

Education in a Multicultural Society: What Sort of Education? What Sort of Society?

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Les termes "multiculturalisme" et "enseignement multiculturel" ont été utilisés ces dernières années plus parce qu'ils sont d'usage courant que par unanimité. Dans le but de clarifier certaines des ambiguïtés entourant ces deux concepts, l'article qui suit démontre que des questions d'intention et de pratique dans le domaine de l'enseignement multiculturel ne peuvent être résolues d'une manière satisfaisante tant et aussi longtemps que l'on écartera les questions sociétales plus générales des relations ethniques et du multiculturalisme. L'article examine les diverses conceptions qu'on peut avoir des relations ethniques au Canada et explique jusqu'à quel point chacune réfère à une interprétation différente de l'enseignement multiculturel et du rôle de l'école.

Multiculturalism is a concept whose use is characterized by currency rather than consensus. In fact, so great is the ambiguity associated with the term that it has been suggested that it is ready for the "conceptual graveyard" (Stent, 1973). Since education itself has rarely been free from controversy, it is hardly surprising that the issue of multicultural education is both confused and contentious. Carlson (1976), commenting on this confusion, observed:

Multicultural education (MCE), as described by many of its advocates, is a labyrinth of assertions and assumptions which need to be examined. To those who make the largest contributions to education—namely, individual teachers and students in specific communities—the assertions and assumptions often make little sense. (p. 26)

Despite the ambiguities in terminology there appears to be little disagreement that Canada is a society characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity. However, differences arise from consideration of the appropriate responses to this diversity, by society in general and the school in particular. This paper endeavors to negotiate a path through the "labyrinth of assertions and assumptions" in order to clarify some of the concepts associated with multiculturalism and multicultural education.

The paper argues that issues in multicultural education inevitably pose questions of purpose in the wider society and that different images of Canadian society demand different responses from the school system. Several different visions of society are outlined and the paper attempts to examine the extent to which each is relevant to the Canadian context and congruent with a particular interpretation of multicultural education.

ETHNICITY, CULTURE, AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Because the terms "multicultural" and "multi-ethnic" are often used interchangeably in the literature, it is advisable at this stage to draw some distinctions between the terms "culture" and "ethnic group." Further, it seems useful to separate the concept of culture from that of social structure, although it is a distinction rarely made in educational literature.

Definitions of "ethnic group" differ considerably. A major source of difference is the extent to which membership is seen to be biologically defined or based upon self-identification. Vallee (1957), like Porter (1972), argues for the former, using the term to refer to a biological descent group sharing a common culture based on national origin, language, religion, or race, or any combination of these. Conversely, Enloe (1973) maintains that the primary emphasis of membership is not that of descent but of self-identification, and that ethnic groups share clusters of beliefs and values, expressed through associational forms, and are networks of regular communications and interactions. Further disagreement centres around the extent to which the term should be restricted to describing minority groups within a society or, as is more general in modern usage, may be applied to the dominant group or groups as well. This paper will use the term in the sense suggested by Schermerhorn (1970, p. 12) of describing "a collectivity within a larger society, having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood." Examples of such symbolic elements might include kinship patterns, religious affiliations, language or dialect, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of them.

The term "culture" has likewise failed to achieve any generally accepted definition. Kroeber and Kluckholm (1963) report over 300 different definitions. Banks (1977, p. 3) defines culture as "the behaviour patterns, symbols, institutions, values and other human-made components of society . . . the unique achievements of a human group that distinguishes it from other human groups." While it is in this broad sense that the term is usually applied to educational issues, Oliver (1977) and Schermerhorn (1970) draw an important distinction between culture and social structure. To Schermerhorn (1970) culture is "a pattern of fundamental beliefs and values differentiating right from wrong, defining rules for interactions, setting priorities, expectations, and goals." These "rules for life" he separates from social structure, which is used to refer to

the set of crystallized relationships which its [society's] members have with each other which places them in groups, large or small, permanent or temporary, formally organized or unorganized, and which relates them to the major institutional activities of the society, such as economic and occupational life, religion, marriage and the family, education and government. (p. 80)

While this separation is rarely made in educational literature — indeed,

the term multicultural is usually used where multi-ethnic would be more appropriate — it does imply that a particular social structure may or may not be congruent with a particular culture, and raises the question to what extent the social structure represented in a school is congruent with the various cultures brought to it by its student population.

ETHNIC RELATIONS: ASSIMILATION AND PLURALISM

Wirth (1945) has suggested that ethnic minorities in a society are faced with a choice between four options: assimilation, the abandonment of cultural differences; pluralism, to seek tolerance of their differences by the majority group; secession, an independent existence; or militancy, to wrest power from the majority group. While it could be argued that each option has relevance to contemporary Canadian society, this paper will confine its attention to the first two.

Gordon (1964) offers a multi-dimensional model that provides a more specific instrument to help understand the process of assimilation. His seven dimensions are: cultural or behavioral assimilation, the absorption of the cultural or behavioral patterns of the "host" community; structural assimilation, entrance into the social cliques, organizations, institutional activities and general civic life of the host community; marital assimilation; identificational assimilation, the development of a sense of peoplehood based exclusively on the host community; attitude receptional assimilation, the absence of prejudice; behavior receptional assimilation, the absence of discrimination; and civic assimilation, the absence of value or power conflict. Of the seven dimensions, the author suggests that the first two are the most potent, that in majority-minority group contact cultural assimilation is most likely to occur first, and that if it is accompanied by structural assimilation all other forms of assimilation will inevitably follow.

Recent years have witnessed a global questioning of assimilation as a worthwhile societal goal and instead an ideology has been promoted in which ethnic and cultural differences are either tolerated or actively supported. Such ideologies usually go under the title of "pluralism," "cultural pluralism," or "multiculturalism." The terms are used both as descriptive models — to explain what is — and as goals — as statements of what ought to be. To separate these two usages Schermerhorn (1970) suggests the use of the term "normative pluralism" to refer to the goal model — implying a general ideology that maintains the desirability of preserving cultural differences among different ethnic groups. In the same way "normative multiculturalism" would apply to a similar ideology.

Used as a descriptive model, Schermerhorn goes on to distinguish between cultural and structural pluralism. Cultural pluralism is used to refer to a society in which one or more ethnic group has a language, religion, kinship, form, tribal affiliation, and/or other traditional norms and values which are embodied in patterns and which set them off from

other groups. Structural pluralism, on the other hand, is used to refer to societies in which the different cultures are segmented into "analogous, parallel, non-complementary, but distinguishable sets of institutions, at least in their most pronounced forms" (Schermerhorn, 1970, p. 124). The extent to which the two concepts are in reality separated would seem to be a critical issue in the nature of inter-group relations. Schermerhorn calls them "virtual Siamese twins" noting that cultural differences need to find expression in structural forms. The relationship between the two concepts is central to the issue of multicultural education, and poses important questions for those charged with the design and implementation of educational programs. As such it is a theme that will be returned to in this paper.

In translating the ideology of "normative multiculturalism" into practice a critical issue becomes the way in which access to societal rewards and resources is determined. Based on this, Gordon (1975) distinguishes between liberal and corporate pluralism. Liberal pluralism is characterized by the absence, even prohibition, of any legal or governmental recognition of racial, religious, language, or national origin groups as corporate entities with standing in the legal or governmental process, and the prohibition of the use of ethnic criteria for any type of discrimination, or conversely any favored treatment. In such a situation structural pluralism would exist only as an unofficial reality in communal life, as would some measure of cultural pluralism "at the will of the ethnic group members, and subject to the pressures towards conformity to general societal norms implicit in whatever degree of industrialization and urbanization was present in the society" (p. 106).

Corporate pluralism, on the other hand, implies that racial and ethnic groups are recognized as legally constituted entities with official standing in society. Economic and political rewards are allocated on a quota system based on some measure of the numerical strength of the group in the society. Structural pluralism is officially encouraged and, indeed, becomes the necessary setting for individual action, and cultural pluralism tends to be reinforced even in the urban, industrialized setting. The dilemma of the liberal pluralist stance is pointed to by Glazer and Moynihan (1975) in their description of the development of anti-discrimination legislation in the United States of America in the 1960s. They note:

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the very embodiment of the liberal expectancy. Race, color, religion, sex, national origin; all such ascriptive categories were to be outlawed. No-one was to be classified in such primitive, offensive terms. In particular, government was to become color-blind. However, within hours of the enactment of the government statute, in order to enforce it, the federal government was, for the first time, beginning to require even more detailed accounting of subgroups of every description . . . in terms of race, color and sex. The expectancy that such things would not be known was instantly replaced by the requirement that they not only be known, but the

fact as to distribution be justified. Skewed distributions would not do; quotas appeared in American society. (p. 10)

CANADIAN APPROACHES TO ETHNIC RELATIONS

The ambiguous uses of terminology relating to ethnicity make all statistics at best open to question. Porter (1975) warns us that figures taken from the census are "artifacts of the census itself and result from the questions from which the data are derived" (p. 279). Based on the interrelation of language and culture, Ryder (1955) suggests that a more meaningful picture of the size and strength of Canada's ethnic minorities could be obtained from measures of retention of mother tongue. This, he maintains would give a better measure of Canadian ethnic diversity than traditional census statistics on ethnic origin, and would also indicate the extent to which minorities were assimilating to either French or English cultures. Porter (1975) applied this approach to the 1971 census statistics to show that while non-English, non-French groups make up some 28% of the population by ethnic origin, only approximately 12% have the same mother tongue as their ethnic origin language, and only 6% speak that language most often in their homes. While these figures give an indication of the different measures of ethnic diversity that can be obtained using different definitions of ethnicity, few people seem willing to argue that ethnic diversity is not a fundamental characteristic of contemporary Canadian society. Neither is this diversity a product of recent years; rather it predates Confederation, and has been the object of different policies and perspectives at different periods of Canadian history.

Despite the "myth of the mosaic," intergroup relations in Canada have traditionally been characterized by assimilation, and the school has been seen as a major instrument by which this was achieved. Murray (1977), discussing the introduction of free schooling to Toronto in 1871, documents the contemporary viewpoint that

free schools would make the new arrivals [the Irish] into Canadians, through coercion if necessary. The immigrant child would have to be separated from the influences of its parents between the ages of roughly five and twelve, during which time he would be taught the values of an expanding mercantile society. (p. 64)

Palmer (1976), while agreeing that intergroup relations in Canada have traditionally been characterized by assimilation, distinguishes between a prewar ideology, which he sees as predominantly one of Anglo-conformity, and the ideology of the "melting pot," which he suggests characterized the 1950s and 1960s.

However, the 1970s have seen Canadian society increasingly question the assimilationist response and instead move tentatively towards a position in which ethnic diversity has been seen as a positive element of Canadian society to be fostered (O'Bryan, 1976; Berry, 1977). Palmer (1976,

p. 101) suggests that the roots of this shift lie in the impact of French-Canadian nationalism and the Pearson government's establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, an appreciation of the way in which ethnicity could provide a basis for personal identity in an impersonal mass society that was unsure of its values, the increasing awareness of the value of cultural diversity in an affluent and technological society, and the upsurge of English-Canadian nationalism which sought to distinguish Canada from the United States by asserting the existence of the Canadian "mosaic" in contrast to the American "melting pot." The establishment in 1963 of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism provided a focus for these different forces working to question traditional perspectives towards ethnic relations in Canada. Originally intended to concentrate on issues related to Anglo-French relations, the commission found itself confronted with other ethnic groups who successfully petitioned for a widening of its terms of reference to include the concerns of "other ethnic groups." To this end, *Book IV: The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups*, was included in the Report in 1970, and paved the way for the federal government's policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework announced by the Prime Minister in 1971.

The Prime Minister's announcement of the federal policy on October 8, 1971, contained the now familiar observation that the time was overdue for Canadians to become more aware of their rich tradition of cultural diversity, that his policy aimed to ensure the continuation of that tradition, and that it sought to enhance the appreciation of the contribution of the many ethno-cultural groups to Canadian society (Canada, House of Commons Debates, October 8, 1971). In the words of the then Secretary of State Gerard Pelletier, the policy called into being a new vision of society; one which refused to sacrifice diversity in the name of unity and which placed the cultures of Canada's many groups on an equal footing (Pelletier, 1972).

The development of the federal policy has been subject to criticism from several directions. To Porter (1972; 1975) the pluralist vision of society contained in the policy which stressed group maintenance rather than individual self-development is regressive. It is a policy, he asserts, that serves to perpetuate in Canada a "vertical mosaic" in which class lines coincide with ethnic lines by preserving conservative values which he regards as detrimental to the social and economic mobility of individuals from minority groups. Rather he advances a position that he calls "liberal assimilation" in which ethnicity is acknowledged as a potentially valuable, temporary "staging post" or "psychic shelter" for recent immigrants, but is given no long-term formal or institutional recognition. A second line of criticism has been that the policy represents a distortion of the realities of Canadian life because there are two main cultures tied to two official languages (Rocher, 1976; Mallea, 1976). It is, from this perspective, contradictory to have a policy of official bilingualism alongside a policy of

multiculturalism because language and culture are inseparable. To these critics the government's policy is not only sociologically mistaken; it is also politically dangerous because it detracts from the status of French-Canadians in Canada (Palmer, 1976).

In applying the terms "liberal" or "corporate" pluralism to the Canadian approaches to ethnic diversity it is important to acknowledge that policies invariably represent a compromise of conflicting and often contradictory pressures — at both the federal and provincial levels — rather than a coherent and consistent response to clearly defined issues. Further, Canada's ethnic groups do not represent a homogeneous "third element" in the country's population, but rather, as is clearly shown by O'Bryan's (1976) national survey, consist of many different groups of differing size and internal cohesiveness and with different aspirations as to their place in Canadian society.

Given these constraints upon the validity of generalized conclusions, it might be argued that in recent years the federal response to francophone Canada and to the native people has been a predominantly corporate pluralist one, recognizing them as groups with official standing in the society and promoting separate, parallel sets of institutions.¹ Conversely, for most of the rest of Canada's other ethnic groups the predominant — although not exclusive — response of the federal government appears to be that of liberal pluralism.

As discussion of the appropriate responses to ethnic diversity continues at the societal level, the school is inevitably drawn into the debate. The confusion that has characterized discussions of multiculturalism has tended to become compounded with regard to multicultural education. However, the thesis of this paper is that differing perceptions of multicultural education are defined by different interpretations of the appropriate societal response to ethnic diversity, and the next section of the paper will be directed towards outlining several different conceptualizations of multicultural education and examining the degree to which each is congruent with one of the differing perceptions of multiculturalism outlined above.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A TYPOLOGY

In an attempt to reduce the ambiguity surrounding the concept of multicultural education Margaret Gibson (1976) suggests that it is possible to identify four different approaches with different objectives described in the literature on multicultural education. These she calls Education of the Culturally Different, Education about Cultural Differences, Education for Cultural Pluralism, and Bicultural Education. While recognizing that in reality these approaches will interrelate and overlap, she suggests that they may be considered in the ideal type as analytically distinct.

Education of the Culturally Different

To Gibson, "Education of the Culturally Different" or "Benevolent Multiculturalism" (Hilliard, 1974) is an attempt to equalize educational opportunities for "culturally atypical" students. The approach is based on evidence of lower academic achievement, higher dropout rates and restricted career aspirations among certain ethnic groups, and a rejection of cultural or genetic deficit models to explain these characteristics (Harvey and Masemann, 1973; Hawthorn, 1967; Grande, 1975; Gertmann, 1976). Instead of a cultural deficit model the differential success rates are rationalized in terms of cultural discordance between the school and the minority student's home. Stated pointedly by Hunter (1974), "for the student who comes from cultural settings deviant from the assumed norm, schooling constitutes a threatening, low-win or no-win situation. Their differences are treated as handicaps, burdens, and short-comings to be overcome" (p. 36).

Hawthorn (1967) sees a similar conflict lying at the root of the failure of the formal school system to meet the needs of Canada's native people. He describes the process whereby an Indian student is placed at the centre of a battle for his cultural allegiance and its impact on the student's development as follows:

The young Indian student is subjected to an informal educational system within his own society which enables him to become an Indian; formal education in the public school seldom overlaps the Indian educational process but it does make some inroads. At adolescence, about fifth to eighth grade, the antithetical position of the two cultures becomes crucial because it places the Indian youth in a dilemma he cannot resolve. In essence, it forces him to choose between being an Indian and being an Indian "White." This is clearly a decision which he cannot make simply because, whatever else he might be he is an Indian and others regard him as such. . . . By fifth grade he begins to realize the futility of his efforts to achieve socially and academically. He then withdraws from any participation in the learning process until he is legally of age, when he withdraws completely. Achievement, attendance, self-image, and level of aspiration drop markedly. (pp. 126-127)

To the proponents of benevolent multiculturalism the solution lies in making the school adapt in order to reduce home/school discordance. This in turn, it is argued, will lead to improved self-image, motivation, and academic success.

Processes designed to sensitize the school to minority students and reduce cultural conflict include teacher education programs designed to prepare teachers to meet the needs of specific minority groups (Kirman, 1969); special materials prepared for practising teachers, along with inservice programs (Witzel, 1969); the recruitment of school-community liaison personnel (Toronto Board of Education, Workgroup on Multicultural Programs, 1975); and special programs designed for the culturally atypical students such as English as a Second Language or Transition Programs.

In these programs teaching during the initial years of school is carried out in the student's mother-tongue as well as the majority language, in order to facilitate the student's overall progress regardless of his or her proficiency in the majority language and to reduce the student's initial culture shock (Grande, 1973; Murray, 1977).

As outlined above, the approach of Education of the Culturally Different describes a strategy congruent with the stance of the liberal assimilationist or the liberal pluralist. It is a perspective not based upon any specific concept of the value of cultural diversity, but rather at the pragmatic level it recognizes the existence of diversity and asserts that equal educational opportunity requires that the school pay attention to the student's cultural identity. Thus cultural diversity is seen as a social reality to be accommodated rather than a resource that has any intrinsic worth and which should be promoted by the school. In seeking to produce success in the "mainstream" culture without permanently modifying that culture the approach is compatible with Porter's (1975) stance of liberal assimilation. Also, to the extent that the approach is based upon a recognition of the social reality of ethnic and cultural diversity and seeks to reduce institutional discrimination and promote individual equality it is also compatible with Gordon's (1975) concept of liberal pluralism in which diversity is maintained at the will of the ethnic community and subject to the pressures towards uniformity of an industrialized and urbanized society.

Education about Cultural Differences or Cultural Understanding

Education about Cultural Differences or Cultural Understanding, as an approach to multicultural education, differs from the previous approach, according to Gibson, in that it has as its target population all students and seeks to promote in them an appreciation of the value of ethnic and cultural diversity and the right of others to be different. Given this perspective on the positive contribution of diversity it is suggested that the school as a major, formal institution of socialization has a responsibility to promote cultural understanding.

That the school has traditionally failed to do this has been well documented in recent years.² Hodgetts (1968) in his book *What Culture? What Heritage?* criticized the ethnocentricity of Canadian social studies programs and commented that "although we laugh at ourselves for doing so and perhaps have convinced each other that today things are different we are continuing to teach a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, political and constitutional history of Canada" (p. 20). Similar studies have followed making similar criticisms (Symons, 1975; Aoki, 1976). Pratt (1975) extended this criticism to Canadian textbooks. He notes that the textbook is not simply any book: it is an official book, authorized by the government, promoted by the school, and acknowledged by the teacher. Following an extensive content analysis of Canadian textbooks, he concludes:

Canadian school textbooks do not represent or support a culturally plural model of society. They do support a consensus, non-controversial, conventional view of society. . . . In sum, the school textbook introduces students to a unitary view of society. (pp. 119-122)

Neither have teachers and teacher-training institutions escaped the criticism of ethnocentrism. The National Indian Brotherhood (1972), commenting on traditional approaches to teacher education, stated that "in most cases, the teacher is simply not prepared to understand or cope with cultural differences. Both the child and the teacher are forced into intolerable positions" (p. 19).

The reaction to this criticism has been to demand that the school become oriented towards the cultural development of *all* of its students by designing programs and creating environments that actively and positively endorse ethnic and cultural diversity. In Ontario such a perspective is advanced by the Ministry of Education's curriculum guidelines for primary and junior grades, *The Formative Years* (1975). These guidelines require that all students be given the opportunity to:

1. Develop and retain a personal identity by becoming acquainted with the historical roots of the community and culture of his or her origin, and by developing a sense of continuity with the past, and,
2. Begin to understand and appreciate the points of view of ethnic and cultural groups other than his or her own.

Further, the ministry through its *Circular 14* — a listing of approved textbooks — is able to exclude extremes of ethnocentrism or cultural bias from school textbooks and to promote those books that are supportive of ethnic and cultural diversity in Canada. Locally, task forces and work groups have been established to review curricula materials, to generate new multicultural materials, and to ensure "ethnic visibility" throughout the school curriculum.

In the area of teacher preparation and professional development the perspective calls for a more comprehensive approach than that of education of the culturally different. Proponents argue that "to suggest that certain teachers who have certain specializations or who intend to teach in certain areas will never interact with children from a variety of backgrounds is to miss the point: teachers and students should be prepared for life in a multicultural society" (Mallea & Young, 1978). Such a perspective argues that some appreciation of and sensitivity towards ethnic diversity in Canada should be a part of all teachers' preparation and ongoing professional development.

The implications for the wider society stemming from this approach would seem to hinge upon the extent to which the term "cultural differences" is used strictly in the sense outlined earlier of "rules for life" or is taken to include both cultural and structural differences. An approach that focuses on cultural issues and seeks to eliminate discrimination and

ethnocentrism from the school program is congruent with a liberal pluralist position. However, to the extent to which the approach stresses aspects of structural diversity and studies the institutions existing within the ethnic communities it may be seen as legitimizing ethno-cultural institutions and, as such, tending towards a more corporate pluralist vision of society.

Education for Cultural Pluralism

Advocates of this approach see its primary objective as the maintenance and extension of ethnic and cultural diversity in society. It is an approach that requires the structural recognition of cultural differences as a way of increasing the power of minority groups in the school system and thus creating a climate for academic success. Pachecio (1977) says of the approach: "More sensitive to the lack of parity in real life it attempts, through a variety of structural arrangements in the school, to aggressively support the right of a cultural group to maintain itself" (p. 20). The belief that the school should actively be involved in the maintenance of cultures separates the approach from the two previous perspectives and gives it the unique characteristic of attempting to reinforce cultural boundaries. In the extreme educational situation these boundaries would be physically defined by separate schools, as is common, for example, with the Hutterite Brethren (Oliver, 1977; MacDonald, 1977) or by separate school systems as illustrated by the Roman Catholic school boards. In other situations the approach takes the form of additional after-hours schooling to supplement or "offset" regular schooling within the public school system. Within the public school system proponents of this approach have advocated such strategies as cultural retention classes, instruction in the mother tongue, and quota systems for teachers and administrators in order for the school to reflect the ethnic and cultural make-up of the population that it serves.

The belief that the school should take an active role in cultural maintenance is clearly stated in the National Indian Brotherhood's policy paper *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972), which stated:

Unless a child learns about the forces which shaped him, the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. . . . The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian. (p. 9)

Stressing the importance of control of the decision-making process, the policy paper maintained, "Indian parents must have control of education and the setting of goals. . . . We must therefore reclaim our right to direct the education of our children" (p. 3).

The establishment of separate schools or school systems has offered a powerful way of resisting what are seen as the forces of assimilation acting within the public school system. However, in recent years, looking at programs in Ontario, it is possible to point to developments in which both the

provincial government and local school boards have moved to promote cultural retention within the public school system. The Heritage Language Program, announced in the Throne Speech to the Ontario legislature of March 29, 1977, may be seen as the most significant move in this direction.³ It represents a move by the provincial government and some local school boards to become involved in teaching a language other than English or French in the elementary schools as well as the secondary schools. While these programs usually take place in after-school classes, some have been integrated into the regular school timetable. Although such programs fall short of what might be described as the ideal by proponents of Education for Cultural Pluralism — which might involve instruction in the students' mother tongues by teachers from the same ethnic backgrounds — they do represent a recognition of the legitimacy of ethnic and cultural diversity within the school system and a conscious attempt to maintain that diversity, thus separating the approach from the two previous ones.

While it could be argued that in its extreme the approach is more compatible with a secessionist stance than a pluralist one, in general advocates of Education for Cultural Pluralism appear to be advocates of a corporate vision of society. It is a position congruent with the corporate pluralist stance of requiring structural recognition of cultural differences as a way of obtaining equality, not at the individual level, but at the level of the group.

Stent (1972) suggests that cultural separation may be a necessary first step to equality in an open society, a position echoed by Stokely Carmichael (1973), who observed that "before a group can enter the open society it must first close ranks." Bryce (1970) articulates a similar point with regard to Canadian Indians who he suggests are saying: "By your treaties you have set us apart. You must now honour that setting apart. You must let us re-discover what it means to be an Indian. Once we know, then we can meet with your society, then we can be better Canadians."

Bicultural Education

The fourth, and most elusive, of Gibson's concepts of multicultural education is that of Bicultural Education. It is an approach designed to produce learners who have "competencies in, and can operate successfully in two different cultures" (Gibson, 1976, p. 13). While recognizing that such an approach may combine elements of all of the three previous approaches, Gibson maintains that it is unique in that it is concerned with fostering biculturalism and in its emphasis on reciprocity. Proponents assert that one's native culture ought to be preserved and that the "mainstream" culture (if different from that of the native culture) ought to be acquired as an alternative or second culture. Furthermore, supporters believe that students whose native culture is the mainstream culture will also profit from the acquisition of competencies in a second culture.

A fundamental issue in the concept of Bicultural Education is the meaning given to the stated objective of the acquisition of competencies in a second culture. To maintain that a person can be equally comfortable and committed to two different cultures is incompatible with the definition of culture used in this paper. If different cultures possess, and are distinguished by, different sets of fundamental beliefs and values then the acquisition of a second culture implies an inherent value conflict and makes little practical sense. However, if bicultural education does not seek to promote dual cultural membership, it can still be argued that it goes beyond the cultural understanding and general tolerance of cultural differences characteristic of education about cultural differences. Bicultural education programs invariably centre on bilingualism, for as Rocher and Laczko (1976) have observed, "knowledge of the second language is a stepping-stone to better understanding of the other group's culture — its literature, theatre, mentality and ideas" (p. 51). In this the approach implies a deeper understanding of the second culture, and through language acquisition promotes participation in the institutions of the second culture, and cross-cultural interactions.

A second important distinction to be made is between individual biculturalism and institutional biculturalism. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recognized this distinction and focused on the latter. Commenting on the concept of Canadian biculturalism and its own role the commission observed that it was not

in our view a suggestion that individuals should acquire the traits and peculiarities of two cultures. What we are mainly asked to do is to establish whether both cultures possess the institutions they need, whether they are properly represented within the principal common institutions, and whether persons who participate in each of them have the opportunity to conserve and express their own culture. (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism; Book I, p. xxviii)

As an approach that emphasizes individual bilingualism and reciprocity, examples within the Canadian context are few, and generally limited to English/French-Canadian biculturalism. Within English Canada there are programs that go beyond treating French as merely another subject option and instead seek to produce bilingual-bicultural students (Greenfield, 1976; Stern, 1976). Such programs usually involve either immersion programs (Swain, 1976), in which the entire course is conducted in the second language, or programs where part of the course is taught in the second language and part in the mother tongue.

A more radical interpretation of the concept was outlined by a Toronto workgroup in 1974 which proposed the establishment of a "Balanced Bilingual School" (Toronto Board of Education, Workgroup on French programs, 1974). The school was seen as providing the opportunity to create "a truly Canadian bilingual milieu and cultural centre" where a balanced program was offered in French and English, taught by bilingual

staff, and offered to students from both English and French backgrounds.

Implicit in the concept of bilingual education is an appreciation of the benefits of cultural diversity and a commitment to a pluralist vision of society. Yet in its emphasis on cross-cultural interactions and on individual rather than institutional biculturalism some people argue that it will inevitably promote assimilation to the majority culture. As outlined above, the approach of bicultural education seems the most elusive of the four conceptualizations with regard to the Canadian context, and one that fits uneasily into a limited corporate vision of society to the extent that individual biculturalism inevitably demands structural and institutional recognition of ethnic diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper has been to argue that the term "multicultural education" has obtained no single, universally acceptable meaning. Instead it is possible to recognize several different interpretations of the concept each of which carries with it an explicit or implicit vision of Canadian society. In endeavoring to make these school and societal relationships explicit and to furnish practical illustrations of the different interpretations of multicultural education the paper has sought to reduce some of the ambiguities surrounding the term, and in addition to provide a framework for looking at the responses of different school systems to ethnic diversity. As such it may offer a way to distinguish political rhetoric from educational reality: the paper has argued that to espouse a particular vision of Canadian society carries with it specific implications for multicultural education, and it is perhaps in the extent to which students have access to these programs that school policy should be critically evaluated.

NOTES

I wish to express my thanks to Roger I. Simon, John Mallea, and Stephen B. Lawton for their helpful suggestions and comments on the various drafts of this paper.

¹ Such generalized conclusions are invariably subject to debate. For a critical attack on the federal practices towards native people as distinct from political statements see Harold Cardinal's book *The Rebirth of Canada's Indians*.

² It should be noted that this "failure" reflects the fact that Canadian society traditionally viewed the school as the major agency of assimilation of its minorities and in this sense teachers and schools responded appropriately to the change that society laid at its door.

³ It should be noted that the Heritage Language Program is provided under the Continuing Education Program of the province and as such is not subject to all of the regular requirements such as certification of instructors.

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