance of a Chinese culture which recognises Chinese values as moral pillars in Singapore. Although the concept of multiculturalism is to recognise social heterogeneity, according to Siddique,

the Chinese community is recognised as the dominant community while the Malays, Indians and 'Others' would be subordinate although they are allowed to perpetuate their languages and cultures (1989, p. 572).

Siddique's 4Ms model indicates that the phenomena of 'multiculturalism', 'multilingualism', 'multiracialism' and 'multireligiosity' in Singapore can be combine to yield the social formula of

$$Ss = C + M + I + O$$

where 'Ss' refers to the Singapore society and the 'C', 'M', 'I' and 'O' represent the Chinese, Malays, Indians and Others respectively.

In the Singapore government's nation building exercises, there is the attempt to unite the various ethnic communities through a national identity that manifests a homogeneous Singaporean population that transcends cultural boundaries. The simultaneous attempt

to construct a multicultural identity, however, reflects a recognition of separate cultural entities. The social formula devised by Siddique mirrors Singapore's version of multiculturalism - the plus signs employed in the formula emphasise the notion that Singapore is comprised of the sum of separate cultural components which Siddique states are the ethnic communities. In a similar vein, the social formula parallels my argument of the existence of cultural specificity within Singapore's multiculturalism framework.

Siddique's use of the equal sign and uppercasing in the formula shows the equal social status shared amongst the four cultural groups. However, given the contradictions of various government's policies with regards to the construction of multiculturalism in Singapore, this equality is questionable. Siddique offers three hypothetical alternatives to reflect this social inequality. One of which is

$$Ss = C + m + i + o$$

This formula is similar to the previous but the Malays, Indians and Others are represented by lowercase alphabets. The new formula recognises the subordination of the minor cultures below a dominant Chinese culture. Multiculturalism continues to be reflected in this formula but Siddique suggests the probability of the evolvement of a Singapore cultural identity that is identified with the culture of the dominant group.

However, the assumption that cultural identity can be constructed based directly on the Chinese culture would have disastrous results in Singapore. Religion is an integral aspect of cultural identity and this component is made complicated by the 'multireligiosity' nature of the dominant groups. Firstly there is the problem of separating Chinese religions into Buddhism, Taoism or Confucianism, secondly the 1980 census shows an increasing number of Chinese who are Christians.

Another formula offered by Siddique in the study of multiculturalism in Singapore is that of

$$Ss = C (mio)$$

This formula, according to Siddique, although hypothetically possible, is the most unlikely to be realised in the Singapore context because it is based on the assumption that the Malays, Indians and Others can be successfully assimilated and absorbed into the dominant group, therefore ensuring equal social status.

Siddique's following formula

$$Ss = (Cmio)$$

in contrast, does not assume assimilation but an emergence of a new cultural entity. The 'C' for the Chinese remains capitalised because it is likely that the majority population will contribute more.

While Siddique's formulae offer an interesting analytical framework of multiculturalism in Singapore, the formulae nevertheless reflects the Chinese population as a dominant cultural group with the multicultural society of Singapore. Above all, the essential component governing the careful construction of the multicultural identity is the government through the implementation of various policies. If I were to devise a formula to represent the multicultural identity of Singapore, I would state

$$Ss = G (Cmio)$$

where 'G' is obviously the Singapore government.

The relationship between the government and ethnic communities is described by Breton (1989) as a 'two-way process of power and influence' which means that the government and ethnic communities are 'interdependent' (p. 40). Although Breton's, a professor of sociology at the University of Toronto, comment is based on the analysis of the advocates of multiculturalism and state institutions in Canada, it is relevant in the current Singapore context. In Singapore, the multicultural policies are constructed to ensure ethnic co-existence, which in turn ensures a stable economy for international trade. The ethnic communities, on the other hand, are able to make claims on the government which the government will try to satisfy in order to maintain the harmonious multicultural framework.

In the case of Singapore, the 'two-way' institutional mechanism pertaining to multicultural policies is more of an unequal political-ethnic exchange of power and influence. The Singapore government appears to have the upper hand in introducing multicultural policies that work to the eventual benefit of the government, rather than for the benefits of the ethnic communities. In addition, the Chinese majority in Singapore aggravates the unbalanced distribution of ethnic influence so that the Chinese cultural group appears to be the dominant group within the multicultural framework of Singapore.

The concept of a dominant Chinese cultural perceived influence over the minor cultures will be further explored in chapter 2 where I will analyse the multiculturalism policy in Singapore with regards to the role of the national core values and the second language policy in Singapore.

While Siddique's (1989) formulae show that multiculturalism in Singapore recognised that cultures are not given equal status due to the dominant Chinese component, Benjamin (1976) offers a differing version of Singapore's multiculturalism. Benjamin acknowledges the concept of cultural specificity but argues that multiculturalism in

Singapore accords cultures with 'separate-but-equal status' (p.121). In Benjamin's opinion, multiculturalism is

an ideology that accords equal status to the cultures and ethnic identities of the various 'races' that are regarded as comprising the population of a plural society. At the same time, it should be noted, a (multiculturalism) ideology serves to define such a population as derived into one particular array of 'races' (p. 115).

By revealing the Singapore government's policies in promoting a dominant Chinese culture, this thesis will challenge Benjamin's concept of status equality amongst the cultural groups in Singapore

Crane (1994) observes that there is a 'lack of cultural coherence' (p. 3) with multiculturalism construction. Although Crane's work on multiculturalism does not deal specifically with multiculturalism in Singapore, the methodology devised is appropriate for the study of multiculturalism in the Singapore context. Crane states that as with the construction of cultural identity, multiculturalism construction is concerned with the identifying of cultural values. Given the Chinese population majority within the multi-ethnicity of Singapore society, multiculturalism becomes increasingly associated with the culture of the dominant cultural group. The term 'culture' is also loosely applied in Singapore, taken to refer to the studies and appreciation of the arts. 'Multiculturalism' hence has taken the effect of promoting and creating an awareness of the arts of the various parent cultures. This concept of multiculturalism, however, does not attempt to interpret how the appreciation of the different ethnic art forms can broaden the Singaporeans' understanding of multiculturalism.

In order to effectively evaluate multiculturalism construction in Singapore, it is necessary to explore the multiculturalism policies of other countries. For the purpose of this thesis, I will look at the construction of multiculturalism in Canada and Australia.

In Canada, multiculturalism is viewed as a social system composed of a set of 'components' and 'relationships' that connect the various cultural components (Roberts and Clifton, 1990, p. 121 - 122). In this sense, multiculturalism in Canada emphasises on distinguishing between cultural symbols that identify members of various ethnic groups. It appears that multiculturalism in Canada stresses on cultural equality so that individual ethnic cultures are recognised and equally promoted within the multicultural framework. However, Roberts and Clifton (1990) argue that in order for the ethnic groups of Canada to maintain their distinctiveness, they (ethnic groups) must constrain the conduct of their members (p. 126). According to Roberts and Clifton's analysis, there are three 'commitment mechanism' within the multicultural framework of Canada, through which ethnic groups maintain their allegiance.

The first 'commitment mechanism' which Roberts and Clifton states is that of symbolic multiculturalism, which is characterised by a high degree of understanding and affection for one's own ethnic culture, yet display a low degree of cultural distinctiveness in one's social conduct. For example, a Canadian-Chinese may have a high regard for his / her ethnic culture manifest in the participating of cultural rituals and customs in the domestic domain. However, the same Chinese is able to detach himself / herself from his / her cultural components by adopting a Western, as opposed to Oriental, lifestyle in the social domain. This form of symbolic multiculturalism is evident amongst the second generation immigrants in Canada, i.e. those that are not born in Canadian but have migrated there at a young age with their families.

Another form of 'commitment mechanism' in Canada's multiculturalism framework, according to Roberts and Clifton, is that of ritualistic multiculturalism. In this case, members of an ethnic groups have little appreciation or knowledge of their culture, nonetheless, they act in a manner that is consistent with their cultural symbols. This form of multiculturalism is apparent with the third generation ethnic-Canadian citizens, who are born and raised in Canada but have either one or two parent(s) who are ethnic

immigrants. Ritualistic multiculturalism is applicable to a Chinese-Canadian citizen who adheres to the Chinese customs in the domestic domain, possibly due to parental influence, but has little regard for his / her ethnic culture.

The third 'commitment mechanism' is that of institutionalised multiculturalism where there is both a high degree of cultural constraint and social constraint within an ethnic community. Institutionalised multiculturalism essentially means that ethnic groups can exert strong control over their members, so that there is conformity within an ethnic cultural group. This form of multiculturalism is apparent with the first generation immigrants to Canada who are conscious of their ethnic identity and seek continuity of their ethnic culture by passing on cultural traits. First generation immigrants are also most likely to resist influence of the dominant culture.

The preferred form of multiculturalism in Canada appears to be that of symbolic multiculturalism. Canada's multiculturalism policy which stresses on individual and not collective interest is seen as a direct contrast to institutionalised multiculturalism which emphasises on a community-ethnic identity. The multiculturalism policy of Canada also seeks to encourage a multicultural heritage (Li, 1990, p. 3). This policy, however, assumes that ethnic members will participate in the social, political and economic structures of the Canadian society, at the same time retaining the cultural diversity of ethnic groups.

In 1971, Canada's Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced

A policy of multiculturalism ... commends itself to the (Canadian) government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. ... the government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society (Roberts and Clifton, 1990, p. 137).

The concern of multiculturalism in Canada centers on the acknowledgment of cultural diversity in the Canadian society, however, Trudeau's speech reflects that the Canadian government is less supportive of a institutionalised multiculturalism than a symbolic multiculturalism structure which is related to the concept of freedom (institutionalised multiculturalism limits the freedom of adhering to the dominant culture because of the high cultural and social constraint mechanism). This suggests that multiculturalism in Canada is interested in assuring cultural diversity, as long as the various cultural groups are consistent with the dominant social structure. Above all, the multiculturalism framework of Canada appears to reflect a lower commitment on institutionalised multiculturalism, yet Canada's Minister of State for Multiculturalism, Gerry Weiner, declares that the multiculturalism act is

the first national multiculturalism act anywhere ... one of our
(Canada's) finest achievement (Weiner, n.d.).

The concept of multiculturalism construction in Australia appears to be similar to that of Canada's. The consensus in Australia's multiculturalism policy is to allow cultural autonomy, while simultaneously introducing measures to ensure social participation, irrespective of ethnic origins. However, while Canada seems to be successful in promoting multiculturalism, Australia, on the other hand, is critical of multiculturalism. Geoffery Blainey, an Australian professor, is one who attacked the Australia government's aims and practices of multiculturalism in the 1980s. In 1984, the 'Blainey Debate' revealed that Blainey's argument opposing multiculturalism in Australia was not the against British / European immigrants, but against the Asian immigrants. According to Blainey (1984),

These people (Asian immigrants) come from a culture and have
values which are very different from our (Australia) own values

This is a land whose traditions belong largely to European civilisation. There are certain things in the European civilisation that's represented in Australia that are not very common in Asia

(pp. 10 & 13).

While Blainey insisted that he is not a racist, the press in Australia clearly labelled him as a proponent of a return to a White Australia Policy. *The Melbourne Age* (1984) conceded that Blainey's comments on Asian immigrants is creating an unnecessary alarm by revealing the following statistics,

The proportion of Asians in the Australia is now (1984) two per cent. Immigration Department estimates are that if present trends continue this figure will still be less than four per cent by the year 2000. Australia is a long way from being a Eurasian nation

(page unknown)

Geoffrey Barker (1984), editor of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, also questions the appropriateness of Blainey's argument on multiculturalism. Barker wrote,

Professor's Blainey's most vexing claim was his suggestion that somehow, the present rate of Asia immigration threatened Australia's shared values. He did not specify which shared values he had in mind but I cannot see how any shared values are threatened by energetic entrepreneurial people who come to Australia because they cannot or will not live in a communist country

(page unknown)

There is a sharp difference over the construction of multiculturalism in Canada and Australia during the 1980s. Canadian seems to be quite comfortable in the multicultural framework that the Canada government has constructed. While the Australia government calls for an acceptance of cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity within the Australian society, Australian critics like Blainey claimed that multiculturalism necessarily involves total cultural relativism. Arguments against multiculturalism stems

from the fact that for Australia to adopt multiculturalism means that the majority of Australians will be involved in preserving cultural practices which are repugnant to the Australian culture. Secondly, multiculturalism in Australia endangers the social mobility of previous immigrants. And thirdly multiculturalism produces a 'new class' (Morrisey, 1986, p. 19) of ethnic group whose main interest is not in the welfare of immigrants but in the promotion of their own cultural position.

On analysis, Blainey's critique of multiculturalism in Australia does not appear to be valid. Blainey feels that the Australian culture is imperilled by Asian immigrants and has to be defended. Morrisey (1986), on the other hand, states that immigration is a positive factor in the preservation of 'Australianism', so long as it is accompanied by

a policy of intelligent but remorseless assimilation into the hegemonial anglo-morph culture of the country (p. 19).

Morrisey further stresses that Indo-Chinese immigrants are, in fact, more willing to embrace the Australian culture than European immigrants because most Europeans believe in the superiority of the European culture, as opposed to Australian culture.

Blainey's critique that Asian immigrants will have a negative impact on previous immigrants is based on the assumption that there is a 'in-group' / 'out-group' classification of immigrants to Australia. Blainey sees ethnic communities as competing groups to define self-reinforcing boundaries (Morrisey, 1986, p. 25). At a practical level, analysing Australia's multicultural history from the 1980s to the present, such ethnic competition is almost non-existent.

Blainey's third argument that visible cultural differences create the problem of zealously guarding one's culture, instead of adopting to the dominant (i.e. Australia) culture.

Morrisey (1986) attacks this remark as racist, arguing that cultural differences seek to produce tolerance. According to Morrisey,

Instead of letting them (immigrants) seem as a threat, we (Australians) should change our hearts and construct these differences as colourful and enriching (p. 26).

Above all, multiculturalism construction in Australia has produced a degree of uncertainty and a general lack of confidence by some Australians in embracing multiculturalism.

The difference between multiculturalism in Canada and Australia, as opposed to multiculturalism in Singapore is that the multicultural situation of the former two countries arose from immigration. Between the 1940s and 1960s, over two million legal immigrants entered Canada (Breton, 1989, p. 150), a large proportion of which were from Britain, the United States, Germany, Portugal, France, Greece, Austria and Yugoslavia (Kalback, 1990, p. 26). Massive immigration during this period resulted in a condition where non-British / non-French became a component of the Canadian culture. More recently, Canada is faced with the massive immigration of Hong Kong citizens, particularly to Vancouver, due to the 1997 handover of the British colony to communist China

Massive immigration to Australia, on the other hand, occurred only in the 1970s and early 1980s where the immigrants during this period were mostly Middle East immigrants and Indo-Chinese refugees (Castles, 1987, p. 9). During the 1950s and 1960s, however, Southern Europeans labour migrants constituted the majority number of immigrants to Australia.

Singapore's multicultural situation, as opposed to Canada and Australia, arose in the 1800s when Raffles founded modern Singapore. The culturally heterogeneous base of Chinese, Malay, Indians and European settlers resulted in a diversity of cultures. By the 1950s when massive immigration hit Canada and Australia, sparking the study of multiculturalism, Singapore was already a multicultural society of third generation immigrants who were born in Singapore. However, it was not only until the early 1980s that the phenomena of multiculturalism in Singapore was of interest to sociologists and culturalists.

Multiculturalism in Canada, Australia and Singapore is constructed within the framework of acknowledged cultural equality. The rhetoric of multiculturalism in Australia calls for 'access and equity' and 'equitable participation' (Castles, 1987, p. 9), while Canada seeks to constitutionalise ethnic equity (Kallen, 1990, p. p. 77). Singapore's multicultural framework, however, stresses on cultural specificity more than equality so that multiculturalism in Singapore is a promotion of separate cultural traits, rather than a call for equal rights for all cultural groups. As mentioned earlier, the pre-eminent Chinese culture in Singapore further challenges the notion of equality amongst the cultural groups in Singapore. Furthermore, multiculturalism in Canada and Australia work towards cultural integration and assimilation of the ethnic groups to the dominant culture, but the pre-eminent Chinese culture in the multicultural framework of Singapore suggests cultural domination of the majority cultural group over the minor cultural groups.

Unlike Malaysia and other Muslim countries, whose cultural policies are geared towards the acceptance of Islam as a state religion, Singapore's adoption of a multiculturalism policy indicates the reluctance to use religion as an integrating factor. The necessity of a secular state was stressed in one of the earlier post-independence speeches by the People's Action Party

... one of the cornerstones of the policy of the Government is a multi-racial Singapore. We are a nation comprising people of various races who constitute her citizens, and our citizens are equal regardless of differences of race, language, culture and religion.

(Ling, 1989, p. 692)

Since its election into office, the Singapore government has assumed that to construct a cultural identity based on a singular religion or language would be a 'recipe for national doom' (Ling, 1989, p. 692). However it has surfaced recently, with the establishment of the national core values and the preference in employing personnel with a bilingual English-Mandarin education, the dominance of the Chinese component within the multicultural framework in Singapore. The identification of the neo-Confucian values and the stress on the knowledge of Mandarin at this juncture seem appropriate in the light of the cultural influences from the West and the economic trade with mainland China. This presents contradictions in the Singapore's multiculturalism policy which has the Chinese component as an integral element and the minor cultures subsumed beneath. Another contradictory aspect is reproduced in the language policy which calls for English as the visible medium for international communication, Malay as the official national language and the wide dissemination of the Chinese language to the non-Chinese population.

The second language policy in Singapore ensures that the population is exposed to their mother tongue but for the policy to be effective, second language classes have to be organised accordingly and this enforces a situation where inter-ethnic interaction within the academic arena is limited (Shotam, 1989, p. 513). Through this carefully constructed policy, the bulk of the population, which is Chinese, would eventually be able to speak Mandarin, and given the Chinese majority in Singapore there will emerge a situation where 'there is an essential unity amongst the Chinese component of the population' (Shotam, 1989, p. 514) from which the minor ethnic groups are set apart.

Although the encouragement to learn one's mother tongue, in accordance with Singapore's language policy, separates ethnic cultures according to language, the growing importance of the Chinese language amongst the non-Chinese, both economically and socially, is apparent. Non-Chinese may seem to have retained the use of their mother tongue in the domestic domain but some have opted for learning Chinese as a second language in the education and professional domain in order to qualify for positions in multi-national corporations, many who have business links with mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, that favour applicants with a knowledge of the English and Chinese language. This again suggests the strong influence of the Chinese component within the multiculturalism context in Singapore.

An aspect within the Singapore multicultural framework which does not appear to give prominence to the Chinese culture is the continual use of the national anthem of the past decades, which is sung in Malay. However apart from the Malays, few understand the meaning of the lyrics. Birch (1993) states that

The (Singapore) anthem has mediated the rhetoric of aspiration into a powerful mythology of 'anchoring', its often wordless voice a reminder that Singapore is home and is therefore worth protecting and improving, worth staying and developing (p. 2).

In this sense, many young Singaporeans have been brought up to participate in nation building activities without fully comprehending or questioning its significance. While the national anthem retains the Malay language, many other nation building songs have been written since the last ten years in the four languages employed by the Singaporeans. Those songs that are given the most publicity and are most often sung are, however, in the English language.

In order to effectively explore the growing dominance of a Chinese culture within the multiculturalism context in Singapore, it is necessary to look at the methodology

employed by the Singapore government to ensure ethnic harmony amongst its heterogeneous population by acknowledging the distinct cultural practices, history and language of the different groups. By doing so, however, the government is simultaneously creating cultural specificity within the multiculturalism framework. This is further complicated by a majority Chinese population whose cultural elements seem to over-shadow the minor cultures. At the same time, the Singapore society is confronted with an erosion of Asian values by Western influences as a result of its open economy.

To address the issue, Jumabhoy (1993) states that there is a need for a sense of purpose and a provocative attitude towards change, and the source of strength to preserve a Singaporean way of life is to inculcate Asian values both as regards the family and nation (p. 5). His view echoes the government's efforts in enticing Singaporeans to value marriage and parenthood, and filial piety.

The competency of the government in influencing the population's opinions lies with their control over the media in Singapore. The Singapore government exercises tight control over the media, despite the recent privatisation of Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, and press and the government shows no hesitation in acting as they personally think best for the future of Singapore. For example, all foreign publications and films are subjected to harsh censorship especially when communist propaganda, racial and cultural confrontations are concerned.

In order to better understand the relationship between the media and multiculturalism in Singapore, it is important to explore the workings of the media with regards to the construction of multiculturalism in Singapore. Chapter 3 sets the scene through an analysis of the media in Singapore and the way it has been utilised as an ideological tool to convey multiculturalism policy in Singapore.

The media in Singapore has been an active agent in promoting various government's policies. In the 1970s, the media was the vehicle in disseminating the government's two-child policy and the Speak Mandarin campaign. In view of the recent privatisation of its broadcasting institution, Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), the role of the media in supporting government's policies has remained relatively unchanged. Before and after the privatisation, the media in Singapore continues to cater for the three parent cultures in Singapore, in a manner that appears to have supported the government's multiculturalism policy. However, it is worthwhile noting that programs in English and Mandarin are given equal air-time while the Malay and Indian programs have comparably less. The production and publicity for local Chinese dramas are also undertaken on a larger scale and on a higher budget, hence many Chinese drama artists have become household names in Singapore while their Malay and Indian counterparts remain relatively unknown. Every year, an award is given to the ten most popular male and female Chinese drama artists in recognition of their contribution to the local acting scene and a Star Search contest is held, every two years, to attract and groom Chinese talents for Chinese productions. Such events are rare for Indian and Malay media personalities and artists, and even if there are such events, they are carried out on a less glamorous scale. In this sense, there is an inclination of the broadcast media towards Chinese culture, and although the promotion of multiculturalism is acknowledged in its policies, the separate channels allocated according to culture and language differences marks the notion of cultural specificity within the mass media's multicultural framework.

The issue of multiculturalism promotion in the Singapore media will be discussed based on accounts that have been gathered through interviews and research. Dr Peter Hardstone's³, Education Specialist of Singapore Tourist Promotion Board, concept that 'multiculturalism is subsumed beneath a national identity' and David Birch's (1993) *Singapore media: Communication strategies and practices* serve as useful frameworks for the analysis. Hardstone argues that a cultural identity cannot be invented through the

³ taken from an interview with Peter Hardstone, 7 January 1995. see Appendix 1.

integration of cultures in Singapore, hence the need for multiculturalism but underlying this is a successful construction of a national identity which manifests itself in terms of patriotism and loyalty. Birch's text gives an insightful and detailed analysis of the Singapore media, and whose framework will be employed in exploring the way the Singapore government has been utilising in the media as a tool for promoting multiculturalism policies.

Heritage conservation is an important part of multiculturalism construction because it ensures the continuity of the various cultural heritage in Singapore through restoration projects of cultural artifacts. Chapter 4 examines the role of heritage tourism in Singapore and its relationship with the construction of multiculturalism. This chapter also looks at how tourism is incorporated into the heritage and multiculturalism policies.

A study of Sentosa island in Singapore will be used to analyse the relationship between multiculturalism, tourism and conservation. An off-shore holiday getaway, Sentosa is a showcase for Singapore's colonial past with its carefully restored colonial buildings and fort. Multicultural heritage is reproduced in the Pioneers of Singapore, and Heritage Museum which showcase the life of early settlers in life size replicas. The Asian Village, a new attraction, depicts the Asian heritage in an artificially created surrounding. The Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) is committed to develop the island as one of the top tourist spots in Singapore and SDC recognises that the multicultural nature of Singapore has been a constant tourist draw. Thus by artificially preserving the multicultural aspect of Singapore on the island through expensive restoration projects, Sentosa indicates that tourism and conservation policies can be used as tools to promote the multiculturalism of Singapore. However, cultural artefacts are restored and preserved according to culturally specified lines, reflecting again that multiculturalism in Singapore is reproduced within separate 'cultural cells' (Hardstone, 1995).

The conclusion of this thesis will reveal that despite formulating a multicultural identity in Singapore, the Chinese culture is becoming increasingly dominant within the multicultural context. The concern with the increasing presence of Western influences, in a way, justifies the government's identification of the core Asian values but the fact that they are based on neo-Confucian principles, rather than Islamic or Hindu teachings, shows a propensity towards the Chinese culture. The construction of a multicultural identity must satisfy two conditions - 'separate' and 'equal' (Siddique, 1989, p. 566) but underlying the cultural specificity is the emphasis on neo-Confucian values, as well as the Chinese majority itself illustrating the emergence of a pre-eminent Chinese identity. Today, Singapore still presents itself as a multicultural society which is eloquent in four languages and practises a number of religions. In Thumboo's (1989) opinion, the way to challenge the inequality which multiculturalism presents is for Singaporeans to have 'a sense of direction that gives cause for hope and some concern which is contained by a determination to be positive' (p. 767).

The appearance of a multicultural identity in Singapore is an illusion, carefully constructed within a number of policies. It seems that the promotion of multiculturalism through heritage tourism has been successful because conservation allows the continuity of the Singapore's multicultural heritage, which becomes a major tourist attraction. Analysis will show, however, that conservation policies only serve to artificialise the cultural artifact so that much of what is seen is constructed to suit the clean and green image that Singapore presents, whereas the ambience is not captured in the restoration. The media continues to be the site for multiculturalism policy advocacy in Singapore but within this framework, there is a recognisable emergence of cultural specificity which is reproduced in the separation of cultural programs according to language. Multiculturalism policy in Singapore appears to be transparent, but beneath it there co-exists a number of other policies which must be necessarily activated to support this multiculturalism framework.

Chapter 2

Multiculturalism: A Contradictory Framework

Multiculturalism is meant to highlight the rich cultural heritage of Singapore. This deliberate construction of multiculturalism can be described as an invention of 'political' traditions, undertaken with political intentions (Hosbawn, 1983, p. 263). Although Hosbawn's theory is based on the analysis of the European culture, it is relevant to the Singapore context. In Singapore, the government has made efforts at promoting multiculturalism, arguing that ethnic harmony is the key to economic survival. However, this chapter will reveal how multiculturalism in Singapore is exploited by the government so that the policy is inclined towards a dominant Chinese culture.

Singapore is a nation of momentous economic advancement, boosted by the buoyant growth in trade and the expansion of the regional economies, as well as a strong performance in the nation's manufacturing, financial and business services sectors (Ng, 1994, p. 32). However, at the time of separation from Malaysia on August 9, 1965 to become a sovereign, democratic and independent nation, Singapore was confronted with economic and social problems, and the threat of communism. In order to survive politically, Singapore had to take advantage of its favourable location and its only resource - the people. With a culturally diverse base of settlers, the socially fragmented nature of the community led to the concept of constructing a multicultural identity which acknowledges social heterogeneity perpetuated by ethnic origins, history and language. The political objective of multiculturalism in Singapore is to ensure cultural harmony through the creation of separate cultural identity yet maintaining equal status amongst the cultural groups. At the same time, the multicultural policy ensures the continuation of the pertaining style of government in Singapore. In this sense, the concept of multiculturalism is similar to the concept echoed by Vasil (1990) that

the PAP (government of Singapore) was fully convinced that assimilation and integration could not be ordered through legislation or political action. Recognizing that the different ethnic components of the Singapore population were likely to zealously guard their distinctiveness, the state had no choice but to adopt a broad-based ethnic agenda that did not conflict with the emotion-charged and critical issues of religion, culture, language and education espoused by various sections of the population (p. 38).

A statement by Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew affirms

The government's policy was not to 'assimilate', but to 'integrate' our different communities, in other words, to build up common attributes such as one common working language, same loyalties, similar values and attitudes, so as to make the different communities a more cohesive nation (Koh, 1989, p. 711).

Singapore's version of multiculturalism does not seek to create a unified community but focuses on the need of inter-cultural sensitivity and tolerance.

The multiracial population of Singapore consists of four basic ethnic groups; a Chinese majority followed by the Malays, Indians and people of other ethnicities such as Eurasians (statistics as of June 1993 - Chinese 77.5 per cent, Malays 14.2 per cent, Indians 7.1 per cent and other ethnic groups 1.2 per cent). Jeyaretnam (1990), a Singaporean writer, offers an interesting metaphor of the two ways that multiculturalism is being constructed in Singapore

some say a pressure-cooker is needed, a melting pot that will turn all ingredients into a single tasty mush. Others say that, far from having a melting pot, we must prepare three (or sometimes more) separate dishes, each with its own unique flavour (p. 89).

However, Jeyaretnam finds both an unsatisfactory methodology for the construction of a multicultural framework, suggesting that culture which is officially planned and promoted is passive and lifeless. There is clear indication that there is a certain extent of government intervention in the management of Singapore's ethnic diversity which is reproduced in policies that promote multiculturalism through ethnic contact and interaction. The government also feels that there is a need to promote a common heritage and common goal which, according to Lee Kuan Yew, requires 'time and circumstance' to eventually create this unified Singapore community.

Jeyaretnam (1990) believes that the best strategy for an evolution of a cultural identity is to treat Singaporeans as matured adults and allow them to make their own cultural choices. A 'vibrant' culture cannot be achieved in Singapore if cultures are to be created by decree. The government's attempt to interfere with and to shape culture essentially reduces freedom of speech and limits individual expressions, hence the metaphoric solution that Jeyaretnam offers is to 'let the banquet prepare itself' (p. 94).

One way that the government has attempted to interfere with culture in Singapore is by promoting the multicultural heritage of Singapore through the establishment of various public and private organisations and institutions which are under the wing of the Ministry of Arts and Information. The Singapore government's idea of constructing a cultural framework is mainly based on promoting the arts and 'gracious living' through culture (Koh, 1989, p. 713). This is executed through campaigns like 'Singapore - City of Excellence' which manifests Singapore as a 'cultivated society'. The visions of a City of Excellence by 1999 is projected by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong as

a society of well-read, well-informed citizens, a refined and gracious people, a thoughtful people, a society of sparkling ideas, a place where art, literature and music flourish ... in short, a *parvenu* society (Koh, 1989, p. 713)

The 'Singapore - City of Excellence' campaign is aimed to keep the cultural progress of Singapore in line with its economic development. Goh further stresses that Singapore is not merely a materialistic and consumeristic society, which the government views as attitudes of the West, but a 'cultivated society with cultured people finding fulfillment in non-material pursuits'.

However, in 1995, six years after Goh's speech, the Acting Minister for Community Development Abdullah Tarmugi said that affluent Singaporeans are becoming arrogant and 'smug', and obsessed with material goods. It appears that the campaign for an 'excellent' society of cultured citizens with Asian values of humility and frugality has not been quite successful. The 'achievements', outlined by Tarmugi, are that Singaporeans are 'giving up seats to those who need them more, less jumping of queues and less monopolising of public telephones'. These acts of courtesy are a far cry from the 'refined and gracious' attitudes that Goh has hoped for.

The absence of a common cultural identity is filled by the government's policies of establishing a multicultural identity - that of identifying cultural affirmations with ethnic pride and boosting an ethnic Asian heritage. Underlining this attempt is to use Asian values to redress the 'undesirable influences' of the West by inculcating Asian morals and is reproduced in the establishment of a set of national core values which are neo-Confucian in nature. Hence, the construction of cultural identity and cultural values in Singapore becomes a related political issue.

To accurately evaluate the difference between Asian and Western values, it is necessary to explore the differences between Asian and Western attitudes. According to Australian Chief Justice Anthony Mason, the Westerners are aggressive and view themselves superior to the Asians, while the Asians are more tolerant, courteous and consensual in their approach. Mason said

Our version of Western society, which is peculiarly assertive, confrontational and adversarial, contrasts sharply with the courteous and consensual approach to decision-making that is characteristic of some parts of Asia and the Pacific

(Australians 'must be more tolerant of Asian values', 1995, p. 7)

Manson's speech further implies that by adopting the qualities of tolerance and respect when dealing with differing opinions, which are Asian attitudes, rather than by believing in the superiority of Western values is more likely to guarantee Australia's economic future. Interestingly though, Koh Buck Song, a journalist with *The Straits Times*, said that 'an Asian mentality' of Singaporeans when it comes to public apathy is to adopt a 'wait and get used to it quietly' attitude or simply 'put up and shut up' (1995, p. 13).

It is evident that the economic strength of Singapore lies in its international relations but the cultural strength, as Jumabhoy states, is the 'willingness to be proactive to change' while at the same time holding on to Asian values in order to preserve a Singaporean way of life amidst the Westernisation of values that the nation is undergoing (p.5). Jumabhoy's statement is an echo of the five national core values, identified in the government's White paper in 1991, to instill an 'Asian' set of acceptable values amongst the Singaporeans. Up till the mid 1980s, the concern of the Singapore government was for economic and political progress. However, with the advancement in communication technologies and an open economy, the power of the Singapore government in controlling the amount of Western influence on the Singapore society is limited. It is timely to introduce a set of 'Asian' values to curb the negative Western influences.

The identification of national core values, however, received mixed feedback. A speech by the Acting Minister for Community Development Abdullah Tarmugi, posted in Netscape, agrees that the core values are beneficial for to the Singapore society as they (the values) stress on strong cohesive families, which are a fundamental ingredient of Singapore's social progress.

Thumboo (1989) argues that while the retaining of Asian values is necessary, Singapore should also examine the impact of Western values on 'self-images' across cultures

The best of the East and the West must be blended to advantage in the Singaporean. Confucian ethic, Malay traditions, and the Hindu ethos must be combined with special Western methods of scientific inquiry, the open discussive methods in the search for truth (p. 763).

While the Singapore government has actively formulated and implemented a framework of neo-Confucian national core values, Tan (1993) argues that

Singapore has been open to non-Asian values since colonial times and it is therefore inaccurate to persist with the view that Singapore values are purely Asian (p. 81).

Strictly speaking, there is no clear distinction between 'Asian values' and 'Western values', or even 'national values' for that matter. As Ho (1989) points out

Unless a nation is geographically, historically, culturally, and linguistically separated from other nations - and no nations are, in fact, islands unto themselves - no system of values, principles, and conventions may be regarded 'nationalistic' in the narrow and jingoistic sense of the word (p. 674).

However, in order to further the investigation on the cultural values of Singapore, it is necessary to define what is deemed as 'Asian values' and 'Western values' in the Singapore context. Ho (1976) states that a homogeneous set of values that represents the various Asian cultural groups does not exist and, in fact, the presence of traditional Asian values might lead to a slower pace of economic and political progress. Ho's statement is in direct contradiction to the Singapore government's idea that the identified Asian national values of Singapore are 'moral anchors' for Singaporeans and catalyst for economic success.

Asian political leaders view 'Western values' as those which manifest and encourage the lifestyle and morals of the Westerners. The fact that Singaporeans wear Levi's, drink Coca-Cola, eat McDonald's and watch the Cable News Network (CNN) are signs of proliferation of American traits. However, Singapore cannot merely import Western technology, in the form of satellites communication, mobile network, automobiles and even fashion, but ignore the social and functional concomitants that accompany them. Hence the problem confronting Singapore today is essentially the conflicting urge to be advanced and modernised on one hand, and the desire to retain Asian traditions on the other (Shoesmith, 1993, p. 125).

A difference between the Asian and the West, as pointed out by Ho (1979), lies in the political interaction with its people. In the Western democracies, it is common to discuss with and consult members of the public before finalising and passing a major policy. This practice of seeking public opinion is rare in Asian countries. Ho (1989) gives reasons that it is the nature of the Asians which makes them willing to accept such policies without questioning

Asians (are) more tolerant, less aggressive, less given to violence and less militant in their social relations and their international politics
(p.689).

Ken Ong's poster on Netscape justifies Ho's statement. Ong, a Singaporean, express his fears of speaking his mind about the Singapore government.

It is not to my interest to be too vocal against certain government policies, whether I agree with them or not I do not wish to expose my family to any such risks it's better for me to adopt a softer approach (1995).

Recent indications have shown, however, that Singaporeans are more willing to speak up and offer their criticism to the government. The hanging of Filipino maid, Flor Contemplacion, in Singapore sparked off a series of debates on the Internet questioning the Singapore's government attitudes towards human rights and respect for its neighbours. Many Singaporeans who have lived in the West have also expressed their reluctance to return home due to political factors.

While it appears that Singaporeans are beginning to question the non-democratic structure of the Singapore government, there are just as many who support their policies. Whenever an article criticising the Singapore government and its policies appears on the Internet, another which supports the policies will also make its appearance to refute the former's remarks. Prime Minister Goh Chok maintains that Singaporeans do not want a change of government, even though a recent survey shows that the government only has 60 per cent of voter support (Jacob, 1995, p. 1). Hence, Singaporeans are constructed as being quite comfortable within the political framework that the government has carefully constructed. Referring to the high costs of home ownership and car ownership in Singapore, Goh says that the Singaporeans who do not support the Singapore government are those who 'are feeling disappointed that the government is not doing anything' with these unpopular policies (Jacob, 1995, p. 1).

In the Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*, Cassius made the mocking remark that Caesar had no intention to be a dictator but when he saw the submissive nature and fear of the commoners, he could not refuse the recognition that the Romans conferred upon him.

Cassius. And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?

Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf

But when he sees the Romans are but sheep

He were no lion, were not Romans hinds

(Act I, Scene III, l 103)

The parallel context here is that if Singaporeans continue to be tolerant and submissive to their political leaders, they are merely exalting them to the status of 'kings' and like Caesar, they become tyrants not because they are ambitious, rather the people are willing to be controlled.

Control is an important political agenda for the Singapore government and as Clammer (1993) claims, the Singapore government's hegemony is non-negotiable (p. 35). The neo-Confucian approach to multiculturalism appears to establish yet another mechanism for control by the Singapore government.

The neo-Confucianism approach to multiculturalism in Singapore

In 1991, the government identified the five national core values in the White Paper which sets up the framework of shared values for Singaporeans to uphold. These values are

- 1 - Nation before community and society before self
- 2 - Family as the basic unit of society
- 3 - Community support and respect for the individual
- 4 - Consensus not conflict
- 5 - Racial and religious harmony

(Birch, 1992, p. 4)

While the national core values serve to instill a sense of responsibility to the family and nation, the neo-Confucian nature of the values seems to divulge an inclination towards Chinese culture. The teachings of Confucian pertaining to filial piety, patriotism and respect may not be entirely foreign to the Malay and Indian cultures in Singapore, however these cultures may have their own perceptions of the family and nation according to their own Islamic, Hindu, or even Christian beliefs and teachings.

To choose neo-Confucian values as national values because Singapore is an Asian society implies that because Asian values are by nature superior, Singaporeans will be 'good' if they enshrine these principles. Those that behave in opposition to these Asian values or choose to adopt Western values will then be seen as a bad influence on the Asian society of Singapore. This view indicates a serious misconception of Asian and Western values which is further impaired by the government's constant bias comparison of Singapore and the West so that all positive images - full employment, low crime rate, high standard of living - are associated with the Asian way of life while crime and violence, illegitimate children, drug abuse are the results of the Western views on freedom of speech and humanitarian rights.

The Singapore government has adapted a socialist way of structuring society. While this appears successful, there are contradictions within this framework. There is the market-oriented economic system in the form of control and regulation. What the Singapore government does is to negotiate the contradictions by developing various policies to hold the framework together. Multiculturalism construction is a part of the government process of managing society, and it appears that in Singapore, the government assumes a pivotal role.

The Singapore government argues that the neo-Confucian approach to multiculturalism is modern, as opposed to traditional. Jeyaretnam (1990) points out that this is a fallacy. According to him, the real opposition set up here is in fact the contestation between traditional and modern values, where Asian values represent the traditional and the Western values, the modern (p. 90). To reject all Western values is to reject progress and the move towards modernity, but given Singapore's advancement towards the modern era of the information superhighway, there is certainly an embracing of some form of Western values. And as Lim (1990) points out, defining Asian values as national values in Singapore is an attempt to show that Asian's economic miracle is due to the supremacy of Asian roots (p. 40).

The government's stance is that above all, the common values work towards the achievement of a national identity for Singapore's heterogeneous population by providing a shared purpose. Hosbawn suggests that the use of national core values is

an 'invented tradition' taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past (p. 1).

The core values which are based on neo-Confucian principles also manifest a propensity towards Chinese culture within Singapore's multicultural framework. Like most government policies, the agenda set for its citizens through the framework of shared values is introduced in the form of campaigns which are carefully planned and co-ordinated. The recent campaign encouraging young Singaporeans to get married and start a family is in line with one of the five national values which states the family as the basic unit of society. Messages circulated with regards to the campaign aim to remind career-minded Singaporeans not to neglect the joys of parenthood at the expense of building a career. While the previous family planning campaign during the 1970s told Singaporeans to 'stop at two', this recent campaign incorporates the message to have 'three or more if they can afford it'.

Under the Islamic laws, the practice of polygamy is legalised for Muslims, hence the Malays who make up 99 per cent of the Muslim population in Singapore tend to have more children than the Chinese and Indians. However, on average the Malays are less educated and earn a lower monthly income than the Chinese. Therefore the message of having three or more children if one can afford their upbringing is to discourage Malays from having too many children. Underlying this is the social and economic concern that if the Malays as parents fail to bring up and educate their children, the financial burden to educate the brighter Malay students will fall on social welfare organisations like

MENDAKI (Council for the Development of the Singapore Muslim Community) (Foo-Law, 1993, p. 32), which is partially funded by the government, who offer scholarships to needy Malay students. Malay students whose academic performance is average will then be denied the chance to advance into the higher stream of education if they lack the financial resources, who would then pose the social problem of a Malay population with a low literacy rate.

The Chinese, who form the high income bracket, and are those who can afford to have more children, become the target audience for the campaign. The campaign addresses the young Singaporeans who are concerned with building their careers, in other words, the fundamentally better educated Chinese population who have better career prospects than their counterparts. It is apparent that the core values regarding the family in Singapore are defined with the Chinese population in mind. The subliminal message within the main text is obvious, magnifying the government's concern for a decreasing Chinese population and the lack of Chinese participation in the workforce.

The failure of the merger between Singapore and Malaysia in 1963 was largely due to the reluctance of the Singapore government in supporting the nature of the relationship between Malay culture and Malaysian identity, instead the People's Action Party (PAP) rallied for a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual policy, leaving little special Malay rights in the evolving of the Malaysian identity (Siddique, 1989, p. 564). In this sense, the government's continual need to maintain a certain level of the Chinese population within the multicultural framework becomes more understandable. Beyond that, it parallels my argument of the propensity towards a Chinese cultural identity within the multiculturalism that the Singapore government has constructed.

The latest scheme to encourage the Chinese population to have more children is articulated in Lee Kuan Yew's remarks about encouraging the educated to have more children because they are likely to produce more intelligent offsprings compared to the less educated (Feranadez, 1995a, p.4). Lee's statement was both criticised and ridiculed

by the Western media, but he maintained that the creation of a superior Singapore population is crucial for the continual progress of a country that has to depend on a hardworking and intelligent population for economic survival. Statistics revealed by Minister of State (Education) Sidek Saniff show that relatively a higher percentage of Chinese than Malays and Indians in Singapore perform better academically. According to him, 95.6 per cent of Chinese pupils went on to secondary schools in 1994, compared to 84.3 per cent of Malays and 87.5 per cent of Indians in the same period (Malay pupils' PSLE results improve, 1995, p. 5). In the same vein, Chinese who have been denied a place in the local educational institutions are more likely to be able to afford to go abroad for their studies. It can be inferred that the 'more intelligent' and the educated who Lee is referring to in his statement are the Chinese.

The emerging dominance of the Chinese component in the education system of Singapore is also evident in the elite Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools where the Chinese enrolment is appreciably higher than the Indians and Malays. At a Parliament meeting, Nominated Member of Parliament Kanwaljit Soin commented that

... SAP schools as being racially divisive as SAP students, on account of their taking Chinese as first-language apart from English, have little contact with other races (Chua, 1995, p. 11).

Moreover, SAP schools cater to the above average students, and the fact that the Chinese outnumber the other ethnic groups in these schools confirms the 'more intelligent' Singaporeans referred to by Lee Kuan Yew are the Chinese.

Traits of patriotism and loyalty are also identified in the core values where Singaporeans are told to put the nation before community and society before self in their everyday life. Internal security is perceived to be vital for the survival of Singapore by the government, given its position as a secular state amongst Muslim neighbours. National defence is a formula for Singapore's peace and prosperity. Every able-bodied male Singaporean

citizen and permanent resident aged eighteen and above is enlisted for full-time national service for a period of two and a half years where they are trained to be 'operational ready' in times of war. While the high ranking military personnel are Chinese, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and the Singapore Police Force have a large number of Malays and Indians officers in the lower ranks. Given Singapore's location amongst its Muslim neighbours, this value of nation before self becomes a diplomacy to ensure military control lies in the hands of the majority population by beckoning the Chinese to serve their nation by occupying military positions.

While the identification of national core values may have been set up to become 'moral anchors' for Singaporeans, details of these values are largely unknown to a large percentage of the Singapore population for them to be effective. According to Birch (1993), only 51 per cent of Singaporeans who were interviewed by *The Straits Times* actually know of the existence of the core values and he cites the reason for their ignorance as they (the core values) were an 'abstract issue' and 'only of marginal interest', appealing only to the 'tertiary educated'.

Apart from the implementation of the national core values, language is another element that the Singapore government has used for the construction of multiculturalism in Singapore. The link between the construction of a multicultural identity and the use of language policies is identified by Lim (1990). In her opinion

Language is a significant mark of a state of mind and cultural consciousness (p. 41).

The linguistic composition of Singapore is made up of the four official languages - Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English; and a number of Chinese dialects, namely Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese and Foochow; and Indian languages, Malayalam, Punjabi, Telegu, Hindi and Bengali. Of the official languages, English is

more visible than the others, being the language of international trade and recognised as the integrating language for the heterogeneous population of Singapore. Although Malay has been, and still is, the national language, prominence is given to the English as it is the 'medium of instruction and the language of administration, commerce, and technology' (Ng, 1994, p. 70).

Shotam (1989) describes Singapore's multilingualism situation as 'the thin end of the wedge' (p. 512). While the multilingual model adopted by the government is meant to emphasise linguistic heterogeneity, the underlying attempts to homogenise this heterogeneity is apparent particularly with the spread of Mandarin and English as the 'necessity' languages for economic opportunities on an international scale. This reduced heterogeneity suggests that within the multilingual framework, linguistic equality is an illusion.

The bilingual policy ensures that Singaporean pupils learn at least two languages in school - English and their mother tongue. This aspect of language policy is evidently assimilated into the government's education policies through the setting up of second language classes. However, this policy enforces a situation which appears to place a limit on inter-ethnic interaction in school where Malay and Indian students will have fewer opportunities to identify and interact with Chinese schoolmates (Shotam, 1989, p. 513).

The fact that the Malays are weaker in their command of English than the other ethnic groups in Singapore is highlighted by Sukmawati Haji Sirat, an academic in Singapore, who published a thesis revealing that Malay Ministers of Parliament (MPs) lack the capabilities of explaining government policies effectively in English. Malay MP Othman Hanon Eusote describes his role as 'walking on a tightrope' because Malay MPs are expected to represent the Malay community in Singapore, but other communities view this as a concern for sectoral interests. However, Othman disputed Sukmawati's view, arguing that explaining government policies is difficult, regardless of the ethnicity of an

MP, or the language they used. He (Othman) pointed out that Malay MPs have in fact been effective, especially with explaining educational policies to the Malay population in Singapore (Chung, 1995, p. 15).

The heterogeneous composition of the Chinese community in Singapore also requires the addressing of a common language policy for the Chinese. This was established with the identification of the Mandarin language as the 'symbolic mother tongue of the Chinese in Singapore' (Shotam, 1989, p. 509). The 'Speak Mandarin' campaign was first introduced in the early 1980s to encourage the common use of Mandarin amongst the dialect speaking Chinese population. Additionally, the government aims to inculcate Chinese values through the campaign. With mass dissemination, there is no clear distinction that the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign in Singapore which is aimed entirely at the Chinese population, also affects the Malay and the Indian population who are equally exposed to the promotion to speak Mandarin. In this sense, the campaign to use Mandarin and to instill Chinese values to the Chinese Singaporeans extends to the minor ethnic groups. In the same vein, the Indians are also a heterogeneous community with different languages but there has never been a 'Speak Tamil' (Tamil being the most common used Indian language in Singapore) campaign in Singapore. Similarly with Malay, which is the official language of Singapore yet only widely known and spoken by the Malay population. There has never been a 'Speak Malay' campaign in Singapore to promote the language, despite its official status.

In line with the identification of the national core values, there has been a revival of the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign a few years ago, where the government claims that the new move to promote the use of Mandarin has a different focus (Tan, 1993, p. 28). The purpose of the new 'Speak Mandarin' campaign is an attempt by the government to instill a Chinese cultural identity amongst the English-educated and the English-speaking Chinese in Singapore so that they, adhering to the Asian values, will be less susceptible to fall prey to the more liberal Western values. This stance of the government, however, largely ignores the fact that the Malay and Indian community are similarly prone to

accepting Western cultures. The 'Speak Mandarin' campaign, together with a growing number of young Malays and Indians who have appeared to accept Mandarin as a 'second language' by their willingness to learn and speak it, reinforce the situation of an emergence of a pre-eminent Chinese culture in Singapore.

The success of the 'Speak Mandarin' campaign lies mainly with the fact that Mandarin is the language of the majority. By choosing to ignore this 'symbol of the majority' (Shotam, 1989, p. 512), minor ethnic groups are likely to be socially limited.

Hosbawn (1983) believes that

The National Flag, the National Anthem and the National Emblem are the three symbols through which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty In themselves they reflect the entire background, thought and culture of a nation

(p. 11).

Students in Singapore go through the daily ritual of the flag raising ceremony, although few understand the meaning of the Malay lyrics of the anthem, and this is followed by the reciting of the pledge. Being accustomed to singing the national anthem in Malay, many young Singaporeans have participated in a ritual, and even those who have no understanding of the Malay language never question the significance c. attempt to acquire a full understanding of the lyrics of the national anthem.

On the surface it appears that the appreciation and a comprehensive understanding of the national anthem is of little significance to the majority of the non-Malay speaking population, but underlying this is the reflection of the shallow recognition and acknowledgment for the official language. In its attempt to campaign for the use of Mandarin in Singapore, the government has literally ignored that Malay, as the national

language, deserves more recognition and prominence. Again, this signifies an inclination towards the Chinese culture reproduced in the language policy.

The recognition of Malay as the national language would essentially mean that the mother tongue of ethnic groups occupy a secondary place in the multilingual model of Singapore. However, in real terms, the national language of Singapore is ethnically limited to the Malay community. Moreover there appears to be no indication by the government to encourage the wide dissemination and use of Malay. Although the government maintains that the four languages - English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil - are equally enshrined in its language policies, the increasing use of Hanyu Pinyin names by the Chinese and the change to Hanyu Pinyin spelling for some housing estates (Yishun was formerly known as Nee Soon and the upgraded Rocher market is now known as Zujiao Centre) contributes to the perception of Mandarin as a dominant second language in Singapore.

Siddique (1989) identifies language as a factor that create the separateness of ethnic cultures which is brought about by the education system and bilingual policy where the learning of English and the mother tongue is compulsory for students attending schools that adhere to the syllabus set out by the Ministry of Education in Singapore. The term 'mother tongue' is defined as the first language that the child learns but in the context of the language policies in Singapore, the term refers to 'a language that is socially identifiable with a particular ethnic group' (Shotam, 1990, p. 509). Shotam further suggests that the English language in Singapore is distinct from the three other parent languages because it is given the status of being the 'non-mother tongue', in this sense, English becomes the symbol of modernisation and economic development, detached from the emotive quality and respect that is associated with the mother tongue.

In addition, ethnic segregation is also unconsciously manifested with the 'English - mother tongue' bilingual model in Singapore. It enforces a correlation between English -

Mandarin with the Chinese community, English - Malay with the Malay community, and English - Tamil with the Indian community. Within this, English -Mandarin appears to be the most widespread and powerful language combination, economically and politically.

Like multiculturalism, multilingualism in Singapore is socially constructed with an inclination towards the dominant Chinese population. Cultural specificity also exists within the multilingual framework. Shotam's argument that culture and language can be used as powerful tools for political manipulation and control (1989, p. 516) is a reflection of how the Singapore government has used the two elements to their political advantage.

In conclusion, the Singapore government's simultaneous attempts at constructing a national identity to manifest a bounded Singaporean population which transcends cultural barriers, and a parallel multicultural identity reflects separate cultural entities within the multicultural framework. The social formula devised by Siddique, mentioned in Chapter 1, mirrors the Singapore society where the plus signs employed in the formula emphasize the notion that Singapore is comprised of the sum of separate cultural components, which Siddique states are the ethnic communities. In a similar vein, the social formula parallels my argument of the existence of cultural specificity within Singapore's multiculturalism framework.

The multiculturalism framework constructed by the government may have been the ideological tool in ensuring the continual of ethnic harmony in Singapore but Singaporeans tend to live in separate 'cultural cells' (Hardstone, 1994), interacting only in the common marketplace, reverting to their individual traditions in the domestic domain. And underlying this cultural specificity is a strong emergence of a pre-eminent Chinese culture.

Chapter 3

The Singapore Media: Illusions of Multiculturalism

The political culture of Singapore has always followed a top-down approach and has remained relatively unchanged for the past twenty-five years. The transition of leadership duties from the first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew to the present Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong promises a new chapter in Singapore's modern history with promises of change in the political climate and mediascape. The 'post Lee' (Birch, 1993, p. 8) period suggests a new milestone in the political order of Singapore with indications by the government to create a open political atmosphere in the form of participatory politics through the Singapore media. However, declaring an open political culture is one thing, actually achieving it is quite another.

Lee's government is known to be strict and uncompromising in its political handlings. The caning of American teenager Michael Fay in 1994 for vandalism and the hanging of Filipino maid Flor Contemplacion in 1995 for murder has sparked off strong outcries from the West and within the region, questioning Singapore's stance on humanitarian rights; while the ban of chewing gum, without any form of public consultation, was both ridiculed and criticised, reflecting the controlled and harsh political atmosphere that the Singapore government has created. The government is also notably intolerant to any form of criticism, regardless of its origins, maintaining that the adopted policies are for the good of the republic (Birch, 1993, p. 23). According to Chee Soon Juan, secretary-general of Singapore's opposition Democratic Party (SDP), critics of Singapore policies and its leaders are branded as 'traitors' and 'troublemakers', and every criticism directed at the government is met with an almost hysterical defence by it and its support (Chee, 1995c, p. 23). Chee feels that this is an unhealthy practice and will intimidate Singaporeans who have criticisms of the government from speaking out. Chee also cautions that elected officials in the Singapore government are human beings open to

mistakes and are fallible (Chee, 1995a, p. 23) therefore Singaporeans must have the courage to see the faults of their government (Chee, 1995b, p. 23).

However, Singaporeans are made to believe that policies of the government are formulated for the well-being of the public by the constant comparisons between the economic vitality of Asia and the economic decadence of the West as presented in the Singapore media. Freedom of speech and of the press is a Western democratic phenomena and has never been a position adopted by the Singapore government. Although the government in the 'post Lee' period hints indications of the willingness to create more openness in the mass media, power is still held by the 'dominant discourses'. This maintaining of control in the media is described by Baudrillard (1983) as necessary because maintaining political power requires the media to be the mouthpiece of the government (p. 117). Baudrillard is echoed by Birch (1993)

Participatory politics and a more 'open' media, does not necessarily mean more open issues and policies - it can often mean that another strategy is being found to maintain the same sort of controls that existed before (p. 25).

This chapter will examine the role of the Singapore's media in promoting multiculturalism, during the 'post Lee' and 'Lee' periods. In discussing the construction of multiculturalism through the media, I will show that within the multicultural stance, cultural specificity exists along linguistic lines and there is an inclination towards catering to the Chinese-speaking population. Chinese serialised dramas have been both successful and popular and a sign that the productions move towards a dominant Chinese cultural society. This chapter examines the way the government has articulated multiculturalism in the Singapore mass media and how this is continued despite promises of openness and change by Goh. My analysis will show that the raising of cultural issues through the media is used as a 'rhetorical instrument to justify a number of actions taken by the government' (Lowe, 1987, p. 57).

The Press

Singapore currently supports nine major newspapers. *The Straits Times*, *Business Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The New Paper* are daily English newspapers while the *Lianhe Zaobao*, *Lianhe Wanbao* and the *Shin Min Daily News* are in Chinese. There is only one Malay newspaper - *Berita Harian* and one Tamil newspaper - *Tamil Murasa*.

All major newspapers are part of the massive Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) and daily readership peaks at 1.5 million in the population of almost 3 million. The question of newspaper censorship has been a vexed one since independence, and conformity is demanded of all editors by the government when reporting sensitive issues of political and ethical conditions in Singapore. Most foreign journalists in Singapore would have had the experience of receiving accusations from the government for their interference in domestic politics. Christopher Lingle, an American academic, was found guilty of contempt of court. In his article, published in *The International Herald Tribune* on October 7, 1994, Lingle made references to the judiciaries in some Asian countries as being 'compliant' and were used by political leaders to bankrupt opposition leaders. Although the Singapore government was never mentioned in the article, Lingle was fined together with four other parties - the Asian editor, publisher and distributor of *The International Herald Tribune*, and the Singapore Press Holdings. Catherine Lim, a Singaporean writer, was also criticised by the Singapore government for her article, published in the Forum page of *The Straits Times*, that questions Prime Minister Goh's leadership style and position in the cabinet (Lim, 1994b), suggesting that the Singapore government was split between Goh's people-oriented approach and the sterner, 'no-nonsense' style of Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew. In responding to her article, Goh challenged Lim and others who wish to comment regularly on politics to enter the political arena. This led to the question of whether Singaporeans could negative comments on the social and political scene as a concerned Singaporean from outside the political arena (Pok, Ong, Diep, 1995).

Tan (1994) feels that the Singapore government's reaction to criticism is wrong and that the government should accept criticism as a form of feedback

The PAP (Singapore government) has not changed. Its leaders still believe that if you are not with them, you are against them. How should ordinary people criticise the government then? Should they whisper their complaints quietly to the Feedback Unit? This is not the way to build a Great Society. This is not democracy. (p. 22)

Unlike some newspapers in the Western democracies, *The Straits Times* as a local newspaper has maintained a good relationship with the Singapore government. In general the Singapore press

do not provoke the same degree of passion and controversy, sound and fury, nor do they engage in tireless probes and investigations, exposes and revelations which have come to typify the role of the media in the West (Tan, 1990, p. 1).

Goonasekera (1995) argues that while the Western media emphasis the freedom of the press, their quality of journalism is dictated by the desire for profits. The Western media is a capitalist media where often issues are sensationalised in order to appeal to the mass market. The Singapore media adhere to a different model of media management where issues are reported with a sense of responsibility and publications are justified and supported by facts. This is the form of media that has been adopted by many countries in Southeast Asia, with the exception of the Philippine media.

The Philippines is the only ASEAN country whose media policies adhere to the Western concept of freedom of speech. The Singapore government has, however, 'made insulting remarks' about the Philippine telecommunication system and had 'chided, belittled, and poked fun at' the Filipinos' fight for democracy as the cause of their economic woes (Chee, 1995b, p. 23). According to Lascon, a Filipino

Because of the so-called concept of freedom of speech, press people just write what they think could sell in the market, so much so that the news can turn out to be confusing The media does not bother about public reaction (1995, p. 23).

Cheong Yip Seng, when he was the editor of *The Straits Times*, states that the press should only be responsible to reflect issues of national concern to its leaders, and should make no attempts at interpreting or questioning government's policies. Cheong stresses that the government has the full authority to amend or dictate editorial policy, therefore the best position for the press to undertake is to support the government standpoint. Despite the conservatism of *The Straits Times*, its current editor Leslie Fong appears to question the role of the press as a social watch-dog and an ideological tool of the Singapore's government. Fong (1991) points out in his article that

the press should not be the tool of any one political party, whatever the pressures or temptations to do so. It should not pander to the tribal instincts of any one community, at the expense of multi-racial harmony and national unity, even if, by virtue of the language in which it publishes or broadcasts, it caters largely to that particularly community (leaflet).

A recent survey⁵ by Nanyang Technological University lecturer Hao Xiaoming reveals the many Singaporeans echo Fong's view that a more critical press is needed in Singapore. The survey found that six in ten Singaporean newspaper readers want the media to adopt a more critical stance towards the government (Chua, 1995, p. 3). In addition, 45 per cent of those who took part in the survey feel that the Singapore's media coverage of opposition parties in Singapore are not fair and objective. Despite the fact that more Singaporeans are pressing for a more critical press and that many Western journalists like William Safire has positioned the Singapore media as occupying the 'morally lower ground' (Birch, 1993, p. 22), the Singapore government stresses the

⁵ refer to appendix 2.

importance of restrictions within the media because of Singapore's 'fragile and vulnerable' (p.23) multicultural society.

Seah Chiang Nee, former editor of *The Singapore Monitor*, points out that sometimes the truth is suppressed in the attempt to negotiate the 'fragile and vulnerable' multicultural environment that the press should reflect. An example of sacrificing the truth in the name of multicultural stability can be found in the case when a local Chinese actress was invited to pick a winner for a lucky draw which was televised live. The drawn entry belonged to an Indian and being Chinese educated, she fumbled at her attempts to read the name, instead lamented that the Indian name was too difficult to pronounce and proceeded to read the identification number in Mandarin even though the program was in English. Immediately after the segment, the station was flooded with irate callers complaining about the actress's insensitivity and demanded an apology. To maintain its stance on ensuring multicultural harmony, *The Straits Times* promptly ran an article on the apology that Television Corporation Singapore (TCS) offered on behalf of the actress and the subject was closed.

Although there might have been Chinese, Indians and Malays from the public who would have liked to offer their individual opinions regarding the incident, the general consensus that the press gave was that an apology was offered and that was all that is needed to be done in maintaining the multicultural stability of Singapore. What is done is in line with the multicultural stability policy that the government wants the media to promote, by choosing to dwell on the topic and seeking the public's views and opinions would have the snowball effect of sparking a controversial ethnic-cultural debate. Given the 'fragile and vulnerable' factor, the attempt by the media to maintain cultural harmony in Singapore is to avoid giving publicity to cultural and ethical confrontations.

The government has made it very clear that unlike the Western democracies, Singapore cannot afford to have an open media environment because it is vital for the effective

functioning of the government to have the support of the media. Trade and Industry Minister Lee Hsien Loong argued that there is no evidence 'to prove that governments can still function effectively when the media are given absolute freedom' (Birch, 1993, p. 20). Even more important is that a balance should be struck between freedom of speech and media responsibility for multiculturalism, and that the flow of information exists to support and enhance the government's policies with regards to this aspect. This has been the fundamental philosophy of the press since the 'Lee' period and is likely to continue in the 'post Lee' period.

Television

To maintain the cutting edge in its communication network and to demonstrate the decentralisation of power in the new chapter of Goh's leadership, the national Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) was privatised in 1994. Now known as Television Corporation Singapore (TCS), it runs three television channels in Singapore. The privatisation of SBC in the 'post Lee' period was viewed by the general public as a loosening of censorship to allow for the televising of controversial programs from the West. Popular talk show *Oprah* was imported and telecast on the English channel 5, however TCS has only telecast the episodes which dealt with relatively conservative issues, whereas episodes discussing moral issues like pre-marital sex, single motherhood, incest, homosexuality as well as those that questions the political of the government have been axed (Birch, 1993, p. 43). Hence the speculation that the privatisation of the broadcast media has not brought about much changes since the role and functions of the television medium has remained generally similar in content and style.

Prior to its privatisation, SBC has made clear that the role of the broadcast media in Singapore is to support government policies, especially those that dealt with nation building and multiculturalism. SBC states in its 'mission statement' that its purpose is to

- Help foster national unity by promoting awareness of a shared past and consensus as to the goals to be achieved and the challenges to overcome to ensure a lasting legacy for our (Singapore's) children,
- Reflect the diverse heritage of our (Singapore's) society and help nurture the growing Singapore identity,
- Support and explain national policies and goals,
- Promote Singapore abroad through the broadcast and distribution of SBC production overseas.

(Tan, 1993, p. 35)

The continual support of this 'mission statement' by TCS is reproduced in the new utilisation of the three channels. Previously Malay programs share channel 5 with English programs, but with effect from the privatisation Malay programs occupy channel 12. While channel 5 became a solely English channel, channel 12, in addition to the Malay programs, features programs that are defined as artistic, cultural and educational as well as documentaries and sports, which are in the English medium. An analysis of the television guide⁶ of Singapore on Wednesday, May 24, 1995 reveals that only 17 per cent of Malay programs occupy channel 12, while the remaining 83 per cent of programs are in English. The Japanese hour is also featured every Saturday on this channel.

The propensity towards the Chinese community in the media policies of Singapore is also apparent. Further analysis of the same television guide shows that on an average weekday, Chinese programs occupy 35 per cent of air time on television, as compared to the 3 per cent that Malay and Indian programs each occupies.

After the privatisation, channel 8 remains unchanged as a Mandarin and Tamil channel. However, the number and popularity of Chinese programs has increased significantly in the past five years. The aim to reflect and preserve the multicultural identity of Singapore by the media is thus undertaken along linguistic and cultural lines. While this may have been a successful manifestation of the rich and diverse cultures of Singapore,

⁶ refer to appendix 3.

the separation of channels according to language inevitably reveal the contradictions of a culturally specified multicultural identity. It can be argued that it is near impossible for TCS to televise a mixture of English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil programs on a single channel without giving the impression of a lack of organisation and co-ordination, but the ethnic channel of Australia, Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), has quite successfully blended a mix of Croatian, Serbian, Italian, Greek and Cantonese programs to cater to the growing minority groups within the multicultural Australian society. Malaysia has also integrated Malay, English and Cantonese programs in its three channels - RTM 1 and RTM 2 which is government owned and TV 3 which is a private channel. In fact, an analysis on the same television guide mentioned in earlier paragraphs reveals that Malaysia television, RTM 2 in particular, offers a more balanced mixed of programs with 42 per cent in English, 33 per cent in Malay, 17 per cent in Mandarin / Cantonese and 8 per cent in Tamil.

While the English programs on channel 5 cater more for the English educated and English speaking population, channel 8 caters largely to a Chinese audience. Its main draw is the local drama serials shown every weeknight on prime time. In fact so popular are these English sub-titled Chinese serials that the English-educated Chinese as well as some Malays and Indians have tuned in despite the language barrier.

To date the Chinese Drama Production Unit within SBC has produced over 150 serials and recently, moved into the production of tele-movies as well. The annual profit SBC nets from the sale of their Chinese serials abroad and the large local audience following may be a boost to the local film production industry, but it is worth noting that some of these serials do not depict a realistic portrayal of multiculturalism in Singapore, while others reflect dominantly a Chinese way of life. The highly acclaimed *The Awakening* portrays the poor, hardworking and sufferings of the early Chinese immigrants in colonial Singapore, largely ignoring that there are Malay, Indian and even British pioneers who have contributed to the growth and progress of Singapore during that

period. *Behind Bars* is a production based on the lives of prison warden in Singapore Changi Prison. Although the prison warden is an unglamourised occupation that is undertaken mainly by the Malays and Indians in Singapore, the two male leads in *Behind Bars* are Chinese. Perhaps it may be even more unrealistic to have Mandarin-speaking Malay and Indian actors in Chinese productions, but if SBC states that it incorporates a multicultural policy in its entertainment and information policies, then there should be a reflection of multiculturalism in its channel 8 serials. Even SBC's new English soap *Masters of the Seas* revolves around the feud between two wealthy Chinese families in the shipping industry.

In contrast, Malay and Indian productions are by far few. While the annual budget for Chinese productions peaks at nearly S\$30 million, production budgets for Malay and Indian programs are comparably lower (Xia, 1994). As a result, productions of and the acting on Malay and Indian programs tend to be of a lower standard than the Chinese programs, attracting only a small fraction of the television viewers in Singapore.

In encouraging the non-English speaking population in Singapore to participate in discussion sessions, the Feedback Unit of TCS plans to hold 'single-language session', which according to Ow Chin Hock, chairman of the Feedback Unit, is 'to encourage the views of the silent majority to be heard in Malay, Chinese and Tamil' (Leong, 1995, p. 2). In 1994, twenty-four feedback sessions have been produced in English, one held in Malay, and one in Mandarin. Ow said that the single-language sessions, held in languages other than English, will enable Singaporeans to express themselves better when emotional issues are concerned, in a language that they are most comfortable with. Plans in 1995 are to hold four Chinese single-language sessions, three in Malay and one in Tamil (Leong, 1995, p. 2). This again manifest a situation where multiculturalism is separate along linguistic lines within the Singapore media.

Signs are evident in Singapore of an increasing preference for English and Chinese programs. In fact many young Malays and Indians in Singapore watch the popular Chinese serials and could actually discuss about their favourite program and local idol with ease, even though the serials are in a language entirely different from their mother tongue. This is a clear manifestation of a pre-eminent Chinese culture within the multiculturalism policy of the media. It leaves one to wonder if the multiculturalism framework employed by the Singapore media is but a 'necessary illusion' (Birch, 1993, p. 11).

Radio

While television has been successful with the production of Chinese dramas, Singapore radio is popular for the recently developed talk-back programs. In all, there are eleven radio stations in Singapore - nine are operated by TCS (four broadcast in English, two in Malay, two in Mandarin and one in Tamil), and two (FM 100.3 and Radio Heart) are operated by the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). In addition, cable radio Rediffusion, BBC World Service, Voice of America, Radio Japan, Radio Moscow, Radio Beijing and the Batam stations can also be received in Singapore (Birch, 1993, p. 30).

A significant event that triggered the expansion of the radio industry in Singapore is the opening of Batam station Zoo FM101.6 in 1988 which caters to the young listeners with its popular Western music. Since the FM signals can be picked up in Singapore, the radio stations in Singapore faced an unexpected challenge to its' radio monopoly. Four months later, SBC (now TCS) responded by copying the format of Zoo and launching the Perfect Ten in order to compete with the Indonesian radio station. Perfect Ten has steadily gained popularity over Zoo in Singapore because of its line-up of contemporary Western hits and phone-in quizzes, as well as providing a clearer signal. According to Tan (1993), this was indeed an 'amazing FM incident' because the Singapore's radio

industry realised that it had no control over foreign signals that entered the island and these signals pose a threat to its' radio monopoly and advertising revenue (p. 39).

After the media privatisation in the 'post Lee' period, there has been a rise in the number of socially aware radio programs in Singapore, especially amongst the English and Mandarin stations. *All About Eve*, which focuses on social problems of Singaporean women like domestic violence and sexual harassment, was developed on the multilingual station Radio Heart, while *Speak Up* has also developed along similar lines but its' target audience are the students. More leeway is given to issues on rape, incest, sex, homosexuality and child abuse which have never previously been heard on Singapore radio. *The Night Train of Emotions* (on Radio Heart), *Dancing with the Moonlight* and *Midnight Call* (both on TCS owned Radio 3) are examples of popular talk-back radio programs in Singapore, and incidentally all three are in Mandarin. The national Malay station Radio 2 also runs a similar phone-in program, which is popular amongst the Malay community.

The attraction of Mandarin stations to the non-Mandarin speaking community is limited, unlike television where subtitles and visual images can assist the translation of meanings and messages, radio depends solely on the spoken word. However, as with television, cultural specificity exists in the radio industry created through the separation of stations along linguistic lines. Radio Heart has challenged this traditional form by its multicultural content, which is dominantly in English and Mandarin. Politically, radio is a medium for presenting positive values by means of airing negative images (Birch, 1992, p. 35) and this is reproduced in radio talk shows. Hence the open media promised in the 'post Lee' period is but a ploy to maintain the existing control from the 'Lee' period. As Birch points out,

It is often thought by Western journalists, amongst others, that Singapore's media is clean, clinical and a simple mouthpiece for government propaganda (p. 34).

The above statement is, however, strongly refuted by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. According to Goh, the Singapore government does not want the Singapore media to be a 'government mouthpiece' (Feranadez, 1995b, p. 1), but the media should not adopt an adversarial role just because news organisations in other countries are doing so. Despite Goh's assurance, many Singaporeans do not think that the media in Singapore speaks up for the Singaporeans and what they care about adequately (Fong, 1995, p. 15).

Changes to the media in the 'post Lee' period

As discussed in the above sections, the Singapore government is seen to be harsh and restrictive in its control of the mass media during the 'Lee' period. The 'post Lee' period with Goh as the new leader has initiated the loosening of media control, however, on analysis, it reveals that little has been changed.

The promotion of multiculturalism in the media has been a crucial aspect since the 'Lee' period. Images of a united Singaporean community 'regardless of race, language or religion' (Singapore pledge) set the agenda for a multicultural identity. Although a multicultural policy is adopted, the Singapore media reflects a dominant Chinese discourse. Towards the end of the 'Lee' period was the concern of a declining Chinese birth rate and the government realised that there was the need to maintain a Chinese majority within the multicultural framework. The family planning campaign promoted in the media of the nineties, as opposed to the one launched in the seventies, was indirectly encouraging the Chinese (the educated and 'those who could afford') to have more children. The glamorisation of Chinese drama artists by the media through talent hunt contest like *Star Search* and the annual Most Popular Male / Female Artist Award

(Singapore's version of the Grammy Awards within the Chinese production unit) is a means to acquaint the non-Chinese with the Chinese community. Chinese serials are also used to promote Chinese traditions and values to the Chinese and non-Chinese. *Twin Bliss* examines the family values of a traditional Chinese family while *Nian nian you yu*, about the ushering of the Lunar New Year by the Chinese, was released during the Lunar New Year period. In keeping with the multiculturalism policy, the broadcast and print media, however, still cater to a multilingual population by broadcasting / publishing in the four official languages.

Multicultural harmony was crucial to the Lee's government and continues to be so in the 'post Lee' period. Foreign publications that dealt with ethnic or political propaganda, or seek to upset the existing harmonious situation have been accused by the government of interfering with 'domestic politics' and are banned from circulation in Singapore. According to Quah (1990), the phrase 'interfering with domestic politics' refers to the act of

publishing material intended to generate political, ethnic and religious unrest; indulging in slanted, distorted or partisan reporting, or persistently refusing to publish government's replies to refute misreporting and baseless allegations (p. 59).

The Ministry of Communication and Information has the authority to suspend the sale and distribution of foreign publications in Singapore which do not adhere to the regulations set up by the government. All offshore publications must obtain a license to circulate in Singapore, although *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist* and *USA Today* are granted exemptions, others like *Asiaweek*, *Yazhou Zhoukan*, *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, are not (Birch, 1993, p. 24). *Time* came under the fire of the Singapore government when it delayed the publishing of a letter that refuted an earlier report regarding Singapore's politics. The Malaysian newspaper, *The Star*, was banned from circulation in Singapore after carrying damaging comments

regarding the suicide of former Singapore minister Teh Cheong Wan. While the government can effectively limit or ban foreign publications in Singapore, it cannot restrict the access of these papers and journals to Singaporeans when they are abroad. Mobility of its' citizens within the region and to the West has resulted in the young Singaporeans questioning and raising doubts about the policies of the Singapore government. This is evident from the number of articles posted by Singaporeans in the Internet that questions the role of the government. The 'post Lee' period saw the restrictions on some foreign publications loosened but Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong maintains that

We (the Singapore government) do not want such foreign journals to take sides on domestic political issues, whether to increase their circulation in Singapore, or to campaign for a particular outcome they prefer. The foreign press has no part in what should be a purely domestic political process. If a foreign newspaper publishes biased one-sided reports and distorts its facts, and the government is unable to compel it to acknowledge errors in its coverage, it can build up unchallenged a skewed view of reality which will sway opinions and shape events in Singapore (Birch, 1993, p. 23).

The defensive and arrogant attitude of the Singapore government towards negative comments of domestic affairs is highlighted in Minchin's book *No man is an island: A portrait of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew* (1990). During a parliament sitting in 1977, Lee expressed

I (Lee) do not believe in telling university researchers where they go wrong. They write all kinds of spurious silly articles or books. They get MAs and PhDs for them ... I laugh away. But I never tell them why they are wrong. Because I am an Asian. I am not a Westerner. This is an Asian situation and do not be clever ... Be modest. Just keep quiet. If they want to be wrong headed, wish them luck (Minchin, 1990, p. ix).

This similar arrogant and insensitive attitude is also displayed by the Singapore government towards other nations (Chee, 1995b, p. 23). Not only has the Singapore government reveal their intolerance of foreign intrusions into their domestic affairs, they have shown total irreverence towards various nationalities. Aung San Suu Kyi, a Myanmar national, states

Authoritarian governments see criticism of their actions and doctrines as a challenge to combat. Opposition is equated with 'confrontation' which is interpreted as violent conflict. Regimented minds cannot grasp the concept of confrontation as an open exchange of major differences with a view to settlement through open dialogue. The insecurity of power based on coercion translate into a need to crush all dissent (Chee, 1995c, p. 23).

Summing up, in both the 'Lee' and 'post Lee' period, the government maintains that because of the multicultural component of Singapore, there is the need to ensure that dissatisfaction amongst the Singaporeans do not arise otherwise it will lead to ethnic conflict and political instability, which is typical of many Middle Eastern countries. Goh's government has promised a change in the political climate of Singapore with the relaxation of the mass media. However, given the strict multicultural policy to ensure the continual support of government policies by the media, many Singaporeans have doubts that the government will loosen their rein and allow a paternalistic media style. The government has made it very clear that

there is one issue on which the government has consistently refused to compromise, and that is extremism in any shape or form, but particularly that encouraging the different cultural groups compromising the island's population to follow and preserve their distinctive cultures, the government has never sanctioned any taint or substance of chauvinism or bigotry

(Sandhu & Wheatly, 1989, p. 1105)

The one way to effect the multicultural policy is to maintain some form of control within this new promise of openness, so that the Singapore media continues to be a positive reflection of government policies and multiculturalism. This has been the role of the media since the 'Lee' period therefore the promise of openness is but an illusion. While the government states that the multicultural policy recognises the importance of the four parent cultures in Singapore, the underlying emergence of a pre-eminent Chinese culture challenges this.

The 'post Lee' period also ushers an era of technological media advancement with the introduction of Pay TV, Internet and satellite communications. The Goh government is struggling to keep their promises for more openness in the media, at the same time retaining some control, hence compromises have to be made. However, as with most policies of the Singapore government, these compromises will eventually work towards the benefit of the government. Afterall, Lee Hsien Loong has already made the equations, with respect to media openness, that freedom equals economic sterility, and control equals economic growth (Birch, 1993, p. 20). This again reinforces the fact that the promise of change and the reflection of multiculturalism in the media scape of the 'post Lee' period is simply an illusion.

Chapter 4

Heritage and Tourism: Representations of Multiculturalism

Singapore is a society torn by the desire to construct a homogeneous multicultural identity yet cautious about the effects of cultural assimilation. Multiculturalism in Singapore has been constructed in such a way that individual cultures are promoted as separate cultural discourses. This chapter looks at how the Singapore government incorporates multiculturalism through heritage and tourism policies based on Craik's (1991) theory that

Tourism produces a range of social and cultural impacts which are complex and intertwined (p. 79).

The emergence of a number of new destinations in the Asian region has posed a challenge to the Singapore tourist industry. This in turn has slightly altered the promotion of multiculturalism in tourism policies. The upgrading and the increased in the number of attractions has been the response of the Singapore government in order to remain competitive in the tourism industry. To examine the new relationship between tourism and multiculturalism, it is necessary to examine the challenges posed by these new regional attractions which has re-shaped tourism policies in Singapore.

Peter Hardstone (1994) said in an interview that to explore cultural identity construction in Singapore based simply on the promotion of tourism is ignoring the political aspect which identity construction entails. In his opinion, the multicultural identity of Singapore manifests itself in political terms, although some of the multicultural components have been utilised for the benefit of tourism. In this chapter, the relationship between tourism and multiculturalism in Singapore will be determined.

According to Urry (1990),

the 'essence' of tourism, is multi-faceted and particularly bound up with many other social and cultural elements in contemporary societies (p. 135).

Urry suggests a link between tourism and culture. This chapter will address the ways in which the Singapore government utilise tourism to promote multiculturalism in Singapore through a study of the off-shore tourist attraction - Sentosa. The study will be done following the framework set out by Boniface and Fowler in *Heritage and tourism in 'the global village'* (1993, p. 44 - 48). Although Boniface and Fowler's work deals specifically with heritage tourism in Hawaii, the methodology devised is appropriate for the study of heritage tourism in the context of Sentosa. The analysis framework they employ presents access to the discourses of tourism and heritage through the exploration of the impact of tourism on the Hawaiian culture, the heritage-oriented experiences of tourists, and the 'good and bad practices' of tourism. The study of Sentosa in Singapore will be modeled closely after the case studies of Hawaii presented by Boniface and Fowler.

Over the past decade, there has been a steady growth in the number of visitors arrivals in Singapore. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Australia and the United Kingdom are the main tourist generating markets (Foo-Law, 1993, p. 260). There has also been an increase in the number of visitors from China and South Africa in the recent years (Dhaliwal, 1995, p. 4). The latest attractions on the island include the transformation of old warehouses along the banks of the Singapore River into restaurants and pubs, the opening of the Singapore Zoological Garden's Night Safari, and the Asian Village on Sentosa (Ng, 1993, p. 133). In addition to these, tourism policies also aim to highlight the cultural festivals of the various ethnic groups in Singapore.

As mentioned earlier, the growth in the number of quality regional attractions have posed a significant problem to the tourism industry in Singapore. Minister for trade and Industry Yeo Cheow Tong expresses the need for Singapore to 'sharpen its tourism edge', otherwise it will run the risk of becoming a tourist stopover for visitors to Asia (Anon, 1995, p. 3). Yeo adds that positive competition by 'partnering them (neighbouring countries), we (Singapore) can create a new, more attractive and mutually beneficial collection tourism product'. Existing heritage tourism policies in Singapore hence have to be modified in order to face up to the new challenges.

Prior to 1964, the socially repressive Singapore government was obsessed with a puritan image for the nation, denouncing Western traits and actively promoting a Singapore culture. However, it did not take long for them to realise that 'puritanism was neither an attraction nor good advertisement for the island' (McKie, 1972, p. 95). Moreover the heterogeneous population of Singapore posed the problem of identifying a Singapore culture. Singapore's neighbours like Thailand and Philippine have a dominantly singular culture. Even Malaysia, who has a large percentage of the Chinese population, has a distinct Malay culture, reproduced by the use of the Malay language and the Islamic religion. These countries have successfully incorporated their cultures in their heritage tourism policies. The heterogeneity of Singapore's population calls for a different approach in promoting a Singapore cultural identity to tourists. The Singapore government realised the economic benefits of tourism and the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (hereafter known as STPB) was set up in 1964. Multiculturalism promotion became a key ingredient in the STPB's tourism policies. This is established in one of their promotional brochures which reads

Dream of an island, fringed with swaying palms, where tradewinds brought the fully majesty of a colonial empire to the shores of a sleepy, fishing village.

Where intrepid immigrants, from all corners of the mystic, exotic East, came to follow their dreams.

To Singapore, where Chinese, Malays and Indians brought their heritage and customs to create one of the most vibrant societies on earth.

(Incentive Isle Singapore, 1994, p. 2 - 3)

The utilisation of the multicultural component for tourism in Singapore, however, do little to attract tourists because statistics show that social attractions, rather than cultural attractions, have been the main tourist draws.

One of the interpretations offered by Smith (1982) defines cultural attractions as

(a form of) tourism that has a positive effect in renewing ethnic identity and revising traditional crafts (p. 26).

Smith implies that the promotion of cultural attractions to tourists allows the host culture to benefit from the revitalisation of traditional cultures. Her statement suggests that heritage tourism goes beyond mere economic benefits and cultural attractions can be a means of promoting the multicultural identity of Singapore. However, Uzzel (1986b) states that cultural attractions can be misused to market heritage as a tourism product even if these attractions have little or nothing to do with the particular heritage (p. 4).

In Craik's (1991) opinion, social attractions are those that offer tourists pleasure and escape from 'the everyday structures and disciplines' in the form of regimented and organised travel and sight-seeing activities (p. 25). Examples of social attractions in Singapore include amusement parks (Fantasy Island); and specially designed gardens and parks (The Chinese Gardens, Bishan Park, Singapore Zoological Gardens, Jurong Birdpark). Cultural attractions, on the other hand, are in the form of mythological theme

parks (Haw Par Villa and Asian Village) and cultural sites (Chinatown, Little India, Kampong Glam).

Social attractions emphasize the importance of the visual or the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990, p. 2). According to Urry, the 'tourist gaze' and cultural practices 'partly implode into each other' (p. 86) when it comes to marketing tourism. This suggests that the cultural and social aspects of tourism overlaps at a certain stage.

One way in which the cultural aspect implode into the social is through 'interactive' (Dhaliwal, 1995b, p. 6) tourism where tourists can participate in various cultural events that are held in theme parks. An example of 'interactive' tourism in Singapore is reproduced in the new Tang Dynasty City, a theme park whose architectural designs are modeled after that of the Tang period in ancient Chinese history. According to Dennis Chiu, the Managing Director of STPB, Tang Dynasty City features acrobatic and stunt shows which 'involve the audience'. Chiu did not elaborate in his speech how audience involvement is achieved, but I assume that it is by inviting tourists to perform with the artists on stage during the acrobatic and stunt shows, perhaps to try out the stunts. My assumption is based on an experience, as a tourist, in Hawaii where tourists are invited on stage to perform the *uhla* dance with the native Polynesian dancers.

While attention is paid to the social and cultural aspects of tourism in Singapore, the economic aspect is rarely mentioned. Even with the strong Singapore dollar, tourists to Singapore spend S\$729 per head shopping and eating in Singapore (Dhaliwal, 1995a, p. 4). While economic tourism has benefited the Singapore economy in terms of an injection of foreign monetary source and providing employment in the service and hospitality industries, the impact that tourism has on culture is not adequately addressed. According to Callimanopoulous (1982), economic tourism may lead to the coveting of 'the magical wealth and leisurely way of life' of the money-spending tourists by the locals (p. 25).

On the other hand, McKean (1982) claims that economic tourism has been beneficial to 'cultural involution' (p. 100). In this sense, traditional cultures of the Chinese, Malays and Indians in Singapore are preserved because tourists are willing to pay to visit cultural sites and buy cultural souvenirs (examples, Chinese pottery, hand-woven Malayan baskets). The making of *longsi* candy is a traditional Chinese trade which seem to have vanished from Singapore during the 1970s and 1980s. However, stalls selling the *longsi* candy have surfaced recently in various department stores in Singapore, where the actual making of the candy (which dominantly involves the stretching of the malt into fine threads) is shown to the tourists. This economic form of tourism not only revives the traditional trade, it leads to a new form of cultural production (May, 1977, p. 125), where cultural traits are marketed as tourism objects.

Although tourists to Singapore have indicated a preference for economic attractions over cultural attractions, the cultural and economic aspect of tourism are in fact interrelated. Despite the benefits of economic tourism, the Singapore government maintains that heritage tourism is the most important agenda in its tourism policies.

The changes to heritage tourism in Singapore

Asia has become a popular destination for travellers around the world. Countries like Hong Kong, Thailand and Indonesia are tapping on the economic boom of Singapore and promoting themselves as cheaper destinations in the region. The strong Singapore dollar has indeed made Singapore a relatively expensive destination by comparison. According to travel agents in Singapore, tourists to Asia prefer to visit Malaysia where 'their money really stretches' (Teo, 1995, p. 19). Ong Beng Seng, owner of Hotel Properties Limited (HPL) in Singapore, cites the strong Singapore and manpower shortage as the two big challenges that the tourism industry will have to face. Moreover, Singapore lacks the natural landscapes and scenery that its neighbours offer to the tourist.

Another potential for tourism in neighbouring Southeast Asian countries is the numerous exotic native cultures that these countries possess. Indonesia, for example, is a fragmented society where cultures and lifestyles differ from island to island. Unlike Singapore which has different ethnic groups and separate cultures, the Indonesians are basically of Malaya descent but has over 350 separate ethnic cultures. The Javanese culture is distinct from the Sumatran culture, which is in turn different from the Borneo culture. As a result, countries like Indonesia, which has a rich cultural heritage, offer foreigners access to the exceptionally varied cultures that exists in the 'mysterious East', which is so often cited in tourism promotional brochures.

Malaysia is another key player in the tourism industry of Southeast Asia, and it has established itself as a shopping and gourmet destination of Southeast Asia in the Visit Malaysia year 1993. The new stance that Malaysia has taken to promote tourism is to preserve its local heritage. Malaysia's tourism minister Sabbruiddin Chik said

We (Malaysia) believe our national heritage can be utilised to our advantages as it contributes to the enrichment of the Malaysian culture which also enhances our tourism industry (Anon, 1995, p.)

In order for Singapore to follow Malaysian and Indonesian footsteps in endorsing heritage tourism, it is essential to define what constitutes a Singapore heritage.

Although the word 'heritage' has been in existence for a long time, it is only in recent years that studies and research have been developed around its usage, representations and interpretations in Singapore. Hewison (1989b) states that heritage is a 'myth', which may be fictional or non-fictional, unhistorical or ahistorical as long as the 'myth' gives a national, local or individual identity to a particular group of people (p. 17). If the heritage of Singapore is a 'myth', then the 'myth' is traced back to the enchanting tale of Siang Nila Utama, the Indian prince who chanced upon the luscious island during a ship-

wreck. However, historians claim that the study of heritage cannot be based on myths but on the historical facts of one's ancestors.

It is necessary then to look into the history of Singapore to determine who are the 'ancestors' of Singapore's heritage. This becomes a struggle because of the different ethnicities of the indigenous people that have settled on the island. One way in which the government has attempted to construct a Singapore multicultural history for the various ethnic groups in Singapore is by restoring and conserving old architectural artifacts, then promoting these artifacts as cultural sites for tourism. This new concept of heritage construction, or in Singapore's case multiculturalism construction, is perceived by Davison (1991) as a postwar preservation movement where historical sites and buildings are means of reinforcing a national or spiritual heritage (p. 1).

Bennett (1988) argues that post-colonial societies lack a clear focused past and when this sense of real past is not deeply-rooted, the heritage becomes a sense of common nationality. The process by which Singaporeans come to identify with old objects, buildings and landscapes with a sense of heritage preceeds the use of the word heritage itself. Moreover these 'heritage artifacts' are preserved according to the careful constructed multicultural framework of the Singapore government, which then becomes ironic because heritage is supposed to be a historical past, not a constructed past.

The concept which the Singapore government has adopted for multicultural heritage construction is seen as a reaction to the massive changes that are taking place due to the effects of modernisation and Westernisation of Asian culture. There is the urgency to cling to the remaining familiar cultural artifacts, hence the solution is to compensate what that has been lost with an interest in what has remained.

With regard to heritage tourism, the STPB seeks to create a 'constructed heritage' of the various cultures in Singapore. This is apparent in the traditional architectural designs of

new buildings in heritage sites of Bugis Street and Chinatown. Tourism heritage becomes a promotion of a historical image of modern artifacts. Particular attention is paid to the identification of sites and buildings illustrative of important phrases of Singapore's development or way of life of representative group of people. In such a scheme, an example of which is the US\$100 million restoration of The Raffles Hotel (Hardstone, 1995), heritage items are selected in accordance with a general understanding of social history rather than the social history being introduced to provide a background for items collected. But for any selection of heritage items for restoration, exhibition, and interpretation of the past is, in fact, a creation of the present.

Heritage is, above all, a political concept in Singapore and it is used as a means to construct a sense of 'togetherness' for Singaporeans so that regardless of ethnicities, Singaporeans are 'one people, one nation'. On the other hand, cultural traits are preserved individually at the various cultural sites. The artificiality of the cultural landmarks also highlights the dual nature of multiculturalism in Singapore, suggesting a gap between the unified homogeneous national cultural identity and a heterogeneous cultural identity marked by specified cultural lines.

According to the STPB, heritage tourism promotes the multicultural identity of Singapore by restoring and developing separate cultural landmarks so that equal weight is given to the promotion of the four parent cultures of Singapore. The restoration of Chinatown is yet another project undertaken to promote heritage by preserving the Chinese heritage.

The clean-up of the wet, dirty and noisy Chinatown was undertaken by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) in alignment with the government's campaign for a 'clean and green' image during the 1970s. The shouting of hawkers in various Chinese dialects, the haggling housewives, the clucking of chickens as they are being slaughtered, the stink smell of fish and human sweat and somewhere amidst the noise a radio will be playing a

Chinese opera at full blast; those are essentially the substances that made up Chinatown - more than ten years ago.

With the hawkers all housed in the three-storey complex, the present Chinatown no longer oozes that life and vitality, instead in its place are clean, quiet street with rows of newly restored shophouses. While it appears that the Chinese culture is preserved in the newly constructed traditional looking buildings, the elements of noise, dirt, smell and crowd, which were the components of Chinese cultures that attracted tourists to Singapore in the 1970s and early 1980s, are sadly lost in the restoration of Chinatown.

The preservation of the Indian culture in Little India and the Malay culture in Kampong Glam were done in similar fashion. The restoration of these heritage sites for tourists appears to be in the form of a 'constructed heritage tourism' rather than heritage tourism, which the STPB maintains it is promoting. The multicultural identity of Singapore is also showcased to tourists in the form of distinct cultures, marked by separate architectural artifacts. The artificiality of the restored buildings, in addition, suggests that the multiculturalism of Singapore is carefully planned and constructed within the framework of government policies.

According to Fowler (1992), tourism policies can be an exploitation of the past.

Essentially the phenomenon exemplified of course selling a sort of
past, verging towards selling *per se* by exploiting pastness
(p. 133).

In the Singapore context, the government has utilised heritage tourism to promote multiculturalism. This is carried out by restoring and preserving cultural artifacts along culturally specified lines. While doing so, heritage tourism in Singapore seeks to present an artificial aspect of heritage. The traditional atmosphere and ambience of Chinatown,

for example, is not captured with the restoration. This is not a true reflection of the Chinese heritage for the tourists, suggesting that heritage tourism by the Singapore government is merely using multiculturalism as a marketing instrument.

Hardstone (1995) admits that while heritage preservation is a policy of the STPB, heritage tourism is not a successful marketing strategy in Singapore. According to Hardstone, most Asian travellers come from countries which have very long established cultures, therefore are more interested in the social and economical attractions that Singapore offer. The Caucasians, particularly those from Europe, are more likely to be interested in the cultural attractions of Singapore, but they only account for 30% of the total number of visitors to Singapore annually. Within this small percentage of Caucasian visitors is an even smaller number that are interested in Singapore's cultural heritage. It appears that tourists to Singapore are not interested in the multiculturalism that Singapore has to offer, hence it is questionable why the Singapore government insists on promoting heritage tourism.

As mentioned earlier, neighbouring countries in the region are able to offer tourists exotic cultures, and higher spending power. The STPB thus realised that it has to re-defined the image that Singapore should create to visitors. While adding new attractions is an integral and ongoing project, overall the STPB emphasizes a quality experience for the leisure visitor by promoting excellence in quality - world-class hotel accommodation and airline, state of the art infrastructure, and a clean, comfortable and safe destination. It is apparent that these factors have little, or rather no, implications on Singapore's multiculturalism. However, in view of the competition that Singapore is facing there is the need to make certain amendments to its tourism policies.

The Singapore government maintains that although quality tourism preceeds heritage tourism in Singapore, the continual effort to preserve the multicultural identity through restoration project is not neglected. The new focal point in heritage tourism is the newly

opened refurbished Little India Arcade where shophouses have been converted into retail shops, restaurants and offices. Minister for Law and Foreign Affairs S. Jayakumar says that the restoration project of Little India is in line with the Singapore government policies of preserving and enhancing existing cultural heritage (Anon, 1995, p. 7). Echoing Jayakumar is K. Shanmugam (MP) who says

Singaporean Tamils who are not able to appreciate the (Indian)
culture would have lost something very significant
(Nirmala, 1995, p. 7)

The STPB states that the multiculturalism of Singapore, rather than promoting it as a unified culture, is promoted in the form of multicultural harmony where an abstract of cultures co-exist beneath a multicultural identity. The aim of the STPB is to promote the individual traits of the four parent cultures in Singapore so that the multicultural identity of Singapore is an amalgam of various fragments of the Chinese, Malay, Indian and colonial heritage. If the multiculturalism of Singapore is promoted to tourists as separate cultural entities, it seems that heritage tourism has not been a successful representation of multiculturalism because of the existence of cultural specificity.

Sentosa: The multicultural experience

Sentosa is the name for an island attraction half a kilometre south of mainland Singapore. The island was formerly known as Pulau Blakang Mati, which means 'the island behind lies death' (Sentosa Press Kit, 1994, p. 1) but was renamed when the Singapore government developed the island into a holiday resort in 1968. The name Sentosa means 'Peace and Tranquility' in Malay (p. 1).

Sentosa island is basically a tropical leisure attraction of golden beaches and lush green flora. It stretches 4.2 kilometres in length and 1 kilometre in width, and approximately 395 hectares of the island is primary rainforest. Access to the island is three-fold; by air

via cable car, by sea via ferry and by land via buses. Fundamental to an understanding of Sentosa is the concept that it comprises, not just entertainment and fun, but an island which was used as a fortress by the British forces since the 1880s and is thus a reminder of the colonial heritage of Singapore.

The rest of the chapter discusses tourists' reactions to what they saw and thought during their heritage-oriented Sentosa experience. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this will be explored following the framework set out by Boniface and Fowler (1993, p. 44 - 48).

There are many landmarks that showcases Singapore's multicultural heritage to the tourists on Sentosa. The Fountain Gardens is an elegantly styled European garden of lawns, formal and knot gardens (Sentosa Press Kit, p. 7) with walkways, pavilions and terraces that are meticulously modeled after the 17th century Villa Gamberaria in Italy. In stark contrast is the Dragon Court, an impressive gateway that receives tourists to the island by cable car. Its main feature is the four and a half metre tall dragon's head statue and Chinese legend had it that dragons are auspicious animals.

Fort Siloso on Sentosa was a British military camp in World War II. The fort is preserved in such a way that replicas of gun emplacements, ammunition bunkers, and search-light posts are placed in their original positions. The experience of the tourists of the war in Singapore is gained through advanced computerised video war games and films, complete with sound and smoke effect, that depicts the story of the fort and the Battle for Singapore in 1942 when Japanese troops invaded the former British colony. The multicultural heritage of Singaporeans is further presented at the Heritage Museum where visitors can watch realistic re-enactions of various cultural festivals, weddings and childbirth celebrations. Life size computerised figures with the ability to move and carefully designed accompanying ethnic artifacts add to the creation of the mood of the multicultural celebrations.

Chan Chong Ming (1995) states in an interview,

The role Sentosa Development Corporation assumes with regards to the promotion of Singapore's heritage on Sentosa, is to conserve the Singapore cultural heritage as a concerned citizen, rather than for the monetary profits.

It is apparent on Sentosa, as on the mainland, that the multicultural heritage of Singapore is promoted to the tourists along culturally specified lines where each cultural attraction is designated to a marked area. The Asian Village on Sentosa appears to challenge this through the concept that seeks to 'integrate the many faces, places and facets of Asia into one entertaining and educational environment' (Sentosa Press Kit, 1994, p. 41). The Asian Village showcases the heritage of East, South and Southeast Asia through theme-designed structures, landscapes and architecture. The artificiality of the 'village', in that it is articulately designed and created for the tourist, suggests the multiculturalism in Singapore does not and cannot exist in its own right, and has to be constructed through various policies of the government. Even within Asian Village, different cultures are separated into various zones, manifesting the multicultural situation that exists in Singapore.

The less apparent Malay heritage on Sentosa is reproduced on the Siloso Beach where *kampong* style food outlets and shelters are constructed to blend with the coconut and palm trees. The development of heritage tourism on Sentosa is obvious, and for the tourists Sentosa covers almost all the cultures (Chinese, Malay, colonial) in Singapore. The forthcoming development on Sentosa is the Merlion Tower, a 37 metre tall tower on the shape of Singapore's tourism symbol, which will then serve as an overarching multicultural symbol, a connotation that all individual cultures are subsumed beneath a Singapore national identity.

In view of the changes to heritage tourism, Sentosa Development Corporation (hereafter known as SDC) has also attempted to develop social attractions on the island. Most of these projects are tendered out to private companies in hope of tapping on their expertise and investment. The Fantasy Island on Sentosa, built at a cost of over S\$50 million, is the largest water theme park in Asia and is completed with pools, water gadgets and simulated rides.

The Volcanoland Theme Park is yet another million dollar project which presents visitors with the mysterious cultural heritage of the vanished of Maya, which was a pre-Columbian American civilisation in the region of ancient Mesoamerica. This civilisation, however, has no bearing whatsoever to Singapore's multicultural heritage. In this sense, heritage tourism not only exploits the past, it appears to be a *rojak*⁷ term, where different cultures, regardless of whether they are related to the parent cultures of Singapore, are used to promote a 'multi' cultural Singapore to the tourists. There is also no clear explanation to the tourists as to which culture Singapore is actively promoting. The promotion of cultures, other than the parent cultures of Singapore, also erodes the value of multiculturalism in heritage tourism policies.

The Singapore food is another form of tourist attraction, which is described by McKie (1972) as a 'pleasurable experience' (p.107) for the tourists. Singapore's multicultural factor is an advantage when it comes to food because Singapore, apart from Malaysia, is the only country in Southeast Asia that serves some of the most varied cuisine - Chinese, Malay, Indian and Nonya. The Chinese food itself has about half a dozen varieties - Cantonese, Teochew, Hainanese, Hokkien, Szechuan, Hakka, Shanghai.

STPB recognises that food is a value-added product to the tourism industry in Singapore, and has been actively promoting this aspect. The 1994 Food Festival was a month-long event, organised by the STPB, aimed at promoting the various food of the

⁷ 'rojak' is a Malay term meaning a mixture of different but related components.

ethnic groups in Singapore. Held at various tourist attractions like Sentosa, Clarke Quay, Chinatown and Marina Square, the festival was to bring together the best of the Singapore cuisine 'under one roof'. Festive dishes that are not available throughout the year like the Chinese *yusheng* (raw fish) and mooncakes were made available during the festival.

According to Hardstone (1995),

there is certainly a link between tourism and heritage ... in other words, it is true that we (STPB) are using the multicultural society of Singapore to promote a food festival ... The food festival took advantage of the cultural aspect and built on it.

While Singapore food and promotions like the food festival has attracted tourists to Singapore, the strong Singapore dollar in recent years has pushed many tourists across the causeway to Malaysia, where a similar spread is offered to the tourists at a much lower cost. With the setting up of cleaner and more hygienic hawkers centres, as well as comfortable, air-conditioned food courts in Singapore, eating is no longer considered cheap by tourists to Singapore.

With regards to food, the Sentosa Food Village is developed as an eating and leisure centre which offers visitors a variety of local cuisine in a beachfront dining atmosphere. This project has been highly successful and SDC hopes to attract more than 4 million visitors, locals and foreigners, annually with the new development.

The Sentosa Food Village is expected to be ready in 1995 and will consist of an indoor food court offering twelve stalls of local delights, seven outdoor food stalls, exhibition concourse area, an amphitheatre, a speciality restaurant and a covered sound-proofed function hall (Sentosa Press Kit, 1994, p. 47). Above all, the promotion of multiculturalism in Sentosa Food Village is in line with Hardstone's concept where he

states that ethnic food can be used as a cultural tool in promoting heritage tourism in Singapore.

Sentosa indeed offers a fascinating multicultural experience, where various cultures appears to co-exists in an 'inauthentic heritage harmony' (Boniface and Fowler, 1993, p. 48). The variety of styles of the gardens, the colonial architectural designs of the buildings, and the Malay influence in the *kampong* huts represent some of the many cultural groups participating in Singapore's multicultural heritage. However, the factor that these cultures are 'kept alive in separate cells' (Hardstone, 1995) is apparent too.

One issue that requires addressing when considering the multicultural experience that Sentosa offers is who the receiver of this multicultural experience is. The SDC marketing strategy aims to reach out to both the tourist and the Singaporean markets (Sentosa Press Kit, 1994, p. 2).

In the opening paragraphs of the chapter, I mentioned that tourists to Singapore have indicated a preference for social attractions over cultural attractions. This aspect applies to Sentosa too. The Sentosa Annual Report 1993 / 1994 shows that between 1993 and 1994, of the 330,000 visitors to Sentosa only 73,000 visited the Maritime Museum and 464,000 visited Fort Siloso. The Pioneers of Singapore and Surrender Chamber had a higher number of 1,363,000 visitors in the same period. In contrast, The Underwater World had 1,882,000 visitors while 1,373,000 visited the beach (p. 37). Forthcoming social attractions like Fantasy Island and Volcanoland Theme Park are estimated to attract even more visitors with their completion in early 1995. These figures point to the fact that tourists to Sentosa are enjoying a social experience, as opposed to a multicultural experience.

For the Singaporean, Sentosa is a costly resort. Cultural attractions on Sentosa like Pioneers of Singapore and Surrender Chambers, Fort Siloso, and Maritime Museum

charge an admission fee ranging between two dollars to three dollars for adults and one dollar for children (Sentosa Press Kit, 1994, p. 12). These charges are in addition to the general admission fee into the island. Admission fees also apply to social attractions like Underwater World, Butterfly Park and Insect Kingdom. Although entry to the Sentosa lagoon is free, rental charges apply to the hiring of skis, canoes, surf's and other water sports equipment.

The imposition of such charges to the various attractions on Sentosa has hindered Singaporeans to the island. Prior to 1994, an admission fee was charged for all visitors to Asian Village. The removal of this fee has resulted in an increase in the number of Singaporeans who visit the attraction. While most tourists can afford the admission fees, Singaporeans are less willing to pay to visit the same attraction twice. It appears that the multicultural experience is neither successfully targeted at the tourists nor the Singaporeans.

The heritage tourism policy that the Singapore government appears to have adopted is to preserve and create the various cultural artifacts as showcases for visitors. Heritage tourism in Singapore is, however, carried out along culturally specified lines so that a particular culture is associated with a particular place or artifact. For example, the Chinese culture is visible in Chinatown, while the Malay culture manifests itself in Kampong Glam. While the offshore island of Sentosa promises visitors a vibrant selection of Singapore cultures, these cultural artifacts are likewise preserved or created individually in a specifically catered zone. The artificiality of many of these artifacts serves to question the existence of a (multi)cultural identity in Singapore. According to Chia (1995),

most tourists (Western tourists in particular) seem to feel that Singapore is cultureless. As far as I can tell, this feeling stems from the fact that we have not got any topless dancing natives, or any

esoteric native dress, or any music that involves unintelligible chanting, drums, gongs or sticks (available from Netscape).

Above all, cultural sites are conserved to suit the image that the Singapore government wants to present Singapore to the tourists. The clean-up of Chinatown may have resulted in the presentation of a clean and organised Chinese heritage site to tourists, but the true ambience of the Chinese culture is not captured in this aspect. What is presented to tourists is merely a artificially created cultural environment. Heritage tourism policies also appears to have little impact on tourism as the STPB projects a six to seven per cent rise in the number of tourists arrivals in 1995 because of the new social attractions, the Singapore Food Festival and the Great Singapore Sale (Teo, 1995, p. 19). In fact a total of S\$4 million will be pumped into the promotion of the Great Singapore Sale, from July 14 to August 13 1995, and of this S\$2.5 million will be spent on advertising (Dhaliwal, 1995, p. 3).

The promotion of multicultural heritage tourism in Singapore to tourists remains an artificial entity. Extensive media promotion of Singapore's multiculturalism to tourists has led many to believe that the Singapore multiculture manifests itself in the form of culturally designed buildings and exhibits. In other words, what makes up the Chinese exhibits are the teahouses and shophouses that accompany the exhibit. In contrast, the Chinatowns in cities like Sydney, Vancouver and New York are not specially designed in an authentic Chinese style for the tourist, the essence of the Chinese culture is captured with the presence of the Chinese and the traditional Chinese trades that continues to flourish in Chinatown.

There is an apparent lack of tourist interest in the multicultural identity of Singapore. According to Urry (1990),

for many people it (heritage history) will be acquired at best through reading biographies and historical novels. It is not obvious that the heritage industry's account is any more misleading

(p. 112).

Tourism policies of Singapore have been successful in attracting tourists over the past decade, however the utilisation of multiculturalism in luring tourists is not the key of this success. While some tourists may have marvelled at the rich cultural heritage of Singapore, this 'richness' is not an integration of cultures to produce a strong, tasteful blend of multiculturalism, in fact the 'richness' projects itself only in the form of a harmoniously co-existence of individual cultures. Indeed cultural integration and assimilation is not a policy of the STPB not the Singapore government, but given the strong multiculturalism stance that both parties have adopted in promoting Singapore to the tourists, it can be inferred that heritage tourism is a way to reinforce the image of a culturally united nation to the tourists and Singaporeans alike.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this thesis, my argument has been that the Singapore government, through various policies, has socially engineered a multicultural framework in Singapore. Singapore is presented to both Singaporeans and tourists as a multicultural society. Multiculturalism in Singapore appears to manifest culture co-existence underpinned by ethnic, historic, and language factors. Underlying this, however, is a strong emergence of the Chinese culture, reproduced in the identification of neo-Confucian values as the national values of Singapore, as well as the emphasis of the importance of Mandarin as the second language for Singaporeans. I have argued that these features of multiculturalism are different from that of Canada and Australia's multiculturalism by comparing the multicultural framework of the three countries. This is done to show that multiculturalism in Canada and Australia stress on cultural equality rather than the cultural traits of the dominant cultural group, which is the way multiculturalism is constructed in Singapore.

The construction of multiculturalism in Singapore conforms to Siddique's (1989) theory of the CMIO model. According to Siddique, the construction of multiculturalism by the Singapore government can be described through the social formula

$$Ss = C + M + I + O$$

In theory, the purpose of multiculturalism in Singapore is to acknowledge that each ethnic group has a distinct culture, perpetuated by race, history, and language. Although individual cultural entities are acknowledged, this does not necessarily mean that they are equally promoted within the Singapore multicultural framework. Multiculturalism is achieved through the promotion of various cultures in tourism policies and by the Singapore media. I have shown that in Singapore case, multiculturalism provides the

foundations for 'an overarching Singaporean identity which exists as a kind of mega-identity within which all these various other identities are subsumed' (Siddique, p. 574).

In presenting Singaporeans with the five core values, the Singapore government is establishing a 'convention of behavior' (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 9). This process is an attempt to provide Singaporeans with a common set of values which acts as a unifying factor for the multi-ethnic population. In addition, the neo-Confucian nature of the values works towards limiting the influence of Western traits through the media and reinforce the superiority of the neo-Confucian / Chinese values as correct moral anchor for the multi-ethnic population of Singapore. I argued that the national values of Singapore are used to negotiate the market economy and the socialist formation of Singapore's society. In defining the national core values for Singapore, the government is assuming a pivotal role in the construction of multiculturalism. However, I have shown that a cultural identity cannot be achieved by decree by examining the various ways that the Singapore government has attempted to interfere with culture.

The political intention of constructing multiculturalism in Singapore is to give equal recognition to the four founding cultures. This is done through the various second language formation, media and tourism policies that I have discussed. The conservation of cultural tourism sites like Chinatown, Little India, Kampong Glam and Sentosa, and the use of the four major ethnic languages in the media are the more important policies that have been made to accommodate the multicultural framework in Singapore. However, as discussed, the concept of cultural equality within the multicultural framework is challenged by the emergence of the Chinese culture as an overarching national culture, while the Malay, Indian and Eurasian cultures are dragged along in its tail. Mechanisms are in place to maintain a Chinese cultural superiority in Singapore, which are significantly reproduced in the identification of the neo-Confucian values as the national values of Singapore, and the emphasis on Mandarin as the second-language in the Singapore educational system and labour market.

With regard to the media policy, I have argued that the Singapore media remains largely an apparatus for nation building and maintaining the multicultural framework under the watchful eye of the Singapore government. Despite the promise for an open media with the privatisation of Singapore Broadcasting Corporation in 1994, the media in Singapore remains under the control of the Singapore government. It is through the retaining of control over the mass media that the government has the ability to continue utilising it as an agent for positively promoting various multicultural policies in Singapore.

The political attempts to construct multiculturalism in Singapore are therefore not intended to allow for ethnic equality. The objective of multiculturalism is in fact two-fold. Firstly, multiculturalism is used to appease minor cultural groups who may feel threatened because of their small community size compared to the Chinese community. In this way, multiculturalism also ensures cultural harmony in Singapore. Secondly, multiculturalism allows the government to maintain a predominant view of the Chinese population majority by emphasising the importance of Chinese cultural entities - moral values, language - within the multicultural structure. Although policies have been made to ensure the continual of minor cultures, the structure put in place to oversee multiculturalism in Singapore is deliberate. Replicas of various cultural artifacts, that are modelled closely on the originals, are created for multiculturalism and tourism purposes. The Singapore government hopes that by 'creating' such cultural aspects they will enable Singaporeans to maintain their Asian morals and values in a period when the country is bracing itself against influences and criticisms from the West.

The Singapore government is aware that, for continual economic progress, the existing cultural harmony in Singapore must prevail. Political and social instability in Singapore, which is dependent on international trade, will lead to a retard in economic growth. The government realise that by enshrining the four parent cultures of Singapore is the key to establish mechanisms for political and economical survival. However, multiculturalism is subsumed beneath a pre-eminent Chinese culture identity. My conclusion is that

multiculturalism in Singapore recognises separate cultural entities and at the same time draw heavily on entities of the dominant culture. The construction of multiculturalism by the Singapore government, hence becomes a confrontational and contradictory issue that requires addressing.

Appendix 1

Interviews

1. Goonasekera, Anura. Senior Programme Specialist (Research), Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre. (1995, May 17). Edith Cowan University: Perth.
2. Yao, Suchou. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. (1995, March 27). Edith Cowan University: Perth.
3. Hardstone, Peter. Education Specialist, Singapore Tourist Promotion Board. (1995, January 7). STPB: Singapore.
4. Chan, Chong Meng. Manager (Public Relations), Sentosa Development Corporation. (1995, January 4). SDC: Singapore.

Appendix 2

What readers say about the newspapers they read

Quality:

Very good	8.7 %
Good	61.2 %
Neutral	25.5 %
Bad	3.4 %
Very bad	0.2 %

Confidence in papers:

A lot	26.5 %
Some	53.6 %
Very little	8.6 %
None at all	1.3 %

The press should support the Government for national development

Strongly agree	8.8 %
Agree	34.8 %
Neutral	16.6 %
Disagree	22.7 %
Strongly disagree	4.4 %
No comment	11.6 %

The press should take a more critical attitude towards the Government

Strongly agree	13.8 %
Agree	46.4 %
Neutral	17.8 %
Disagree	4.4 %
Strongly disagree	0.6 %
No comment	16.9 %

Is the media's coverage of these areas credible?

Rank		% who rated coverage credible
1	Education	55.7
2	International News	55.5
3	Crime and Law	54.5
4	Sports	50.4
5	News about Government	50.2
6	Business and Finance	50.2
7	Entertainment	45.5
8	Lifestyle	44.5
9	Human Interest	44.1
10	Domestic Politics	43.1

Is the media's coverage of these institutions and issues fair and objective?

	Yes(%)	No(%)	Not sure(%)
Crime and Law	73.1	6.8	20.3
Community Affairs	67.4	8.1	23.5
Schools	66.0	11.7	22.3
Business	62.6	4.0	33.4
Ethnic issues	51.4	17.9	30.7
Religion	49.6	18.6	30.9
Government	45.1	23.4	31.4
PAP	40.8	27.2	32.1
SDP and Workers' Party	17.1	45.0	38.0

Timesgraphics

Appendix 3

Television

CHANNEL 5

- 5.30 AM Adbreak
- 6.00 AM Singapore (News magazine)
- 9.00 Adventures In Wonderland — Hic-Hic Hooray (Children's story-telling/stereo)
- 9.30 Orson And Olivia — The Crown Jewels (Cartoon)
- 10.00 Tazmania (Cartoon)
- 10.30 Aerobics Oz Style (Instructional/sports)
- 10.55 What's Cooking (Instructional): Featuring chocolate eggs and spicy calamari.
- 11.25 Today's Gourmet — French-American Fare (Instructional/last episode): Featuring crab sauteed with asparagus and tomato, chicken stuffed with rice and mushrooms, and pear in grenadine.
- 11.50 Hawkeye — The Boxer (Drama): Hawkeye helps to nab a French spy.
- 12.40 PM Winnieka Road — The Real Winconsin (Drama): Terry is upset to learn that Nicky will not be at the procession.
- 1.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show — What Would You Save In The Fire (Talk show)
- 2.20 Travel Travel (Variety)
- 2.45 I Dream Of Jeannie — The Strongest Man In The World (Comedy)
- 3.10 Classic Concentration (Game show)
- 3.35 Win, Lose Or Draw (Game show)
- 4.00 America's Funniest People (Variety/stereo)
- 4.30 Geo Kids — Tadpoles, Dragon Flies And The Caterpillars Big Change (Children's variety)
- 5.00 Tiny Toon Adventures (Cartoon/stereo)
- 5.30 Adventures Of Sonic The Hedgehog (Cartoon)
- 6.00 Wheel Of Fortune (Game show)
- 6.30 The Pyramid Game (Game show/stereo)
- 7.00 News 5 At Seven
- 7.30 Weird Science (Comedy): Wyatt and Gary are tired of life's routine.
- 8.00 Gurnit's World (Variety)
- 8.30 The Five Mrs Buchanans (Comedy): Bree offers to babysit the twins, London and P.J.
- 9.00 The X-Files (Drama/stereo)
- 10.00 Talking Point: Missing Persons/Ebola Virus (Current Affairs): Find out what should be done if a loved one is missing. Plus a report on the deadly Ebola virus.
- 10.30 News 5 Tonight
- 11.00 NYPD Blue — Trials And Tribulations (Drama/stereo): Kelly testifies in court about his involvement with Locals.
- 12.00 MN Rescue 911 (Reality drama/stereo): Featuring a crocodile attack and people stuck in a live.
- 1.00 AM Missing Persons — If You Could Pick Your Own Parents (Drama/stereo)
- 1.55 Sell-A-Vision (Advertisements)
- 3.55 Close

All programmes in English unless otherwise stated.

CHANNEL 8

- 6.00 AM Rocky Racket (Cartoon)
- 6.30 What's Hot (Music/r)
- 7.00 Good Morning Singapore (Magazine)
- 8.00 Casper The Ghost And Friends (Cartoon)
- 8.00 Around The World In 80 Days (Cartoon)
- 9.30 Twins Of Destiny (Cartoon)
- 10.00 Fun Connection (Variety)
- 11.00 Family Business (Drama/episode 27 of 30)
- 12.00 NOON Do It Yourself (Documentary)
- 12.30 PM Egg Vs Rock (Variety)
- 1.00 Mid-Day News
- 1.15 Singapore Fun Discovery (Variety/stereo/r)
- 2.15 Entertainment News (Variety)/What's Hot (Music)
- 3.00 CoffeeShop (Drama/episode 18 of 30)
- 4.00 Afternoon Leisure Hour (Magazine/stereo)
- 5.00 A Cruel Lover (Drama/episode 4 of 30): Wenhao rescues Xiaoxin from the boiling workers in Thailand.
- 6.00 Neeadaga Arangam (Tamil drama/English subtitles)
- 6.30 News (Tamil)
- 6.50 News Brief In Mandarin
- 7.00 Dream Hunters (Drama with English subtitles/episode 12 of 20): Ye Ting decides to end her singing career.
- 8.00 Singapore Fun Discovery (Variety/stereo)
- 8.00 Secret Files (Drama with English subtitles/episode 17 of 20): Gao Wei's peers avoid him out of fear for Yuantang.
- 10.00 News In Mandarin
- 10.30 Movie Tycoon (Drama with English subtitles/episodes 37 and 38 of 41): Zoukun threatens to expose Qiao Gang's scandalous schemes.
- 12.10 AM Eight Thousand Miles (Documentary)
- 1.00 Dream Of The Three Kingdoms (Documentary)
- 1.20 Sell-A-Vision (Advertisements)
- 3.20 Close

All programmes in Mandarin unless otherwise stated.

Television

CHANNEL 12

- 11.00 AM Sell-A-Vision (Advertisements)
- 1.00 PM The Home Shopping Showcase (Advertisements)
- 2.00 TV Innovations: Revolutionary Home Shopping (Advertisements)
- 3.00 Close
- 6.00 Sesame Street (Children's educational)
- 7.00 The Puzzle Place — Man Music Magic (Children's info-education)
- 7.30 Berita 12 (Malay news)
- 8.00 Sandiwara — Gadis Di Jendela (Malay drama/English subtitles)
- 9.00 Earthvisions — In Care Of Nature: Lars And The Owls (Documentary): A blind man in Sweden fights against the persecution of birds of prey.
- 9.30 Earthvisions — Survival: Give A Little, Take A Little (Documentary): A look at mutually-beneficial relationship like the antelope and cheetah's of prey.
- 10.00 Tennessee Williams (Arts documentary)
- 11.45 After Henry — Last Chances (Comedy/last episode)
- 12.15 AM TV Innovations: Revolutionary Home Shopping
- 1.15 Oxford Cambridge Boat Race (Sports)
- 2.00 Soccer: UEFA Champions League — AC Milan Vs Ajax Amsterdam (Sports/live via satellite)
- *3.45 Close

*Closing time is subject to change.

All programmes in English unless otherwise stated.

TV 1

- 5.55 AM Programme Summary and Quran Reading
- 6.00 Selamat Pagi Malaysia/News
- 6.10 CNN International (English)
- 6.30 Motivasi/Gerak Sihat
- 7.02 Asia Business News/Asian Market Report (English)
- 7.30 Ito Semasa: Current Affairs
- 8.02 Serapan Malaysia/Lakukan Sendiri
- 8.15 Sudut Kampus/Sudut DJ
- 9.02 Topik Semasa: Current Affairs
- 10.02 CNN (English)
- 10.30 The Art Of Mexican Cooking (English)
- 11.02 F.R.O.G. (English)
- 11.30 Big Comfy Couch (English)
- 12.00 NOON News
- 12.15 PM Menjelang 2020/Bisnes Hari Ini
- 1.00 Asia Business News (English)
- 1.30 Call N Shop (English)
- 2.00 Teater Asean — Pam Walaan Mo (Filipino movie)
- 4.00 He Is Always There (Japanese drama dubbed in Malay)
- 4.32 Ala Sayang — Merisik (Drama)
- 5.00 Teleton
- 5.30 Blinky Bell (Cartoon/English)
- 6.00 Regional News
- 6.30 Al Quran Dan Sains — Proses Penafasan Makhluk
- 7.00 Spektra — Senja Kesunyian (Drama/episode 5 of 6)
- 8.00 National News
- 8.35 Teater Novel — Hari Terakhir Seorang Seniman (Drama)
- 10.00 World News
- 10.40 World Sports Special (English)
- 11.10 Aneka Hiburan (Music)
- 12.10 AM Close

All programmes in Malay unless otherwise stated.

TV 2

- 3.50 PM Programme Summary and Quran Reading
- 4.00 Maskman (Cartoon)
- 4.30 Impian Sutura — Lady Enforcer (Drama/episode 4 of 20)
- 5.30 News In Tamil
- 6.00 A Life Of His Own (Cantonese drama/episode 17)
- 7.00 News In Mandarin
- 7.30 Caesar's Challenge (Game show/English)
- 8.00 News In English
- 8.30 The X-Files — Tooms (English)
- 9.30 Combat Movies — Escape To Victory (English): A group of Allied prisoners try to escape from the prison camp during a soccer match. Stars Michael Caine, Max von Sydow and Sylvester Stallone.
- 11.30 Good Advice — Divorce Egyptian Styles (English)
- 12.00 MN National News
- 12.10 AM Close

All programmes in Malay unless otherwise stated.
Listings based on information from the respective stations.

Source: *The Straits Times*, 1995, May 24, p. 23.

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